

REMEMBERING RWANDA: PRESIDENT KAGAME'S
RHETORIC OF NATION BUILDING THROUGH
COLLECTIVE MEMORY

THESIS

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In loving memory of my mom,

Petrina "Penny" Gay Bode

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This page contains a vital list of people who without their support, this project would not be possible.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

“History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

President Paul Kagamé of Rwanda gave a speech on April 18, 2005, in which he told an audience the story of his country:

My country would have become a failed state in the dark days of 1994 when the whole world abandoned us, if we had not as Rwandan people, risen to the occasion and done what patriots have always done in history: defend the nation and protect the people.

The ease with which we retell and believe stories that we hear without questioning the authenticity of these tales can be frightening. This capacity raises a question: how can we positively affect our future when we simply are unable to accurately recall the past?

Andrews (2003) argues, “Ethically, we have a responsibility to remember....But never forget what? Keep which memory alive? Nations are, among other things, communities of shared memory and shared forgetting” (p.45). Citizens can remember the past as a lesson in order to help prevent negative events in history from being repeated. However, memories of the past also help a society remember and re-frame negative events in order to allow for healing and enable citizens to move forward. But the ability to re-frame

history raises questions about who is selecting the memory of the nation and how the memory is shaped. Just as in life, the omission of parts of stories can speak just as loudly as the stories themselves. This chapter will explore the basic story of Rwanda and lay down the foundation of what communication methods will be explored, extended and applied to the stories of Rwanda told by President Kagame. Finally, this chapter will preview implications that can come from this research.

In April 1994 the President of Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana, was shot down in his plane over Rwanda. Habyarimana, a Hutu, had been President of Rwanda since 1978 and his party was the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (M.R.N.D.). At this time there were complaints that the Hutu were not allowing Tutsi to be involved in politics. In fact, the M.R.N.D. party was the only party in government. The public cried out for balance in the political system and the Arusha peace talks began. The Arusha peace talks were supposed to help transition Rwanda from being dominated by a single party's (and supposed ethnic group's) system to multi-party rule, but the talks failed repeatedly for various reasons. It was on his flight returning from one of these talks that Habyarimana's plane was shot down and he was killed. Chaos broke out in Rwanda and, upon learning the news of his demise, many extremist Hutus took part in a genocide against the Tutsi and some moderate Hutus. Many Hutus believed that the leaders of the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had assassinated President Habyarimana, and that Hutus had to defend themselves as a result. In July 1994 the RPF ended the genocide by overthrowing the government and taking over Kigali (Ferroggiaro, 2001). In 2000, Paul Kagame was elected as president and in August 2003, in the first open election since

the Rwandan genocides, Paul Kagame won the presidency in a landslide victory (BBC, April 27, 2004).

Although genocide based on race is not an anomaly, what makes Rwanda unique is that the entire country was caught up in the massacre. It was not a situation where individuals were taken to concentration camps and murdered out of public sight. In Rwanda, the murders were committed right in the streets and in schoolhouses with machetes as the weapon of choice. The brutality of the violence witnessed in Rwanda and the depravity of humanity were so pronounced that a reasonable person might wonder if civilization will ever return to Rwanda. But today the government and the people of Rwanda are still functioning, they are moving forward, and they are rebuilding their nation. I argue that this is possible due to the rhetoric of Paul Kagame and his formation of the collective memory of the people. In fact, Taylor (2000) contends that national governments attempt to diffuse ethnic tensions through communication and that it is a “valuable resource in nation building” (p.180). The effectiveness of communication and its potential to be used as a tool in nation building depend upon what message is sent, when it is sent, the sender of the message and the situation in which it is sent.

According to Taylor (2000) political science literature identifies several approaches to understanding how communication has affected nation building. One approach is the primordialist’s approach, and the other is the integrationist’s approach. The primordialist’s approach states that communication would actually strain a government in a multicultural state, and in fact communication can strengthen prejudice and hurt national unity (Amir, 1969; Connor 1972; Taylor, 2000). Before April 1994, communication in Rwanda (including presidential speeches, rally speeches, RTLM-

government owned radio program) actually functioned to spread the message of hate and in turn hurt national unity. This message of hate grew from years of physical and mental segregation of the people of Rwanda. The primordialist's approach seems to be correct in the case of pre-1994 Rwanda. However, after the atrocities of the genocide were over, the new government faced a challenge. The undertaking was to build the country through the essential tool of communication. This task of building a country thorough communication is the integrationist's approach which argues that nation building happens when communication builds interpersonal and national relationships.

Deutsch (1963) explains that a nation-state is a communicatively constructed entity dependent entirely on the people and their collective consciousness. This collective consciousness refers to a situation in which people accept the memory of the nation and become part of the story. Through this action they in essence become the nation-state. I argue that Deutsch's early work is the foundation for the theory of collective memory (Gans, 2002; Osiel, 1997; Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, 2000; Pennebaker and Banasik, 1997; Roudometof, 2002; Schudson, 1992; Zeilzer, 1992 and 1995).

Pennebaker and Banasik (1997) argue that society provides the framework with which individuals form and recollect certain events. Events that are discussed begin to take shape and through the reiteration of the same story an individual begins to organize the story of the event in his/her memory. Andrews (2003) claims:

Telling and listening to stories is a key component of the journey to reconciliation, for it is in this exchange that individuals can begin to make sense of their experiences, to understand if not to condone why things happened in the way in which they did. (p. 46-47)

This is how collective memory is formed. The society tells or is told a story and the story takes hold in society's memory. Of course, with telling and re-telling, stories become streamlined. The actual recollection and timeline of events become fuzzy. It is this memory lapse that is renegotiated when a leader rhetorically re-frames the event. Studies on collective memory help establish a basis for how rhetoric is used to re-frame a nation's memories. In the collective memory process the individuals in that society begin to form a national identity and build their nation state. This process of collective memory can be carried out through ceremony, in museums, in any celebrations or monuments, and by leaders. Most importantly, collective memory is formed by rhetoric.

Among those who effectively use rhetoric to establish collective memory are the presidents of sovereign states. In addition, Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles (2000) state that although many sources (media, legitimate speaker, etc.) may help to establish collective memory, "In the United States, in particular, no other individual possesses authority and power to influence collective memory more than the President of the United States" (p.419). In the United States, the office of the presidency often functions as a "rhetorical presidency" and it must be noted that, "epideictic oratory is a dominant rhetorical form-a genre of rhetoric particularly conducive to transmitting collective memory" (p.419).

Epideictic oratory, as defined by Aristotle, is a type of rhetoric aimed to condemn or eulogize. While there is no question about the amount of study dedicated to the "rhetorical presidency" in the United States, the study of the rhetorical impact of foreign presidents is seriously neglected by current scholars. Many countries throughout the world still struggle with a low literacy rate, and mass media can be limited to one government-owned radio station. In countries that face these obstacles, the rhetorical

emphasis of the office of presidency is not sufficiently researched in current communication studies. I argue that in many countries where a multi-vocal mass media has yet to gain a stronghold the arena with the most power to shape and speak to the public is the office of the presidency. This can be especially true in countries that have given their government the role of savior to help pull them out of the dismal situation in which they find themselves. Rwanda has a population that earns less than \$2 a day and has one radio station which is government-owned (BBC, November 9, 2004; United States Department of State, 2001). This situation means that the citizens of Rwanda find themselves reliant on what the government provides both in actions and in words. Many government leaders during the genocide pillaged the monies, taking them with them when fleeing the country, leaving the new government no resources except land that was destroyed and would take time to rebuild. More importantly, people were left with huge emotional scars. It is evident that the president of Rwanda had much to accomplish and needed the basic tool of rhetoric to help inspire the public and to prompt others to invest in the country.

In the U.S. we are comforted by the process by which leaders come and go; we have elections and without bloodshed a new leader steps into government. Rwanda is a perfect case to explore how a government which has changed leaders through bloodshed uses rhetoric to establish its legitimacy in its own country and throughout the world. I argue that the legitimacy of the government is established through collective memory. It is essential that the nation and the world agree on the events that allow the new leaders to assume their offices in order to allow them to effectively rule and build their nation-state. It is also through collective memory that a country can reshape a horrid past and

reconstruct the hope of a future. Using the Rwandan genocide as a backdrop, I will focus on the collective memory that President Kagame has put together throughout his political speeches. Because of the large amount of history involved I will not belabor issues already heavily covered by the press but focus on issues or subjects that are not as mainstream.

The texts chosen to help analyze the collective memory instilled in the public are from President Kagame's political speeches. All of the speeches on President Kagame's website (<http://www.gov.rw/government/president/speeches.html>) with an accessible link were downloaded. The dates of the speeches are from 2000 to 2005. The total number of speeches listed on the site was 149 and the number that had active links was 93. However, some of these links redirected to another speech, so the total number of accessible speeches was 20. Several times during the writing of this thesis I have gone back to the website to download more speeches, in the hope that links have been activated. However, much to my disappointment many of the links, including the ones with the speeches I had, had been deactivated. The speeches I still had were searched for any reference to what happened during and immediately after the genocide; 15 speeches had references that were the equivalent of four sentences or more. Anything with more than three sentences that offered analysis and explanation of the history of what had happened either before, during, or immediately after the 1994 genocide would qualify the speeches for study. A textual analysis was then performed on those excerpts.

This thesis first explores the previous research on nation-building and reveal how, through rhetoric, leaders can build their country and the idea of a nation-state. The next rhetorical idea to be explored is the concept of the rhetorical presidency in the US and

how it applies to other presidents in the world. This concept is fundamental because the skills of the rhetorical presidency are utilized as the president attempts to build a nation. However, as explained earlier, it cannot just be assumed that rhetoric will build a nation, especially when that nation has been demolished by inhumanity. Actually, collective memory is the most valuable and fundamental tool a rhetorical president must use in order to build the nation-state. With these reviews in place a new method will be developed. This method establishes that when a country has been demolished through inter-conflict and a new government has been installed after bloodshed, it is essential that the president use epideictic oratory to help rebuild the citizens' memory, which in turn will help the identity of the nation-state become firm and help legitimize the new leaders and in turn the new nation. After a review of research and method, the next step in the thesis is to discuss the history of Rwanda to fully understand what has been selected and omitted to form the collective memory. Next, I will apply this information and new method to the speeches of Paul Kagame. It is in this portion of the thesis that we can explore what message the president is sending and by looking at what is said and not said we can arrive at the collective memory that is developed. Finally, collective memory does have a massive impact on the people, the government, and the world (investors and aid givers) and these implications are also explored. I argue that collective memory established in the public leaves out details that would cause the new government problems and instead focuses on legitimizing the new government. Collective memory is also used to help re-frame the past and make it easier for the people in Rwanda to live together with their Hutu and Tutsi neighbors. In addition, collective memory gives people a way to establish blame on the "other" while ignoring many of the variables that are still

in place that could ignite the fuse of hatred again. It is essential that communication scholars address the shortage of material and research dedicated to political communication in foreign countries. This thesis, lastly, hopes to broaden the field of political communication research by applying the principles of collective memory to President Kagame's rhetoric in Rwanda.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

When a government has been torn apart by internal conflicts then the new leadership must completely rebuild the nation and national identity. I argue that nations must rebuild by using collective memory. I argue that a nation that does not have media to function as an intermediary can only rebuild through an expanded collective memory that includes the rhetorical presidency. The leader will then utilize collective memory in order to fulfill the components of post conflict reconstruction. Therefore, we must explore the theory of collective memory and expand this theory to include the rhetorical presidency. Once the expanded theory has been laid out we will then talk about how the theory functions by utilizing components of nation building.

