

**A qualitative exploration of identity among mothers of rape-born children
conceived during the 1994 Rwandan genocide:
A secondary data analysis**

by

Michelle Nöthling

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Supervisor: Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

Co-supervisor: Dr Samantha van Schalkwyk

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I, **Michelle Nöthling** declare that the research dissertation that I herewith submit for the Master of Arts, Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, at the University of the Free State is my independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another institution of higher education/faculty.



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CONTENTS

<i>Declaration</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Contents</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Terms</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>vii</i>
Chapter 1 — Introduction and Orientation to the Study	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background/Rationale to the Study	2
1.3 Research Problem and Objectives	3
1.4 Outline of the Study	4
Chapter 2 — Literature Review	
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Setting the Context	6
2.3 Framing Rape Discourses	10
2.4 Theorising War Rape	16
2.5 Strategic Functions of War Rape	19
2.6 Trauma in the Aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide	20
2.7 Studying Mothers of Children Conceived from War Rape	23
2.8 Conclusion	25
Chapter 3 — Methodology and Methods	
3.1 Introduction	27
3.2 Aims and Objectives	27
3.3 Research Paradigm: Epistemological Orientations of the Current Study	28

CONTENTS (continue)

3.4	A Feminist Poststructuralist Theoretical Framework	29
3.4.1	Poststructuralism: A Theoretical Overview	29
3.4.2	Poststructuralism and Subjectivity	31
3.4.3	The Feminist in Feminist Poststructuralism	32
3.4.4	Feminist Poststructuralism and Agency	36
3.5	Research Design	36
3.5.1	Qualitative Epistemological Approach	37
3.5.2	Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data: A Brief Overview	38
3.5.3	Rationale for Using a Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data	39
3.6	Data Collection	42
3.6.1	Of Death and Rebirth: Life Histories of Female Genocide Survivors	43
3.6.2	Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape	44
3.7	Participants	45
3.8	Data Analysis: The Thematic Narrative Approach	46
3.9	Ethical Considerations	48
3.10	Conclusion	48

Chapter 4 — Analysis/Discussion:

The Taking of Wives: When Marriage Means Rape

4.1	Introduction	50
4.2	Setting the Context	54
4.3	Narrative Analysis	
	The Voice of Josette	56
	The Voice of Charline	59
	The Voice of Valerie	67
	The Voice of Josephine	72

CONTENTS (continue)

Chapter 5 — Analysis/Discussion:

Negotiating ‘Good’ Motherhood in the Face of the ‘Unspeakable’

5.1	Setting the Context	78
5.2	Narrative Analysis	
	The Voice of Josette	81
	The Voice of Philomena	86

Chapter 6 — Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations

6.1	Summary	90
6.2	Overview of Chapters	90
6.3	Value of the Research	93
6.4	Limitations and Recommendations	93

References	95
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Appendices

Appendix A: Josette	117
Appendix B: Charline	118
Appendix C: Valerie	122
Appendix D: Josephine	123
Appendix E: Philomena	124
Appendix F: UFS Ethical Clearance Certificate	125
Appendix G: Written Consent by Annemiek Richters	126
Appendix H: Written Consent by Grace Kagoyire	130

LIST OF TERMS

- Gacaca/Gachacha:** Traditional tribal system of justice. The practice was revived in the aftermath of the genocide when the criminal justice system was not able to cope with prosecutions.
- Interahamwe:** Extremist Hutu military force, recruited in part from unemployed young men. Literal translation: ‘those who attack together’.
- Inyenzi:** Literal translation: cockroaches. The term was originally used to describe Tutsi rebels who attacked at night. During the anti-Tutsi propaganda campaign leading up to the genocide, the term was used to label all Tutsis.
- Militia:** Hutu military force. Used interchangeably with the term *Interahamwe*.
- RPF:** Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). A militant wing comprised of mostly Tutsis who took refuge in Uganda during conflicts in the early 1990s. The RPF forces ultimately ended the genocide by defeating the *Interahamwe* and subsequently establishing a new government.

ABSTRACT

Although war rape has proven to be a ubiquitous phenomenon proliferating across the globe, research has paid little attention to women who became pregnant as a result of war rape. The available literature pertaining to this vulnerable group tends to represent mothers of rape-born children in static and monolithic ways, often focusing on mothers' victimhood while neglecting sites of agency. Most of the studies that do consider mothers of rape-born children in the context of war, frame the research within Western paradigms which leads to misrepresentation and inappropriate conceptualisations of victims within non-Western settings.

This study addresses these issues through exploring how Rwandan women who became pregnant as a result of rape during the 1994 genocide, narrate their identities and their relationships with their social world. The study employs a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework that supports contextualised and nuanced understandings of subjectivity. This approach allows for African conceptualisations of an interdependent self, highlighting the constitutive power of dominant discourses in the lived reality of Rwandan mothers of rape-born children. Through employing a feminist poststructuralist approach, this study was able to conduct a rich and nuanced secondary analysis of qualitative data into ways Rwandan mothers of rape-born children construct and negotiate their subjectivity amidst dominant—and often contradictory—discourses.

Through a thematic narrative analysis, the study reveals two areas that have received little to no scholarly attention. The first area centres on the practice of male militia members to claim Tutsi women as their 'wives' after having raped them. Although various studies have referred to this practice as 'taking sex slaves', no attempt has been made to interrogate the master narratives that govern and sanction this practice, or how women narrate their experiences and sense of self when taken as a 'wife'. The second under-researched area identified by this study pertains to the way social, cultural, and religious discourses construct motherhood in contradictory ways—limiting mothers' access to attaining the identity of 'good' mother. On the one hand, dominant discourses construct an ideal image of motherhood, venerating women for their role as bearers of life. These discourses have constructed maternal love as natural and unconditional, and view any different experience as an anomaly. Patriarchal

discourses on the other hand, shame and marginalise mothers of illegitimate children, constructing these women as sexually deviant and dangerous. The study looks at how these contradicting discourses shape participants' sense of self when they are either forced to choose between their family and their child, or when these mothers are denied the option of abortion but are expected to love their child—culturally considered as belonging to the enemy—unconditionally and unreservedly.

Key Words: War rape; Rwandan genocide; mothers of rape-born children; feminist poststructuralism; African identity; subjectivities; secondary analysis of qualitative data

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A global audience watched in horror as the details of the mass rape campaign during the Bosnian war of the early 1990s entered mainstream consciousness. Serbian militias erected torture camps where they gang-raped and forcefully impregnated mostly Bosnian Muslim women and girls. An estimated 60 000 women were raped during this war. In 1994, on another continent, up to 500 000 women were raped—within the span of 100 days. This time, the target was Tutsi women in the Rwandan genocide (Seifert, 1996; Weitsman, 2008; Farr, 2009).

The Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide not only served to focus international attention on the perpetration of mass rape during war, though. For the first time in history, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) prosecuted individuals for rape as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and as an act of genocide (ICTR, 1998; ICTY, 2001). Although the rape campaigns waged during these two armed conflicts incited a proliferation of scholarly research—especially among feminist researchers—these incidences of mass rape during war should not be regarded as anomalous.

When delving into the phenomenon of rape during war, it quickly becomes clear that this practice is ubiquitous and the statistics staggering. In 1937, between 20 000–80 000 women were raped and sexually tortured in what became known as the ‘Rape of Nanking’. During WWII, around 200 000 Asian—mostly Korean—women were abducted and sexually tortured by the Imperial Japanese Army. During the same period, Soviet soldiers raped more than 2 million women by the end of WWII. In Bangladesh, up to 400 000 Bengali women were raped by Pakistani soldiers during the war in 1971. Mass rapes were perpetrated during the war in Vietnam, Cambodia, Peru, Sudan, Uganda (Seifert, 1996; Neill, 2000; Henry, Ward & Hirshberg, 2004; Farr, 2009). The list is too exhaustive to catalogue here. Rape during war has by no means only manifested since the twentieth-century though. According to Jonathan

Gottschall (2004: 130), "...historical and anthropological evidence suggests that rape in the context of war is an ancient human practice ..."

1.2 BACKGROUND/RATIONALE TO THE STUDY

Civil armed conflict has become increasingly characterised by torture rapes, public rapes, and gang rapes as a political strategy to terrorise and demoralise the opposition (Card, 1996; Farr, 2009; UN Secretary-General, 2015). Such a strategy was employed during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The systematic rape campaign left almost every surviving Tutsi woman and girl sexually violated, about 70% of rape survivors HIV positive, and between 5 000 – 10 000 children born as a result (Grieg, 2001; Mukamana & Collins, 2006; Weitsman, 2006; Youngblood-Coleman, 2014).

Since women are generally seen as the keepers of family and community, rape serves to splinter families, destroy bonds of friendship, alienate community members, and rips at the social fabric that keeps societies together. Ultimately, war rape attacks the individual's sense of self as well as the group's cultural and social identity (Card, 1996; Seifert, 1996; Neill, 2000; Farr, 2009).

Interested in issues of identity, I examined the scholarly literature on Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children and found that most of the academic work has approached the subject from a Western perspective (Rieder & Elbert, 2013; Sandole & Auerbach, 2013; Roth, Neuner & Elbert, 2014). Western ontology regards concepts such as truth and reality as independent and outside of human action – and therefore 'knowable' and singular (Alcoff, 1991). Western approaches also tend to naturalise and universalise Western thinking that value individuality and independence (Shohat & Stam, 2014).

Similarly, scholarly studies that examine mental health issues of Rwandan mothers predominantly use Western-formulated instruments (Reid-Cunningham, 2008; Rouhani et al., 2015) and generally arrive at a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—tending to pathologise survivors. These Eurocentric approaches are deeply problematic, since it negates an African worldview that places relationality and social interaction central to an individual's sense of self. Interdependence and communality, within the African context, are essential to conceptualisations of the self and in making meaning of lived experiences (Mkhize, 2004). The experience and expression of trauma are embedded within cultural and

social contexts and a globalised Western approach might therefore be inappropriate or insufficient (Summerfield, 2001; Kienzler, 2008). Academic scholars also seem to focus exclusively on either the victimhood of these mothers, or on their identity as resilient survivors (Clifford, 2008; Sandole & Auerbach, 2013; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013). Such conceptualisations tend to portray this group of women in monolithic ways and fail to convey the complex and often ambiguous nature of their identities.

Addressing the issues above, this study aims to explore the testimonies of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children to investigate the narratives of their experiences before, during, and after the genocide. This will be done in order to gain insight into the identities that these mothers construct through their testimonies/talk as well as how they construct meaning in terms of their victimhood and agency. I will be using narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children that have previously been published. In order to argue from an African worldview, this study will conceptualise identity as interdependent and collective. I will therefore ground my research in a feminist poststructuralist framework that will allow me to interpret constructions of identity as discursively and socially produced (see Weedon, 1997).

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

My study aims to explore the narratives (previously recorded and collected by researchers and organisations in Rwanda) of 8—10 Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children in order to gain insight into the identities that they construct through their testimonies/talk. I will also focus on the intersection of gender discourses, victimhood, and agency that may emerge from the mothers' narratives.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

- i. to explore the women's existing narratives of experience in order to gain insight into the identities that they construct, and
- ii. to investigate how mothers of genocide-rape children make meaning in terms of terms of gender, victimhood and agency.

The research questions are:

- i. What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences?
- ii. How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world (in their family/community/larger social sphere)?
- iii. Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self? What are these significant moments, as narrated by the mothers?

1.3 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The study comprises of both a theoretical and empirical component. The theoretical component comprises of the literature review as well as the research methodology and methods I employ in the study. The empirical component contains the analysis and discussion of the secondary data.

In Chapter 2, I situate the research within the historical and sociocultural context of the Rwandan genocide in order to facilitate a deeper contextual understanding of the literature. I discuss how rape discourses has generally been framed and proceed to consider several theories of war rape and the strategic functions of mass rape during war. I then move on to discuss studies that have researched trauma in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide and conclude the chapter with a focus on mothers of children conceived from war rape.

Chapter 3 outlines the epistemological orientations of the study and situates the research within a qualitative paradigm and feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework. I also present the research design and methods that I have employed in the study.

In Chapter 4, I analyse and discuss the first of two themes that I have identified in the narratives of the participants. The first theme, *The taking of wives: When marriage means rape*, centres on the discourse employed by male Hutu militia¹ members to claim Tutsi women as their ‘wives’ after raping them. I look at how participants who have been taken as a ‘wife’ narrate their sense of self and their relationships with others and highlight sites of agency and resistance.

¹ Hutu military force. Used interchangeably with the term *Interahamwe*.

In Chapter 5, I proceed to analyse and discuss the second theme, *Negotiating 'good' motherhood in the face of the 'unspeakable'*. I look at how contradicting social, cultural, and religious discourses shape participants' sense of self when they are either forced to choose between their family and their child, or when they are denied the option of abortion and expected to love their child unconditionally. I provide a nuanced exploration of how participants narrate themselves and shift among dominant discourses in their struggle to negotiate between opposing constructions of motherhood.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 6, provides a summary of each chapter, highlighting the areas of consideration and relevant findings throughout my overview. I close the chapter by reflecting on the possible limitations of the study and offer some recommendations for possible future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter situates the study in the field of genocide rape by providing an overview of literature pertaining to both rape and genocide-rape. I begin the chapter by discussing the historical and sociocultural context in which the Rwandan genocide took place. I then consider the two main camps of thought that aim to explain rape: those who argue that rape is a sexual act, and those who maintain that rape is an act of power. This is followed by a brief summary of the theories about the causes and strategic functions of war rape. I consider trauma in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, and conclude the chapter by reviewing studies pertaining to mothers of children conceived from war rape.

2.2 SETTING THE CONTEXT

For a richer understanding of literature relevant to this study, it is important to situate this discussion within the historical and sociocultural context of the Rwandan genocide. I will therefore provide brief contextual information before proceeding to explore the available literature for this review.

During the time leading up to the Rwandan genocide, Hutu extremists launched a campaign inciting cultural fissures along ethnic lines between Hutu and Tutsi and employed the media to disseminate genocidal ideology across Rwanda. Relationships between Hutus and Tutsis became fraught with suspicion and fear. When the Rwandan genocide erupted on 7 April 1994, Hutu civilians stood alongside members of the *Interahamwe*², hacking at the limbs of long-time Tutsi friends and neighbours with machetes, nail-studded clubs and farming implements, sparing neither men, women, children, or babies (Youngblood-Coleman, 2014: 2; Bhabha, 2016). Pregnant women's bellies were slashed open. Breastfeeding mothers' breasts were cut off. Husbands were forced to watch their wives and daughters being raped, before they were killed. Rape—and the subsequent spreading of HIV—became a weapon of mass destruction (Survivors Fund, 2005).

² Extremist Hutu military force, recruited in part from unemployed young men. Literal translation: 'those who attack together'.

The sexual violence directed at predominantly Tutsi women lent the Rwandan genocide a distinct gendered dimension—similar to the targeting of women during the Bosnian war that took place during the early 1990s. A marked difference exists in the way rape was strategically used during the Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide, though. In the first-mentioned, Serbian militias held predominantly Muslim Bosnian women captive in rape camps, forcing these women to give birth to ‘Serbian’ children. In contrast, during the Rwandan genocide, rape was employed as a torture tactic and means of spreading AIDS amongst mostly Tutsi women in order to ‘prolong’ their suffering should victims survive (Baines, 2003). The number of Rwandan women who were raped cannot be established due to the fact that many of these rape victims were subsequently killed. Those who did survive have been reluctant to report the sexual assault due to severe social stigma ascribed to rape victims. Testimonies of Rwandan survivors confirm, though, that rape was perpetrated on a massive scale and it is estimated that 90% of surviving Tutsi women and girls has been sexually violated during the genocide (Nowrojee, 1996; Baines, 2003; Weitsman, 2008).

In the aftermath of the Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide, research has seen a proliferation of studies, especially among feminist scholars and specifically in theorising war rape (see, for example, Seifert, 1996; Carpenter, 2000; Gottschall, 2004; Reid-Cunningham, 2008; Farr, 2009; Henry, 2014). Literature has, however, paid little attention to the lived experiences of these war-rape victims. The group that has perhaps received the least amount of academic interest is the women who became mothers as a result of war rape. A mere handful of researchers have endeavoured to address this paucity specifically in the context of the Rwandan genocide. Notable are studies conducted by Donatilla Mukamana (2006; 2008), Maggie Zraly (2010; 2013), Odeth Kantegwa (2014), and Annemiek Richters (2013; 2015).

Considering the sociocultural context in which the genocide took place, multiple studies discuss the deeply-entrenched patriarchal norms that have governed—and to a large degree, still govern—Rwandan society (see, for example, Jefremovas, 1991; Sharlach, 1999; Baines, 2003; Weitsman, 2008; Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013; Kubai & Ahlberg, 2013). Men were regarded as women’s superior in all spheres of life. Women were expected to be dutiful wives, obedient daughters, and subservient community members who did not voice their opinion in public. Most Rwandan women were subsistence farmers at the time of the genocide, but had no legal claim to the land they tilled, since both legal and customary law prohibited women from inheriting land. Women could not even open a bank account or apply

for credit without their husband's permission (Nowrojee, 1996; Sharlach, 1999; Wallace, Haerpfer & Abbott, 2008). A female's worth was derived from her relationship to men. Girls were highly valued for their sexual purity. As virgins, these young women held the potential of securing a bride-price for their families upon marriage. It was only through the traditional institution of marriage—and her first sexual encounter with her husband—that a Rwandan girl transitioned into womanhood, and subsequently motherhood. Motherhood was constructed as the ultimate realisation of a woman's purpose and worth in Rwandan society—as long as her offspring were legitimate. These practices marked major identity transitions for Rwandan females, both in women's sense of self and in the way society regarded and treated women (Mukamana & Collins, 2006; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013).

However, rape subverts all these cultural discourses that ascribe worth to a Rwandan woman. Being a rape-victim in Rwanda carries severe social stigma which leads to rape victims being rejected by their families and ostracised by their communities (Nowrojee, 1996; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). When a virgin Rwandan girl is raped, she is not only robbed of her virginity, but of her childhood identity as well. Since she is no longer a virgin, she cannot identify herself as a girl. At the same time, though, she cannot claim to be a woman because she is not married. In essence, these young genocide-rape survivors feel excluded from both the in-group of girls and the in-group of women respectively—experiencing a lack of belonging to either group. Within a cultural context that regards the self as intrinsically interdependent (Mbiti, 1990), this social marginalisation cuts rape victims off from vital social relations.

This brings me to an important aspect—often overlooked by both theoretical and empirical studies in the field of genocide rape—that I need to highlight before proceeding with my review of the literature. What I found is that most of the studies on war rape fail to situate the research's conceptualisation of subjectivity in culturally-specific ontological frameworks. Since this shortcoming is prevalent across different subsections of the literature, I deem it important to take note of the differences between Western and African conceptualisations of subjectivity at this point.

I found the work of Nhlanhla Mkhize, a specialist in the field of indigenous psychologies and sociocultural psychology, especially useful in deconstructing Western and African frameworks of understanding the self, the world, and one's place in the world. A worldview,

according to Mkhize (2004: 35), is “a set of basic assumptions that a group of people develops in order to explain reality and their place and purpose in the world.” A particular worldview, therefore, influences our attitudes, values, thoughts, and behaviour.

Traditionally, the worldview of Western societies advocates individuality and independence. From a Western perspective, the individual is an autonomous entity with a singular sense of self—independent of social, contextual, and environmental factors. Internal attributes such as biology, physicality, thoughts, and emotions generally define the individual (Mkhize, 2004; Weedon, 2004). Historically, the West has heralded its perspectives and forms of knowledge as superior and universal (Shohat & Stam, 2014). Non-Western societies were regarded as inferior and less advanced. Through pervasive processes such as Christianisation, colonisation, and the slave trade, Western knowledge systems have been imposed on non-Western settings (Hook, 2004; Weedon, 2004). Eurocentric thought has become so entrenched that it now presents itself as natural and universal—even invisible (Wright, 2002; Hook, 2004).

In contrast with Western ontology that emphasises individuality and autonomy, the African worldview takes a holistic approach that embraces assemblages of collectivist and interdependent notions of the self. The self is regarded as interdependent on the environment and part of the communal collective. Connection, community, association, and relation are essential mediums through which an individual obtains selfhood, and finds meaning and satisfaction in life (Wright, 2002; Mkhize, 2004; Jaja, 2014; Adelowo, 2015). The description of a particular worldview is not an attempt to posit a universal truth, but rather “an attempt to explain human reality” from a specific society’s perspective (Mkhize, 2004: 35). People’s engagements with such cultural worldviews might therefore be different in different African contexts.

The collectivist approach—in which the self is defined in terms of interdependence and relationality—of the African worldview may be misconstrued as a denial of individuality. Individuality, in fact, is an integral element of the whole. The community nurtures and supports the individual to reach their personal potential. The achievements of the individual, in turn, positively transform and enrich the community. In this way, the community creates the individual, and individuals create the community (Mkhize, 2004). In his seminal book, *‘African Religions and Philosophy’*, John S Mbiti (1990) emphasised the essential role that

community plays in the conceptualisation of self-identity within an African context. Mbiti (1990: 106) succinctly articulated this point when he wrote: “The individual can only say: ‘I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am’.”

As Bame Nsamenang (1995) argued, research in Africa should be based on the context and realities of African people—a position I support. Mkhize (2004) also presented a strong case for incorporating an African worldview when operating within an African context and the importance of including African perspectives in research. The majority of studies that I review in this chapter emanate from the West and may neglect to situate the research within African worldviews and knowledge systems. It is therefore imperative to take note of the centrality of interdependence within an African context in order to understand the potential repercussions of the Rwandan genocide on participants’ sense of self when reviewing the literature.

2.3 FRAMING RAPE DISCOURSES

Two main camps of thought have developed among scholars within the field of rape: one that theorises that rape is primarily a sexual act, and the other that rape is an act of power and aggression. In order to delineate the term ‘rape’, I draw on the definition of rape offered by Allison Reid-Cunningham (2008: 279): “Rape is a particular type of sexual violence: a penetrative sexual assault. Penetration may occur using an object or a human body part, and it is not limited to vaginal copulation (oral and [anal] penetration may also be categorized as rape).” It must be noted, though, that both men and women can be rapists, and both men and women can be raped. For the purpose of this study, the term will be used for the act of rape by men of women.