Collective Memory

Collective memory is a relatively new topic of study in the communication field (Gans, 2002; Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, 2000; Pennebaker and Banasik, 1997; Roudometof, 2002; Zelizer, 1992; Zelizer, 1995). Anything rhetorical in nature such as museums, television, monuments, and, I argue, the rhetorical presidency, utilizes collective memory. Collective memory is not an immediate memory or individual memory, but the social memory of a group that retains the memory of a significant event. Eventually, older members of a society do pass away and for the remaining people in

society the collective memory becomes a “memory of a memory” (Osiel, 1997, p.18).

Halbwachs states that collective memory consists of memories of a shared past held by those who have experienced it and who must make a conscious effort to keep it “alive” (Zelizer, 1992, p.3). This effort includes the repetition of the story to the society at large. Collective memory is formed by telling and re-telling the stories, putting them firmly in the mind of the group (Andrews, 2003).

It is necessary to clarify the distinction between narratives and collective memory. Collective memory consists of a narrative or a story that is told. Stories that are told can have a powerful effect in that the terminology chosen by the rhetor is a “reflection of reality...a selection of reality...a deflection of reality” (Burke, 1945, p.45). So, in essence, the dramas that are told become a filter for society’s reality. Mumby (1987) explains that the act of storytelling is the act of framing for the audience a way to view the world. Fisher (1984) claims that the narrative perspective is an essential component of people’s dialogue. The stories humans tell are dramatic and laden with symbols. The narrative allows for all individuals to be able to comprehend and offers the ability “for determining meaning, validity, reason, rationality, and truth” (p.3). The narrative must also contain probability (the audience considers the story coherent) and fidelity (the experience must ring true to the audience). Zelizer (1992) states that the ability of narrative to “invoke community” and construct reality implies “the strategic nature of narrative acts” (p.33). The difference between the study of narrative and the study of collective memory is that narratives are utilized in collective memory and as a result collective memories have a specific audience. A narrative is not necessarily a collective memory but collective memory is a narrative. Telling stories to group of people could be

a way to implant the collective memory. Clearly, when reviewing the recent studies of collective memory, storytelling becomes the tool to establish a memory in the public.

Zelizer (1992) claims that a narrative actually legitimates its tellers by establishing them as the “connected, credible, authoritative spokespersons for a tale” (p.32). As a result, the storyteller must employ some sort of strategy in order to be considered a legitimate storyteller by the public and to get public agreement on past actions and events (Zelizer, 1992). Memory work involves creation of an origin myth; memory work is about negotiation of power (Gans, 2002). For instance, the creator of a narrative must have the power to tell the story and select and re-frame history. The creator of this story must be legitimized by power and/or position. The creator will only tell selected portions of the story; in fact, it would be unusual, if not impossible, for collective memory to be a reproduction of an event in its entirety (Zelizer, 1995). Zelizer (1992) argues that collective memory constitutes an effective way for narrators to “position and uphold themselves as authorities in culture” (p.199).

There are many characteristics of collective memory. Initially, the narrator must provide a statement of origins (going back as far back into history as possible), then construct the continuing thread among historical periods to allow for preservation of culture, before identifying the periods of glory and decline, and finally fulfilling the quest for meaning and purpose (Roudometof, 2002). The narration may have several elements, including synecdoche. Synecdoche is the “narrative strategy by which the part ‘stands in’ for the whole” (Zelizer, 1992, p.37). In *Covering the Body*, Zelizer explains that when journalists covered the assassination of John F. Kennedy they established a time frame for the assassination, the shooting of Oswald, and the funeral. By actually choosing the

beginning and end of coverage, the journalists were able to “rhetorically legitimate themselves to offset a basically problematic performance” (p.38). When looking at a narrative the following questions must be asked: What is the time frame that is used when re-telling the story? Zelizer (1995) points out that choosing to talk about when an event begins and ends gives the narrator the ability to highlight only the parts that the narrator wishes to include. Often the narrator will attempt to leave out any portions that would reflect negatively upon him/her. Therefore, when does the story begin and end and how does this re-framing give weight to the storyteller and perhaps offset a problematic performance? There will also be retrospective nominalization- the naming of events or players after the incident (Zelizer, 1995).

Since not every point of the narrative can be conveyed, there must be some part of the story left out. When this is done, narrators must choose which part of the story will be left out and which part will be re-told. Someone must consciously choose by “omitting, combining, and rearranging the details of the past in an active way” (Osiel, 1997, p.238).

Zelizer (1995) states that:

the study of collective memory values the negation of the act. Forgetting is the substituting of one memory for another. It is considered not as a defect or deficit practice but a valued activity that is as strategic and central a practice as remembering itself. Forgetting reflects a choice to put aside, for whatever reason, what no longer matters. (p.220)

But why did the narrator make the choice to leave in or omit information? The answer to this question reveals the intentions of the narrator. I argue that the rhetorical presidency is the best office from which to form collective memory. As a result, the following

characteristics of the narrator could also be the characteristics of the office of the presidency. The president of a country must prove that his/her story is the correct and best version, proving that s/he is an authority in culture as a result.

Some collective memories play a much greater role in the political discourse of some societies than others (Osiel, 1997). Collective memories of events in America and in Europe often receive attention from current scholars, but, sadly, our current rhetorical analyses are limited to the discussion of collective memory in industrialized countries. Although it would be ludicrous to assume that life-changing events happen and are memorialized only in industrialized countries, it seems that that is what research indicates by its silence towards other countries. It must be noted that collective memory may also have a duality; that is, the same narrative may mean one thing to individuals in the society but it can take on another universal meaning to the international community (Zelizer, 1995). Collective memories may be transmitted through a variety of rhetorical forms- television, museums, songs, monuments, and I argue, the rhetorical presidency. Therefore, in order to expand the theory of collective memory to include the rhetorical presidency, the theory of the rhetorical presidency must be revisited.

The Rhetorical Presidency Revisited

The rhetorical president could be considered a uniquely American construct. Tulis (1996) and his fellow critics, when writing studies, focus only upon the American presidency. However, many of the tenets of the rhetorical presidency can be applied to foreign presidents as well, thus allowing for an expansion to the current theory of the rhetorical presidency. In order to further clarify this argument, it is necessary to analyze the construct of the rhetorical presidency.

The rhetorical presidency is a theoretical construct that embodies several ideas, including the fact that the presidents' words are actions because of the office that is associated with them (Denton & Woodward, 1998). The difference between the rhetoric of the president and the rhetorical presidency is the focus on different elements. When studying the rhetorical presidency the important features to take into consideration are the "nature, scope, and function of the presidency as a constitutional office" (Medhurst, 1996, p.xiii). Therefore, to study the rhetoric of the president would be to study the actual components of the president's speech in contrast to studying the rhetorical presidency- the office of the presidency, the rights granted to the President by the Constitution, and the ones implied or built upon by the president.

The office of the American presidency was originally seen as an office that worked directly with Congress regarding legislation. At the beginning of the 20th century Tulis (1996) says that presidents began to think that the executive office could do more than work with Congress to pass legislation. Instead the executive office could be used to routinely "appeal to public opinion" (p.181). Instrumental in this change of viewpoint about the Executive Office was Woodrow Wilson. Tulis states that "Under the auspices of the Wilsonian doctrine, all presidents labor under the expectancy of great oratory" (p.177). In fact, Wilson claimed while the nineteenth-century presidents gained support because of their reputation, twentieth century presidents would have to gain support through public opinion (Tulis, 1996). Presidents now often find themselves "going over the heads" of Congress as they give speeches to sway public opinion in order to set policy. In order for a president to get specific policies in place, he can no longer rely solely on networking with party leaders to get a bill passed. He must instead "go public"

by giving speeches on his issues (Powell, 1999). Rhetoric, as defined by Tulis and his colleagues, are “emotional appeals to ignorant audiences...rhetoric is understood as a substitute for, or as a false form of, political action rather than as being, in and of itself, a type of action” (Medhurst, 1996, p.xiv). No matter which rhetorical presidency a critic wishes to study, the focus will still be on the “office of the presidency and how that office has been transformed (extra-constitutionally, in Tulis’s view) into a seat of popular leadership, with rhetoric being the main instrument of such leadership” (Medhurst, 1996, p. xxi).

Therefore, the rhetorical presidency must now focus on several factors, but the core of the rhetorical presidency is still the same; it “is not just the use of popular leadership, but rather the routine appeal to public opinion” (Tulis, 1987, p.181). One key component Tulis (1987) mentions is Wilson’s belief that he should give a:

visionary speech, which would articulate a picture of the future and impel a populace toward it. Rather than appealing to, and reinvigorating established principles, this forward-looking speech taps the public’s feelings and articulates its wishes. At its best it creates, rather than explains, principles. (p.135)

Instead of articulating the principles of legislation or executive branch policies, the modern rhetorical president will try to define the desires of the public and use those emotions to make new legislation.

The emerging technologies of radio, television and the internet have added new dimensions to the rhetorical presidency, and Benson (1996) points to the rise of the rhetorical presidency recently due to the rise of electronic media. However, it must also be noted that the internet does not necessarily mean the people have more comprehensive

access to the president because Benson points out that the internet has too much information to be read and reviewed in a basic twenty-four hour period by the average person. Although it can be asserted that there are still some problems with access, there is also increased accessibility to the speeches of presidents due to the internet. The rise of electronic media has made storage and retrieval of public discourse easier and as a result has also increased the audience of presidential rhetoric. It is also important to note that among the changes to the rhetorical presidency, the role of president has also expanded over time, and in the last few years the presidency and its rhetoric are no longer confined to the national scene but the international field as well, thus creating the post-modern presidency (Smith, 1997).

No matter the changes, the basic foundation of the rhetorical presidency (American or foreign) will remain the same. Tulis (1996) states, in regards to American presidents, "In an important sense, all presidents are rhetorical presidents. All presidents exercise their office through the medium of language, written and spoken" (p.3). All presidents can be understood to mean all foreign presidents as well, despite the fact that the rhetorical presidency may focus on different components in other countries. For instance, the lack of a congress in some countries means that the need to go over the heads of congress is no longer essential, but a main component of presidency seems to be speaking to the citizens and the international public. Therefore, many components of the rhetorical president are utilized when trying to discover the purpose behind the president's words. Foreign presidents are often faced with dilemmas similar to those of an American president. Even if a constitution has not been drawn up to delineate the exact expectations of the office, the president must still seek support from the public.

Even if one could claim that the president obtained the office unfairly, presidents still must gain some public support or their presidency may be vulnerable. In 2000, George W. Bush lost the popular vote in the United States presidential election. One could contend that President Bush had to face many of the same issues foreign presidents must face where they must, no matter how they obtained the office, go to the public and gain their support by tapping into public's emotions. In addition to the president needing at least some nominal support from the public, the president, whether foreign or domestic, must gain support from other nations. Finally, no matter what part of the world one is located in, all presidents utilize the internet. As a result much of a president's public rhetoric is saved on-line and is ready for instant retrieval, which means that all presidents must now face wider audiences than before.

Finally, it must be noted that it was always difficult to determine the outcome of presidential rhetoric; but now, with the larger international and national audience, an actual measurement of outcome is impossible. It is difficult to gauge to what extent rhetoric causes behavioral effects. In fact, to claim that it is even possible to measure the outcome of presidential rhetoric would be to try to reduce rhetoric into a field in which it does not belong. Medhurst (1996) supports this claim by stating, "To reduce rhetoric to a linear, one-to-one, cause-effect relation between the message (cause) and audience reaction (effect) is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of the art" (p.xv). The best claim that can safely be made about the audience reaction to the rhetorical president is that the rhetorical presidency carries the weight and respect of the office with it and as a result one will find that few individuals possess more authority and power to influence collective memory than the president (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 2000, p.419).

The office of the presidency has the ability to construct and relay the collective memory of an event not only for a nation but also for an international community. Therefore, collective memory becomes a powerful strategic tool in the rhetorical repertoire of leaders striving for electoral and political ascendancy (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 2000, p.419). The collective memory of the public will leave an imprint and even a prescription for future action; during this process a national identity is formed. In order for a national identity to be formed through collective memory after an atrocity, research shows that a rhetorical president is essential in establishing collective memory. Research suggests that a president must cultivate “a shared and enduring memory of its horrors” (Osiel, 1997, p.6). Since the mass brutality that the society is recovering from is also a mass brutality often induced by the state, the new leader must now seek “to reconstruct some measure of trust, social solidarity, and collective memory of the recent past” (Osiel, 1997, p.9). Finally, the recollection of memories must be considered a “kind of refuge, a place to which a people may repair for warmth and inspiration” (Zelizer, 2005, p.228). Therefore, the collective memory, which has been expanded to include an international rhetorical presidency, can be useful when trying to rebuild a destroyed nation.

Nation Building

One context that produces a collective memory is when a nation or group of individuals has had such systematic violence aimed toward them that as a result of this violence the basic foundations of humanity and national identity are left in shreds. Osiel (1997) argues that “Violence against individuals violates their moral rights to life and to physical integrity. Administrative massacre involves violent acts on a massive scale. Acts of violence evoke in citizens strong feelings of resentment and indignation toward the

wrongdoer” (p.28). As a result, collective memory is formed to deal with these incidents and to answer questions about how these incidents could happen. Of course, collective memory is also very powerful in that when a group recalls the past, the past shapes individual actions in the present (Schudson, 1992; Zelizer, 1995). Therefore, the collective memory of a nation is part of its cultural heritage and tradition; collective memory is the set of symbols invoked in order to produce elements of social solidarity and cultural cohesion (Roudometof, 2002). Osiel (1997) also concurs by stating that in premodern societies authoritative stories about the past often serve as “the legal charter of the community” functioning to “integrate and weld together the historical tradition, the legal principles, and the various customs,” thereby providing “for cohesion, for local patriotism, for a feeling of union” (p.22). However, it must be clarified that not just anyone can be the narrator of collective memory. Osiel (1997) states that “state socialist” regimes engage in campaigns to force individuals to forget certain aspects of the past and that “the official ‘rewriting’ of history in which such regimes engage highlights, unwittingly, the rulers’ self-perception that their legitimacy hangs precariously on public acceptance of a particular historical interpretation” (p.213). If the public does not accept the story told by the president then the legitimacy not only of the president, but of the office of president, would be questioned. Therefore, it is essential that certain criteria be met as the president seeks to rebuild the destroyed nation utilizing collective memory.

Over thirty years ago one challenge facing African leaders was “national consolidation”, or the ability to “unify disparate groups and to create a common sense of nationhood” (Jordan & Renninger, 1972, p.189). To this day, that national consolidation

is still an issue in many African countries; however, consolidation is now commonly referred to as “nation building” or “national identity.”

After reviewing collective memory theory and including the rhetorical presidency, I argue that this expanded collective memory functions in building a nation (Taylor, 2000). In fact, collective memory is vital when trying to build a nation and a national identity (Deutsch, 1963). I argue that when one reviews the steps needed to build a nation and follows those steps by creating collective memory, then a new national identity and a stronger nation will be formed. However, the study of nation building often contains mixed messages; there are many arguments for what must be done to build a nation. Researchers must remember that Rwanda is an area that has been immersed in internal conflict. In areas that have internal conflict the need for a strong rhetorical presidency is great and he/she must present the specific components which contribute to nation building through collective memory to the people and the international community. In this way, collective memory can function as a tool in building a new nation.

The actual term “nation building” has various definitions. Nation building, for some journalists, “is about community development on a massive scale.... it involves bringing the people together...providing them with a higher sense of purpose and a real hope for better things” (Patience, 2005). But for some scholars the term “nation building” tends to imply outside powers that help build up the nation rather than relying on the internal political powers (Moberg, 2001). Some scholars suggest the term “post-conflict reconstruction” is a more apt term than “nation building”. Hamre and Sullivan (2002) use the term “post-conflict reconstruction” to refer “to that which is needed to help reconstruct weak or failing states primarily after civil wars” (p.85). The article

further argues that even though all countries need reconstruction after conflict, a country that has had its political government implode due to internal conflicts is more challenging to reconstruct (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002). When a country has imploded due to internal conflicts, the term “post-conflict reconstruction” is preferable to “nation building” because the use of this term focuses on “local actors” where “the citizens of the country in question will build their nation and bring about peace; outsiders can only support their efforts” (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002, p.85). This term changes the focus from outside forces attempting to build a new nation to a more narrow focus on a country that was destroyed by internal conflict reconstructing its nation even if the conflict is ongoing. This is not merely semantics; the correct term helps us narrow our focus, which allows us to absorb all the elements that must happen to ensure reconstruction.

Several scholars agree on the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction: security; governance and participation; economic and social well-being; and justice and reconciliation (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Orr, 2005). Of course, these pillars are interrelated, but security must be provided first, before the other steps can be accomplished. Security means all aspects of public safety affecting the individual as well as the community (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002). Justice and reconciliation are ways in which a community not only deals with past traumas through the rule of law but also begins to formulate the collective memory. Hamre and Sullivan (2002) state that economic and social well-being “entails protecting the population from starvation, disease, and the elements. As the situation stabilizes, attention shifts from humanitarian relief to long-term social and economic development” (p.85). Finally, a system of governance must be formed. The government needs “to create legitimate, effective

political and administrative institutions and participatory processes...setting rules and procedures for political decision making and for delivering public services in an efficient and transparent manner” (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002, p.85).

After reviewing the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction it is now essential to see where communication, via collective memory, is utilized to help build the four pillars. First, security means that individuals must see that no harm is coming to them, and they must also be “persuaded” that no harm *will* come to them. One step in this process in Rwanda is to destroy all the national identity cards that were used as tools to help carry out murders. The next step must be to persuade the people that they can live together in harmony. Collective memory can establish this by adding distinction between past and present circumstances to help illustrate that safety is possible. In addition, the people must be convinced that there is some sort of justice system in place to allow them a way to seek vindication for past atrocities. In this pillar, not only is communication the tool to help convince people that justice is being carried out, but the actual court decisions help form the collective memory of the nation. Finally, the government must be open, transparent, and legitimate. However, it is not enough that a government act open and transparent; rather, it must continually reinforce its efforts by persuading the public that its behavior is above reproach. If a rhetorical president can establish a collective memory that reminds the citizenry of the terror of the old government in comparison to the new nation – in that the new nation provides greater security, well-being, upholds the rule of law, and is run by a government that possesses the qualities of being transparent and legitimate – then that president, through collective memory, has reconstructed a new nation.

This thesis will examine the speeches of President Paul Kagame to further explore how the expanded collective memory contributes to post-conflict construction. This thesis will analyze two main functions. First I will examine how Kagame re-frames history in order to help prove legitimacy, and how by doing so he helps establish the legitimacy of the new government and offers healing to the public by taking partial blame off of them. Second, Kagame also provides meaning for the atrocities and hope for the future by discussing lessons from the past, and he also provides inspiration in a better future because a legitimate and transparent government will provide justice.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY

The history of a country is usually well recorded in books and, as a result, the country and its citizens have the texts to review. It is hoped that negative events in history will not repeat themselves. But what happens when the country has a low education rate and, for that matter, a low literacy rate? Not only can history repeat itself, but those who tell the story often have the ability to manipulate the events and misconstrue what happened.

Such is the case in Rwanda; a country that had been tearing itself apart after colonization added a factor a divisionism which divided the country into two groups. But some main arguments regarding the precise history of Rwanda and the details of the events that have occurred there remain a point of contention. Allison DeForges of Human Rights Watch wrote a detailed manuscript of her account of the events of the 1994 genocide called “Leave None to Tell the Story”, but she testified before a courtroom in *Mugesera v. Canada* (2003) that at least part of her manuscript was written based on the testimony of unnamed individuals who were not even present at the event in question but had only heard others talk about it.

It is necessary at this point to note that although much may be written about Rwanda, not all sources may have accurately depicted what happened. At the very least,

many of these documents such as “Leave None to Tell the Story” that are wrapped in the cloak of academia are nothing more than sensationalism. DeForges’ popular and often referred to work has very few actual sources that can be verified. It is for this reason that this portion of the present paper relies heavily on published material that is well researched and can be verified through other texts – all in an effort to get closer to the story of what happened in Rwanda.

The Rwanda story can be broken up into four main components- the beginnings of the people and the government of Rwanda, the change that colonialism brought to the country, the reported genocide of 1959 and changing of the guards, and finally the genocide of 1994 and the new government that stepped in.