During the twentieth century, psychoanalytical theories became prominent in framing the understanding of rape. Psychoanalytical theories developed during this period predominantly focused on the sexual nature of rape and regarded rapists as psychologically deviant, not criminal. Clinical explanations ascribed factors such as poor parenting, repressed homosexuality, inadequate social skills, and excessive sex drive to the motivation for rape. It was also during this period that the second wave of feminism brought women’s sexuality to the fore, demanding recognition for and autonomy over their own sexuality (McPhail, 2016). Regrettably, this claim to female sexuality contributed to the concept of, what Beverly McPhail (2016: 315) termed, “victim-precipitated rape”. From this perspective, women had

somehow to be partially complicit in their rape—either by the way they dressed or behaved (McPhail, 2016).

The rise of second wave feminism promoted the theorisation of rape among feminist scholars. Both radical and liberal feminists began arguing for rape to be theorised from a framework of power relations, as opposed to sex (Reid-Cunningham, 2008; McPhail, 2016). Feminists therefore came to regard rape as an “act of dominance, associated with power, rather than as a particularly sexual act” (Reid-Cunningham, 2008: 280). Feminist theories therefore introduced a prominent shift in the perspective on rape, framing rape as an instrument yielded to regulate and maintain men’s power over women (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). According to Ruth Seifert (1996), a correlate has been established between the incidence of rape and the stability of male power in a society. The less stable male power becomes, the higher the rate of rape grows.

Seifert’s (1996) assertion regarding the correlation between rape and the (in)stability of male power within society finds resonance in the study of Adam Jones (2002). In his study, Jones (2002: 65) examined the gendered aspects—both male and female—that were, as he described, “perhaps more extraordinarily intricate and multifaceted than in any genocide in history.” Jones based his study on the testimonies and findings contained in five significant human rights reports on the Rwandan genocide published in English. These include: *Leave none to tell the story: Genocide in Rwanda* (Desforges, 1999), *Shattered lives: Sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath* (Nowrojee, 1996), *Rwanda: Death, despair and defiance* (African Rights, 1995a), and *Rwanda: Not so innocent—when women become killers* (African Rights, 1995b), and *The report of the OAU 's international panel of eminent personalities to investigate the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the surrounding events* (Murray, 2001). Jones (2002) described how Rwanda’s economic decline in the early 1990s—precipitated by the costs of a civil war and a prolonged drought—combined with a crisis over available land contributed to a gender crisis among young Hutu males in particular. As a result of colonial rule that favoured Tutsis, Hutus in general were poorer and less educated than their Tutsi counterparts. Work in the formal and agricultural sectors, and available agricultural land for cultivation became increasingly scarce. Without income, young males could not attain the financial means to marry and would therefore not be able to attain the social status of husband and father. This led to a massive influx of Hutu males into the military as a means of employment. Most young males remained unemployed and frustrated,

though. As Seifert (Seifert, 1996) posited, these factors contributed to undermining young Hutu males' power in society, which probably contributed to the sexual violence perpetrated on such a massive scale. Additional gender discourses—such as the construction of Tutsi females as sexually superior to Hutu females on the one hand, and propaganda denigrating Tutsi females as seductresses and spies—also played a significant part in the sexual targeting of Tutsi females (Jones, 2002; Baines, 2003). The point I am trying to make, though, is that the decrease in Hutu males' social power in all probability contributed to what Kathryn Farr (2009: 1) termed “extreme war rape” aimed at Tutsi women in a mixture of lust, envy, revenge, and hatred.

Jones' (2002) study stands out in literature on the Rwandan genocide for considering both male and female gendered aspects of the massacres and mass rape. In discussing Tutsi females as the target of rape and murder, Jones (2002) paid much attention to gendered discourses that served to sexually objectify Tutsi females on the one hand, and Hutu propaganda that constructed Tutsi females as seductress spies on the other hand. However, in my opinion, Jones (2002) neglected to take into account broader cultural discourses that subjugate women and normalise violence against females in Rwandan society. From my reading of the literature, these patriarchal norms that have become embedded in Rwandan culture have played a crucial part in accommodating the perpetration of extreme sexual violence against women during the genocide.

Entering the scholarly debate between sex or power as the primary motivator of rape, Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer (2000) offered a highly-contentious evolutionary approach to understanding rape. In *A natural history of rape: Biological bases of sexual coercion*, Thornhill and Palmer (2000) proposed that rape could only be explained by one of two hypotheses. Either rape was rooted in biology and a by-product from the different sexualities between males and females, or rape has evolved as an adaptive strategy to increase men's chances of procreation. Since I adopt a feminist stance that views rape as an act of power within a patriarchal system of unequal power dynamics, I fundamentally disagree with Thornhill and Palmer's (2000) biological approach.

All these psychological and feminist theorisations of rape discussed above are situated within Western frameworks of understanding. During my research of the literature, I found paucity in scholarship within the African context on the theorisation of rape perpetrated during peace-

time. Rape studies tend to focus on South Africa—due to the prevalence of rape and the legacy of apartheid (see, for example, Armstrong, 1994; Dosekun, 2007; Sikweyiya, Jewkes & Morrell, 2007; Sigsworth et al., 2009; Rumney & Van der Bijl, 2010). When literature does turn attention to rape on the African continent, it is predominantly within the context of war (see, for example, (Baaz & Stern, 2009; Dossa et al., 2014; Marks, 2014; Kitharidis, 2015; Meger, 2015; Trenholm et al., 2016).

Kofi Boakye (2009) also recognised the lack of empirical research of rape during peacetime—not only within the African context, but across non-Western countries in general. In answer to this paucity, Boakye (2009) tested the usefulness of feminist theory when applied to three main objectives: the extent of gender-stereotypical beliefs within Ghanaian society; the prevalence of rape-myth acceptance; and lastly, possible correlations between gender, age, education/occupation, and religion and rape-myth acceptance. In framing the feminist theory used in the study, Boakye (2009) drew on the work of Susan Brownmiller (1975) in particular, explaining rape ideologies as emanating from patriarchal systems. Patriarchal systems and social institutions “encourage and justify sexual coercion, trivialize sexual violence, and demean and devalue” female rape victims (Boakye, 2009: 1635). Boakye (2009) circumscribed rape myths as wide-spread and persistent beliefs about rape, rapists, and rape victims. These stereotyped beliefs are hostile towards women and serve to blame, denigrate, and stigmatise victims, and trivialise the act of rape. The study employed a stratified random sampling procedure which rendered 250 participants and a final sample size of 202 respondents. Boakye (2009) collected data from participants by means of questionnaires from two major rape-myth acceptance scales: the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and the Attitudes Toward Rape Victims Scale. Both of these instruments were adapted, rephrased, and restructured to generate contextually- and culturally-relevant measurements.

Participants revealed deeply-entrenched patriarchal norms and a high prevalence of acceptance of rape myths—particularly among male respondents. A high number of male participants also reflected adherence to the belief the marital rape was impossible that, according to Boakye (2009) reflects “the broader belief pattern in the Ghanaian society.” Although gender was a significant factor in indicating prevalence of rape-myth acceptance, results indicated that education—particularly the content of both formal and informal education—was the most important element in predicting reduced rape-myth acceptance. In

addition, Boakye (2009) found that rape-myth acceptance occurred across age groups, but that religion did not seem to be an influential factor.

Although Boakye (2009) set out to test the usefulness of feminist theory when applied to rape-myth acceptance among Ghanaian participants, this element of the study remains rather opaque. Boakye (2009) adopted central tenets of feminism—as expressed by Susan Brownmiller (1975)—that regard sexual violence as underpinned by the patriarchal system that affords men domination over women across all spheres of life. Boakye (2009) further posited that, according to feminist theory, patriarchal norms therefore allow for the devaluation of women and the justification of sexual coercion on the part of men. In my view, Boakye (2009) seems to have misread central tenets of feminism for feminist theory. As a result, Boakye (2009: 1648) surmised that the study “offer some support for the feminist theory of rape” based upon results that indicated gender as a predictor of rape-myth acceptance. Boakye (2009) contended, though, that of the content of education—and not gender—seemed “to be the most important factor in predicting level of rape myth acceptance.” In my opinion, Boakye (2009) missed the opportunity to fully embrace the depth offered by feminist theories to interrogate the latent power hierarchies and the layers of female subjugation that may have informed and enriched the data.

What is of significant value from Boakye’s (2009) study, though, is an attempt at explaining the conceptualisation of rape within a specific culture without claims of universality, or even generalisability within Ghanaian society. Furthermore, Boakye (2009) highlighted the necessity of acknowledging entrenched gendered belief systems within a given society and culture when researching rape.

Another important aspect in the conceptualisation of rape—I feel, often overlooked by rape discourses emanating from the West—is raised in the research of Katie Carlson and Shirley Randell (2013). Although Carlson and Randall (2013) focused on the involvement of men in gender-equality initiatives in post-genocide Rwanda, the authors provided important insights into understanding the gendered dimensions of sexual violence in Rwandan society specifically. Carlson and Randall (2013) posited that violence can generally be divided into two categories: direct personal violence, and indirect structural violence. Direct personal violence manifest in acts such as rape, physical and emotional abuse, and murder. Indirect structural violence, on the other hand, “occurs as a result of structures that discriminate

against certain groups or individuals. (Carlson & Randell, 2013: 116). Carlson and Randell (2013) subsequently offered a detailed discussion of gendered beliefs and practices within Rwandan society. Cultural norms compel women to be submissive to the males and docile in their demeanour. These gendered norms were exacerbated by colonialism that served to entrench patriarchal beliefs and misogynistic attitudes. The Rwandan Family Code of 1992 formally positioned husbands, fathers, and older sons as the head of the household and therefore the primary decision makers. Men were in control of finances, since Rwandan women were “legally designated as minors”—not allowed to “engage in economic transaction”, “control financial resources”, or even “own or inherit land” (Carlson & Randell, 2013: 116). Since the vast majority of Rwandan women were subsistence farmers before 1994, access to land was crucial to their survival, leaving females dependent on the goodwill of males to be able to make a living.

According to Carlson and Randell (2013), the practice of bride wealth, or *inkwano*, within Rwandan society is as an additional form of structural violence directed at women. The prospective groom would offer the bride’s family payment in the form of cows or cash in order to marry their daughter. This, according to Carlson and Randell (2013: 116) “served to establish the woman as the property of her husband and further solidify her status as a minor.” The only way a Rwandan woman could divorce was if her husband abused her more than once, and if this abuse was public knowledge. According to my interpretation, this reflects how Rwandan society has normalised abuse against women. In addition, according to Rwandan cultural tradition, fathers are automatically given custody of children in the case of spousal separation. In fear of losing their children, women would therefore avoid reporting spousal abuse (Carlson & Randell, 2013).

Carlson and Randell (2013) argued that women in developing countries often face these and other forms of structural violence, such as a lack of access to resources, legal rights, education, and safe healthcare. Coupled with widespread domestic violence and sexual abuse that have become normalised in Rwandan society, these sources of indirect structural violence greatly contribute to women’s vulnerability (Carlson & Randell, 2013).

Acknowledging structural violence in addition to personal violence is crucial to more nuanced discourses of rape, not only in non-Western settings, but worldwide. Carlson and Randell’s (2013) inclusion of structural violence in situating their discussion of gender violence and gender equality is, in my opinion, a valuable contribution to rape discourses—especially those pertaining to the Rwandan context.

2.4 THEORISING WAR RAPE

War rape is by no means a modern phenomenon. Rather, rape in the context of war has been perpetuated throughout history. Gerda Lerner (1986), prominent historian and feminist scholar, traced the practice of war rape back to the second millennium BC. Linking war rape with the establishment of patriarchy, Lerner (1986) convincingly argued that since ancient times, women became regarded as the property of men and in the process became reified. During wartime, men would rape the women of the conquered group. Not only did the rape dishonour the women—who's worth was vested in their sexual chastity—but also symbolically castrated the conquered men, since they failed to protect the sexual purity of their women. In what has been described as a landmark text, Susan Brownmiller (1975) followed the same argument as she traced the practice of rape throughout centuries. Brownmiller (1975: 15) described rape as a “conscious process of intimidation by which *all men keep all women* in a state of fear” (italics in the original). Since women were viewed as the property of men, rape became a “property crime of man against man” (Brownmiller, 1975: 18). Along these patriarchal lines of reasoning—and a widely-held belief that rape is driven by irresistible biological compulsion—the rape of women became regarded as a ‘natural by-product’ of war, the spoils of combat (Gottschall, 2004; Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

In the scope of this study, I use ‘mass rape’ and ‘war rape’ interchangeably, and understand these terms to denote a “military strategy of widespread, systematic sexual violence and rape perpetrated intentionally against civilians” (Reid-Cunningham, 2008: 297). This military strategy does not necessarily have to be communicated through an official military order, though, but can be implied and incited (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998: 3) circumscribes genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group”. These acts include killing, or causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; causing life-conditions that lead to the destruction of the group, in whole or in part; preventing births within the group; and forcibly transferring children out of the group (United Nations General Assembly, 1998). Since mass rape within the context of genocide meets the conditions of causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of a specific group, and is in many cases followed by death, these acts are considered to constitute genocide rape (Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

I acknowledge that rape—both in the context of peace and armed conflict—is perpetrated against both women and men. For the purpose of this study, I specifically focus on the genocide rape of women and girls during the Rwandan massacres of 1994. When using the term ‘rape victim’, I do so to draw attention to women’s experiences of victimhood during and as a result of the rape. I use the term ‘rape survivor’ when focusing on women’s sense of agency and power during or after the rape. It should be noted, though, that the subject positions of victim and survivor are fluid. I only use this distinction for descriptive purposes. When referring to mothers of rape-born children, or mothers of genocide-rape children, I denote females who were raped during the Rwandan genocide and had a child or children as a result of these rapes.

In discussing how war rape has been theorised, I draw on the work of four prominent scholars in the field: Ruth Seifert (1996), Allison Reid-Cunningham (2008), Kathryn Farr (2009), and Nicola Henry (2016).

According to Seifert (1996), both the academic community and the public have accepted and promoted two main arguments for the practice of war rape. One prominent theory ascribed war rape to men’s insatiable sex drive, unleashed during war by the collapse of social norms that usually govern society’s behaviour (Seifert, 1996; Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Seifert (1996) vehemently refuted this claim, arguing that war rape is committed even when other avenues for sexual satisfaction are available, such as the service of prostitutes and brothels. According to Seifert (1996)—and as I have shown in my discussion of rape discourses above—studies show that rape is not a sexual act, but an act of aggression and power in order to subjugate.

Another theory that has been widely disseminated posit that the rape of civilians during armed conflict is a regrettable by-product of war (Seifert, 1996). This theory is based on the notion that attacks on civilians are perpetrated by rogue units operating outside the boundaries of ‘war proper’. Statistics cited by Seifert (1996) suggest differently, though. In 1937, for instance, about 20 000 women were raped, sexually tortured, and murdered during the Japanese occupation of Nanking. It is estimated that in 1945 during WWII, up to 900 000 women were sexually violated in the Greater Berlin area by means of mass rapes and retaliation rapes during WWII, and that between 100 000—2000 000 were raped in camps in Korea (Seifert, 1996). The list and statistics are staggering. Seifert (1996)

presented these numbers in order to refute the claim that war rape is a mere by-product of war, and rather indicate that female civilians are in effect on the forefront of the battle lines. Seifert (1996) therefore maintains that the by-product theory is not only analytically, but also morally inappropriate.

In an attempt to understand war rape, research has focused on militarism, military masculinities, patriarchal structures, and gender-oppression and hierarchies. The military has accentuated and entrenched constructions of masculinity within its structures. Military service has, for example, been constructed as a rite of passage through which males attain adult status. The military has furthermore embedded the need to maintain masculine behaviour among soldiers, scorning any characteristics stereotypically associated with femininity, such as empathy and fear. In this hyper-masculine environment, aggression, domination, and forcefulness have become normalised (Reid-Cunningham, 2008; Farr, 2009). Reid-Cunningham (2008) proposed that in order to understand mass rape, one also needs to consider the hatred directed at women during brutal sexual attacks. Farr (2009: 6) termed this form of brutality “extreme war rape”, characterised by vicious sexual violence. This hatred toward women does not appear from nowhere, though. This anger and hostility toward women, Reid-Cunningham (2008) argued, have been part of the cultural landscape during peace time and become exaggerated during war.

Henry (2016) investigated feminist theories on wartime rape and found that, in giving priority to war rape in order to lobby for legislative reform, feminist scholars have inadvertently created a victim hierarchy. Genocide rape became constructed as worse than “less extraordinary” rape during times of peace (Henry, 2016: 46). Henry (2016) also found that in researching war rape, feminist scholars have tended to draw attention to gender binaries, often positioning women exclusively as victims, and men as perpetrators. Female perpetrators and male victims of war rape have mostly been ignored by research, rendering these groups almost invisible. Through these gender binaries, feminist scholars have predominantly constructed women as passive victims of war rape, often ignoring sites of agency and autonomy, and universalising experiences.

In order to understand sexual violence during war time, Henry (2016) maintained that it is important to situate victims and perpetrators in a social and political context—which typically becomes unstable during armed conflict. This context needs to include cultural norms, gender

attitudes and -discrimination, and the prevalence of violence within the society prior to the war. Henry (2016: 48) also highlighted that “structural determinants underlying sexual aggression in conflict” are largely missing from scholarship and theory on wartime rape—echoing Carlson and Randall’s (2013) emphasis on including structural forms of oppression when investigating sexual violence. Drawing on Crenshaw’s (1991) conceptualisation of intersectionality, Henry (2016: 51) argued for adopting intersectionality “as a framework for understanding both individual and structural causes of wartime sexual offending, as well as the complex and diverse experiences of victimization.” within webs of power. Since my research challenges monolithic representations of genocide-rape victims, and considers how various webs of power and structural elements intersect to shape victims’ subjectivities and lived experiences, it steps into these gaps in scholarship identified by researchers such as Carlson and Randall (2013), and Henry (2016).

2.5 STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS OF WAR RAPE

Although scholars seem to agree that war rape does not have constant functions across time, cultures, and society due to the contextualised nature of sexual violence (Seifert, 1996; Reid-Cunningham, 2008; Farr, 2009), I identified several broad strategic functions that emanated from the literature.

Using the Bosnian war of the early 1990s as a case study, Seifert (1996) posited that the primary goal of the war was to destroy culture. According to Seifert (1996), it was the destruction of culture, rather than the defeat of the enemy that forces an outcome to armed conflict. Seifert (1996), and Reid-Cunningham (2008) agree in their views that women are specifically targeted because of their central role in family and social structures. Women are generally viewed as a social cohesive, holding families and communities together. Through strategically employing mass rape against the females of the opposition, armed forces aim to destroy females emotionally and physically, thereby destroying the social and cultural stability of the enemy group. Another way to achieve cultural destruction is through polluting the enemy in two ways: by impregnating the women of the enemy with the ‘enemy’s children’, and by dissolving the opposing group’s spirit and identity through raping their women. The female body has been constructed as a trope that symbolises the nation: it is the female body that produces the nation and gives it life. By raping the women of a specific group, the aggressors symbolically rape the body of the group and send a message to the males that they could not protect their own women (Seifert, 1996; Reid-Cunningham, 2008).

Seifert (1996) furthermore argued that a close relationship exists between rape and torture. Inflicting intense pain often results in a loss of language that is regarded as “an important source of self-extension”, and destroys the content of a victim’s consciousness (Seifert, 1996: 40). The extreme brutality employed in these rapes often culminate in a loss of identity for victims, and the annihilation of, what Seifert (1996: 40) called, the victim’s “interior culture”. The torture and pain of the victim are subsequently transformed into power for the attacker (Seifert, 1996).

Farr (2009) also considered sexual torture as a function of war rape. In contrast to Seifert’s (1996) focus on the annihilation of culture, Farr (2009) regarded sexual torture as a means to terrorise and humiliate. Extreme war rape is achieved through raping victims with objects, the mutilation of genitals, and cutting women’s breasts off. This sexual torture is extended by raping and killing family members in front of each other, forcing family members to rape each other, repeated rapes, and gang rapes (Farr, 2009).

2.6 TRAUMA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

Before I proceed with discussing trauma ensuing in the aftermath of genocide, I need to clarify what I mean by the term ‘trauma’. In conceptualising trauma, I draw on a description offered by Cathy Caruth (1996: 3):

... the term *trauma* [italics in original] is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind ... the wound of the mind—the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world—is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that ... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.

Female Rwandan genocide survivors repeatedly stated that they were not the same person as they were before the rape. Testimonies abound with phrases that reflect a sense of having been destroyed, of personal devastation, and a loss of identity (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008; Van Ee & Kleber, 2012; Nikuze, 2013; Kantengwa, 2014). Narratives of Rwandan mothers of rape-born children abound across several studies with feelings of guilt for having survived, shame and loss of dignity as a result of rape, isolation due to stigmatisation, sleep disturbances, depression, suicidal thoughts, and a sense of being ruined. Many genocide-rape

survivors expressed that the humiliation of being raped—and often gang-raped—in public extended beyond the reach of words.

Young genocide-rape victims often reported that they experienced the loss of their virginity as a loss of identity. Rape left these girls in a vacuum, unable to reach back to the identity of virgin child and unable to claim the identity of woman, since they were not married (Mukamana & Collins, 2006; Nikuze, 2013). Testimonies contained in the study of Mukamana and Brysiewicz (2008: 382), among others, underscore this rupture in identity as reflected by the following excerpts: “With that rape I lost my identity as a girl ...” and “... I didn’t feel as a girl because I am not a virgin but I am not a woman either ...” In contrast to the veneration of mothers within Rwandan society, mothers were raped in front of their family members, forced to be raped by family members, and gang raped in public (Nowrojee, 1996; Baines, 2003; Torgovnik, 2009a). Following the rapes, sexual intimacy became near—if not completely—impossible due to having contracted HIV, suffering from gynaecological injuries, and severe long-term psychological wounds (Mukamana & Collins, 2006; Nikuze, 2013; Kantengwa, 2014). The ensuing trauma in the wake of this violence therefore extends beyond the physical body that has been invaded, and reaches into the psychological and social well-being of these women.