Between 1897 and 1916, the Germans occupied Rwanda; at the onset, they left the monarchy in place. Even though only 96 Europeans lived there in 1914, the Europeans had laid a dangerous foundation (Prunier, 1995). It was during this time frame that the seeds of division were sown and a powerful principle was instilled in the people. A Tutsi king headed the monarchy that was in place, so there were mainly two different groups that were documented. Besides the Tutsi and the Hutu, there were also a small minority of Twa, but since they were such a small part of Rwanda the Hutu and Tutsi who were fighting basically left the Twa alone. The Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa divisions were already in place when the first explorers arrived in Rwanda. In fact there was even an ancient royal drum, Kalinga, that had been decorated with the testicles of vanquished Hutu princes. Although this can definitely be used as evidence to show that the two groups did indeed recognize each other and war against each other, there is nothing in the evidence that documents that one group was superior to another. So both groups did have

definite identities and they did fight against each other; however, the real division, the dividing of the group according to supposed superior races did not happen until the 1920's. Part of this was due to the fact that the Hutu and Tutsi looked different. The Tutsi were taller on average than the Hutu. Tutsis were also darker in skin color, had thicker lips, and had more angular features (Mamdani, 2001; Prunier, 1995). These characteristics made the Tutsis the favored group because "the Europeans were quite smitten with the Tutsi, whom they saw as definitely too fine to be 'Negroes'" (Prunier, 1995, p.6). As a result, if the monarchy could not maintain control of an area due to a lack of manpower, the Europeans would assign the task to the Tutsi chiefs who acted as "rapacious quasi-warlords" (p.25). However, it is important to note that Hutus were still actively participating in their society.

When the Belgians took over in 1916 the Belgian administration encouraged Hutus to become more active in the political atmosphere, but the seeds of division had already been planted in the minds of Rwandans. Because of the European writings and mainly because of the European treatment of Tutsi, favoring them over the Hutu, stereotypes and hatred of each other had already been instilled in the Rwandan people. It was difficult to overcome the suspicions of "other", but explanation is necessary to understand how quickly this grew into an ideology that strangled a nation.

In 1930, a bishop lit the fire by writing the following words: "We will have no better, more active and more intelligent chiefs than the Batutsi (Tutsi). They are the ones best suited to understand progress and the ones the population likes best. The government must work mainly with them" (Prunier, 1995, p.26). The Belgian administration agreed with this sentiment, and they did not hesitate to remove many Hutu leaders from their

positions and replace them with Tutsis (Prunier, 1995). The Belgian practice continued over the years as Tutsis were given higher positions and had more opportunity for education. This division of Tutsi and Hutu finally culminated in the issuance of the national identity card. These cards were issued to each person according to his/her identity: either Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. These official identities “naturalized a constructed political difference between Hutu and Tutsi as a legislated racial difference” (Mamdani, 2001, p.101). Mamdani further explains that:

The racialization of the Tutsi/Hutu was not simply an intellectual construct, one which later and more enlightened generations of intellectuals could deconstruct and discard at will. More to the point, racialization was also an institutional construct. Racial ideology was embedded in institutions, which in turn undergirded racial privilege and reproduced racial ideology”(p. 87).

This naturalization of the Hutu and Tutsi races had an impact that would continue to affect the country. Prunier (1995) states, “ The result of this heavy bombardment with highly value-laden stereotypes for some sixty years ended by inflating the Tutsi cultural ego inordinately and crushing Hutu feelings until they coalesced into an aggressively resentful inferiority complex”(p.9). This finding confirms that the aggression and tension was building because of colonization which began to divide and conquer the Hutu and Tutsi populations. The Hutu people were left on the sidelines while the Tutsi people were elevated to a high social status, regardless of ability, and the seeds of resentment were sown. The years that this continued only added to the anger until it bloomed into full-scale war and the Hutu were able to gain a place in society from 1959 until 1990. But instead of equalizing the playing field, they only reciprocated the actions that they

had learned from the colonials, and the result was a continuation of division. To further understand why the Hutu continued this practice of trying to put one group above another it is necessary to look at the Hutu rise to power.

In 1957 Rwanda had a ruling Tutsi King but in March of that year a group of nine Hutus published the “Bahutu Manifesto”, a text aimed at the Hutus that described the unfair treatment of Hutus (Prunier, 1995). The Belgians had favored the Tutsi rule originally but felt as if their protégées had “betrayed” them and began supporting the Hutus by “letting them burn Tutsi houses without intervening” (p.49). In 1959, the Hutus, comprising the majority of the population, overthrew the king and a battle continued over the next several years in which thousands of Tutsis were killed and many fled to surrounding areas for their safety. It must also be noted that many of the events of 1959 parallel the 1994 genocide. The event that started the 1959 revolution was the alleged Tutsi activists’ killing of a Hutu activist. In retaliation, the Hutu began attacking all Tutsi with primitive weapons such as machetes. By the end of 1963, 130,000 Tutsis had left Rwanda and resettled in the Belgian Congo, Burundi, Tanganyika, and Uganda. However, there was no real change in government and a UN report in 1961 stated that, “An oppressive system has been replaced by another one”(p.53). The ripple effects of this continued not only into Rwanda but also into the countries to which Tutsis had fled.

A partial genocide happened in Burundi in May 1972 when many Tutsi murdered at least one hundred thousand Hutus (Scherrer, 2002). Many of the torture methods used by the Burundian Tutsi during the genocide were devised to destroy their enemy not only physically but also mentally and spiritually by impalement, evisceration of pregnant women, and forced incest (Hinton, 2002). The aftershocks of this genocide would

continue as massacres between the Hutu and Tutsi escalated. In 1994 the *New York Times* stated that the Hutus had gained power in Rwanda in 1962 and the Tutsi retained power in Burundi, and both “tribes have been locked in a deadly spiral of ethnic violence and bloodshed” (Schmidt, p.A1).

Many exiles from Rwanda also traveled to Uganda. Children of these exiles formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party, who were given weapons and training and became members of the Ugandan Army (Schmidt, 2004). The RPF was formed to help put a stop to discrimination and to help relocate the Tutsi back into Rwanda. The RPF grew and in October of 1990 the RPF armed invasion of Rwanda took place (“The Spread of Genocide Ideology,” 2005). Between 1990 and 1994, hatred and resentment between the Rwandan Government and the RPF raged (Adelman & Suhrke, 2005). The RPF had signed a cease-fire with the Government of Rwanda but in 1990 began to cross over the border and shatter the agreement (Schmidt, 2004).

In 1992 the RPF continued to move into Rwanda. During this time the RPF “shot eight civil servants and nine of their relations, some of them children...it seems the victims were shot simply in reprisal for the recent massacres” (Prunier, 1995, p.175). This friction between the groups raged as the Arusha Accords, which were supposed to bring stability to the region, failed (Prunier, 1995). Tensions rose as the RPF pushed into the country, culminating in heightened tensions that would be ignited in an instant.

The spark that ignited the Rwandan genocide was the shooting down of Rwanda President Habyarimana’s personal plane on April 6, 1994. President Habyarimana was the leader of the M.R.N.D.(Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour la Democratie/Developpement translated as the National Revolutionary Movement for Development), a

party comprised of the Hutu Majority. It was claimed that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was responsible for the assassination of President Habyarimana. In response, the Hutu extremists murdered between 500,000 and a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in a period of 100 days (Mamdani, 2001, p.5). Gitera Rwamuhuzi, a Hutu who took part in the genocide, recalls during an interview with BBC, “We thought that if they (RPF) had managed to kill the head of state, how were ordinary people to survive?” (BBC, 2004). Although the torture the Tutsi had inflicted on the Hutu has been documented in this paper, I would be remiss if I did not also elaborate on the Hutu torture of the Tutsi during the 1994 genocides. Although the mass media and even the film *Hotel Rwanda* has educated the public about the Hutu extremes, for the purpose of symmetry some of the Hutu exploits must be documented in this paper. Although the brutality is endless, a short depiction of the atrocities that happened may give one insight into the Tutsi plight during the 1994 Rwandan genocides. On January 26, 1999, *Frontline* aired a segment concerning the atrocities in Rwanda. Over several months of planning a hit list of Tutsi had been compiled and an order was issued to register all Tutsi in Kigali. With this registration list in place it was now possible for suspects to be exterminated in mass numbers and in very little time; “in 20 minutes...personnel could kill up to 1,000” (Bradshaw & Loeterman, 1999). *Frontline* writers Bradshaw and Loeterman (1999) continue with the descriptions:

The militias set up roadblocks and began to look for Tutsi- men, women and children...National radio acted as a cheerleader for the slaughter...So-and-so has just fled. He is said to be moving down such-and-such street...We even saw children, very small children, 3-year-olds, 4-years-olds arriving at the school

saying, Mummy and Daddy have been killed. They've been killed with machetes. They took stones and smashed the heads of bodies. They took little children and smashed their heads together.

As the fighting and massacres continued the response from other countries was inadequate. U.S. President Bill Clinton and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan both claimed that the international community had failed to act to prevent the 1994 genocide ("Clinton meets Rwanda", 1998; Smith, 2004). General Romeo Dallaire, commander of UNAMIR, the United Nations peacekeeping force in Rwanda, informed the UN and the United States that an assassination of primary leaders was to take place and many (Hutu) were in training, ready at the first sign to start the killing. General Dallaire requested permission to go in and disarm the camps and individuals, but his requests were denied. General Dallaire states that it was made "quite clear by the U.S. representative, that Proposition Number 225 that had been introduced weeks before, that the United States was not only not getting involved in Rwanda, but it was going to support no one who was interested in doing so" (Committee Hearing, 2004, p.7). According to William Ferroggiaro (2001), author of *The U.S. and the Genocide in Rwanda 1994*, the United States "did not see its interests affected enough to launch unilateral intervention" (p.2). Records do indicate that the United States did have plenty of information and, throughout the situation, "considerable U.S. resources- diplomatic, intelligence and military- and sizable bureaucracies of the U.S. government- were trained on Rwanda...officials knew so much, but still decided against taking action or leading other nations to prevent or stop the genocide" (Committee Hearing, 2004, p.2).

Since the international community did not take action, it can be argued that the genocide was stopped by the RPF forces. The genocide ended on July 4, 1994, when the RPF took control of Kigali, the capital of Rwanda (Ferroggiaro, 2001, p.2). After the RPF took control of Rwanda many were waiting in anticipation to see if the change of the country would be one that could destroy an old ideology.

In the first presidential election since the 1994 genocide, in August of 2003, Paul Kagame won the election by a landslide. Paul Kagame was a product of Tutsi parents who had fled to Uganda to escape the Hutu violence. Mr. Kagame was also the commander of the RPF, the group that ended the genocide but also started the civil war in 1990 (BBC, 2004). According to the Freedom House, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that rates the freedoms individual countries have, Rwanda is not a free country. Freedom House established this by stating that the RPF was not challenged in the recent elections because the MDR (Mouvement Democratique Republicain), a major Hutu political party, was declared illegal. It also stated that because many media entities feel as if they are censored by the government, “certain topics cannot be discussed. As a result, newspaper coverage is heavily pro-governmental” (Freedom House, 2005, p.3). The current system of justice is questioned as well. There are 120,000 suspects being held in jails that are built to hold only 10,000. In order to help alleviate this situation the Rwandan government had reinstated the system of “Gacaca” which allows for locals who are in charge of their community to hold court for the smaller genocide crimes. However, these courts do not uphold the same standards of “fairness, particularly in terms of competence, independence and impartiality” (Freedom House, 2005, p.3).

Besides currently running a government that may have as many oppressive traits as the previous one, President Kagame has had other charges leveled at him. First, he has come under scrutiny for his possible involvement in the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane. In a completed French judicial probe it was determined that Kagame was the "main decision-maker" behind the shooting down of the plane (Agence France Presse, 2004, p.1). As a result of these findings President Habyarimana's daughter, Marie-Rose Habyarimana, plans on bringing lawsuits against current President Kagame (Edwards, 2004). Victor Karamagi (2005) also reports that missiles used to shoot down the plane were property of the Ugandan Army. This information and the proceedings against President Kagame do not bode well for him. Also, when the RPF took control of the country many of the Hutu extremists fled into the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo); however, the RPF had made many recent trips across the border looking for them. The situation is best summed up by Michael J. Kavanagh of *Slate Magazine* who notes that the pursuing of Hutu extremists was a "vengeful period of years whose atrocities will never be fully documented, the Tutsi rebels seemed to consider every Hutu they came across a genocidaire and massacred tens of thousands (at least) of soldiers and civilians alike. The RPF soon moved on to massacre Congolese Hutus, who in turn responded (with the help of other Congolese ethnic militias) by massacring Congolese Tutsis" (2004, p.1). These trips into the Congo breach the peace treaty that President Kagame signed and threaten to destabilize the region. It is estimated that since 1998 the RPF have killed over 3 million Congolese (Curiel, 2005). Critiques of Kagame's regime state that the "revenge killings reveal a pattern of abuse that continues to this day in Rwanda" (Curiel, 2005).

Because the massacres still continue, it can be argued that the division still exists. One sign of healing may be found in the judicial system where the government has released 63,000 prisoners and allowed inmates who are accused of participating in the genocide to confess their crimes and seek forgiveness (Munyaneza & Mazimpaka, 2005). These prisoners will not have to participate in the Gacaca trials. One problem that exists in this situation is that there is no guarantee that the community will have them back. For example, "In 1999 in Kibuye prefecture, judicial officials delayed the release of 1,000 genocide suspects who have no case files due to fear that the community had not been sensitized sufficiently to receive suspects peacefully" (USDOS, Report 2000).

In the Country Report on Human Rights Practices of Rwanda released by the U.S Department of State in 2001 some of the problems that Rwanda faced included extrajudicial killings which continue by the Rwandan Army units inside and outside of the country, prison conditions that remain harsh and life threatening, government restriction of freedom of press, government ownership of the only national radio station and television station, and the prohibition of other political parties from campaigning. In addition the government has not addressed problems of ethnic quotas. However, not all is lost because in the same report one thing has taken place, which may help to begin to unravel the division forced on Rwanda so long ago, and that is the removal of ethnic labels from the I.D. cards.

This is a very condensed account of what happened in Rwanda. The complexities of the economic and cultural influences which were interwoven and affect the people of Rwanda today still need further study. For the purpose of this paper this history is selected in order to provide a larger story with more components to compare to President

Kagame's narratives. It is essential to note that this chapter did not cover the atrocities of the Hutu extremists and the previous government. News organizations have already explained in ample detail the Hutu extremists and the atrocities they performed. Instead this history sheds light on the other story. The comparison of President Kagame's narratives to some of the information we have gathered about the history of Rwanda will lead us to the insight of what the collective memory is for Rwanda.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Rwanda is a country still trying to establish its community and sense of identity. Eleven years after what he called the “most brutal genocide in human history”, Rwandan President Paul Kagame declared that his African nation had “a new national identity” (Kagame quoted in Magagnini, 2005). In several appearances throughout Atlanta, Georgia, Kagame stated that “Rwanda has been reborn under his leadership, and encouraged Americans to invest in Rwanda's mines, tourist industry and agriculture” (Kagame quoted in Magagnini, 2005). President Paul Kagame has claimed that his rhetoric has not only helped international investment in his country but has also formed a new national identity. His first step in establishing a new national identity was getting rid of the national identity cards, but how is he changing the mindset of the people? How does he persuade people who have been fighting each other during their entire lifespans to believe they can live together (Suggs, 2005)? It takes more than just getting rid of identity cards to form a national identity and to rebuild a nation it takes collective memory.

This thesis has not only reviewed the events that led up to the horrific genocide but has also discussed rhetorical theories that expand the concept of collective memory to include the rhetorical presidency and then explained how this expanded theory of

collective memory may function in post-conflict reconstruction. In order to further explore these claims in this chapter I will apply the expanded theory of collective memory to the speeches of Paul Kagame. I will analyze the rhetoric of President Paul Kagame to investigate how he uses collective memory to rebuild the nation and seek international support.

President Paul Kagame has traveled all over the world giving speeches to the international community as well as his own community. The history that he has told and re-told has reframed the situation to reveal the story he wants to tell to help the people recover from the atrocities and to help legitimize his authority and government party.

As noted in the method chapter, the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction are security, governance and participation, economic and social well being, and justice and reconciliation. The first pillar, the economic and social well-being pillar, consists of mostly physical needs that are met by a working government. The rhetorical features in this component are limited. The final three pillars all have more rhetorical features and will be developed further in this section. One of the pillars involves the security of citizens. A country that has just had its previous government and citizens take part in genocide against each other must know that they can now exist without having to worry whether their neighbor will take a machete to them. This can be achieved through police and government protection but the citizens must also be told that their security is a priority and will be taken care of by the government. Rhetoric by the authority figure is essential to reassure citizens that their security needs are met. The citizens must also believe in their government and their ability to participate in the government. Moreover, citizens must feel that their government is the government they chose and that this new

government will not repeat the mistakes of the past. For instance, public elections and laws that provide checks and balances help to ensure the legitimacy of the government, a second pillar in reconstruction. However, even when the government is physically trying to help establish its legitimacy, it is not reasonable to assume the citizens will feel that their government is transparent. Therefore, to help reduce accusations of illegitimacy from the public it is essential that a sense of government transparency be instilled in the public through rhetoric. Through rhetoric, the public can be reassured why the government is making the choices it is making and how the government is functioning. Finally, the government must also provide a sense of justice and reconciliation for its public. This can be done through trials but also must be done through rhetoric. The leader achieves post-conflict reconstruction by addressing these pillars largely through collective memory for the public. However, the storyteller must first prove legitimacy. A president may gain a momentary ability to form collective memory, but his/her legitimacy must be maintained. This legitimacy can be established by re-framing history.

As stated earlier, the president has the authority to actually establish collective memory for the public while at the same time reaffirming its feelings of security, justice and reconciliation, and government transparency. I will examine several speeches given by President Kagame. These speeches date from his swearing-in, on April 22, 2000, until 2005. Kagame delivered these speeches to various audiences, including the citizens of Rwanda and scholars at American universities. These speeches illustrate how the expanded concept of collective memory advances post-conflict reconstruction and in essence gives President Kagame the ability to help legitimize and heal his nation. I will look at how President Kagame re-frames history while aiming his country towards

understanding and healing from the past atrocities and gives them hope in the future. The first part of this chapter will explore how President Kagame re-frames history and by doing so he helps establish legitimacy of the new government. Then I will focus on how, by reframing history, Kagame offers a chance for the public to heal by taking blame off them. The next part of the chapter will discuss how Kagame's speeches help inspire his citizens and the international community toward understanding a meaning in the atrocities and looking to the future. Kagame does this by discussing lessons learned from the past, and by talking about a future that includes justice from a legitimate and transparent government.

The Blame of Colonization

As stated earlier, it is impossible to expect the story of the past to be retold in its entirety. By re-framing history, Kagame places blame for the genocide on colonization and the recent government; this rhetorically absolves the Rwandan people of responsibility. When president Kagame gives his speeches he starts the history of Rwanda at that beginnings of colonialization. For example he says:

The genocide that we experienced in 1994 was a result of a dark colonial past and many years of misrule by post-colonial regimes that had no interest in the socio-economic development of our country, but rather sought to exploit artificial differences among our people. (2005, May 12)

In this excerpt President Kagame seems to be saying that differences were “artificial”; in fact it was only the colonial regimes that started the trend of animosity. In fact President Kagame even states that the people lived peacefully before colonization took place:

Rwanda constituted a single community of people, intermarrying and living on the same hills, sharing a common culture, a common religion, and a common language. The divisions among Rwandans were an instrument used by colonial administration to subjugate, divide and rule the Rwandan people. (2005, April 14- From Despair to Hope)

President Kagame argues in his speeches that the division was drawn by colonization and he tries to dispel the notion that ethnic difference is the same as racial difference:

Let me first of all dispel the most fashionable anthropological concept that the Bahutu, the Batutsi, and the Batwa constitute distinct ethnic groups in Rwanda, suggesting that Rwanda has always been a divided country. Some have even sought to elevate the notion of ethnic differences to the status of racial difference. The truth is that the Bahutu, Batutsi, and Batwa form one ethnic group- the Banyarwanda, sharing the same language, culture, history, and they have always lived in the same geographic location. This flawed perception has its roots in the colonial period when the colonial administration deliberately divided the Rwandan people in order to rule them. Although the Bahutu, Batutsi, and Batwa entities existed, they were not primary identities, neither were they genetically locked as was advocated by the colonial discourse. (2005, April 05)

As President Kagame continues to attack the theories about the causes that led to the genocide, he is explaining to the public that Rwanda has not always been a divided nation but that the division came because of the colonial leaders and until that time of colonization the Rwandan people lived a peaceful life. If this is true then the people now have a scapegoat, someone who can be blamed for starting the division of Rwandan

people. Since it was colonization that drew unnecessary lines, it is then possible for the people to believe that Kagame's government can erase the faulty notion of difference. In his speeches, President Kagame is telling the Rwandan and international public that Rwandan people once lived in peace and did not have a problem until colonization took place:

The horrific events of 1994 should never be viewed as just the latest outbreak of centuries-old animosity between the Bahutu and the Batutsi, as some self-styled anthropologists and sociologists at the time of colonialism led the world to believe. The genocide was engineered by the government of the day, and it was therefore, deliberate, calculated, premeditated, and cold-blooded. Contrary to widespread but erroneous and skewed theories, pre-colonial Rwandan history shows the three constituent groups of Rwandan society: the Bahutu, the Batutsi and the Batwa coexisting as a united people under the single name of Banyarwanda- or Rwanda people. They faced challenging times together and collectively participated in the project of nation building. Pre-colonial leaders of Rwanda never engaged in premeditated schemes to isolate and destroy a section of Rwandan society. Instead, they sought to widen the extent of the Rwandan State and deepen its reach.... The genocide in Rwanda stems from the infamous colonial legacy of divide and rule, and the subsequent failure of the post-colonial governments to reverse that legacy. Instead, post-colonial leaders functioned as conduits of colonial type policies. They failed to capitalize on our common denominator as a people, but rather entrenched division, promoted discrimination, and rewarded oppression of one group over another. (2005, April 11)

President Kagame's speeches have redundancy. Whether the speech is delivered in 2003 or two years later, the repetitive thoughts not only reinforce his message but also prompt the nation's collective memory. By contrasting President Kagame's words in 2003 with the ones spoken in 2005, the redundancy of President Kagame's speeches becomes apparent:

In short, Rwanda's contact with the West has defined our nation's experience for 100 years - the entire 20th century. Rwanda is not a young nation; Centuries old, Rwanda has not always been a divided nation of Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa, as many of you have been led to believe. It has been, century after century, a community of Rwandans, "Abanyarwanda" as we call ourselves, sharing a common culture, and a common language. We have lived on the same hills, and we have always intermarried. The notion of ethnic difference, elevated to the status of racial difference by the colonial administration, was an alien characterisation, deliberately designed to divide in order to rule. (2003, March 6)

In these last excerpts Kagame seems to argue that the nation can heal itself since it was the colonial powers rather than the Rwandan citizens who created the idea of racial difference. However, these last excerpts are leaving out some key components of history. By leaving out these components, Kagame is reframing history. I argue in the earlier history chapter that the division happened before colonization took place. Tutsi kings were ruling over Rwanda while the Hutu were largely relegated to servant positions; during this time frame there was even a royal drum that had pieces of former Hutu prince's anatomy attached to it. These historical events illustrate that there were plenty of divisions in place before colonization. But this point will not do the country good because

the Rwandan citizens are trying to heal and if the citizens are at fault then it makes it much harder for the community to come together. If instead, there were some foreign intrusions that made the hatred possible then the removal of the foreigners and the foreign government means Rwanda does have a chance to recover by just having a new government in place.

The Role of the Old Government

President Kagame in his speeches also points out that the previous government engineered the 1994 genocide:

So, from a divisive colonial legacy and subsequent chronic bad governance, Rwanda was plunged in 1994 into a genocide, which goes down in the annals of human history as the most brutal, and the fastest. (2005, April 05)

President Kagame blames those who were in the highest echelon of the old Hutu government for committing the atrocities. He once again scapegoats the old Hutu government and as a result allows the people to remove some of the blame from themselves:

We know that they were responding to the vicious campaign of hate by the architects of the genocide, men and women who held the highest offices in the land. This elite, which had for a long time misappropriated and controlled the Government, army, radio and television stations, was most instrumental in fomenting ethnic division and hatred; a strategy they subsequently transformed into genocide. (2004, April 7)

President Kagame also leaves out the fact that the act that started the genocide was the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane. He continually refers to the genocide

as something that was carried out by the old government. He also points out that some of the citizens carried out the massacres out of a sense of “civic duty”, this again points to the past government as responsible for the atrocities. He claims:

The political decision to commit genocide in 1994 was made possible by the tradition of impunity for crimes against Abatutsi, the targeted section of the population. From this past emerged killers who did not see the act of genocide as a transgression of the laws of society and nature which would meet with due punishment. They saw it as the enactment of civic duty and knew that they would be rewarded. (2004, January 26)

Kagame blames the government and the president of that government:

From 1959 to 1994, our history reads like a litany of unimaginable abuses against the Rwandan people committed by the Government of the day: Massive periodic massacres, Refugees, Discriminatory policies against the Batutsi, Intolerant political culture that was based on the rule by one party; one "ethnic majority" with "one man" at the top. (2003, March 6)

Kagame does reiterate his message that the leaders caused the genocide saying, “We stand as a good example of a nation that bears harrowing scars of the consequence of manipulative leadership” (2004, October 21). It is evident that the period of colonization increased the tension between the people in Rwanda. The government from 1959-1994 continued to observe the division that had been established by colonization. But there is more that led to the genocidal events, such as the accusations against the RPF of shooting down the plane that triggered the genocides. The RPF had also invaded Rwanda prior to the 1994 genocides and caused civil strife.

Foundation of Legitimacy

However, since the RPF is now the government in power, President Kagame must establish the legitimacy of the RPF and of his Presidency. In his inauguration speech to the people of Rwanda on April 22, 2000, he states, “In a very special way I would also like to thank the RPF- Inkotanyi who fought for a change in the leadership of Rwanda. The RPF fought for and achieved a new political dispensation in Rwanda that has made this day possible”. This story is the same one he tells to the people of Rwanda and to the international community. He states in another speech:

Let me say at the outset that I belong to the generation of Rwandans that grew up after independence in 1962. I have been, for a big part of my lifetime, devoted to fighting for justice and people’s rights, in Rwanda and in our region. I have never looked backed at this vocation as futile. My country would have become a failed state in the dark days of 1994 when the whole world abandoned us, if we had not as Rwandan people, risen to the occasion and done what patriots have always done in history: defend the nation and protect the people. (2005, April 18)

President Kagame was a member of the RPF and in the previous statement claims that if his party had not come to the rescue the nation would become a failed state. He asserts, “The Rwandan Patriotic Front led the drive to end the genocide” (April 11, 2005).

President Kagame praises the RPF throughout many of his speeches, for instance saying, “The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), together with other political parties, which had not participated in the genocide came together and formed the Government of national unity”

(2005, April 05). In this sentence he argues that the RPF formed the government of national unity and that many other parties could participate in the government as well, as long as they did not participate in the genocide. This statement carries enormous repercussions. For one, this statement implies that the RPF had nothing to do with the genocides, and clearly from the documented evidence in the history chapter there is some evidence that points toward RPF involvement. In addition to claiming innocence he is also reinforcing the public's belief in a government that was not involved in the genocides. But as discussed in the earlier history chapter, some organizations are questioning if any party other than the RPF is actually able to participate in the Rwandan government.

Kagame does attempt to explain what caused the ancient hatred between the people in Rwanda and whom the citizens should blame for the genocides. He states that the RPF came to the rescue of the Rwandan people by getting rid of a government that continued a history of hatred that the colonials had established. President Kagame reiterates the sentiment of the RPF coming to the rescue in several speeches, "I know that every soldier in the RPF knew that the cost was likely to be high, but that the cause of freedom and liberation was one worth fighting for" (2004, April 7) and on April 7, 2001, he states, "It took the sacrifice of a few brave Rwandans, who shed their blood, to stop the genocide but over a million lives had already been lost".

President Kagame has re-framed history and chosen what part of the story to talk about. He has blamed colonization and the former Hutu government. He has also stated that it was these groups who stirred up the hatred between ethnic groups and started the genocides. As a result, according to Kagame, the RPF party came to the rescue and is just

one of the many parties represented in the new government. In addition to analyzing Kagame's version of the past, this thesis will examine Kagame's meaning or purpose in these speeches. Kagame focuses on how the new government that was elected is transparent and is aiming toward reconciliation.

Government Legitimacy and Participation

Collective memory can also function in post-conflict reconstruction by ensuring the public that justice will be provided by a legitimate and transparent government. First it is essential that the government establish its legitimacy and the public's ability to participate in the government. President Kagame does this when he states:

The people of Rwanda were able to exercise their inalienable right and elected a candidate and a party of their choice, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) under a free and fair democratic election. The subsequent parliamentary elections also demonstrated the confidence of the electorate in the ability of the RPF and its allied parties in defending and serving interests of the people of Rwanda. (2004, September 11)

Not only does Kagame need to ensure the public in the governments legitimacy but must also help heal the nation. In order to help the nation heal and learn from the past, Kagame reaffirms the essential element of the public and their participation in the new government, he tells the public:

We may forgive while continuing to remember atrocities that were committed against our people. Asking for forgiveness and forgiving go together, and call for courage, which may sometimes appear impossible. However, we should strive to achieve this so that our nation can move forward and our people can live in a

better environment than before. Apart from forgiving and asking for forgiveness, we should work towards creating conditions that will not allow for a recurrence of Genocide. (2001, April 7)

Kagame also through his speeches confirms that the Rwandans will have an opportunity to participate in the new transparent government:

But throughout the last eleven years, we have worked hard to turn a sad chapter in our history into a new beginning and hope for our people...We have put in place mechanisms and institutions that will guarantee checks and balances and promote transparency and accountability in our country. (2005, May 28)

In his inaugural address to the nation on April 22, 2000, he reminds Rwandan citizens how this new government will be different from the old one and once again of their ability to participate in the new government:

Rwanda will become a rule of law, where democracy and the respect for human rights have a place and where people are happy to live....Although the country was in such bad shape, we, the Rwandese people did not get discouraged. A lot of progress has been made. Rwandese and friends of Rwanda should all be proud of the progress so far made...I will regularly consult you, and those at various levels of local or central government, so that together we can begin a new crusade.

Reconciliation of Past

Not only does Kagame need to ensure the public in the governments legitimacy but must also help heal the nation. In order to help the nation heal and learn from the past Kagame tells the public:

It is the duty of those of us who are still living to keep alive the ideals for which

Our heroes gave their lives. Although they are physically dead, their memory will be kept alive by our unwavering resolve to bring about justice, peace, reconciliation and development in Rwanda. (2000, October 1)

In order for collective memory to offer the healing abilities it has, the speaker must also help the audience purge their memories of the past atrocities. The speaker can do this by reminding the audience of what happened; however, there must be a delicate balance struck in that the speech and the collective memory formed must not belabor the horrors of the past but must instead focus on the potential of the future. When Kagame talks about the genocides in his speech he does not often explain many of the horrific details but rather states the number of victims. This also can help an international government take part in collective memory. President Kagame summarizes the atrocities in many speeches:

Over a million lives were lost in organized killings of unparalleled magnitude.
(2005, May 28)

This massive human hemorrhage, with a death toll of over 1 million people in 100 days, goes down in the annals of human history as the most brutal, and the fastest.
(2003, March 6)

These excerpts illustrate the relative lack of detail that Kagame utilizes, but every once in a while Kagame goes into more detail:

The victims were all innocent civilians, unarmed and defenseless. They were burnt alive in their houses, or hounded out into churches, schools, maize fields, banana plantations, forests and swamps by machete-wielding neighbours, soldiers and militiamen. Children were particularly singled out, to ensure the lasting

elimination of the targeted group. Women and girls were gang-raped, tortured and maimed for life, if not murdered. The victims were forced to kill their kin or dig their own graves before they were buried alive. Others were thrown alive into pit latrines, or in rivers and lakes. They were all treated with sadistic cruelty and suffered humiliating and excruciating agony..... Their tormentors and killers were fellow countrymen and women, who chose to do evil, because they were swayed by hate or hope of profit. They were keen to kill, rape, rob and ravage. They killed their victims without remorse and inflicted pain and agony and enjoyed doing so. (2004, April 7)

The fact that Kagame does not often speak in his public addresses with such detail demonstrates that he emphasizes the numbers but downplays the horrific details with which the Rwandan population and the international community are already familiar.