Picking up on this point of the ensuing nature of trauma, Susan Brison (2002: 137) argued that trauma not only ruptures a victim’s sense of self, but also fractures their relationship with others and the way they see the world. Within the African context, these relationships are vital to a person’s sense of self and holistic worldview (Mkhize, 2004)—a fact often overlooked by studies emanating especially from the West. This is where my study fills this particular need in research, since it takes relationality and a communal sense of self as essential factors when considering identity.

Brison (2002) also touched on an important point when she referred to the fracturing effect of trauma on relationships. This point links strongly to issues of cultural trauma. Although my study does not focus on the collective, but rather on individuals’ experiences, I feel it is important to take note that the trauma of the genocide not only affected Rwandan individuals’ sense of self, but also the nation’s sense of self. This is especially important in a context where the self and collective are so inextricably intertwined. In framing the concept of

cultural trauma, I found the definition offered by Neil Smelser (2004: 44) the most comprehensive. Smelser (2004: 44) defined cultural trauma as:

... a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is a) laden with negative affect, b) represented as indelible, and c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions.

Smelser (2004) regarded culture as a system that consists of the following elements: values, norms, outlooks, beliefs, ideologies, knowledge, and assertions. Members belonging to a particular culture generally share these elements. Furthermore, a cultural system finds expression in a social system. The last mentioned operates through organised social relations, roles, and institutions. It is within these cultural and social systems that members of a group find meaning. Therefore, when an event overwhelms or disrupts the elements of culture and dismantles social roles and relations, a cultural trauma ensues (Smelser, 2004). These cultural disruptions echo through the narratives of victims when they describe how rape has disrupted cultural scripts that structure identity within the Rwandan context. Girl-children were no longer virgins, and sexual intercourse no longer initiated wife- and motherhood within the structure of marriage. In addition, Elizabeth Powley (2005), and Debusscher and Ansoms (2013) noticed how the genocide has led to substantial changes to established gender roles. Due to the massacre of most of the Tutsi men and boys, as well as moderate Hutu males, Rwanda's population comprised of about 70% females directly following the genocide. As a result, women had to step into the roles traditionally reserved for males: as heads of household, providers, community leaders, and labourers in order to rebuild their country (Powley, 2005; Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013). I would therefore argue that cultural trauma on the collective level, and trauma experienced by individuals are inextricably linked, especially within the context of an African collective sense of self. It is for this reason that, while discussing the lived experiences of individuals, my study continuously situates participants' narratives within broader cultural context in order to connect the individual with the collective.

2.7 STUDYING MOTHERS OF CHILDREN CONCEIVED FROM WAR RAPE

In searching through the literature for studies that focus on mothers of rape-born children in the context of armed conflict, I found scant research on this topic. In the following review, I will consider the most relevant of the studies I located.

Van Ee, Kleber and Mooren (2012) conducted research in The Netherlands among 46 refugee mothers originating from Eastern Europe, Russia, Asia, Middle East, and Africa respectively. The authors found that the greater the symptoms of maternal PTSD, the less emotionally available the mother was to her child (Van Ee, Kleber & Mooren, 2012). This finding is echoed in the studies of Donatien Nikuze (2013) and Odeth Kantengwa (2014), both investigating issues of motherhood and parenting styles among Rwandan genocide-rape survivors.

Nikuze (2013) used Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interviews (a data collection tool developed in the United States and Europe), the Child Behavior Checklist (originating from the United States), and descriptive statements on a four-point Likert scale. Nikuze (2013) therefore made use of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis to reach her findings. Of a group of 44 mothers, 75% reported that they withheld emotional warmth from their child and 66% indicated that they displayed rejection in their parental behaviour (Nikuze, 2013).

Reviewing the studies of Van Ee et al. (2012), and Nikuze (2013), I find the exclusive use of Western diagnostic tools of measurement within a non-Western setting troubling.

Superimposing Western understandings of trauma onto non-Western societies is to assume homogeneity across cultures and contexts. To do so is tantamount to what Derek Hook (2004: 16) called “the imperialism of Western psychology”. Western formulations of conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) ignore contextual aspects such as collectivist understandings of identity, and culturally-specific expressions of emotion and healing practices. Donatilla Mukamana, Anthony Collins and William Rosa (2018) raised this specific concern in a recent study. Mukamana et al. (2018) found that conceptualising trauma exclusively in terms of PTSD diminishes the complexity of trauma among Rwandan genocide-rape survivors. In order to conceptualise trauma in culturally and contextually relevant ways, close attention needs to be paid to how rape survivors express their trauma. These expressions may, for example, take on the form of unbearable memories, a sense of

helplessness, somatic symptoms of distress such as abdominal pain or chronic headaches, or altered intimate relationships, among others (Mukamana, Collins & Rosa, 2018).

Moving away from psychological measurement tools, Kantengwa (2014) opted to use a qualitative analysis of individual interviews and focus-group discussions among 14 mothers of rape-born children conceived during the Rwandan genocide. The main objectives of the study were to explore how mothers perceived their children born from rape, and to gain a sense of the value of motherhood among participants. Research participants were free to guide the conversation and where needed, prompted with open-ended questions. This allowed for narratives that reflected the lived experiences of these mothers in their own voices. All 14 respondents reported suffering from severe emotional trauma during their pregnancy and throughout the child's infancy. This trauma manifested in symptoms such as suicidal thoughts, withdrawal from society, sleep disturbances, and hyper vigilance. Reflecting on the period of their child's infancy, the mothers' narratives revealed pervasive negativity toward themselves as well as the child, characterised by emotional unavailability and abusive behaviour. One of the participants said that she did not breastfeed her child, against doctors' orders. Another mother reported that she felt her child was bewitched and that having a child of rape was more traumatising than the rape itself (Kantengwa, 2014). These findings are consistent with those of Van Ee et al. (2012) and Nikuze (2013).

Kantengwa (2014) noticed, however, that the mothers attitudes seemed to shift as they retrospectively narrated their relationship with their children as they entered young adulthood. Kantengwa (2014) suggested that this shift might be ascribed to the fact that the children started asking questions about their origins and the identity of their father. It was predominantly during this stage that the mothers decided to disclose the circumstances of their child's conception and the complexity around paternity. Despite grave concerns on the mothers' part, all those who did disclose, reported positive changes and long-term benefits. Not only did disclosure lift the burden of silence and secrecy that cloaked the mother, it also offered the child a deeper understanding of their identity. This culminated in a closer bond between mother and child (Kantengwa, 2014). One of the mothers, for example, said that after disclosing to her son how he was conceived, he promised her that he will take his studies seriously in order to provide for her in future. Since relationality—especially the relationship between mother and child—is culturally regarded as fundamental to participants' constructs of identity (Oyewumi, 2000), disclosure has the potential for developing a more

positive sense of self. Kantengwa (2014) found that the majority of mothers ultimately narrate motherhood as a reason for having survived the genocide and that their child has become the nexus of meaning in their life. Taken in its entirety, Kantengwa (2014) has shown, though, that these mothers experience an array of emotions toward their children, and that these emotions and their relationship with their children may shift over time.

Research conducted by Rouhani et al. (2015), on the other hand, showed an overwhelmingly-positive parental attitude among mothers of rape-born children. Rouhani et al. (2015) interviewed 757 mothers who were at the time still living with their child conceived of rape during the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The study was interested in the parenting attitudes of these mothers toward their children born of rape. Of the group of 757 mothers: 82.5% regarded their child as an important source of affection, 91.9% thought their child was enjoyable, and 93.5% enjoyed spending time with their child (Rouhani et al., 2015).

Rouhani et al. (2015) acknowledged that the participants may have reflected what they thought Congolese society expected of them as mothers. Considering that Oyewumi (2000: 1097) reiterated that the tie between mother and child is regarded as natural and unbreakable within the African context, I concede that the findings may indeed reflect acquiescence to dominant gender discourses that have constructed an ideal image of motherhood in which a mother's love for her child is considered to be instinctive, inevitable, and unconditional (Rich, 1995). I would argue, though, that motherhood is a highly-complex, ambivalent identity that should not be understood in simple binary terms such as positive/negative assemblages of motherhood.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the historical and sociocultural context of the Rwandan genocide in order to situate the study within broader discourse of rape and genocide rape. I have provided an overview of how rape has been framed in terms of either sex or power and demonstrated how the decrease of male power in a society can be linked to an increase in the rate of rape. I have also highlighted the importance of considering both direct as well as indirect, structural forms of violence in the study of rape. The chapter proceeded to provide an overview of how war rape has been theorised, and the main strategic functions of war rape. I then considered various ways in which trauma has manifested in the aftermath of the

Rwandan genocide. I concluded the literature chapter by a review of studies on mothers of war-rape children, highlighting the different areas of focus among these studies. In the next chapter, *Methodology and Methods*, I set out the epistemological orientations and the theoretical framework of the study, as well as the methods I used to conduct the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

I start this chapter by providing a brief summary of the aims and objectives of the study. I then proceed to situate my research within a deconstructivist research paradigm. This is followed by a delineation of a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework, highlighting how subjectivity and agency is conceptualised and why this theoretical framework is particularly useful for this research. I then move on to discuss the research design, data collection, participants, and the thematic narrative approach to analysis. I conclude the chapter by considering ethical principles pertaining to my study.

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the aims I have set out for this study, I needed to employ a theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods that would answer to these aims. Before embarking on a discussion of these methodological elements and my research design, I would like to reiterate the aims of the study for the reader at this point. The study sets out to explore narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children to gain insight into the identities they construct through their testimonies/talk. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate how these mothers make meaning in terms of gender, victimhood, and agency. The unit of analysis in this study is identity as constructed by Rwandan mothers of rape-born children.

The research questions propelling the study towards achieving the above-mentioned aims are:

- i. What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences?
- ii. How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world (in their family/community/larger social sphere)?
- iii. Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self? What are these significant moments, as narrated by the mothers?

I subsequently researched various theoretical perspectives and methodologies to identify frameworks that would best enable me to achieve the aims of this study. In the following section, I elaborate on the various choices I have made to inform the theoretical foundation of my study.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM: EPISTEMOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

In their article, “Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology”, Noella Mackenzie and Sally Knipe (2006) emphasised the importance of establishing a research paradigm in which to ground one’s study. The establishment of a research paradigm serves as a basis for substantiating the researcher’s choice of theoretical perspectives, methodology, and methods for a particular study. Greg Burnett (2012: 482) agreed with Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) and stated that “... research decisions made at a paradigmatic level position the research on its course and inform a range of decisions concerning methodology, data analysis and outcomes.” Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1994: 107) described research paradigms as sets of basic belief systems—or worldviews—that prescribes “the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts”.

Originally, I intended to use a constructivist paradigm underpinned by an ontology that regards reality and truth as socially constructed (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). At the time, a constructivist paradigm seemed useful in explaining differing worldviews and divergent conceptualisations of the self—such as a Western ontology that centres on individuality and regards the self as autonomous, and an African worldview that centres on relationality and regards the self as interdependent (Mkhize, 2004). As I progressed through the research process, though, I realised that a constructivist paradigm would fail to help me examine issues of victimhood and agency—as part of the aims of this study. Ultimately, a constructivist paradigm seeks to understand the world, but it does so without interrogating the relationship between power, knowledge, and identity (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Since power dynamics is, in my view, pivotal to understanding victimhood and agency, I needed a research paradigm that would allow me go beyond social constructivism to include power relations.

It is for this reason that I chose to situate my study within a deconstructivist research paradigm. Similarly to constructivism, the deconstructivist paradigm also regards reality and

truth as socially constructed. Truth, within deconstructivist ontology, is ultimately unknowable, meaning is multiplicitous, and understanding is layered (Caputo, 1997; Lather, 2006; Mertens, 2009). Deconstructivism goes beyond the aim of describing the social construction of truth and reality—a general pursuit of constructivism—to include the objective of interrogating “the ways in which truths, particularly dominant truths, have been constructed” (Burnett, 2012: 485). It is this inherent attribute of deconstructivism to interrogate—to deconstruct and disrupt—that enables me to investigate the underlying tensions between power, knowledge, and identity. Situating this study within a deconstructivist paradigm therefore allows me to explore the social construction of identity among Rwandan mothers of genocide-born children.

Before continuing to a description of the methodology I am using in this study, I need to state the following. Deconstructivism is built on the tenet that social phenomena cannot be defined by a singular meaning (Mertens, 2009). Therefore, the definitions and meanings I offer in this study are only one of many possibilities. I provide these particular definitions and meanings that I have found useful in exploring and broadening understandings within this study.

3.4 A FEMINIST POSTSTRUCTURALIST THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.4.1 Poststructuralism: A Theoretical Overview

For the purpose of the current study, I use the definition of methodology presented by Mackenzie and Knipe (2006: no pagination) as “the overall approach to research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework” of a specific study.

Within the deconstructivist paradigm, I found poststructuralism particularly appropriate as a theoretical lens for the current study. I consider the work of Chris Weedon—an acclaimed scholar in the field of feminist theory—especially useful to gain an understanding of poststructuralism and therefore draw extensively from her book, *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (Weedon, 1997) in the following section.

Poststructuralism rejects the notions of one truth, one reality, and objectivity. In contrast, poststructuralism embraces plurality and contradiction, and regards knowledge as socially constructed (Weedon, 1997). Moreover, poststructuralism asserts that “all meaning and knowledge is discursively constituted through language and other signifying practices”

(Gavey, 1989: 463). In other words, language constructs our reality and we construct our realities through language.

From a liberal humanist point of view, language is transparent and expressive—a reflection of a pre-existing truth, meaning, or reality. Poststructuralism, on the other hand, does not regard language as fixed or essential, neither as neutral nor innocent. Language, within a poststructuralist theoretical framework, produces—rather than reflects—meaning. This does not imply that meaning does not exist, though, but rather that meaning can be interpreted in various ways, that meaning is informed by context and historicity, and that meaning can be challenged. Since meaning is not regarded as unitary, language—or discourse—vies to ascribe meaning and therefore becomes the site of political struggle for status and power (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1997).

Discourse is a central feature in poststructuralist theory. In describing the meaning of discourse, several authors have drawn on the work of Michel Foucault. Tamara Shefer (2004: 188), for example, defined discourse a “complex term that Foucault used to refer to bodies of the practice that ‘form the objects of which we speak’”. Lindy Wilbraham (2004) said that “Foucault used this term to overcome the ‘split’ between talking and *doing or acting*.” Wilbraham (2004: 488) continued to say that discourses not only “specify domains of knowledge”, but also organise and regulate the conduct of subjects through incorporating “particular behaviours and techniques”. In conceptualising the term discourse, I use the definition provided by Wilbraham (2004: 489), stating that discourse refers to “sets of historicised, overtly institutionalised or technical statements and practices, which constitute the objects they describe, address subjects in particular ways, and reproduce power-relations and ideological effects.” Social structures, such as the church, the family, the media, and educational- and political systems construct and maintain dominant discourses to serve its own interests (Weedon, 1997). Furthermore, poststructuralist theory maintains that discourse constructs the individual. As Bronwyn Davies (1991: 47)—a renowned academic in the field of subjectivity and poststructuralism—pointed out, “[w]e are constituted through multiple discourses at any one point in time ...”

This is why, in my opinion, it is vitally important to take context, culture, and historicity into account when investigating constructs of identity, since discourses emanating from these spheres shape subjectivity in profound ways. It is this tenet of poststructuralism—that

subjectivity is constructed discursively—that is most useful to my study to explore the constructive nature of identities among Rwandan mothers’ of rape-born children.

3.4.2 Poststructuralism and Subjectivity

Language is theorised by poststructuralism to be “the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed*” rather than “the expression of unique individuality” (italics in original, Weedon, 1997: 21). Subjectivity, from a poststructuralist point of view, is therefore not innate, fixed, or biologically determined. Rather, poststructuralist theory conceives of the self as discursively constructed, characterised by contradiction and fragmentation, and ultimately open to change. This construction of the self—of subjectivity—takes place by means of dominant social discourses (Davies, 1991; Weedon, 1997).

“Discourses”, as Weedon (1997: 41) explained, “represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist.” Following from this statement, poststructuralism does not regard the individual as a mere marionette that comes to life as various discourses pulls its strings in different directions. Weedon (1997: 125) explained this point eloquently: “Although the subject in poststructuralism is socially constructed in discursive practices, she none the less exists as a thinking, feeling subject and social agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices.” This argument—that we both speak and are spoken into existence—also answers general criticism against poststructuralism for being anti-humanist (Weedon, 1997). Our subjectivity can never be separated from language, though, and we can only speak from—or resist—the subject positions made available to us by social discourses.

In my view, poststructuralist conceptualisation of the self runs parallel to African worldviews of the self. A comment made by Davies (1991: 43) in relation to poststructuralist supports my view: “The concepts of the individual and the collective are not understood in terms of a dualism. The individual is constituted through the discourses of a number of collectives as is the collective itself.” Compare this to the collectivist approach central to an African worldview that regards the self and community as interdependent. The community nurtures and develops the individual to achieve their highest potential, and in turn, individuals come

together as a collective to create a community (Mkhize, 2004). The one therefore constitutes the other.

When considering these parallels between poststructuralist and African conceptualisations of the self, it becomes clear that a poststructuralist theoretical framework is ideally suited for this study exploring constructions of identity within an African context.

Based on poststructuralist principles, I use the terms ‘identity’, ‘self’, ‘subject’, and ‘subjectivity’ interchangeably for the purpose of this study, with the understanding that these terms denote processes of social construction rather than possessing a unique, innate essence.

3.4.3 The Feminist in Feminist Poststructuralism

Feminism—both as a political movement and academic research framework—has undergone many diversifications and adaptations. Early manifestations of feminism presented itself within the suffrage and abolitionist movements, branching into radical, liberal, and Marxist feminisms, amongst others (Kroløkke & Scott Sørensen, 2006; Hines, 2007a). The predominantly Western schools of feminism came under severe criticism from particularly black feminists, though, for “neglecting the positioning and experience of non-white non-middle-class women” (Hines, 2007b). In answer to this challenge, the field has seen the development of a difference approach which included black feminism; standpoint feminism; various African feminisms that include womanism, motherism, and stiwanism; postcolonial feminism; transgender feminism; postmodern feminism, and poststructuralist feminism—to name but a view (Weedon, 1997; Arndt, 2002; Kroløkke & Scott Sørensen, 2006; Mekgwe, 2006; Hines, 2007b).

Despite the differences in approach, focus, and political agendas, all feminist theories share some basic concerns. These include concerns about unequal power relations—created and perpetuated by patriarchy, concerns with subjectivity, and the possibilities for change. Patriarchal structures are embedded in the way institutions and social practices function. Power relations therefore infuse and shape all aspects of life, from the domestic to the work space, from politics to leisure, from culture to government and beyond (Weedon, 1997). These unequal power relations “determine who does what and for whom, what we are and what we might become” (Weedon, 1997: 1). Patriarchal scripts—established and kept in

place by dominant social discourses—view men as the norm and ascribe social meanings and roles based on biological sexual difference (Weedon, 1997).

Poststructuralist theory is particularly useful in addressing feminist concerns since it offers a framework that enables interrogation of dominant social discourses that constitute, maintain, and perpetuate unequal power relations. According to Weedon (1997: 19), poststructuralism offers “a way of conceptualising the relationship between language, social institutions and individual consciousness which focuses on how power is exercised and the possibilities of change.” In her book, *Just sex? The cultural scaffolding of rape* (2005), Nicola Gavey argues that feminist poststructuralist theory offers more than a mere abstract theoretical observation of the workings of identity and power. Self-narrations also have material implications. Self-narrations influence the ways in which individuals experience themselves in the world. Feminist poststructuralist theory therefore also offers insights into the experience of living within the web of patriarchal power dynamics. In delineating feminist poststructuralist theory, both Gavey (1989) and Weedon (1997) emphasised that class and race need be taken into account in order to address the oppression of women and that understandings need to be informed by the specific historical, social, and cultural context.

Gavey (1989: 185) described a feminist poststructuralist approach as a “*sympathetic* theoretical ally” (italics in original), since it expects and embraces the contradictory and complex nature of ourselves, our positions, and our experiences of the world. “A feminist poststructuralist approach,” Gavey (1989: 185) explained, “understands and forgives our obedience to dominant cultural norms and values ... yet highlights the contingency of these norms. In doing so, it shines a light on possibilities for being and acting otherwise ...”

I find feminist poststructuralism a productive theory for my current study, since it not only offers an explanation of contradictory experiences—informed and given meaning by contradictory dominant discourses, but also situates these experiences in specific historical and social contexts. Feminist poststructuralist theory also enables the deconstruction of discourses that constitute subjectivities to expose overt as well as latent unequal power relations. Feminist poststructuralism therefore advances the aims of the current study that include the exploration of constructed identities narrated by Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children, as well as meaning-making in terms of gender and victimhood. In addition,

feminist poststructuralism also encompasses a liberatory aspect, since it offers the potential for change through subverting or resisting dominant social discourses.

Adopting a feminist approach also requires me to practice reflexivity in order to make my own situatedness clear within the research (Ackerly & True, 2008). Jane Jorgenson (2011: 115) defined the practice of reflexivity as “a ‘bending back’ by going more deeply into the self in order to understand others.” Jorgenson (2011) continued to say that reflexivity allows us to recognise how we are similar to or different from participants in terms of elements such as gender, social status, class, and race. Through a reflexive practice also reveals how researchers co-constructs knowledge by acknowledging our particular worldviews and backgrounds that influence how we work with the data (Jorgenson, 2011; Berger, 2015).

It is therefore important for me as a feminist researcher to be aware and make explicit how my own situatedness shapes my motivations, research choices, and interpretations.