Security

However, some detail is essential in order to validate the real fear that the citizens face on a daily basis. The concern Rwandans must have about their security is also rhetorically answered when Kagame uses redundancy in his message and in a speech on April 2, 2004, and he reminds the citizens that they have provided security for each other before, saying, “Firstly to those who resisted, those who stood up for their right to life and defended themselves and their families. To all those who died in the fight, thank you for going down so valiantly”. He then states to those who helped their neighbors and friends, “You are our reason for hope. There are people alive in Rwanda today- people still alive in this stadium here today- who would have been dead ten years ago, but for your bravery” (2004, April 2). Kagame continues to offer hope to the Rwandans and

inspire them to think about the future. Several times he pontificates on the future, as when he says, “We must therefore recognize our responsibility in the process towards achieving these noble goals (justice, peace, reconciliation, and development). It is a journey that our heroes courageously began, and laid down their lives for in the process. Our role, and indeed our privilege, is to complete the journey they started” (2000, October 1). In this statement the President has helped identify the meaning of life and what citizens have to look forward to. He also reminds the public in another speech of what they need to look forward to, “We need to look ahead and see what we need to do in order to continue building our country” (2004, September 11). Kagame does consistently appeal to Rwandan citizens in the belief of the future and working together to establish hope:

Let us come up with concrete and realistic outcomes that show us the best way to deal with genocide and dehumanization, to preserve memory and to legislate against denial, but especially, to work in solidarity and ask the international community to play their role. (2004, April 4)

Kagame not only offers security through justice and a transparent government but he confirms that the Rwandans are also an essential part of the new government. In order for security and government legitimacy to also be established it is essential that Kagame contrast the new government to the old government. He also is trying to encourage the people by explaining to them that progress has been made. Throughout many of his speeches he acknowledges the public’s need for security and the government’s attempts to provide it. If the public can trust the government’s authority and credibility then it is

reasonable to assume that the new government will be in a position to provide security to the public. Kagame notes:

Besides, the people in Rwanda have embarked on an irreversible course of national unity and reconciliation, and we face the future with renewed hope and confidence. I am also pleased to inform you that we have put in place institutions and mechanisms that guarantee good political and corporate Governance, ensure that there are checks and balances, and promote transparency and accountability in whatever we do..... We have had to be innovative because we brought in the traditional justice system known as Gacaca, which seeks to bring out the truth of what happened during the genocide, ask perpetrators to repent, and where appropriate, determine the punishment required. This way we hope to enhance the reconciliation process between perpetrators and victims and knit together again the social fabric that had ruptured during the 1994 genocide. (2005, June 3)

This statement reflects the hope and the belief that the future will be different, a key component in collective memory and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Justice and Reconciliation in the Community

Not only does the new system of justice, Gacaca, help to promote healing but it also serves as a reminder that the new government will not be like the old government; it will be transparent. And the promise of justice through Gacaca is often touted as a way to achieve reconciliation, Kagame argues:

We have also attended to justice issues and we have started an innovative traditional judiciary system called Gacaca. This is intended to bring out the truth

about what happened in the 1994 genocide and render justice to the victims, and, in so doing, enhance reconciliation among the Rwandan people. (2005, May 28)

If the new government could not claim transparency and the ability to help promote security and justice through the justice system, then the citizens would not support the new government. The people need to be reminded that their government will help them establish security and that the government will be accountable to the people. Some of President Kagame's speeches offer more insight into what his plans are for the future of Rwanda, while some speeches repeat information. Throughout many of his speeches Kagame, heralds the abilities of the Gacaca system:

We have put in place what we call "Gacaca Jurisdictions", traditional community courts which dispense restorative justice, help establish the truth of what happened and, in so doing, help in the reconciliation of our people. (2005, April 14)

Throughout his time in office, Paul Kagame's message is redundant and consistent; this helps ensure that the message is received. One repeated and consistent message given by details the justice system with which he hopes to provide citizens with:

Eleven years down the road, I am happy to report that the people of Rwanda have embarked on an irreversible course of national reconciliation, and we face the future with renewed hope and confidence. We have put in place mechanisms and institutions that we believe will guarantee checks and balances and promote transparency and accountability in our country.....We are determined to complete the complex task of carrying out the dual process of justice and reconciliation at the same time, for ours is a society where victims and

perpetrators have to live side by side. We do so through the courts and through a new, innovative, and people-based jurisdiction called Gacaca, which is designed to bring out the truth, ask the perpetrators to repent and seek forgiveness, and where appropriate, accept punishment for the crimes they committed. In so doing, we hope to promote reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. (2005, May 12)

Although Kagame reiterates the claim of transparency, he also states that the goal of Gacaca is to promote reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. As noted in the history chapter, the problem with Gacaca courts is that many individuals are being let go without even going through a hearing so people are not getting the sense of closure that this justice system was supposed to offer. The story Kagame tells is that the new court system will offer justice and a way to reconcile Rwandans and heal past wounds. In reality, because the court is so backlogged with cases it can actually do very little. As a result the only real sense of justice and reconciliation the Rwandan people may hope to gain comes from the stories of President Kagame. President Kagame offers citizens the hope that they can heal through the Gacaca courts but the current problems of the courts mean that a major part of collective memory and the ability for Rwanda to achieve a major pillar of reconstruction are in a frail state. Unlike many of the significant events of U.S. History that have a notable end date, arguably the tragedy of Rwanda has no end date in sight because justice has not taken place. Although collective memory can be formed whether or not healing or justice takes place, arguably collective memory is not completed until the event has an end. The citizens have been told that justice will mark the end but justice does not seem to be happening through the Gacaca courts. I argue that

Kagame's consistent reiteration within his speeches that the Gacaca systems will provide the way to justice and reconciliation may have been a crucial mistake. Kagame puts much emphasis on Gacaca's ability to bring justice to the nation:

This is why we have sought to build a society anchored on the rule of law and to bring to justice those responsible for genocide through the courts and through a new and innovative, and people-based jurisdiction called Gacaca, which will deal with minor crimes. This kind of justice is participatory, and seeks to give the perpetrators of genocide an opportunity to show remorse, confess, repent and, where appropriate, accept punishment for the crimes they committed against the community. The community participates in the whole process of resolving the conflict and passing judgment. This way we hope to create a new basis for the rule of law that allows concepts of justice to permeate our society and put a halt to a culture of impunity that climaxed into genocide. (2005, April 05)

Kagame fails to mention what will happen if the Gacaca courts do not work or fail to bring about justice; the lack of having another justice system in position places President Kagame in a precarious situation.

President Kagame has re-framed the history of Rwanda while showing how the new government represents the people and is transparent. I argue, however that a major component of collective memory and post conflict construction is missing. The justice system must give the citizens a sense of closure. This sense of physical closure is obviously missing when accused individuals are being released instead of being tried according to Kagame's promises. Since President Kagame does not establish another method of justice, and the current Gacaca system seems to be a flawed system of justice,

I argue that Kagame cannot achieve a reconstructed nation. I also argue that there must be a beginning and end to the story for the complete collective memory and since there is no end- no justice- then the collective memory is in a state of instability.

I also argue that in part Kagame has based justice on the ability to bring individuals to justice through the Gacaca court system and that he also seeks justice from the international community.

Justice and Reconciliation in the International Community

He blames the international community for not assuming their duties and as a result of their refusal to help: one million people lost their lives. Kagame does not attribute the lack of international aid to ignorance. Paul Kagame states that the international community willfully refused aid to Rwanda:

A cheering international community, not willing to take a hard look at the anatomy of a disaster-in-the-making...My country would have become a failed state in the dark days of 1994 when the whole world abandoned us, if we had not, as Rwandan people, risen to the occasion and done what patriots have always done in history: defend the nation and protect the people. (2003, March 6)

Here Kagame argues that the world abandoned Rwandans and it was the patriots- particularly those in the RPF- who had to rescue the people. Although there may be evidence for this claim, the problem is that when he voices this opinion he scapegoats the international community. The actual problems with this tactic will be discussed in detail once more examples of President Kagame's scapegoating have been examined. He repeats several times that, "In my view, the root causes of the International Community's failure in Rwanda have not been eradicated" (2005, April 11). Moreover, he notes:

I was saying a moment ago that we Rwandans must acknowledge our primary responsibility for what happened in our country in 1994. This is the only way we can begin to come to terms with it, and more importantly, take steps to prevent its recurrence. Having lived the horrors of genocide, and having been betrayed by the international community, we have the desire to contribute peace...In our case, we know that the global powers had the means to prevent and stop the genocide in Rwanda if they had had the political will, and the commitment to do it. And yet it went on for 100 days under the eyes of these same powers. The fundamental questions we ask ourselves are: 1) Why did the international community, and in particular the Western Governments falter and mock the mandate “Never Again”, declared almost with one voice after the holocaust? 2) Did the International community fail one million innocent Rwandans because Rwanda was of no strategic importance? Were the lives of Rwandans so insignificant that they could be slaughter with impunity? 3) Could there be a repeat of the genocide because some lives are considered more precious than others? 4) When will the International community take its own responsibility for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda? (2005, April 11)

In the above statement President Kagame levels serious charges at the international community. He states that the people of Rwanda have the primary responsibility for allowing the genocide to take place but he also argues that the international community betrayed them. He says this in several speeches:

Beyond that, however, the failure also has a lot to do with the flaws in the way the international system is governed. I mean the injustices of the powerful nations

which dominate the international scene, and which are never held accountable for their wrongs. They do not only govern the international system, they are also judge and jury in adverse situations affecting others and, often, situations of their own making. Not to mention that sometimes geopolitical interests dictate the choices that the powerful nations make. In our own case, some of those powerful nations were directly or indirectly implicated in the genocide. (2004, April 7)

Paul Kagame not only blames the international community and its involvement in the genocides, he also specifically informs the audience of each government's responsibility in the genocides. Kagame also names each government that was involved and could have helped:

In regard to the failure of the international community, you can imagine how long it took the United States to find the right name to describe what was happening and which they knew was genocide. Nonetheless, they had the decency to apologise. One wonders also why the United Kingdom sponsored the resolution at the UN Security Council to withdraw the small UN peacekeeping force. Then you had the Belgians withdrawing their forces at the peak of the killings, leaving the victims to be slaughtered. ...For those who apologised, however, the apologies are not sufficient if they have not learnt lessons from the tragic consequences of their mistakes; that is, if confronted with similar cases, whether they would be able to act appropriately....As for the French, their role in what happened in Rwanda is self-evident. They knowingly trained and armed government soldiers and militia who they knew were preparing to commit genocide. Later on, under the Operation

Tourquoise, they deliberately designed a strategy to protect the killers, not to save the victims. That is the bitter truth of the matter. (2004, April 7)

Sadly, Kagame claims that the reasons for the international community's failure are self-centered:

All these powerful nations regarded one million lives as valueless, as another statistic that could be dispensed with. And, of course, some claimed that the dying people were not in their national or strategic interests. But if the death of a million people was not a concern to them, then what is? I hate to contemplate that this may have been due to the colour of the skin of us Rwandans. Ten years after the powerful nations eventually called the mass killings by their proper name – genocide - they have not legislated to apportion responsibility where it belongs.