During my work as a magazine journalist, I became increasingly concerned with the incidences of human trafficking, particularly in the Bloemfontein—a city situated in the middle of South Africa in the Free State province. I felt increasingly compelled to not only write about the topic, but to connect with these victims³ on a personal level. Eventually, I was able to get in touch with the owner of a shelter for survivors of human trafficking in Atlantis in Cape Town, and received her permission to stay in the shelter with these women for a couple of days. The few days I spent with these survivors irrevocably changed my life. I realised how immensely privileged I am as a white, middle-class woman. It was a personal turning point in my life to work with survivors of sexual violence and it was that experience that ultimately inspired me to return to university. After a hiatus of almost two decades from academic study, I enrolled for a postgraduate diploma in Gender Studies.

It was during that time that I attended a presentation by Sabine Hirschauer—who was a post-doctoral fellow in Prof Gobodo-Madikizela’s research unit at the time—entitled, *Rape and the State: Sexual violence and its political narrative and othering in 21st century South*

3

As I note in the literature review section of this study, I use the term ‘rape survivor’ when focusing on women’s sense of agency and power during or after the rape. It should be understood, though, that the subject positions of victim and survivor are fluid. I only use this distinction for descriptive purposes.

Africa (University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 25 July 2013)⁴. Hirschauer's talk introduced me to the concept of rape as a weapon of war and by the end of her presentation I knew that I wanted to do research in this field. When Prof Gobodo-Madikizela invited me to join her research group, I embraced the opportunity to make a contribution in this area.

People often ask me why I chose genocide rape as a field of study. I do not have an answer. Perhaps the field chose me. I only answer I have to offer is that I feel compelled and therefore I follow the calling where it may lead. Although I grew up in a family that was generally arranged in patriarchal fashion—my father was the breadwinner and head of the household, my mother left the workforce when she became pregnant and stayed at home to raise me—I was never subjected to sexual violence. My childhood was deliciously unremarkable, and I grew up in sheltered and safe environment—both physically and emotionally.

Since commencing with this masters research project, I have been challenged in ways I could not have predicted. I realised how very Western I was in my outlooks despite the fact that I consider myself to be African. Immersing myself in writings on African worldviews and – concepts of identity, I gained a better understanding of the essential differences between Western individualistic conceptualisations of the self and African views of a communal self. With this increased understanding, I also realised that I have felt alienated and isolated by Western, humanistic epistemologies. The African model of relationality offers me an opportunity to move closer to a relational conceptualisation of myself. An African worldview allows me to agentically shift to a discourse that sits more comfortably within me. Herein, also, lays the contradiction and tension between my own subjectivities. I have been raised within a Western paradigm, but I view myself as African. Some dominant discourses do not regard me as African, though, because of my Western heritage. I therefore find myself precariously positioned—not fully embracing a Western identity, but not able to fully claim an African identity because of my Western subjectivity.

My research journey with the stories of Rwandan mothers of rape-born children—even through a secondary data analysis—has taken me on a path of discovery within myself. As I read how these mothers negotiate and contest their subjective positions in a world where they also move between belongings, my eyes are opened to my own subjective

⁴ Hirschauer subsequently published a book based on this work, "*The Securitization of Rape: Women, War and Sexual Violence*," Palgrave Macmillan, 2014."

processes of negotiation and contestation. A group of Rwandan women who I have not met and whose depths of trauma I will never be able to fully comprehend has touched and changed me in a profound way.

3.4.4 Feminist Poststructuralism and Agency

Since part of this study's aim is to explore how Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children make meaning in terms of gender, victimhood, and agency, it is important that the theoretical framework enables me to enhance this part of my research. I found Davies' (1991) work on agency within feminist poststructuralist theory extremely useful and draw extensively from her conceptualisation in the following section.

Humanist discourses predominantly regard agency as synonymous with freedom, autonomy, and rationality. Humanist frameworks of understanding conceptualise agency as an inherent part of a sane adult individual. This agentic individual is therefore seen as responsible for their actions and moral choices. Davies (1991) proceeded to reconceptualise humanist understandings of agency from a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework. Agency—conceptualised from feminist poststructuralism—offers individuals the possibility to recognise their own discursive placement through dominant discourses and can subsequently “move within and between discourses” and “use the terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse or go beyond the other ...” (Davies, 1991: 46).

As discussed earlier, poststructuralism posits that experience, meaning, truth, and subjectivity are all discursively constructed. Since we cannot exist outside of discourse, agency can never be free from discourse. Agency therefore entails resisting, subverting, and changing the discourses that constitute us (Davies, 1991). This conceptualisation of agency within a feminist poststructuralist framework therefore enables me to investigate the ways in Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children exhibit agency in their everyday lives through resisting or subverting dominant social discourses within the Rwandan context.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

In the following section I provide an outline of the methods I have chosen to achieve the aims of the current study. When referring to ‘method/s’, I understand the term to mean “the systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data” (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: no pagination). I start this section by providing a brief overview of the

qualitative epistemological approach and show why such an approach is particularly useful and relevant to my study. I then discuss the secondary analysis of qualitative data and explain the rationale for using this approach for my research. Proceeding into the remainder of the chapter, I move on to describe the sources that I have selected and discuss the processes of data collection—both my own and those employed by the authors of the sources I draw from. This is followed by a description of the participants. I conclude the chapter by discussing the thematic narrative approach, and ethical considerations.

Considering various potential methods, I had to keep in mind that the most appropriate method had to answer the research questions of the current study. To reiterate, these questions are:

- i. What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences?
- ii. How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world (in their family/community/larger social sphere)?
- iii. Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self? What are these significant moments, as narrated by the mothers?

3.5.1 Qualitative Epistemological Approach

Research endeavours are generally guided by either a quantitative or qualitative epistemological approach, or a mixture of the two. Quantitative approaches are mainly interested in measuring causal relationships, examining factors such as intensity and frequency between units of analysis. Quantitative research is predominantly framed within positivist epistemologies that regard reality as fixed and ultimately knowable, and characteristically claim to be value-free (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Goodson & Gill, 2011).

A qualitative research approach, on the other hand, is generally interested in deeper understandings of social phenomena and the human experience. From a qualitative research epistemology, reality is regarded as socially constructed and therefore allows for different understandings, multiple truths, and various interpretations of the world. Qualitative research sets out to explore social relationships and how meaning is made in deep and nuanced ways, and encourages thick descriptions and subjective interpretations of these social relationships and meanings. Although the goal of qualitative research depends on the purpose of the study, it does not seek to generalise, but rather to present the particular through analysis, observation, insight, and reflexivity (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005; Saldaña, 2011). Within the qualitative research paradigm, the researcher is intimately involved in the research and regarded as a co-constructor of knowledge and meaning-making (Saldaña, 2011).

Since my study is interested in a nuanced exploration of subjectivities, relationships, and meaning making, a qualitative epistemological approach is most appropriate. A qualitative research approach allows me to examine how mothers of rape-born children understand and make meaning of the world, how they narrate themselves within that world, as well as the nature of their relationships with their family and society. Within a qualitative research framework, I am not only able to bring participants' understandings and subjectivities to the fore, but also my own—tenets that resonate with a feminist approach that foregrounds women's experiences, gendered subjectivities, and reflexivity. The emphasis of qualitative research on the social world and relationships further facilitates a feminist theoretical framework by allowing me to interrogate hierarchical power relationships and potential sites of agency.

3.5.2 Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data: A Brief Overview

Secondary analysis of qualitative data involves the reuse of qualitative data—that has originally been gathered for the use in a primary study—for new purposes. Users of secondary datasets can be either the researcher/s that conducted the primary research, researcher/s that were not involved with the primary research at all, or a combination of the two (Heaton, 2004; Bishop & Kuula-Lummi, 2017).

In her book *'Reworking qualitative data'*, Janet Heaton (2004: 16) offered the following definition: "Secondary analysis is a research strategy which makes use of pre-existing quantitative data, or pre-existing qualitative research data for the purposes of investigating new questions or verifying previous studies." My understanding of secondary analysis of qualitative data is based on Heaton's (2004) interpretation. My specific approach therefore involves investigating new questions from the data, rather than verifying findings of previous studies.

For the current study, I have selected two published sources of qualitative data containing narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children. One source is a primary study conducted by Annemiek Richters (2014), published under the title "*Of death and rebirth:*

Life histories of female genocide survivors”, featured in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1). The objective of Richters’ (2014) study was to gain a deeper understanding of Rwandan women’s suffering during and after the genocide. The study also explored the potential of sociotherapy groups for healing and support within the Rwandan context. The second source of qualitative data is the book, “*Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape*” (2009), by Jonathan Torgovnik. The book resulted from Torgovnik’s work as a photojournalist with Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children. After photographing and interviewing 30 women and their families, Torgovnik compiled his photos and participants’ narratives into book format in order to raise awareness of these mothers’ lived experiences to an international audience. I am therefore conducting a secondary analysis of qualitative data as a researcher who was not involved in the primary research. The purpose of my research also departs from those in the primary sources, since the current study looks at the narrated constructions of identity, and meaning-making in terms of gender, victimhood, and agency.

The use of secondary analysis of qualitative data has grown rapidly during the last 20 years—especially in North America and the United Kingdom, to the extent that it can now be regarded as mainstream (Bishop & Kuula-Lummi, 2017). This trend is also emerging in South Africa with archives such as the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the National Research Foundation: South African Data Archive, and the Centre for Social Science Research promoting the storing and use of qualitative datasets.

3.5.3 Rationale for Using Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data

Secondary analysis of qualitative data offers researchers a variety of functions. Secondary analysis can be used to perform a deeper analysis of original data; to apply different conceptual frameworks, alternative perspectives, or new analytical tools to previously-collected data. In addition, secondary analysis can be used to study new themes that have emerged from the original data that have been left unexplored. Researchers have realised that many qualitative datasets offer narratives that contain issues and themes not examined by the primary researcher (Heaton, 2004; Corti & Thompson, 2006; Long-Sutehall, Sque & Addington-Hall, 2011).

The areas that seem to have attracted the most debate are issues of contextuality and reflexivity. Most notable is the fierce criticism raised by Natasha Mauthner, Odette Parry, and

Kathryn Backett-Milburn (1998). Mauthner, Parry and Backett-Milburn (1998) insisted that since data is co-constructed and the product of a dialectical and reflexive process, data cannot be reconstructed later in time—especially not by researchers who have not participated in the primary research. The data cannot be restored to the original status it held for the primary researchers and that secondary analysis is unable to reconstruct, fix, or make the dataset “whole” again (Mauthner, Parry & Backett-Milburn, 1998: 735). The authors (Mauthner, Parry & Backett-Milburn, 1998: 735) continue their argument by stating that “the meanings of data are not be found in the data, but to be made by those doing the interpreting ...” In other words, findings are not inherently part of the data itself, but rather created through the interaction between researcher and participant. I gather from this statement that Mauthner, Parry and Backett-Milburn (1998) argued that primary data is fixed and can only be interpreted by the primary researcher/s in one way at one point in time.

Since my research conceptualises the self and the world around us as dialogically constructed and constantly changing, our positionalities, and vantage points render possible interpretations endless. The following authors support my position.

Fielding (2000), as well as Corti and Thompson (2006) countered the argument of Mauthner, Parry and Backett-Milburn (1998) by pointing to the established practice within qualitative research projects where fieldworkers gather the primary data, and then hand over the data to one of the researchers. These researchers—who have not collected the data from the field themselves— then subsequently conduct the analysis. Even when members of research teams share experiences and thoughts on reflexivity, some details are inevitably lost or are impossible to share (Corti & Thompson, 2006). Primary researchers also have to contend with incomplete data, due to factors such as unforeseen interruptions, participants’ unfinished thoughts, or retracted statements. Researchers of secondary data are faced with the same challenges of contingency and react similarly by making choices and “moving on to what be evidenced by the material available” (Fielding, 2000: no pagination). Fielding (2000) was of the opinion that resistance to secondary analysis was not essentially rooted in issues of epistemology, but was actually resistance to change and the opposing of new techniques that differ from researchers’ original training and experience.

In addressing the issue of contextuality, Molly Andrews (2008) put forth an excellent argument for the use of secondary analysis. Andrews (2008) asserted that all researchers

bring their own unique set of knowledge and experience to the research. It is correct to regard a particular analysis as situated within a particular context, co-created by the researcher and participant who each have a particular situatedness. But, as Andrews (2008) explained, the world and everyone in it are constantly changing. From the time of conducting an interview to analysing the data, the context or a researcher's insights may have changed, which in turn affect the findings. Data itself is also not exempt from change. Re-reading a text may offer previously unrecognised themes. The same words, read at a different life-stage, may exhibit different meanings and carry a different weight for the same researcher. Not even primary researchers—with all the knowledge of 'being there'—interpret the same data the same way over time.

Since my research is grounded in a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework, which regards the self as continuously changing, discursively constructed and perpetually in a state of 'becoming', I agree with Andrews (2008: 91) when she stated: "... analysis of data is always carried out by someone other than the 'me-in-the-moment' who conducted the interview ...". In light of the fact that researchers and the world change over time, Andrews (2008) underscored the importance of secondary analysis—either through revisiting your own data or that of another researcher—in order to bring new perspectives to light. In doing so, our understandings of phenomena are deepened and enriched.

As Niamh Moore (2006) stated, whether we conduct face-to-face interviews or read the interview transcripts, we are co-constructing data and making meaning. In the debate over contextuality, the emphasis is placed on the primary research and the context of the secondary analysis is often disregarded. It is therefore necessary, Moore (2006: 26) continued, to "pay attention to the context and reflexivity of the *current* [italics by author] project, which effectively makes new data out of old". Rather than regarding secondary analysis as an attempt to reconstruct the primary research, secondary analysis should instead be viewed as "a new project in its own right" (Moore, 2006: 26).

Through using secondary analysis of qualitative data as a method, I am able to explore themes of discursive subjectivity and agency in deeper, more nuanced ways. I am also able to apply a different conceptual framework from those employed by the primary sources, namely a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework. In addition, secondary analysis offers a method that refrains from burdening sensitive research groups by over-research and avoids

repeating the same fieldwork (Fielding, 2000; Heaton, 2004). Nigel Fielding (2000) proposed that secondary analysis of qualitative data is especially useful when researching topics of a sensitive nature—as is the case with my current study. Social stigmatisation and severed relationships are still potential outcomes for rape victims in Rwanda—where interdependence, relationality, and communality are essential to individuals’ sense of self. Mothers of genocide-rape children face an even greater risk of being ostracised, since they are often regarded as the parent of an ‘enemy child’. Considering the above risks of disclosure, as well as the sensitive nature of the topic of genocide rape and the potential for re-traumatising participants, a secondary analysis of qualitative data offers a particularly suitable method for conducting the current study.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

For this study, I have selected two sources containing narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children:

- i) Richters, A. 2014. Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors. *Torture*. 24(Supplementum 1):6–57. Available: <http://irct.org/publications/torture-journal/118>.
- ii) Torgovnik, J. 2009. *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape*. New York: Aperture.

During my search for appropriate sources, I found it extremely challenging to find rich, descriptive narratives of Rwandan mothers of rape-born children. Most narratives or testimonies by these mothers that is available either in print or online speak mainly to the events of the genocide. Secondary data on the lived experiences of these mothers in the post-genocide world is extremely scarce. Even the Genocide Archive of Rwanda—an online depository of survivors’ testimonies—was not able to provide me with any narratives of mothers who had children conceived by genocide rape. The scarcity of secondary data might be due to the sensitive nature of the topic on the one hand, or be a reflection of the marginality of this vulnerable group—both in society and within literature.

Ultimately, I was able to locate two appropriate sources that contained descriptive narratives by Rwandan mothers of rape-born children: *Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors* (Richters & Kagoyire, 2014), and *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape* (Torgovnik, 2009a). I therefore employed these two sources of

qualitative data in order to analyse the narratives for potentially new or previously-unexplored themes of identity and thereby add deeper, more nuanced understandings of women's agency without burdening participants. This enabled me to achieve the aims of this study regarding the construction of identities as well as how meaning is made through gender, victimhood, and agency. In the following two sub-sections, I describe how I found each of these sources. These sub-sections include some background information about the sources, how participants were recruited, and the ethical procedures that were followed.

3.6.1 Of Death and Rebirth: Life Histories of Female Genocide Survivors

My supervisor, Prof Gobodo-Madikizela, introduced me to Prof Richters during a conference. Since I was familiar with Prof Richters' work and have earmarked *Of death and rebirth* as a possible source, I subsequently discussed my study with her. It was during our ensuing conversations that Prof Richters kindly allowed me to make use of the mothers' narratives.

Since the inception of community-based sociotherapy programmes in Rwanda in 2005, Prof Annemiek Richters was part of the initiative as a researcher. The sociotherapy programmes were initially established in the north of Rwanda and extended to the south-east district of Bugesera in 2008. It was during these sociotherapy sessions that the idea of collecting these survivors' stories developed.

At the time, scant literature was available in Kinyarwanda—the official language of Rwanda—about female genocide survivors' experiences. The goal was to collect survivors' life stories to show women in similar situations that they were not alone in their suffering and that positive change was possible. When the idea of publishing the stories came up, the concept was discussed with the women several times. The women supported the idea enthusiastically and provided their consent for the publication of their stories. Throughout the interview process, both the interviewers—Prof Richters and Grace Kagoyire—established a trust relationship with participants and were attentive to signs of re-traumatisation. Grace Kagoyire's experience as a trauma counsellor also ensured consideration for participants' emotional well-being. Since all of the participants were part of a sociotherapy group, these groups provided ongoing support and could address any potential re-traumatisation.

Any details that could lead to identification in the women's stories were changed or omitted and pseudonyms were used for all participants. Each woman received a draft of her story—in

Kinyarwanda—to ensure that they agreed with the details and content of their narratives. Where applicable, changes were made according to participants’ wishes.

Only after the participants were satisfied with the way their narratives were composed and gave their final consent, were the stories published. The book in Kinyarwanda—containing the full collection of stories—was published in May 2013, and the selection of 10 stories translated into English was subsequently published in the journal, *Torture* (Richters & Kagoyire, 2014).

3.6.2 Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape

During the course of my research, I also came across the work of Jonathan Torgovnik. As a photojournalist, Torgovnik travelled to Rwanda in February 2006 on assignment for *Newsweek* magazine. He accompanied writer Geoffrey Cowley to compile a story on how HIV/Aids was used as a weapon of war during the Rwandan genocide. The horror revealed during an interview with a genocide survivor who conceived a child as a result of gang rapes, deeply affected Torgovnik. The traumatic experiences recounted by Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children struck a deep emotional cord within Torgovnik, since his grandfather was killed by the Nazis and his father was subsequently adopted in Israel. Canon Professional Network (2008) quoted Torgovnik saying, “In the process of working on this project I felt so many parallels between the collective consciousness of the Rwandan people and the Jewish people who had gone through the Holocaust.”

Driven by a desire to bring about positive change for these mothers and their children, Torgovnik therefore decided to return to Rwanda. He proceeded over three years to research and to document the images and narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children—which culminated in the book and documentary film, *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape* (Torgovnik, 2009b). During this time, Torgovnik and Jules Shell co-founded Foundation Rwanda, a non-profit organisation that supports female genocide-rape survivors and their children born from rape. The images and stories therefore not only raise awareness among the international community, but also generate funds for the foundation. Although the book and documentary film were not created for academic purposes, Torgovnik did however implement some measure of ethical practice in recruiting and interviewing participants.

Torgovnik interviewed the women in their own homes, therefore ensuring that they were in an environment in which they felt safe. In order to give the mothers the opportunity to tell their stories in their own time, Torgovnik spent at least a day with each mother. Since many of the mothers have not previously disclosed that they were raped, or that they conceived as a result of the rape, Torgovnik conducted the interviews away from the children. The children and community were told that the interviews and photographs were to collect the stories and images of genocide survivors. None of the participants' demographic details were disclosed in the book or film either. The names of the mothers and their children were changed to pseudonyms and any details that could identify them were omitted. Since photographing the mothers and children was integral to the project, Torgovnik committed to refrain from distributing or publishing their stories in Rwanda.

What gives me a sense that Torgovnik succeeded in establishing a trust relationship with the women is the fact that they shared—often for the first time since the genocide—their traumatic experiences with him. Torgovnik noted that perhaps because he was a foreigner, the mothers sensed that he did not judge them—as many of their family members and community did—and that he was there to give them a voice. “... yet with each interview, the women told me the most intimate details of their suffering and the daily challenges they continue to face as a direct result of brutality. They knew why I was there, and they wanted to tell their stories to the world” (Torgovnik, 2009a: preface).

I decided to purchase his book online, *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape*. When I received the book, I was swept away by the mothers' poignant stories, made even more vivid by the accompanying photos of the mothers with their children. I then proceeded to contact Torgovnik telephonically, and he gave his consent for me to use the narratives. I also received permission from Aperture—the publishers of the book—to use the mothers' stories as secondary data.

3.7 PARTICIPANTS

With the assistance of sociotherapy staff, Prof Richters recruited participants for the purpose of collecting life histories of female genocide survivors. Additional participants were recruited through the snowballing technique. Initially, 14 women—all from the same sociotherapy group—agreed to be interviewed. Five more women from another sociotherapy group also volunteered to participate. The ages of the women ranged between 36—60 years.

Most of the women were subsistence farmers at the time of the interviews, while the remaining participants were physically too weak to work. Most of the women lived in Nyamata—the main town of Bugesera—or surrounding countryside. The entire group of participants comprised of widows, women who remarried post-genocide, and women who married for the first time after the genocide. All of the participants were looking after children: either their own children conceived with their husband(s), their children born from rape, or orphans—mostly left behind after their families were massacred.

Torgonik made contact with a number of non-government organisations in Rwanda mainly supporting women who were HIV-positive. Through working with these NGOs, Torgovnik was able to recruit participants for his project. For the book and documentary film, Torgovnik interviewed 30 mothers and their families. All of the women who participated were raped during the 1994 Rwandan genocide and had a child as a result of those rapes. In order to protect their identities, no demographic details were divulged.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS: THE THEMATIC NARRATIVE APPROACH

In discussing the fundamentals of qualitative research, Saldaña (2011) pointed out that qualitative research consists of a variety of ‘genres’, and that these genres can overlap and interconnect within a research project. Examples of genres within qualitative research include ethnography, autoethnography, case studies, content analysis, action research, critical inquiry, or a narrative approach, to name but a few listed and discussed by Saldaña (2011).

Narrative research has become increasingly popular over the last couple of decades as social scientists became increasingly interested in the stories people tell. Research exploring the narratives of both individuals and groups burgeoned and this shift in research focus has become known as the ‘narrative turn’ in the human sciences (Kreiwirth, 2005; Goodson & Gill, 2011). This ‘narrative turn’ is in part attributed to, as Ivor Goodson and Scherto Gill (2011: 18) explained, “a new wave of philosophical discussion on the relationships between self, other, community, social, political and historical dynamics.”

Corinne Squire (2008) posited that narrative research can be broadly divided into three theoretical approaches. The first approach is conceptualised as event-centred narrative research in which the storyteller narrates past events that they experienced. The event-centred approach assumes that the narrator’s interpretations remain more or less constant over time.

The second theoretical approach is experience-centred narrative research. This approach embraces narratives of both real and imagined events. The narrator may either narrate their own experiences, or tell a story about something they only heard about. An experience-centred narrative approach makes use of a variety of sources that may include, for example, speech, written texts, artefacts, activities, and visual material. Fundamental to an experience-centred approach is the understanding that representations can “vary drastically over time, and across circumstances within which one lives, so that a single phenomenon may produce very different stories, even from the same person” (Squire, 2008: 5). Since my study focuses on experiences and representations within a historical and temporal context that shapes the telling of the story, an experience-centred approach is the most appropriate for my study. The third form of narrative research centres on conversations or narrative exchanges between people. This approach therefore focus on the dialogical construction of stories, rather than representations and expressions of an internal state (Saldaña, 2011).

As an analytical method, I have chosen to employ a thematic narrative analysis. A thematic narrative analysis, according to Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006), is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” Furthermore, thematic analysis is regarded as a useful tool to render rich and detailed accounts of the data. A thematic approach allows the researcher to organise the analysis in a meaningful way that facilitates the discussion of complex realities and meanings. Thematic analysis emphasises what is said, rather than how it is said (Kohler Riessman, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach therefore allows me to explore salient themes in participants’ narratives that may have gone unnoticed before.

By follow the guidelines offered by narrative research scholars such as Josselson (2013), Kohler Riessman (2005), and Frasier (2004), I have conducted multiple readings of each transcript in order to familiarise myself with the content. I have made notes of themes that surface, paying specific attention to the kinds of identities the Rwandan mothers construct in their narratives, any turning points that shaped their sense of self, and how they narrate their relationships with others in their social world. I then analysed the emerging themes from each transcript through a feminist poststructuralist lens, and also compared and contrasted these themes across transcripts. I have done this in order to gain insight into the identities Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct, and how these mothers make meaning in terms of gender, victimhood, and agency.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As stipulated by the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State (UFS), the current study was required to adhere to guidelines of ethical processes. I therefore submitted a proposal of my research for peer review by the relevant ethics board at the UFS for clearance. Although I am not working directly with human subjects, I still had to adhere to ethical procedures to continue to protect the rights of the participants involved in the primary data sources. I subsequently received ethical clearance with ethics number: UFS-HSD2017/0544 (see Appendix F)

I approached Annemiek Richters, Grace Kagoyire—a primary interviewer in Richters’ (2014) study—and Jonathan Torgovnik to ask for their permission to use the narratives published in the public domain. These individuals have indicated their support for my study. Richters and Kagoyire provided me with written consent (see Appendices G and F) to use the narratives contained in *Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors* (Richters & Kagoyire, 2014) and Torgovnik gave his consent telephonically to use the stories in *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape* (Torgovnik, 2009a) respectively.

In order to uphold ethics in terms of respecting the original researchers’ work, I have duplicated any personal information as it has been published originally, replicating any pseudonyms, demographic information and place names.

I have given recognition to Richters, Kagoyire, and Torgovnik in the acknowledgements section, in the methodology chapter, and the body of the dissertation. I will also give recognition to Richters, Kagoyire, and Torgovnik in any subsequent publications which may result from the Masters work.

3.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined the epistemological orientation of the study, arguing for the suitability of a deconstructivist research paradigm. Thereafter, I discussed feminist poststructuralism as a theoretical framework, also paying specific attention to how subjectivity, feminism, and agency have been conceptualised and incorporated within this framework. I proceeded to describe the research design, broadly situating my study within a qualitative epistemological approach. This was followed by an overview of secondary analysis of qualitative data, explaining the rationale for this method. I then

moved on to discussing the collection of data, participants, and the analysis of data through a thematic narrative approach. I concluded the chapter with the ethical considerations employed in the study.

The analysis chapter that follows is structured around two broad themes that I have identified from the narratives contained in *Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors* (Richters & Kagoyire, 2014), as well as: *Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape* (Torgovnik, 2009a). The first theme discusses the practice of taking Tutsi women as ‘wives’ by means of rape and how participants narratively construct a sense of self within this practice. The second theme explores how Rwandan mothers of rape-born children are forced to choose between their family and their child, or denied abortion and expected to love the child that is socially considered to belong to the enemy. I look at how participants negotiate their subjectivity within contradicting discourses of motherhood.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

THE TAKING OF WIVES: WHEN MARRIAGE MEANS RAPE

“They said they were going to marry us until we stopped breathing.”

(Josette)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the analysis that follows, I explore the narratives of four Rwandan mothers of rape-born children, drawn from two sets of secondary data. The sources of secondary data are a collection of stories contained in: *Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors* (Richters & Kagoyire, 2014), as well as: *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape* (Torgovnik, 2009a).

Of central concern to feminist research projects—which this study aligns with—is the recognition of various sites of oppression that impact subjectivities. This focus on multiple, rather than a single axis of analysis was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) when she argued for an intersectional approach to studying the oppression of Black women. In conceptualising intersectionality, Crenshaw (1989) focused on the ways in which racism and sexism intersect to shape Black women’s subordination in specific ways. The concept of intersectionality is now broadly used—especially in feminist theoretical frameworks—to refer to intersecting systems of power which shape subjectivity (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). Adopting an intersectional approach therefore allows me to gain a more nuanced understanding of how multiple forms of discrimination, such as ethnicity, gender, and social divisions, collude to shape the experiences of participants. The most relevant intersections of power that have emerged from participants’ narratives are gender discourses that work to sexually objectify women, patriarchal norms that subjugate women to men and wives to husbands, and ethnic discourses that have constructed Tutsis as the enemy to be exterminated. Positioning my research within a feminist framework means that I privilege these mothers lived experiences while exposing sites of unequal power relations and agency in my analysis.

Since this study is situated within a feminist poststructuralist research framework, it is imperative to take cognisance of the relevant worldviews and discourses that have shaped the subjectivities of the women in this study. Feminist poststructuralism regards language as central to the construction of all meaning, knowledge, and subjectivity and works to uncover latent power hierarchies within discourses. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the various discourses participants drew from in narratively constructing their identities, I start each of the two main sections with a broad contextual overview. In introducing the first theme—the practice of taking ‘wives’ and forced marriage—I discuss traditional Rwandan norms regarding the institution of marriage and the gendered power hierarchy between husband and wife. I show how marriage is central to the construction of Rwandan women’s identity and worth in society. I also consider how dominant discourses have constructed Tutsi females, especially in relation to Hutu males. By means of introducing the second theme—the contradictions of motherhood—I offer an overview of how gender discourses within Rwandan society construct a stigmatised identity of mothers of rape-born children. I include a discussion of how Rwandan society and legislation view the issue of abortion and how these attitudes limit participants’ choices. Finally, I contrast the idealised constructions of motherhood with the denigration of mothers of illegitimate children within Rwandan society.

During the initial phases of my analysis, I recognised several prominent themes emerging from the narratives. One of these themes is the various ways in which mothers perceive their children born from rape. What became clear to me from participants’ narratives was that perceptions were vastly diversified and highly individual. Some mothers narrated how they longed for an abortion but fell in love with their child the moment they were born. Others saw their children as reminders of the rape and punished their children for it. Some mothers saw their children as a gift from God, some felt ambivalent, others grew to accept the responsibility while others grew to love their children. This stands in contrast to the findings of Nikuze (2013), Van Ee and Kleber (2013), and Rouhani et al. (2015) that reflected either predominantly negative perceptions (Nikuze, 2013; Van Ee & Kleber, 2013) or predominantly positive perceptions (Rouhani et al., 2015) among mothers—representing mothers of rape-born children in monolithic ways. Other prominent themes include rape trauma, disruption of identity, and stigmatisation. Mukamana and Collins (2006), Baines (2003), Weitsman (2008), for example, reported the devastating psychological and physical trauma endured by genocide-rape victims, the sense of loss of identity among participants, and the ensuing experiences of stigma and marginalisation by family members and the

community. All these findings were reiterated by the participants from both sets of secondary data. Since these themes have been discussed extensively, I returned to the data in search of latent themes that have not received much scholarly attention. Through this research I therefore add new knowledge to the understanding of mothers of rape-born children, while acknowledging the culturally-situated nature of these narratives and the unique experiences of these women. Employing a qualitative research methodology, I do not, however, seek to generalise my findings, but rather to provide rich, textured information about these women's gendered subjectivities. Working within a feminist theoretical framework, I seek to amplify these women's experiences and their unique perspectives that are often glossed over by imposed Westernised research perspectives of women's static powerlessness in relation to patriarchal oppression (Mohanty, 2003). By providing textures of these women's unique experiences of oppression within their specific context, and through focusing attention on their agency, I am able to challenge Westernised views of women's universal subordination.

I subsequently identified two themes that I analyse and discuss in the following two chapters. The first theme—that I analyse and discuss in this chapter—centres on the discourse employed by male militia members to claim Tutsi women as their 'wives' after raping them. I discuss how participants work with this discourse in various ways and show how the discourse of marriage is subverted to denote rape. The second theme—that I analyse in Chapter 5—explores the contradiction in the ways social, cultural, and religious discourses construct motherhood, and how mothers struggle to negotiate a sense of 'good' motherhood. On the one hand, dominant discourses construct an ideal, venerated image of motherhood, positing maternal love as natural and unconditional. On the other hand, patriarchal discourses denigrate and marginalise mothers of illegitimate children, constructing these women as sexually defiled and deprived of social worth. I look at how these contradicting discourses shape participants' sense of self when they are either forced to choose between their family and their child, or when these mothers are denied abortion and expected to love their child unconditionally.

The analysis chapters will accordingly be divided into the following two main themes:

- i) The taking of wives: When marriage means rape (Chapter 4), and
- ii) Negotiating 'good' motherhood in the face of the 'unspeakable' (Chapter 5).

Each theme will be divided into two sections. In the first section, I provide a contextual overview of dominant discourses that have direct bearing on the specific theme under discussion. The second section consists of an in-depth analysis of participants' narratives, drawing on a feminist poststructuralist interpretive lens. This theoretical framework allows me to explore participants' narrated identities in rich and nuanced ways, showing how participants construct, shift, resist, and conform to dominant discourse. In the course of my analysis, I also reflect on contradictions and paucities within scholarship. In this way, I contribute new knowledge to the field of this study.

Structuring the analysis in this way allows me to answer each of the research questions set out by this study. The research questions are:

- i) What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences?
- ii) How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world (in their family/community/larger social sphere)?
- iii) Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self? What are these significant moments, as narrated by the mothers?

Answering these research questions allows me to achieve the aims and objectives of this study: to gain insight into the identities that these mothers of rape-born children construct, as well as how they make meaning of their experiences and their daily lives in terms of gender, victimhood, and agency.

The core themes I identified are: being the mother of a rape-born child, gender, ethnicity, as well as victim/survivorhood. I will therefore weave these core themes throughout my analysis, discussing the ways in which participants draw on these discourses in complex ways to construct their subjectivities.

4.2 SETTING THE CONTEXT

During an exploration of literature on the Rwandan genocide, and reading testimonies of female rape victims, I noticed that many of these women mentioned that they were taken as ‘wives’ by the *Interahamwe* (see for example testimonies contained in Nowrojee, 1996; Blewitt, 2005; Uram, 2007; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013). From the literature and narratives, I understand this practice of the Hutu militias of ‘taking a wife’ to denote capturing (predominantly) Tutsi women and using them as sex slaves. Members of the militia would often keep these ‘wives’ captive for anything from several days to a couple of years. From the secondary data sets that I have chosen for this study, almost half of the women’s stories contain either personal experience of having been taken as a ‘wife’ or mention the practice as wide-spread during the genocide. Despite this fact, none of the sources referring to the rape/marriage narrative make any attempt to interrogate this discourse—leaving this aspect completely overlooked and unexamined. Through an analysis of Josette, Charline, Valerie, and Josephine’s narratives, I address this paucity in scholarship.

Traditionally, Rwandan culture has regarded marriage as a sacred institution through which girls are transitioned into womanhood. It was also only within the sanctity of marriage that women were to have sex and bare children (Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013). From an early age, Rwandan girls were instructed by their mothers on culturally-appropriate behaviour in their future roles as wife and mother—which were important identity markers within Rwandan society. The wife’s primary roles were to take care of the house and work in the fields as subsistence farmers. A wife was—and to a great extent, still is—expected to have a reserved attitude and be subservient toward her husband, especially sexually (Nowrojee, 1996). At the time of the genocide, Rwandan women were expected to be obedient to men, serve their husbands with humility, and refrain from voicing their opinions in public (Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013; Kubai & Ahlberg, 2013). Women were believed to belong in the home, taking care of the children, while the men were regarded as the head of the household and the authority figures who made decisions (Kubai & Ahlberg, 2013; Mannell, Jackson & Umutoni, 2016). Male dominance within the institution of marriage is also reflected in the acceptance of violence against women as part of daily life. Discussing the subject of domestic abuse, Binaifer Nowrojee (1996: 15) referred to the Rwandan proverb: “a woman who is not yet battered is not a real woman”. This attitude toward women is reflected in the high proportion of Rwandan society that still sees wife-beating as acceptable under certain circumstances, such as burning the food, neglecting the children, or refusing sexual

intercourse with her husband (Mannell, Jackson & Umutoni, 2016). The institution of patriarchy has therefore created a distinct power hierarchy that has placed men in a superior position to women in general, and to their wives in particular. Despite the implementation of progressive gender equality policies in Rwanda over the last two decades, entrenched patriarchal practices and norms still persist within Rwandan society (Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013).

Alongside patriarchy, a powerful discourse developed within Rwandan society regarding the sexual identity of Tutsi women. This discourse characterised Tutsi women as sexually sweeter, more beautiful, and more desirable than Hutu women. Tutsi women were also accused of fostering attitudes of sexual disdain toward Hutu men, and regarding Hutu males with discontent and arrogance (Nowrojee, 1996; Mukamana & Collins, 2006). In effect, I would argue that this stereotyping discourse—incorporating both the gender and ethnicity of Tutsi females—served to construct the social identity of Tutsi women as the ‘inaccessible, exotic other’. In addition to the construction of the sexually-coveted Tutsi woman, political propaganda in the wake of the genocide contributed vastly, in my opinion, to the rape and torture of Tutsi women during the massacre. In December 1990, a document was published in the *Kangura*, an anti-Tutsi propaganda newspaper in Rwanda. This notorious document was entitled ‘The ten commandments of the Bahutu’ (Ngeze, 1990), which clearly outlined the extremist ethnic ideology that was demanded from loyalist Hutus. Within this document, a specific discourse on the nature of female Tutsis was promulgated. These commandments promoted the ideology that Tutsi women used their sexuality to infiltrate the ranks of influential Hutus in order to spy on them—revealing fear and distrust toward Tutsi females. Tutsi women were vilified as acting solely to the benefit of the enemy, and portrayed in ‘The ten commandments’ (Ngeze, 1990: 4) as inferior to Hutu females: “... our Hutu daughters are more dignified and conscientious in their role of woman, wife and mother. Are they not pretty, good secretaries and more honest!” By means of this ‘commandment’, Hutu extremists may have attempted to subvert the social construction of Tutsi women as sexually sweeter and more beautiful than Hutu women. The commandments also encouraged Hutu women to be suspicious of their Tutsi counterparts, and to protect Hutu males against the female Tutsis’ seductive wiles.

This binary construction of Tutsi females as sexually sweet/seductress spies speaks to dominant patriarchal scripts constructing female sexuality as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’.

McDonald's (1995) 'Madonna/ Whore' distinction comes to mind. Women who adhere to discourses of 'good' sexuality are worthy and appropriate to become wives, since their sexually is passive and can be controlled. Conversely, women who transgress discourses of 'good' sexuality are constructed as 'bad' and therefore deserve to be punished. Men fear uncontained female sexuality because it powerfully threatens the patriarchal order and violence is therefore often used to control female sexuality (McFadden, 2003).

In the following analysis, I will show how these dominant, gendered constructions of wifehood, female Tutsi sexuality, and the vilification of Tutsi women through propaganda ideology, converge in participants' constructs of identity.

4.3 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The Voice of Josette

Josette—of Tutsi ethnicity—and her sister were captured by militias during the genocide and kept captive and raped for an extended period of time. Josette was a virgin when she was caught by the soldiers. This is how Josette described her ordeal.

Josette: The militias came in the evening and locked us in a house. Then they said they were going to rape us, but they used the word *marry*. They said they were going to marry us until we stopped breathing. That night, my sister told me to get ready because she had already been raped. I had never known what sex was like.

(Appendix A, page 1)

“Then they said they were going to rape us, but they used the word *marry*. They said they were going to marry us until we stopped breathing.” These two sentences, and this excerpt as a whole, were especially chilling to me. I acknowledge that as a white South-African female, raised within a Western paradigm, I cannot assume to share the same conceptualisation of marriage to that of Rwandan women. From the literature on Rwandan culture and customs, I am, however, of the opinion that some elements within the construction of marriage between my culture and these Rwandan participants, overlap. Common areas include discourses of marriage based on romantic love between romantic partners, and the traditional belief that the virgin bride and her husband will have sexual intercourse for the first time on their wedding night. The militia's use of the discourse of marriage—which I regard as a sacred union—as a discursive placeholder for rape, has therefore deeply disturbed me.

Reading Josette's words, it seems to me that she distances herself from the narrative employed by the militia. Josette stresses that this is not her language by repeatedly stating that "they said" and "they used the words". Through this narrative device, Josette agentially resists the discourse of the militia that aims to position her as the wife of her rapists. It is significant that Josette mentions that she has "never known what sex was like" when she was captured. By stressing the fact that she was a virgin, Josette highlights an important social implication of the marriage narrative used by her rapists. As a virgin, Josette would culturally still be regarded as a girl, anticipating the transition into womanhood by means of sexual intercourse with her husband upon marriage (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). The act of rape would therefore strip Josette from her social identity as a girl since she now has had sexual intercourse. Due to the fact that she had sexual intercourse outside of marriage—regardless that it was against her will—Josette would culturally not be regarded as a woman. Such a violation, I argue, would rupture Josette's sense of communal self as well as her interactions in her social world, belonging to "neither the in-group of women nor the in-group of girls" (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008: 381). Furthermore, due to the profound dishonour attached to rape within Rwandan culture, Josette subsequently narrates her experience of severe social shame and stigma—heightened by the fact that she was pregnant with a child of the enemy (Hogwood et al., 2014).

Josette: The militias went away in the morning and came back in the evening with clothes and machetes stained with blood. They told us to wash the clothes and machetes—that was going to be our job because they had other jobs to accomplish. They kept doing that: coming with blood-stained clothes, we would wash the clothes, they would rape us at night, and then the next day, they would go out to kill. That was the pattern of our lives.

(Appendix A, page 1)

To me, Josette's words in this excerpt paint a picture of her cruel subjugation and victimhood. Josette described the pattern of their daily life as the militias going "away in the morning" and coming "back in the evening" in order to accomplish their jobs. In turn, the militias relegated the job of washing their clothes and weapons to the female captives. To me, this daily repetitive pattern set up by the group of militias is a macabre reconstruction of traditional married life. The militias going out in the morning and returning in the evening after accomplishing their job of raping and killing is symbolic of the husband who goes out into the world and the workforce. Josette and her sister relegated to washing blood-stained clothes and machetes and being raped at night is akin to the subservient wife dutifully bound

to household chores and serving her husband sexually. Through the exaggeration of the traditional, patriarchal roles of marriage, the militia rapists therefore heightened their power over their female captives. Again, I notice in this part of the excerpt describing the pattern of her daily life, Josette narrates these memories through positioning the militias as active agents and herself and her sister as passive victims. Looking at Josette's narrative positioning of active and passive subjectivities through a feminist poststructuralist lens reveals the underlying power hierarchy present in her narrated experience. Rwandan society has been structured according to entrenched patriarchal hierarchies, placing men in a superior—and therefore more powerful—position to women. Being held captive by armed militiamen while Tutsis are massacred *en masse* would subjugate Josette and her sister even further, since the militia had the power to kill them. In this situation, being a passive victim would be a crucial strategy of survival. In this grim reconstruction of marriage, I would argue that Josette had very little choice but to go along with the militia members' demands in order to survive.

Through narrating these memories, Josette is able to agentically position herself as a physical victim. In my opinion, Josette's descriptions of herself as powerless allow her to claim legitimacy to her experiences as a victim. At the same time, though, Josette narratively resists the militia's discourse of wifhood. Josette's narrative resistance is important, since female rape survivors of the Rwandan genocide were accused of having been willing participants and accomplices with the militia (Sharlach, 2000). This accusation stemmed from Tutsi returnees who believed the only way these women could have survived must have been if they were willing sexual partners to the militia (Nowrojee, 1996). Definitely bestowing the discourse of marriage to the language of the militia, Josette clears any possible doubt about her victimhood.