(2004, April 7)

These very powerful claims could be considered retrospective nominalization, or the naming of people who are responsible for the genocides. Of course, when anyone tells a story or a part of history they name the elements of that history- who, what, when and where. President Kagame names the act of colonization as a key event that disrupted an otherwise harmonious group. He also names the international community as an entity that betrayed the Rwandan people and treated them like a set of statistics that could be dismissed. The result is that Kagame turns attention to an international community which produces a dichotomy of “us” versus “them”. The Rwandan people will not be allowed to heal but must keep the wounds open in order to make sure the blame is properly laid at the feet of the international community. This may be why many of the bones of the victims of genocides are kept on display in Rwanda, and many of the cleanup efforts

were avoided. Although Paul Kagame for the last several years has used discourse to help rebuild his nation and also to help establish a collective memory, two problems exist. Kagame has touted the Gacaca courts as being a means to achieve reconciliation and justice, but in actuality, this achievement is missed because many prisoners are now being released without even a trial. This impedes the healing of many victims. Second, although Kagame's arguments about the international community's involvement are useful to secure international assistance, Rwandans must keep their wounds open so the international community can see what it helped bring about. As a result, the Rwandans are now reliant on the international community (a community that arguably did not live up to its obligations before) to come to their aid.

Discussion

Upon closer inspection, it seems that when one looks at the chronological order of the speeches, Paul Kagame was actually in a stage of isolationism in 2001. On April 7, 2001, he stated to the nation, "We should not be deceived that solutions will come from beyond our borders. That is not possible. Why? This is because the world we live in has no mercy. If the world were merciful, the genocide would not have occurred. It occurred before the very eyes of the world, and they did nothing about it". As seen above, his later speeches do blame the international community but also asks them to do something about their inaction. I argue that at the point that the international community was not stopping the former Hutu rebels from coming back into Rwanda, President Paul Kagame was prepared to break international relations in order to send his soldiers into the DR Congo. President Kagame's reliance on international support is conditional and he only relies on

the international community if he does not find a preceding reason to sever the relationship with them.

President Paul Kagame has traveled all over the world giving speeches to the international community as well as his own community. Collective memory does provide a prescription for actions; as Kagame speaks about the genocide of 1994 he states, "...genocide has changed the way we think, the way we behave, the way we deal with the past and definitely, the way we shall deal with the future" (2004, April 4). He has reframed events, to help the people recover from the atrocities and to help legitimize his authority and government party. The press now restates this version as well. As the public begins to retell Paul Kagame's story of Rwanda, the problem remains that the Rwandan people are not yet allowed to heal. A memory cannot be formed if the event is current. Memories are of past events. But during the Gacaca trials people feel as if they are still involved in the final chapters of the genocides. In fact, these trials serve a vital purpose in helping to close out the final chapter and put the entire collective memory in place. Since many people are not on trial, and since many accused are getting out without a trial, people will not be able to achieve the healing that this trial was suppose to bring. If President Kagame continues to focus on the failure of the international community in his speeches, by describing a cheering community that "prevaricated and dithered", then the wounds of the people in Rwanda will remain open. I argue that President Kagame, through the expanded collective memory with the inclusion of the rhetorical presidency, has met many of the physical and rhetorical components of post conflict reconstruction. In physical action, President Kagame has offered economic and social well being by reestablishing the infrastructure. There are schools, hospitals and roads and these help

provide security. But, President Kagame also rhetorically reminds the people that he is establishing security for them and helps them recognize that security needs are being met. Although I argue that the government is not as transparent as touted nor really representative of the people, the President's rhetoric has affirmed why the government is taking certain steps (such as only allowing parties that did not participate in the genocides to take part in the new government) and this has given legitimacy to the new government. Even though many of Kagame's speeches confirm the past events and help establish collective memory the lack of justice and reconciliation means that nation may not be able to achieve full reconstruction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis advances the expansion of the theory of collective memory by adding the theory of the rhetorical presidency. The construct of the rhetorical presidency is most often applied to the American presidency. However, many of the functions and components of the rhetorical president can also be seen in many international presidencies. I argue that all presidents must gain the confidence of the public. The public must believe the president actually deserves the role of presidency and has the ability to lead the country. All presidents, whether American or foreign, face the same challenges and must address them by utilizing both written and spoken language. The speeches the president gives must also impel the audience to look into and help establish principles for the future. Although the power of the presidency has basically endured, it has also had some recent elements of change. One can look to two factors of change: the internet and the increasing globalization of our society. Because of the rise of the internet, many political speeches given by a president of any country can be viewed online. However, these factors of change become visible in the international community where many governments must be part of the globalized world. But as stated at the beginning of this thesis, many countries still are without access to television or even newspapers, so the rhetorical presidency has a greater burden in those areas. As stated in the earlier chapter,

all presidents are now faced with the challenge that they must work to instill principles in their country and in the international community. This limit to mass media means that the office of the presidency is the one that will be instrumental and the most powerful office with the ability to influence collective memory.

In addition to evaluating components of collective memory this thesis exposes the components of a non-communicative theory, post conflict reconstruction. The combination of these two theories is essential when looking at how a country is emerging from internal mass atrocities. Collective memory is essential to post-conflict reconstruction. The four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction can only be finalized by collective memory; in fact, collective memory and post-conflict reconstruction rely on one another. There are both physical elements (a police force, infrastructure) and rhetorical elements necessary to achieve the fulfillment of the four pillars of reconstruction. The security pillar and economic and social well-being pillar can be established through rhetoric when the president constantly reinforces to Rwandans and the international community that basic protection is available for all citizens. Collective memory also has elements where the people are promised a better future with hope of survival, something not offered by the previous government. But I argue after basic physical and survival needs have been met, the public then focuses on what happened to them and how they can move forward. A collective memory will help the public move forward. The pillar of government and justice means that a transparent government that will ensure public participation is necessary in order to rebuild the nation. This is another essential component of collective memory as a leader attempts to rebuild a country by offering justice and a chance to reconcile with the past. These essential components,

governance, participation, justice and reconciliation work in tandem to help the community reconcile with the violence that was perpetrated against them and the collective memory is the story told that the community must have in order to move on with their lives. Collective memory re-frames past events. By analyzing what parts of history get left in and what parts get left out, it is then possible to arrive at some potential answers as to what the new government is striving to achieve. In reviewing the collective memory that a president is attempting to establish, a critic must evaluate the elements of history that a president chooses to highlight and disregard.

Both sides, the Tutsis and the Hutus, had mass atrocities aimed at them throughout time. Although one can definitely point the finger at colonization for helping to fuel the anger of both sides, colonization is not the only factor in the aggression in Rwanda. The conflict started before colonization. Even when the ethnic groups moved to different geographic locations the brutalization and hatred followed. The history chapter attempts to give a large account of history to help us better understand how collective memory can function in a post-genocide 1994 Rwanda.

This thesis then explored Rwandan President Paul Kagame's post genocidal speeches as a case study for this expanded theory of collective memory and post-conflict reconstruction. Kagame does re-frame history by stating the hatred and beginning of division in the country started with colonization and was extended by a Hutu government. Of course, there is a history of hatred among the tribes long before colonization began. However, it is essential that Kagame re-frame this history because the collective memory can not have the actual Rwandan citizens be at fault. The citizens will heal through the collective memory of colonization causing the division. As a result of telling Rwandans it

was colonization and the Hutu government that caused the division instead of looking to traditions before colonization, the real problem has been masked. By masking the solution, although the citizens can partially heal through this scenario, the real problem of ancient anger is never addressed and as a result could flare up at any moment. For example there have been recent charges of cannibalism in Rwanda with sources blaming the trauma from the 1994 genocides as responsible for these atrocities (Agence France Presse, 2005). Collective memory may help a nation heal and move forward. However, since collective memory also means a problem situation or problematic performance can be masked the post-conflict reconstruction of a country becomes unstable.

Kagame also re-frames history by leaving out the information that the hostilities in Rwanda can be attributed to the RPF crossing borders and inciting a civil war. In addition, the RPF has been accused of actually triggering the genocides by shooting down the former Hutu president's plane. Of course, in order for the citizens to believe in their new government the collective memory can not be about how the RPF could have been a major player in starting the genocides but instead must believe in the goodness of their new government comprised of members of the RPF.

Another component of collective memory is that the people must feel meaning in their lives. Kagame does this by reminding the citizens that the new government will be different: it will be a transparent government selected by the citizens. Kagame tries to establish that his government will offer security and justice through the Gacaca courts. The Gacaca courts are also supposed to help establish justice and reconciliation. However, since the courts are not functioning the way they were originally intended then the courts are not helping to establish justice and reconciliation. Paul Kagame also

establishes that the international community must share its burden for the part they took in the genocides, either by not helping or by helping the Hutu.

Kagame does establish a collective memory that allows the public to deal with the past atrocities and attempts to get the public to move forward. I argue that moving forward is not possible as long as the call for justice has been unheeded. I also argue that masking the past is problematic. Not only will the collective memory be weak in structure but the final component of reconstruction is also left unfulfilled and the real problems with society are hidden. Collective memory is a vital tool to help future political and communication scholars discover what problems were ignored and what issues must be addresses in order to provide complete healing to a nation, rather than temporary, and to reconstruct a nation.

Finally, it must be noted that further studies must focus on international political communication. The political system of industrialized countries such as the U.S. provides a sanitized viewpoint. More communication studies need to focus on those countries where race and ethnic diversity still tear at the countries' soul; it is in this environment that rich communication texts are developed. However, the lack of research has ensured that much of this rich text is lost forever. If we do not research it then the need for saving and evaluating the text is not valued.

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