After narrating her experiences with the militia, Josette however, does not explain how she came to be free from her captors. It is therefore not clear if she escaped, was rescued, or let go.

The Voice of Charline

Charline was born in 1976, which would have made her about 34 years old at the time of her interview. She had four brothers and four sisters. At the onset of the genocide, Charline was living with her parents who were farmers. Five of her siblings and both of her parents died in the massacre. For four days, Charline and her sister-in-law hid in a swamp where they were discovered by a group of *Interahamwe*.

Charline: One of those *Interahamwe* took me to his parents' house. He lied to me, saying that he was going to hide me. I spent the night in that house and started to trust him. After two days, however, he began to rape me. He told me that the genocide would continue and that I should become his wife. I refused sexual intercourse with him. I continued begging him to leave me alone, wanting to go back to the swamp. He terrorized me and told me that if I went back he would kill me. I was afraid. The situation outside was bad. I stayed with him because I had no choice ... A man who should have helped me violated me instead. Many women were killed by their 'husbands' who raped them once they heard that the Inkotanyi were around, but we continued to live together at his place.

(Appendix B, page 17)

I suggest that both Charline and her rapist may have drawn on patriarchal ideologies of male protection. Charline remembers that her rapist lured her with promises of safety, saying he was going to hide her. In addition, he took Charline to his parents' house—which, most likely, would signify a place of safety. Her rapist therefore employed a discourse of protective paternalism to gain Charline's trust—which he did initially.

Examining traditional gender roles in a broader social context, Peter Glick and Susan Fiske (Glick & Fiske, 1997) highlighted two forms of sexism that inform gender relationships and shape gendered roles and expectations: hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism strives to maintain male power and traditional gender roles, as well as the exploitation and sexual objectification of women. Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, veils the maintenance and justification of patriarchy through mechanisms such as female idealisation and protective paternalism. Both hostile and benevolent sexism share the common assumption, though, that women are weaker than men (Glick & Fiske, 1997). I find Glick and Fiske's (1997) discussion of protective paternalism as a form of benevolent sexism particularly relevant to my analysis of Charline's narrative. Protective paternalism posits that, since men are physically stronger and positioned more powerfully than women, men should be the protector and provider of women (Glick & Fiske, 1997).

In the context of war rape, Claudia Card (1996: 10) described the function of this patriarchal discourse as “a domestic protection racket whereby males secure the services of females in exchange for protection (against other males).” This excerpt from Charline’s narrative is a fitting example. The rapist—in a position of power over Charline by virtue of being male as well as being an armed member of the *Interahamwe*—demands sexual servitude in exchange for her safekeeping. This man quite literally held power over Charline’s life and death.

Charline also drew on this aspect of benevolent sexism, expecting him to fulfil the role as male protector when she said, “A man who should have helped me violated me instead.” In the context of armed violence, it must be kept in mind that Charline was trying to stay alive. As Charline points out, she had no choice but to stay with her rapist in order to survive. It is within this complexity of normalised gender discourses and the threat of death that Charline was perhaps consciously and unconsciously driven to trust this man to protect her.

After two days’ of safekeeping, the *Interahamwe* member started to rape Charline and told her that she should become his wife. Charline tried to resist both physically—attempting to refuse sexual intercourse with him—and verbally—begging to be left alone and be allowed to go back to the swamp. It seems that Charline would rather prefer to return to the danger of the swamp and possible death than to be raped and dishonoured. She narrates a sense of her power as a woman who attempted to shift her position through active resistance to the rapist’s demands. Her resistance was met with threats to her life, though, and Charline stayed with him because she had no other choice if she wanted to stay alive. Charline remained with her rapist for fifteen years, bearing three children with him. This is how Charline narrated her life with her rapist.

Charline: I live with the three children I conceived with this man ... During the fifteen years after the genocide that I lived with this rapist, he tortured me ... Throughout my whole life with him I was always afraid. I never felt happiness. Since the day he took me from the swamp, I expected him to kill me ... That man hated all survivors.

(Appendix B, page 17—18)

In this excerpt—and throughout her entire narrative—Charline does not once refer to her rapist as her husband. Instead, Charline uses terms such as “this man”, “this rapist”, and “that man”. Charline therefore renounces her positioning as wife by the rapist, and agentically

positions herself against the subjectivity that her rapist's discourse attempts to construct for her. Through using labels like "that man", Charline narratively divorces herself from him and discursively positions herself in opposition to him. Through her talk, Charline reiterates her status as abused victim who feared for her life during her time with her rapist.

What is interesting, though, is that Charline would use the term 'husband' when she repeated other people's talk. At various points in her story, Charline mentions that her siblings used the term 'husband' to refer to her rapist. Later in her narrative, Charline also recounts that she "did not testify against the rapist, afraid of being called a mad woman by the public, because ... neighbours considered me his wife" (Appendix A, page 19). A tension therefore exists between the way Charline positions herself—against the narrative of wife—and the way her family and community positions her—as a wife to the *Interahamwe*. The reason for her family and community taking up this narrative might be located in cultural beliefs linking sex, marriage, and motherhood. Since Charline had three children with her rapist, it is understandable that her family and community would identify her as her rapist's wife.

The phrase, "afraid of being called a mad woman by the public", might also hint at local understandings and expectations of a wife. Within the Rwandan culture, women are regarded as representatives of their family and in order to protect the family's image, wives are expected to keep domestic issues secret. The Rwandan proverb, 'the heart of a woman is the coffin of a man's sins', speak directly to this cultural belief (Mannell, Jackson & Umutoni, 2016). Charline's fear of being labelled a 'mad woman' might therefore be situated in the view that a wife testifying against a man considered to be her husband is akin to madness. Taking into account the deeply-entrenched patriarchal norms that govern Rwandan society, I can understand that a breach of domestic confidence and publically accusing your husband of rape in this context would be regarded as madness. Should the community label Charline as 'mad', such a narrative would situate her outside of the group. Since the worldview in which Charline finds herself conceptualises identity as interdependent and communal of nature, a label of madness would most probably marginalise and isolate Charline from vital social networks. With this looming threat of stigmatisation, Charline rather opted to remain silent in order to maintain a measure of belonging in her community, rather than seek justice by testifying against her rapist. Charline might also have been striving to maintain some semblance of the construct of a 'good wife' within a cultural context that places such high value on attaining the social position of wife. It is important to note the inherent tension in

this excerpt of Charline’s narrative. Charline did not accept the identity of ‘wife’, but it was forced upon her and she needed to abide by the social rules of being a ‘good wifehood’ in order to protect her from stigma and shame.

The following excerpt shows how various sources of public discourse have positioned Charline as a stigmatised identity.

Charline: It was not only him [rapist] who discriminated against me. Everyone stigmatized me. Survivors could not talk to me. Hutus used to tell my perpetrator that it was his own fault that he lived in poverty, because he married a Tutsi woman who was not able to cultivate. Nobody else was allowed in our home. That man hated all survivors. He used to say that they were all witches, and that all male survivors were my husbands ... He also hates his children because they look like me. All of my siblings hated me too. They could not come to my house. They discriminated against me instead. They were saying that I should leave this husband. Even though my sister told me to leave the rapist, I did not do it because I did not want to become a burden to anyone. On the other side, the family of this man also disliked me. As people stigmatized me, I was afraid of attending the survivors meetings because I also stigmatized myself. I felt as though I was in jail.
(Appendix B, page 18)

Charline remembers how several people from different groups drew on divergent discourses to stigmatise and marginalise her during the fifteen years she spent with her rapist. Firstly, Charline recalls how her rapist physically isolated her from her siblings and other survivors, whom he all labels as witches. By default, he therefore also identifies Charline as a witch. I would argue that through the label of witch, the rapist narratively taints all female Tutsi survivors, rendering them evil and as something that needs to be controlled. Using the label of witch, the rapist seems to strip Tutsi women—including Charline—from their humanity.

Charline’s rapist also inverts his initial discourse through which he claimed Charline as wife. He says that “all male survivors” were her husbands. This is an interesting reversal in discourse. Initially, during the genocide, he narratively constructs Charline as his wife, and then, in the years following the genocide, he positions her as the wife of all male survivors. Within patriarchal discourses, men are allowed to have many sexual partners, but women who are not sexually chaste are considered to be ‘whores’ (MacDonald, 1995). Gendered Rwandan discourses regard women who have sex with more than one man as prostitutes—a label that carries severe social stigma and shame (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). These

denigrating constructions work to discipline, control, and oppress female sexuality. In narratively constructing Charline as a 'whore', the rapist might be attempting to humiliate and subjugate her. This subjugation can be linked to the fear of and the deep need to control female sexuality (MacDonald, 1995). Rwandan cultural norms regard the husband/wife relationship as sealed by sexual intercourse. Through reversing his discourse of marriage, Charline's rapist might be attempting to humiliate and stigmatise her.

According to Charline, the group of Hutus portrayed her as a scapegoat for her rapist's poverty, continuing the trauma and shaming long after the genocide. Through blaming Charline for the rapist's financial strain, the Hutu individuals subvert traditional gender discourses within Rwanda, since the man is generally regarded as the breadwinner and head of the household, and the wife as his subservient. Although most Rwandan women practiced subsistence farming as an additional source of household income in addition to carrying child and household responsibilities, women's labour was discounted and went unremunerated (Nowrojee, 1996). Therefore, by shifting blame onto Charline for not being able to cultivate and discursively positioning her as scapegoat, this group of Hutus seem to construct the rapist as the victim.

Furthermore, Charline recalls that not only her rapist's family disliked her, but that her own siblings hated and discriminated against her. According to Charline, her siblings told her to leave the rapist. Looking from her siblings' point of view, they might be urging Charline to leave the relationship due to concerns for her well-being. For Charline, though, this urging discounts several factors that severely restrict her options. Firstly, Charline narrates how she constantly feared for her life. Secondly, Charline reveals how she has been physically and emotionally abused for years by her rapist. He also isolated her from other survivors and her family, disconnecting her from crucial support networks. In addition, her rapist's family and Hutu community members reject and stigmatise Charline, further isolating her. Through describing her experiences of abuse and stigmatisation emanating from various sources, Charline narratively plunges into the depths of her victimhood. In my opinion, Charline is attempting to convey the measure of her powerlessness in this situation. Telling her to leave is to assume that she is in a position of agency and power—a position in which she makes clear she is not. The fact that Charline's economic circumstances are also dire contributes to the restriction of her choices. I would venture to say that declining to leave her rapist might

have further alienated her siblings, who might have failed to recognise the extent of her victimhood and lack of power.

Caught between all these various discourses jostling to stigmatise and isolate her, together with being poverty-stricken, Charline claims a measure of power and agency by choosing not to leave her rapist. As Charline says, she “did not want to become a burden to anyone”. Through staying, Charline attempts to hold on to a degree of dignity and independence, even if it is only in discursive terms. At the end of this excerpt, though, Charline reveals that she acquiesced to the discourses of stigmatisation when she says, “I also stigmatized myself.” Charline seems to have internalised constructions of stigmatisation. Charline’s narrative reveals the contradictions of her situation and the effects it had on her sense of self.

After the death of one of her children in 2010, a dispute ensued between Charline and her rapist about the burial of their son. This dispute ultimately prompted Charline to leave the abusive relationship—a significant turning point in Charline’s life. This is how Charline narrates these events.

Charline: The situation was aggravated by the death of one of our four children ... Coming home, when it was time to bury the dead body of my son, his father did not want him to be buried in what he considered to be ‘his’ plot of land, while I owned half of it. He wanted to sell the whole plot in order to marry a rich woman. He told me that if I buried the child in his land, he would kill me just like another man from our neighbourhood had killed his wife. After I refused to bury the child in the ruins of my parents’ house, I separated from this man because he was making our lives too stressful. My sister started to rent a house for me. I regained my wits after my separation from that man and after I started to join other women and collaborate with them. I was no longer in that man’s prison. The separation somehow reduced the sadness and other problems I had. After separating from this man, I had my rights back, the ones I had been deprived of for fifteen years. Before, I was not even allowed to benefit from survivor support. I was told that I was not a survivor. Now separated, I am supported like other vulnerable survivors.

(Appendix B, page 18)

At this point in the narrative I notice how Charline repositions herself in relation to her rapist, shifting the power dynamic between them. Preceded by vivid descriptions of her victimhood, Charline now constructs a more powerful sense of self. By stating that half of their plot of land belonged to her, Charline reveals a more valued sense of self. Previously in her narrative, Charline expressed how—under the threat of death—she was left without any

choices. At this junction, Charline again mentions how her rapist threatens to kill her, but this time she defies him by refusing “to bury the child in the ruins of [her] parents’ house”.

In order to understand the contextual significance of this dispute—as required by a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework—and the possible reason why it carried so much weight to facilitate a turning point in Charline’s life, I read some literature on traditional Rwandan burial rites. According to Gerard van’t Spijker (2005), Rwandans traditionally bury their dead in or around the house or land of the deceased. It would therefore follow that Charline’s son would be buried on his parents’ plot of land. According to Rwandan culture, a child’s identity is paternally derived (Weitsman, 2008). Since the rapist is of Hutu ethnicity, the son would socially be regarded a Hutu as well. The rapist’s rejection of the cultural norm of burial might be a denouncement of his son’s paternally-derived identity. Through this denouncement, the rapist may be extending his contempt for Charline onto their son, further punishing and emotionally abusing Charline. Charline’s refusal to have her son buried in the ruins of her parents’ house might be tied to the belief that victims of the genocide experienced a ‘bad’ death. A ‘bad’ death in this context refers to the violent way genocide victims died as well as the fact that many of the dead could not be buried according to prescribed rituals. From Charline’s story, I surmise that her parents died such a ‘bad’ death without proper burial rites. It is widely believed in Rwanda that the spirit of those who died a ‘bad’ death might be agitated and cause the family misfortune. Charline might have drawn from these cultural beliefs and her role as mother to subsequently refuse to have her son buried in her parents’ house. Should this be the case, then these traditional spiritual discourses may have served as impetus for Charline to reposition her subjectivity in defiance of her rapist. These spiritual beliefs may therefore have provided Charline with a discourse in which she could find the necessary agency and a more powerful sense of self in order to break away from her rapist.

The change in Charline’s tone when narrating her sense of self after separating from her rapist is noticeable. She uses phrases such as “I regained my wits”, “no longer in that man’s prison”, “I had my rights back”, and “I am supported”. Through using these phrases, Charline seems to shift from ‘madness’ to ‘sanity’ and constructs a more positive sense of self, characterised by a sense of freedom and social support. It is important to take cognisance of the fact that Charline asserts that she was now “supported like other vulnerable survivors”. Within an African ontology that understands the self as intrinsically relational, this narrative

identification with other survivors imply, in my opinion, that Charline is repositioning herself as part of a community again—as opposed to being isolated from her community as she was before. By constructing herself as belonging to the survivor group—entitled to rights and support—Charline takes up a position of agency and an increased sense of communal self.

Observing this transition from assemblages of victimhood to survivor, I recall a study conducted by Samantha van Schalkwyk, Floretta Boonzaier and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (2014). Van Schalkwyk et al. (2014) investigated the complexities of identity construction among women who left abusive partnerships. The authors cautioned that “women continue to grapple with the meaning of the abuse long after the physical point of leaving the relationship” and that the “act of leaving in itself does not constitute a final move to the identity of survivor” (Van Schalkwyk, Boonzaier & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014: 316). Charline’s narrative transition from victim to survivor should therefore not be regarded as a detachment from the identity of victim in lieu of the identity of survivor. Rather, Charline narratively repositioned herself in relation to the identity of victim and survivor at specific points at the time of narration. Both these seemingly binary constructions of victim and survivor are therefore simultaneously available to Charline as she draws on threads of power and powerlessness in her narrative and the way she experiences her ‘self’ in the world. A feminist poststructuralist theoretical viewpoint acknowledges that contradictory positions exist through which individuals can construct particular kinds of identities. These constructs of identities are not merely abstract, though, but have material implications (Gavey, 2011). Narratively positioning herself as a survivor translates into Charline attaining a more powerful sense of self and experiencing the world in a more positive way.

I think it would have been extremely difficult for Charline to have left the abusive relationship if it was not for her sister’s support, since Charline did not have the financial means to do so. With her sister’s material support—in the form of renting a house—Charline was able to draw from an alternative discourse: one of agency and empowerment. From this position of agency and empowerment, Charline was also able to narratively shift her position from being isolated and stigmatised to belonging to a group defined as survivors.

The Voice of Valerie

Valerie was fifteen years old when the genocide broke out. She recalls how her family and other Tutsis from the area formed a stronghold at the top of a hill, but they were overpowered by soldiers from the presidential guard ten days later. Valerie's father, mother, two brothers and sister were massacred on that hill. Trying to reach a place of safety the next day, Valerie was stopped at a roadblock. One of the militiamen knew Valerie's aunt and offered to take Valerie to her. As a show of gratitude for returning Valerie to her, her aunt gave the militiaman a goat. Later, the militiaman came back, though. This time, he claimed Valerie for himself, threatening that she either goes with him, or he kills her. Valerie recalls her time with this man in the following way.

Valerie: He started raping me from that night on for two weeks until we heard that the RPF were near the village. The militias became scared. He told me that they were going to kill us in the evening, but if I trusted him, he would save me. I didn't have a choice. He took me to a place where he had relatives, and I stayed there. When he heard that the RPF were going to take over the government, he decided to go into exile. We went to Tanzania and there, when he realized that I was pregnant, he declared that I was his wife.

(Appendix C, page 1)

An interesting juxtaposition emerges in the way Valerie narrates herself and her rapist in the above excerpt. From her description, the rapist seems to have positioned himself as Valerie's protector, the one who would 'save' her from the RPF⁵ (Rwandan Patriotic Front, comprised of mainly Tutsis who launched a military offensive against the extremist Hutu forces) (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In doing so, the rapist attempts to co-op Valerie into the same group-identity as himself, discursively placing himself together with Valerie as the targets of the RPF who "were going to kill [them] in the evening". It must be noted here that the goal of the RPF forces was to rescue and secure Tutsis, and it would therefore follow that the rapist would be among the target group and Valerie to be rescued. Through this discursive positioning, the rapist constructs Valerie and himself as a unit against the RPF. Valerie, though, resists the militiaman's construct, through emphasising that he immediately started raping her, and that she had no choice but to stay with him. This highlights Valerie's construction of her victimhood and her lack of power in this situation. I can appreciate

⁵ Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). A militant wing comprised of mostly Tutsis who took refuge in Uganda during conflicts in the early 1990s. The RPF forces ultimately ended the genocide by defeating the *Interahamwe* and subsequently establishing a new government.

Valerie's position. Up until this point, the rapist had indeed kept her alive in the midst of the massacre. In order to survive, Valerie saw no other option but to stay with her rapist and subsequently join him in exile.

What I found particularly significant is the fact that the rapist declared Valerie his wife when he discovered that she was pregnant. What would have prompted him to do so at this point? Considering the patriarchal nature of Rwandan society, I propose that the rapist was taking formal ownership and social control over Valerie and his child.

In order to formulate the argument I want to make, I need to divert attention to the literature on traditional, heterosexual marriage customs in Rwanda. Most of the literature that I reviewed predominantly addressed the female component of the marriage union. Some studies highlight the importance of a girl's virginity upon marriage, wifhood as a desirable social status, and marriage as a pivotal identity marker of womanhood (see for example Oyewumi, 2000; Baines, 2003; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008; Kantengwa, 2014). Other studies underline the expected domestic roles and required subservient behaviour of a wife within the Rwandan context (see for example Nowrojee, 1996; Kubai & Ahlberg, 2013; Mannell, Jackson & Umutoni, 2016). When these studies do mention males in marriage, it does so by pointing out the role of the husband as the head of the household, positioned as an authority figure with the ultimate power of decision-making.

This brings me to the point I want to make about the militiaman declaring Valerie as his wife when he found out she was pregnant. I propose that he drew on traditional marriage discourses that give him ultimate social power over Charline and the child. By claiming Valerie as his wife, and now mother of his child, this man has formed his own nuclear family over which he ruled as head of the household. When reading Valerie's narrative, it seems to me that the rapist disregards the fact that he forced Valerie to be with him. Does this perhaps point to ingrained gender bias within the Rwandan context, where women had limited agency and restricted power—especially in relationships with men?

Perhaps this contradiction between rape victim and wife did not matter to him, since he had power over her. Valerie discursively countered the construct of wifeness in the following way, though.

Valerie: I had never had sex until I was raped during the genocide. I never loved that man at all. I always feared him. Even now, when I hear people say they enjoy sex, I don't know what it means to enjoy sex. For me, sex has been a torture and I associate it with torture. As we stayed for a second year in Tanzania, he insisted that he wed me in a church. I had no alternative.

(Appendix C, page 1)

In this piece of narrative, Valerie strongly positions herself as a victim. Valerie also describes her sexual identity as damaged. Rather than finding joy in her sexuality, Valerie has found torture. As a woman and a sexual being, Valerie has been severed from an elementary source of pleasure and sense of self. By emphasising the aspects of virginity, as well as love and sexual pleasure—or more specifically, the lack thereof—Valerie seems to contrast the ideal of marriage against her lived reality. Marriage is regarded as a landmark event in a Rwandan woman's life. It is through the act of sexual intercourse with her husband that the virgin bride transitions from the identity of a girl to that of a woman. Rwandan cultural norms imbue wifeness with increased value and status as well as a greater sense of self. From an early age, Rwandan girls are groomed by their mothers for their future role as wife (Nowrojee, 1996; Mukamana & Collins, 2006). All of these discourses combine to construct an ideal image of wifeness and of marriage as a union of love celebrated through sex. In her narrative, Valerie uses these elements of virginity, love, and sex to show that her reality did not resemble the ideal construct of marriage. By doing so, according to my analysis, Valerie subverts the rapist's attempts to position her as wife and his construct of their union as a marriage.

It also seems to me that Valerie used this contrast between the ideal construct of marriage and her lived reality, combined with her positioning as victim to buffer her rapist's insistence on marriage in a church. Valerie reiterates her sense of powerlessness in the situation when she says she had no alternative but to marry him.

Again, it is striking to notice that the rapist insisted on an official marriage in church after more or less two years have lapsed since the genocide. From Valerie's narrative, I surmise that she has been opposing becoming this man's wife. By insisting to get married in church,

did the man perhaps attempt to impose more legitimacy on their union? Was it to gain more ‘official’ power over her as wedded husband? Or perhaps his motives were less sinister and he insisted to follow Christian religious norms that have become embedded in Rwandan society? By insisting on getting married in church, this man might be trying to negate the fact that he took Valerie by force and had sexual intercourse with her against her will. Would exchanging vows before God perhaps help absolve him from his past actions? Whatever his motivations, neither the discursive label of wife, nor a religious marriage offer Valerie more power in their relationship. I would argue that being declared her husband by the church would give the rapist even more social and personal authority to demand Valerie to perform her wifely duties.

It was only upon returning to Rwanda that Valerie could harness a greater sense of power and agency to ultimately break away from her rapist.

Valerie: When we got back to Rwanda, I went to my church and told them what happened to me and that I wanted a divorce. At first they refused. I got annoyed and wrote a letter to the chief of the big parish and told him my story. He understood me, and the church allowed me to divorce. Now I am free. I feel satisfied and have hope and faith in God and in the survivor organizations that support us. They encourage us to live positively. Whatever I do, I strive to see that my parents’ killers are not going to laugh at me. Instead, they are going to see me progressing every day and keeping alive.
(Appendix C, page 1)

From a feminist poststructuralist viewpoint, it is interesting to note how the church doctrine has made various—and conflicting—discursive positions available in the construction of Valerie’s subjectivity. As I discussed above, a church marriage offered the rapist an avenue to socially-legitimise his union with Valerie. Through the ritual of religious wedlock, the church doctrine therefore allowed the rapist to lay claim to Valerie as his wife. Despite the fact that the practice of forced marriage was rife during the genocide (Nowrojee, 1996)—a fact, I would argue, the church must have been well aware of—Valerie’s church attempted to keep her bound to the marriage. By denying Valerie permission to divorce, the church—a patriarchal institution—strives to exert control over Valerie’s subjectivity by trying to prevent her from renouncing her identity as wife. As Valerie put it, she “got annoyed” and refused to accept this subjugation by her own church. Through an act of defiance, Valerie approached a more authoritative figure at a bigger parish, who did allow her to divorce. Valerie describes this turning point in her life as being set free. The doctrines of the church have therefore, at

different times in Valerie's life, functioned to disempower and empower her. The church matrimonially joined Valerie to a rapist-husband and attempted to keep her captive in the relationship through religious doctrine. I would go so far as to draw a parallel in the ways the rapist and the church positioned Valerie. The rapist— an armed soldier who is socially-sanctioned as superior and more powerful on the basis of being a male—captures and subjugates Valerie. The church—based predominantly on patriarchal principles that endow men with authority and power over women—legitimised a forced marriage between Valerie and her rapist, capturing and attempting to keep her bound to the identity of wife. It is also the church, though, that facilitated an important turning point in Valerie's life and allowed her to shift identity and reposition herself as a free woman, no longer the wife of a rapist.

Following this turning point, Valerie narrates a more positive sense of self. She draws on her faith in God and the support of survivor organisations as sources of resilience and hope. Valerie concludes her narrative by a powerful statement of resistance and agency: "Whatever I do, I strive to see that my parents' killers are not going to laugh at me. Instead, they are going to see me progressing every day and keeping alive." This statement speaks to Valerie's experience of life in the aftermath of genocide and her psychological resistance to intersecting modes of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989)—specifically ethnicity and gender. Ethnic discourses have constructed Tutsis as the enemy who needed to be exterminated. Gender discourses further attempt to subjugate Valerie as a woman, control her subjectivity as wife, and regulate her sexuality. However, Valerie agentially shifts from her narrated position of victim to the identity of survivor who has gathered strength and a firm resolve to live positively and prosper. In doing so, Valerie opposes broader strategic objectives of war rape that strive to annihilate victims' sense of self, power, and culture (Seifert, 1996; Farr, 2009). In her final two sentences, Valerie ultimately narrates herself as a triumphant, deviant, proud woman who refuses to allow her perpetrators to define her.

The Voice of Josephine

All the narratives contained in both sets of secondary data are from women of Tutsi ethnicity, except one. Josephine is the only Hutu female who shares her story in Torgovnik's (2009a) book, *Intended consequences: Rwandan children born of rape*. Since Tutsi females were the main target of rape during the Rwandan genocide, and scholarship has subsequently focused attention predominantly on Tutsi victims. During my research, I could not find any studies that call specific attention to female Hutu rape survivors, and the stories of this particular group of female victims have seldom been included in the collections of testimonies that I have read. Apart from the sources that I am using as secondary data, other collections of testimonies that I consulted include publications such as *Survival against the odds* (Survivors Fund, 2005), a Human Rights Watch report (Nowrojee, 1996), online archives (Survivors Fund, 2014; AEGIS Trust, 2015), and numerous online videos hosted by YouTube when using search terms such as "Rwanda testimonies".

To be able to incorporate Josephine's narrative in my analysis therefore offers me a rare opportunity to explore the militias' use of marriage and rape discourses within a Hutu-perpetrator/Hutu-victim dynamic.

At sixteen years old, Josephine married a Tutsi man and they had six children together. When the genocide broke out, Josephine's husband instructed her to take their children and seek refuge at Josephine's birthplace, thinking that they would not be targeted among fellow Hutus. Josephine and her husband separated ways and later on in her narrative, Josephine reveals that her husband was killed in the onslaught.

Arriving at a checkpoint along the road, a militia member recognised Josephine. He indicated that Josephine was one of their own (Hutu), but declared that her children were 'wrong'. Within the Rwandan context, as generally across the world, identity is paternally derived (Weitsman, 2008)—hence the militiaman's classification of Josephine's children as Tutsi. The soldiers at the checkpoint then proceeded to kill Josephine's sons in front of her and ultimately set Josephine and her daughter free. Upon arrival at her birthplace, Josephine and her daughter were met with antagonism, though. Neighbours viewed Josephine as a traitor for having married a Tutsi man, and threatened her daughter's life because the community identified her as a Tutsi.

It was during her stay at her birthplace that Josephine was targeted and raped by Hutu militias. She describes her experience as follows.

Josephine: When the militias knew that I was around, they came saying they wanted to see the woman who married a Tutsi. They raped me and told me that I should be there for them to have sex whenever they want, that I was no longer anyone's wife, but a sex object as punishment for marrying a Tutsi.

(Appendix D, page 1)

What stands out to me from this piece of Josephine's narrative is the inversion of the rape/marriage narrative that the militiamen used with a victim of their own ethnicity. Instead of claiming her as a wife—as the case with Josette, Charline, and Valerie who are Tutsi—the militias discursively dismantle Josephine's identity of wife. As I have mentioned previously, Rwandan cultural norms have constructed wifeness as a highly-desirable identity imbued with an elevated status within society (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008; Kantengwa, 2014). Therefore, when the militias tell Josephine that she is no longer anyone's wife, they denigrate and strip her of a cherished identity, discursively positioning her as a woman of less value in society. Furthermore, through the act of gang rape and branding Josephine as their sex object, the militia physically and morally debase her. Broader patriarchal discourses posit that—as an extension and maintenance of power—men need to dominate and control women. One of the ways to achieve this is through sex. The institutionalised ideology of patriarchy has therefore made the sexual objectification and dehumanisation of women possible and permissible (LeMoncheck, 1997).

In order to unpack the militias discursive positioning of Josephine, I draw on the work of eminent scholar Martha Nussbaum. In examining people's treatment of other human beings as objects, Nussbaum (1995) proposed seven features of objectification. I have found four of these features particularly useful in my analysis: violability, the denial of subjectivity, the denial of autonomy, and inertness (Nussbaum, 1995: 157). Violability speaks to the permissibility of violating another's boundaries, treating the 'object' as if they possess no boundaries. In the denial of subjectivity, the 'object' is treated as "something whose experience and feelings ... need not be taken into account" (Nussbaum, 1995: 157). Denial of autonomy constructs the objectified person as lacking any self-determination, and inertness

deems the ‘object’ as devoid of agency. All of these features are present in the way the militias treated and narratively constructed Josephine.

Broader patriarchal discourses have permitted men to disregard women’s boundaries and sanction the violation of women. Through the act of rape, the militias violate Josephine’s physical, mental, and emotional boundaries, humiliating and shaming her in a social context that severely stigmatise rape victims (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). In declaring Josephine a sex object “that should be there for them to have sex whenever they want” (Appendix D, page 1), the militia members deny Josephine of her subjectivity as a human being whose feelings and thoughts are completely discounted. Stating that Josephine should be available on command denies her autonomy and agency and renders her no more than a tool for the militias’ sexual gratification and an object over which they can exert their power. Through rape and sexual objectification, Josephine’s female body is translated into male power.

I would argue, though, that it is not only misogynist attitudes—assimilated and normalised within Rwandan cultural norms—that offered the militiamen these discursive avenues of objectification. Hutu supremacist ideology undergirding the genocide in all probability contributed to the specific targeting and sexual objectification of Josephine. The Hutu Ten Commandments (Ngeze, 1990)—a manifesto of Hutu ideology—classified any person affiliated with a Tutsi as a traitor. The media was also used as a mechanism to discursively construct Tutsis as animals or insects, most notoriously labelling Tutsis as *inyenz*⁶ (cockroaches) (Nowrojee, 1996). It would therefore follow that anyone associated with—or married to—a Tutsi would be regarded in the same light. Also, when Hutu women marry the ‘enemy’, Hutu men do not have control over them. These discourses further sanction the militias’ sexual objectification and violation of Josephine. Raping Josephine, in my opinion, would therefore not only function to sexually subjugate her as a woman, but also to punish her as a perceived traitor of Hutu ideology and emphasise their regained control over her.

⁶ Literal translation: cockroaches. The term was originally used to describe Tutsi rebels who attacked at night. During the anti-Tutsi propaganda campaign leading up the genocide, the term was used to label all Tutsis.

Josephine continued her narrative in the following way.

Josephine: As a result of those rapes, I got pregnant and later I gave birth to that girl.

Because I reported these people in Gachacha, my family does not accept me. They say I should have kept quiet, but I couldn't keep quiet. They killed people in broad daylight when I was watching, when everybody else was watching. I am one of them (Hutu), but I'm not embarrassed to say that the Hutus are beasts ...

My neighbors [sic] are not friendly. They attack my house every day. They say I'm stupid, that the Tutsi bewitched me. They ask how I could report what the Hutus did as if I were a Tutsi myself, how I could do this in addition to sleeping with the Tutsis and giving birth to their children. Despite this, I don't regret having married a Tutsi ...

I think God gave me the gift of being tolerant. The world should learn to respect all people when they consider what I went through, my being led to slaughter as if I were an animal just because I married into a certain ethnic group. God created each one of us differently, but we should learn to live together and to respect each other. Just in case I don't live, I want my children to remain with these words: Be friendly. Love one another. Learn to be patient just like I have been patient in the trying moments of this world.

(Appendix D, page 1)

Two aspects from this piece of Josephine's narrative particularly strike me. Firstly, the particular discourses that Josephine's family and neighbours chose to prioritise in positioning her. Secondly, Josephine's resolute acts of agency and resistance amidst hostility and social rejection.

Since traditional Rwandan norms place such emphasis on the dishonour of female rape victims, I would have expected Josephine's family and neighbours to draw mainly from gender discourses that disgrace and shame rape victims (Mukamana & Collins, 2006). Against my expectation, though, Josephine did not recount any stigmatisation as a result of being raped or having a child from rape. Instead, her family and neighbours focused on discourses of belonging/not belonging in narratively constructing a stigmatised identity of Josephine.

Belonging, Yuval-Davis (2006b) asserted, is a social construction that speaks to emotional attachment, and is presented as natural. Elaborating on this assertion, Butler and Spivak (2007), as well as Ann-Dorte Christensen (2009) posited that belonging also inherently implies not belonging, since belonging denotes both inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, by

defining who belongs, those who do not belong are also defined. The boundaries of belonging are perpetually in flux, though, continuously shifting and contested (Yuval-Davis, 2010). This shifting nature of belonging is clearly demonstrated in this excerpt from Josephine's narrative.

Although Josephine declares herself as belonging to the Hutu group—"I am one of them (Hutu)"—her family and neighbours discursively relegate Josephine to the margins of the Hutu in-group. Josephine recounts how her family has rejected her for denouncing her rapists at Gacaca⁷—a traditional Rwandan community court system used in the aftermath genocide (Youngblood-Coleman, 2014). It is not clear from Josephine's narrative how long after the genocide she testified against her rapists. Gacaca courts came into operation in 2002 (Richters & Kagoyire, 2014). At minimum, Josephine testified seven years after the genocide. Family and neighbours still stigmatised and rejected Josephine so many years after the massacres. This indicates the lasting effects and the ongoing nature of trauma within Rwandan society, reiterating the findings of Allison Reid-Cunningham (2008) that the effects of war rape do not stop when the act of rape ends. In my opinion, Josephine's family may have placed greater value on loyalty to the Hutu in-group than on discourses of justice, morality, or even sexual chastity. Josephine further describes how her neighbours attack her house daily, calling her stupid and bewitched. Her neighbours therefore use violence and labelling to publically marginalise, demean, and demonise Josephine, dismissing her from the in-group.

In exploring these nuances of belonging, a specific phrase drew my attention. Josephine recalls that her neighbours asked how she could report the rapist "in addition to sleeping with the Tutsis and giving birth to their children." Notice the subtle nuance in this phrase. Josephine's neighbours do not say she slept with a Tutsi (singular)—who was her legal husband. Her neighbours said she slept with Tutsis (plural). Also, by declaring that she gave birth "to their children", her neighbours probably imply that she had children with multiple Tutsi men, rather than children with her husband. I would argue that this use of the plural form may serve to depict Josephine as sexually loose. To do so in the Rwandan context is to insinuate that Josephine is similar to a prostitute—someone who is dirty and morally deplorable (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008).

⁷ Traditional tribal system of justice. The practice was revived in the aftermath of the genocide when the criminal justice system was not able to cope with prosecutions.

Despite being sexually violated and objectified by the militia, and marginalised and stigmatised by family and neighbours, Josephine refuses to accept these constructions of subjugation. As rape victim, Josephine took up the power of her voice to denounce the rapists at Gacaca—even in the face of rejection by her family and violence and stigmatisation by her neighbours. Josephine agentically holds on to her moral self that guides what she believes is right and wrong, reflected by her words, “... I couldn’t keep quiet. They killed people in broad daylight ...” Josephine therefore testifies to the atrocities of the Hutu militia while simultaneously acknowledging her victim status when she refers to “being led to slaughter as if ... an animal”. Josephine draws strongly on her faith in God and religious teachings in the last part of her narrative, referring to her tolerance as a gift from God, and advocating for mutual respect and love between people despite their differences.

In order to more deeply understand the significance of Josephine’s agency and resistance, it is important to take broader discourses on war rape into consideration. Scholars such as Ruth Seifert (1996), Claudia Card (2003), and Allison Reid-Cunningham (2008), among others, posit that one of the main functions of war rape is the destruction of culture. Women are specifically targeted because they play a central role in holding families and the community together. Through sexual attack on the females of a target group—and females who affiliate with the target group, such as Josephine—the aim is to destroy family, community, and culture (Seifert, 1996; Card, 2003; Reid-Cunningham, 2008). Considering the actions and attitudes of Josephine’s family and neighbours, this aim was achieved. If one of the main goals was to destroy family, community, and cultural ties—in addition to punishing and humiliating Josephine—this was subverted by Josephine’s agency and resistance. Through drawing on religious discourses that prescribe love and respect for all, Josephine resists being alienated from a sense of family and community. Josephine maintains a worldview that supports communal harmony, reflected in her words, “we should learn to live together and respect each other.” Witnessing the slaughter of her children, losing her husband in the massacre, raped by militia, and stigmatised by family and neighbours, I would understand if Josephine held onto hatred and resentment. Josephine, however, agentically constructs herself in accordance to moral and religious doctrine, and in her role as a mother, chooses to teach and perpetuate a narrative of friendliness, love, and patience.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

NEGOTIATING ‘GOOD’ MOTHERHOOD IN THE FACE OF THE ‘UNSPEAKABLE’

"We left the child in the forest, but as we were going to get into the taxi, I didn't feel comfortable. I went to find my child and put him on my breasts again."

(Josette)

5.1 SETTING THE CONTEXT

Notable studies in the field of genocide rape conducted by scholars such as Baines (2003), Card (2003), Mukamana and Collins (2006), Nikuze (2013), and Kantengwa (2014) mention how Rwandan genocide-rape victims were often forced to choose between their family and their child conceived from rape. Unfortunately, these studies do not describe how being faced with this choice has affected the mothers or what their experiences were like. These, and other studies on genocide rape (see, for example, Seifert, 1996; Clifford, 2008; Reid-Cunningham, 2008; Farr, 2009), tend to focus on issues of stigmatisation to explain why mothers are made to choose between their family and their rape-born child. I completely agree that stigmatisation—informed by cultural and patriarchal discourses—play an integral part in creating the situation where Rwandan mothers of rape-born children are made to choose between their family and their child. However, these discussions of stigmatisation tend to focus predominantly on the male: the rapist father, paternally-derived identity, the honour of men, and the disgrace and sexual defilement of women as the property of men. Lacking from scholarship, though, is an interrogation of how social, cultural, and religious discourses collude to restrict these victims to inimical constructs of motherhood. Master narratives have constructed mothers as central to the family, venerated as life-bearers and keepers of culture. According to these discourses, ‘good’ mothers naturally possess instinctive and unconditional love for their children. When a woman becomes pregnant outside of marriage, though, dominant discourses construct her as morally loose, sexually defiled, deprived of social worth, and ‘bad’ mothers (Jefremovas, 1991; Rich, 1995). Literature has, however, failed to explore how mothers of rape-born children attempt to negotiate their subjectivity between these contradictory discourses.

Another dimension to consider when investigating the nexus of forced motherhood and forced choices within the context of genocide rape is the issue of abortion. It was surprising to me that despite the fact that many war-rape survivors openly acknowledged that they wished they could have aborted their pregnancy (see, for example, Nowrojee, 1996; Sullivan & Jammer, 1996; Survivors Fund, 2005), research seems to glance over this aspect of victims' narratives. Of importance to the discussion at hand is the fact that in addition to being forced into motherhood by means of genocide rape, legislature as well as cultural and religious norms forced these Rwandan women to carry their pregnancy to term. I therefore feel it is vital to include abortion in the discussion of forced motherhood and forced 'choices'.

In analysing the narratives of Josette and Philomena, I intend to offer a more nuanced understanding of how social, cultural, and religious discourses essentially construct mothers of rape-born children as 'bad', no matter where they choose to situate themselves discursively. Before proceeding to analyse these participants' narratives, it is important to provide a contextual overview of how dominant cultural discourses have situated Rwandan women in terms of motherhood, as rape victim, and as the mother of a rape-born child respectively. This contextual overview will help to gain a deeper insight into various and contradictory discourses through which mothers of rape-born children attempt to negotiate a more positive senses of self.

Oyeronke Oyewumi (2000: 1096)—a leading scholar in gender, feminist theory, and African studies—asserted that being a mother “is the preferred and cherished self-identity of many African women.” This is also true within Rwandan society: motherhood is regarded as a “critical social identity” instilled with “esteemed status” and therefore embraced with great pride by Rwandan women (Baines, 2003: 482; Mukamana & Collins, 2006). Rwandan cultural discourses have constructed motherhood into a profoundly-meaningful, intensely-joyful, and greatly-respected identity that bestowed women with elevated worth in society. This worth also increased with the number of children a woman—within the confines of marriage—could produce (Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013; Kantengwa, 2014). Weitsman (2008) noted that as a result, Rwandan women had around six children on average prior to the genocide—one of the highest fertility rates in the world at the time. Rwandan cultural norms promote the ideal of motherhood among girls from an early age, mentored by female family and community members in their ultimate identity as future mother (Nowrojee, 1996). Rwandan society has valorised mothers not only as bearers of life—extending the patrilineal

line of descent—but also as conduits of cultural knowledge and norms to the next generation (Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013; Kantengwa, 2014). Baines (2003: 482–483) elaborated on the valorisation of motherhood, saying that “[a]s bearers of a country’s sacred values and—literally—of its children, women are often constructed as the authentic, inner country whose purity, sexuality, and traditional roles must be secured.”

In stark contrast to this idealised construction of motherhood is the denigration of women who have been raped. Historically, Rwandan victims of rape have been subjected to severe social stigma. Over the last century, Rwandan social norms have constructed rape victims as sexually defiled and therefore unmarriageable—divesting rape victims of their social worth (Mukamana & Collins, 2006; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013). The stigmatisation and dishonour attached to rape victims often resulted in rejection by families and the community (Mukamana & Collins, 2006; Weitsman, 2008; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013). The severity of this stigmatisation becomes clear when reading the studies of De Lame (1999), and May, Mukamanzi and Vekemans (1990). Danielle de Lame (1999)—who conducted extensive fieldwork in Rwanda that stretched over a period of seven years—documented that up until the 1920s, unwed pregnant girls were customarily put to death or exiled. Cultural beliefs that condemned children born out of wedlock persisted throughout the previous century. Some of these beliefs posited that even a mere glance from an illegitimate child could result in the destruction of a family’s property, cause the death of an entire family lineage, or eradicate a hillside community (May, Mukamanzi & Vekemans, 1990; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013).

These dominant discourses on motherhood on the one hand, and the stigmatisation of rape victims on the other hand, were central to the various ways women were discursively positioned during the Rwandan genocide. Patricia Weitsman (2008) examined the politics of identity and sexual violence during the Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide, and showed how women’s value is measured in relation to her sexual chastity. The identity of a virgin is regarded as pure, since she has not had any sexual relations with a man. The identity of a mother is regarded as sacred in terms of her monogamy toward her husband. Weitsman (2008) therefore argued that a woman’s identity within this discourse is not autonomous, but positioned in terms of her sexual relationship with men. When raped, a woman’s worth is “inextricably linked to a man interposing his body onto her own” (Weitsman, 2008: 564). It is the female body that produces a nation by literally giving it life through birth. The destruction

of the female body by means of genocide rape is therefore the symbolic destruction of the group. Women are also specifically targeted because of their central role in the family and society, since they are the custodians and agents of culture in their capacity as mothers and caretakers. Since children are generally identified through paternity, women who fell pregnant from genocide rape were regarded as vessels of the enemy's children (Weitsman, 2008). Rape victims and children of war rape become physical reminders of the group's defeat and therefore become the target of social stigmatisation. Communities use stigmatisation as a strategy to shield and distance themselves from the mothers and rape-born children who are embodied memorialisers of the group's humiliation and cultural defeat (Seifert, 1996).

In conclusion: these various discourses on motherhood and the construction of rape victims—during both peacetime and armed conflict—serve as an important contextual framework for my following analysis. Before proceeding to analyse the narratives of Josette and Philomena, I would like to reiterate the broad aims and research questions of my study.

This study aims to gain insight into the different kinds of identities that mothers of rape-born children construct, and to explore how these mothers make meaning in terms of gender, victimhood, and agency. In order to inform the aims of my study, I pose the following research questions: i) What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences? ii) How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world? and, iii) Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self, and if so, what are these significant moments as narrated by the mothers?

5.2 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The Voice of Josette

In the previous section deconstructing the practice of taking 'wives', Josette's narrative provided a rich source for analysis. I will continue to draw from Josette's recollections in the following discussion. In order to pick up Josette's story from where I left off, allow me a brief recap. Josette and her sister were kept captive as sex slaves by members of the militia for an extended period of time. During their captivity, the two girls were raped daily by various men and made to wash the men's bloody clothes and weapons. Josette's sister became pregnant from the rapes and five days after she gave birth, the militias killed both

mother and child. At this point, Josette knew that she was pregnant as well, and that she was going to be killed next. Josette did not reveal how she came to be liberated from her captors, but rather continued her story by narratively jumping to the reunion with her uncle. This is how Josephine describes meeting her uncle again.

Josette: ... my uncle told me that I could only enter his house if I agreed to throw away the child. Because of how I was living—the conditions were very difficult—I complied. We left the child in the forest, but as we were going to get into the taxi, I didn't feel comfortable. I went to find my child and put him on my breasts again. My uncle said that if I was taking the child, I shouldn't come back.
(Appendix A, page 1)

Rwandan culture has constructed motherhood as a vital social identity, imbued with elevated status, and heralded as the culmination of meaning in a woman's life (Baines, 2003; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). As soon as motherhood falls outside of the boundaries of marriage, motherhood becomes a socially-objectionable identity, imbued with denigration, and branded as an attribute of a sexually promiscuous woman. Genocide-rape victims were often accused of having been complicit in their sexual assault. Community members generally reasoned that the only way these victims could have survived was if they allowed themselves to be sexually exploited (Nowrojee, 1996). Social discourses degrade these mothers even further for carrying a child 'belonging' to the enemy.

It is within these contradictory constructions of motherhood that Josephine has to negotiate a sense of self. On the one hand, Josette is expected to "throw away the child" in order to regain acceptance into the fold of her family. In other words, Josette must abandon her baby to become worthy of her position in the family again. In my opinion, expecting Josette to leave her baby for dead so that she can attain social worth again is to contradict the normative construct of maternal ties as unbreakable. 'Good' mothers do not throw away their children, but this is exactly what is demanded of Josephine. Therefore, two distinct and contradictory discourses intersect in shaping Josette's experience: the 'good' mother, and the 'illegitimate' mother.

Josephine narrates her struggle between these subjectivities. She foregrounds the difficulty of her living conditions as reason for deciding to leave her child in the forest. Perhaps Josette does this in an attempt to narrate herself in a more positive light. The fact that Josette

includes her difficult living conditions indicates the presence of what Carlson and Randall (2013) referred to as structural violence. At the time, patriarchal norms positioned Rwandan women as second-class citizens, and both legislation and custom prohibited women from attaining economic independence from men. Women were not allowed to inherit land and had to defer control of their economic resources to men placed in authority positions over them, for example their father, brothers, uncles, or husband (Jefremovas, 1991; Nowrojee, 1996; Adekunle, 2007). According to Adekunle (2007), Rwandan women were not even allowed to milk a cow or cut firewood. They had to ask their male relatives or neighbours to perform these tasks. I refer to these cultural practices and legal restrictions in order to highlight the possible situation Josette found herself in. She had no protection or financial support from a male, and she was most probably stigmatised and isolated by her community for having a Hutu's child. I would therefore argue that the intersection of gender and ethnicity greatly contributed to Josette's physical and economical marginalisation, and played an integral part in severing her from familial ties—vital to a person's interdependent sense of self within the African context.

Ultimately, Josette narrates that she could not leave her baby behind, though. Josette recalls that as she got into the taxi to leave, she “didn't feel comfortable”. She fetched her baby and put him on her breast again. This is a significant moment in Josette's life from which she could not turn back. By choosing her child, Josette agentically takes up the identity of mother, but simultaneously relinquishes her family. As Josette recalls this experience, she narratively positions herself as good mother, but it is evidence of the strong contradictions that are at play during her time of narration.

Josette continues to describe her relationship with her child in the following way.

Josette: I must be honest with you; I never loved this child. Whenever I remember what his father did to me, I used to feel the only revenge would be to kill his son. But I never did that. I forced myself to like him, but he is unlikable. The boy is too stubborn and bad. He behaves like a street child. It's not because he knows that I don't love him; it is that blood in him.

(Appendix A, page 1)

Josette narratively conveys that her child represents trauma, shame, and hate for her. In doing so, Josette might be at risk of portraying herself as a 'bad' mother, though. Through Josette's

description of her efforts to force affection for her son, though, she may be attempting to position herself as good mother at the moment of telling. Josette constructs her son as “unlikeable” and says “it is that blood in him”. He is “stubborn and bad”. He behaves like a “street child”. Positioning her child in this way, Josette might be attempting to negotiate a more positive sense of self by suggesting that she is not to blame for being an unloving mother. Josette therefore agentially positions herself in a way that is not fully constructed as a ‘bad’ mother. This shows Josette’s struggle with the contradictions inherent in the multiple positions of motherhood.

An important point that I want to raise is situated in Josette’s expression of lack of love toward her child. This acknowledgement should be read within Rwandan and broader African discourses of motherhood. As I have discussed earlier, motherhood is a venerated and celebrated identity within African cultures, and central to women’s sense of self and place within society (Oyewumi, 2000; Baines, 2003; Weitsman, 2008). The mother figure has even been conflated into the trope of Mother Africa (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994) and employed to symbolically represent Rwanda as country, praised in the national anthem as “the land that gave me birth” (Habarurema & Abanyuramatwi, 1962). Motherhood has also been idealised as a source of strength for African women, and central to the conceptualisation of Motherism—an African alternative to Western forms of feminism (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994; Lewis, 2001). Literature therefore abounds with cherished and venerated images of the ‘good’ mother within the African context. I could, however, not locate any literature that spoke of African women’s negative experiences of motherhood—except studies on mothers of rape-born children. Could this perhaps indicate that African constructs of motherhood are unquestioningly regarded as a positive, joyful experience for all African women? Or has positive construct of motherhood been so deeply entrenched that it leaves little room for alternative experiences of motherhood? Indeed, as Sara Ruddick (2001: 189) observed, the “idealized figure of the Good Mother casts a long shadow on many actual mothers’ lives.”

Therefore, to actually voice one’s hatred or lack of love for one’s child within these profoundly- and profusely-positive constructions of motherhood is, in my opinion, a tremendous act of agency. In expressing her inability to like or love her child, Josette situates her subjectivity and lived experience in opposition to master narratives of motherhood, and actually voice the ‘unspeakable’.

While I was reading Josette's narrative, I found myself judging the uncle, though. How could he deny her abode and seemingly callously reject her—a young, pregnant rape victim and family member—especially in the aftermath of such trauma? I realised that my reaction, in turn, reveals my own entrenched norms and beliefs. I am a white, Afrikaans, middle-class Western woman with a post-graduate education who has never experienced armed conflict. Although I have been brought up within a conservative culture and a household guided by patriarchal principles, pregnancy outside of marriage on my part might have been met with shock and disappointment but not rejection. In the early 20th century, my fate would probably have been quite different and I might have been shunned to an institution for unwed pregnant girls, but I would not have been put to death. As a child, I lived a very sheltered life and as far as I knew, rape did not even exist—and neither did my friends. I can therefore not even guess what my parents' and community's reaction would be if I would have been raped and fell pregnant as a result. I do believe, however, that my parents and family would have rallied around me. I also believe, though, that such an event would have been shrouded in silence and secrecy beyond close relatives.

It was at this point in struggling with my own bias that I came to more fully understand Nicola Gavey's (2011: 185) acknowledgement of feminist poststructuralism as a "sympathetic theoretical ally" that may help us to make sense of some of our predicaments. Gavey (2011: 185) went on to say that a feminist poststructuralist approach "not only tolerates but also expects" complicated and conflicting desires and motivations. Models of rationality, Gavey (2011) went on to say, do not cope well with these complexities and contradictions. It is with a deeper appreciation for this 'sympathetic theoretical ally' that I could approach my analysis with a better understanding of how dominant discourses govern our behaviour in often complex and contradictory ways. In the case of Josette's uncle, I could more fully appreciate that he probably had to grapple with several powerful and opposing discourses that dictated his behaviour in culturally-normative ways. Patriarchal norms have constructed women—and their sexuality—as the property of men. It therefore follows that men in a patriarchal society, such as Rwanda, would consider sexual assault as an offense against the victim's male family members rather than an offense against the victim herself (Das, 2008; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008; Reid-Cunningham, 2008). When taking these discourses in consideration, the behaviour of Josette's uncle would be consistent with the dictates of Rwandan cultural norms when he discursively positioned Josette and her pregnancy as dishonourable and demanded that she abandon her child. Broad patriarchal

discourses also posit that identity is transmitted through the father's blood, and as Weitsman (2008: 566) asserted, "the identity of the war babies is inextricably linked to their rapist fathers", even when the identity of the rapist/s is not known. Josette's uncle therefore probably drew on these discourses of ethnic and paternal identity when he forced Josette to choose between her family and her child.

The Voice of Philomena

At the start of the genocide, Philomena was thirteen years old and just entered secondary school. Philomena and her family hid in their house for several days. Eventually the militia discovered them and proceeded to kill her father and brothers. Philomena described how the militia gathered her mother, her sister, and herself in the sitting room and proceeded to gang rape each of them. Afterwards, the rapists took Philomena to their militia headquarters where they kept Philomena captive as a sex slave for two months. With the news that the massacre has ceased, Philomena somehow made her way back home. This is how she continues her story.

Philomena: My elder sister was there [at home], but my mother was in Gitarama [one of the former twelve provinces of Rwanda situated in the centre of the country]. When she returned, she said I looked pregnant. At that time, we were free to abort a child of a militiaman. But my mother said, "No, I am Christian. I can't allow you to kill. Just bear with it. It will be your child, and you will love it later."

Today, I have a big challenge: I am a mother but feel unwilling to be a mother.

(Appendix E, page 1)

Although Philomena does not articulate her wish to have an abortion in this part of her narrative, it becomes clear later on that she did consider it. Philomena sets up a strong tension between herself and her mother on the subject of abortion. On the one hand, Philomena indicates that she might have gone through with the abortion if she had the opportunity. On the other hand, Philomena narrates her mother's opposition to abortion rooted in a strong Christian belief system. Philomena reveals feelings of deep ambivalence toward the subjective identity of motherhood. Firstly, Philomena was forced into motherhood as a result of rape. Secondly, she was forced to become a mother by being denied the opportunity to abort. Thirdly, it is expected as natural and inevitable that Philomena will 'love the child later', since dominant discourses have constructed mothers' love for their child as instinctive and unconditional (Rich, 1995). As Oyewumi (2000: 1097) pointed out, the bond between

mother and child is “conceived as natural and unbreakable” within the African context, and Sarah LaChance Adams (2014: 4) added that maternal love has become a pre-given fact attributed to “the essence of motherhood” or “maternal instinct”. These dominant discourses, however, do not reflect Philomena’s lived experience. Philomena admits that, although she is a mother by virtue of having given birth, she feels unwilling to take up the social identity and cultural expectations attached to the construct of motherhood.

Philomena’s struggle with motherhood speaks directly to the argument made by Andrea O’Reilly (2014). O’Reilly posited that motherhood should be included in theories of intersectionality in the same way as race, class, and gender, for example. “Mothers,” O’Reilly (2014: no pagination) explained, “do not live simply as women, but as mother women”, and should therefore be considered as an interlocking system that has the potential to both oppress and empower. Regarding the way in which Philomena narrates her identity as mother, I would argue that motherhood may indeed intersect with gender, ethnic, and religious systems of power in constituting Philomena’s subjectivity. According to my interpretation, acknowledging that she is unwilling to be a mother but can however not escape the subjective position, Philomena reveals motherhood as a system of oppression in her lived experience. For Philomena, motherhood intersects with gender and ethnicity in ways that subjugate and oppress her as a female, as a mother, and as a target for rape. Religion also intersects with these systems of power to oppress Philomena in denying her the right to choose if she wanted to continue with the pregnancy. All these systems have therefore worked together in a powerful way to shape Philomena’s lived reality.

Philomena describes her experience of motherhood in the following way.

Philomena: I don’t love this child. Whenever I look at this child, the memories of rape return. Whenever I look at her, I imagine those men holding my legs open. I understand that she is innocent, and I try to love her, but I fail. I don’t love her like a mother ought to love her child ... I have asked God to forgive me. Maybe, with time, I will love this daughter of mine. But for now, no. Sometimes, I regret not aborting; other times, because she is the only daughter I am going to have in my life, I don’t regret it.

(Appendix E, page 1)

Philomena’s statement, “I don’t love this child,” defies the archetypal construct of the ‘good’ mother. The ‘good’ mother joyfully embraces motherhood with an unending love for her

child (Rich, 1995; Abrams, 2015). To admit to not loving one's child would be to admit to being an aberration, to give voice to the 'unspeakable' similar to Josette. To acknowledge that she does not love her child, Philomena agentically situates herself in opposition to Rwandan practices and norms that groom girls from a young age to look forward to motherhood as a culmination of a female's personhood. Perhaps in an effort to resist fully taking up this oppositional position, Philomena explains the reason for her lack of love. Philomena narrates how her child is a physical reminder and manifestation of the horrific trauma she experienced and therefore emphasises her position as a victim. It suggests a constant returning of the trauma and Philomena seems to construct herself as victim experiencing this constant trauma. Through describing the image of her legs being held open by her rapists, Philomena might be morally protecting herself—she cannot be judged for not achieving the position of 'good' mother. Narratively positioning herself in this way, Philomena takes up agency in her construct of identity. Considering the historical and cultural context in which the genocide took place, I would understand if Philomena constructed her child as belonging to the enemy and therefore blameworthy for Philomena's lack of love. This is not the discourse that Philomena follows, though. Philomena asserts that her daughter is innocent. Comparing herself to the idealised construction of the all-loving mother, Philomena narrates herself as having "failed" since she does not love her child as a mother "ought to", hoping this might change some day.

Philomena narrates that at times she regrets not having had an abortion, and at other times she does not. On the one hand, Philomena experiences motherhood as a system of oppression in her life—setting an ideal that she feels she cannot attain. On the other hand, Philomena also regards her forced motherhood as the only chance she would be afforded to have a child and be a mother. Patriarchal norms within Rwandan society have constructed women who are no longer virgins as 'unmarriageable', since she has been defiled sexually and therefore not worthy of the social status of wife. Mothers of illegitimate children are regarded as shameful and a disgrace for their families as well as potential in-laws (Weitsman, 2008; Zraly, Rubin & Mukamana, 2013). Mothers of genocide-rape children therefore had limited opportunities to get married and have other children. Shifting between regrets not only displays Philomena's complex feelings of ambivalence toward her subjective position as mother, but also suggests the deep troubles that these women face in their role of mothering a child born of rape.

I would like to reflect on Philomena's statement at the beginning of her narrative, mentioning that women were free to abort a child of a militiaman at the time of the genocide. From a judicial point of view, abortion was illegal in Rwanda at the time and I could not find any documentation that support Philomena's statement. It was only in 2012 that some exceptions were included in the Rwandan penal code that permitted the performance of a legal abortion. The requirements set for these exceptions still make it near impossible for most women in Rwanda to legally abort (Kane, 2015). Authors such as Nowrojee (1996), and Hogwood et al. (2014) noted, though, that Rwandan women seeking to terminate their pregnancy from genocide rape resorted to illegal methods such as clandestine procedures or self-induced abortions. However, in my opinion, even in the event of an illegal abortion, the severe social stigma attached to such an act would not temporarily lift the cultural embargo, rendering victims 'free to abort'.

Why would Philomena say this, then? One possible explanation might be located within the interview setting itself. Was Philomena perhaps attempting to position herself in a more positive light for the interviewer, Jonathan Torgovnik? Considering the legal and cultural ban of abortion in Rwanda during the 1990s, I propose that Philomena might be attempting to justify her having contemplated abortion by stating that victims were free to do so at the time. Philomena may therefore be trying to normalise abortion during the genocide and perhaps in doing so, attempted to normalise considering abortion. Another—or additional—factor may be the draconian way in which anti-abortion laws have been enforced in Rwanda. According to Gillian Kane (2015), a large number of women have been prosecuted and imprisoned on abortion charges in Rwanda. Prison sentences could range from five to fifteen years. Some abortion cases have been prosecuted under the law of infanticide—carrying a life sentence in Rwanda (Umuhoza et al., 2013; Kane, 2015). In highlighting the extent of stigmatisation ascribed to abortion in Rwanda, Umuhoza, Oosters, Van Reeuwijk and Vanwesenbeek (2013) noted that even just discussing abortion was a cultural taboo. Admitting that she contemplated abortion might therefore have made Philomena vulnerable and she tried to protect herself by claiming that abortion was permissible at the time.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

This study used a secondary analysis of qualitative data to explore the ways in which Rwandan mothers of rape-born children narrate their identities. It investigated how dominant patriarchal discourses and structural violence intersect to shape the experiences of these mothers, and serve to subjugate and objectify them. The research also highlighted how the mothers agentially resist these master narratives and make meaning in terms of their gender, as well as their victim- and survivorhood. Three main research questions guided the analysis. These research questions were: i) What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences? ii) How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world (in their family/community/larger social sphere)? and iii) Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self? What are these significant moments, as narrated by the mothers? To answer these questions, I used a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework that enabled me to consider how subjectivities are discursively constructed and highlight areas of agency and resistance.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduced the study by highlighting the ubiquitous nature of war rape within a current global environment rife with armed conflict. It discussed the contextual background of the study, and provided the rationale for conducting this research. The chapter also outlined the main research objectives as follows:

- i. to explore the women's existing narratives of experience in order to gain insight into the identities that they construct, and
- ii. to investigate how mothers of genocide-rape children make meaning in terms of terms of gender, victimhood and agency.

Through exploring how Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children narrate their sense of self and relationships with others, we are able to gain new and more nuanced layers of understanding of their identities. Not only may such knowledge enable context-specific support structures, but may also open up avenues for transformation and healing.

Chapter 2 centred on a review of the literature important in framing the study. It started by providing an overview of the historical and sociocultural context of the Rwandan genocide. This contextual overview provided information on the ethnic and gendered nature of the genocide, as well as broader patriarchal discourses that have shaped Rwandan society in gender-specific ways. In discussing violence, the chapter also highlighted the importance of taking structural violence into consideration in studies of this nature. The chapter situated the study within an African epistemology, emphasising the centrality of a communal sense of self within African societies. The review then proceeded to consider how rape discourses have been framed in terms of sexual desire versus acts of power and aggression. I discuss how gender discourses and stereotyping inform the conceptualisation of rape. Considering how war rape has been theorised and the strategic functions of war rape, I drew on the work of Susan Brownmiller (1975), Ruth Seifert (1996), Allison Reid-Cunningham (2008), Kathryn Farr (2009), and Nicola Henry (2016). I then moved on to review literature pertaining to trauma in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. The literature revealed that trauma not only manifests in psychological forms, but also in the disruption of identity constructions and the fracturing of social relationships. I concluded the chapter by looking at research that studied mothers of children conceived from war rape. These studies revealed that the main areas of focus have been on the diagnosis of PTSD through Western measurement tools, and on the parental relationship between mother and child.

In Chapter 3, I provided a description of the methodology and methods I employed in the study. I situated the study within a deconstructivist research paradigm that allowed me to interrogate how dominant discourses have shaped participants' lived experiences and lay bare underlying tensions between power, knowledge, and identity. I proceeded to discuss the feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework, drawing on the work of Chris Weedon (1997) and Nicola Gavey (1989). I highlighted the centrality of language within the poststructuralist theoretical framework and how dominant discourses organise and regulate subjectivity. I discussed how poststructuralism conceptualises subjectivity as socially constructed. I subsequently drew parallels between poststructuralist and African

conceptualisations of the self. The chapter then considered how feminism has been incorporated into the poststructuralist theoretical framework and showed the usefulness of the framework in exposing latent power hierarchies as well as possible locations for agency. This was followed by the research design. I situated the study within a qualitative epistemological approach. I offered a brief overview of secondary analysis of qualitative data and argued for the appropriateness and usefulness for adopting this method. The chapter provided a description of the data collection, explaining how I sourced the secondary data as well as the various recruitments practices and ethical procedures employed by the researchers of the primary data. I moved into the last part of the chapter by discussing the thematic narrative approach and showed why this was an appropriate and useful choice in analysing the data. I concluded the chapter with the ethical considerations of the study, demonstrating that the research adhered to official guidelines of ethical processes.

Chapters 4 and 5 encompassed my analysis and discussion of the qualitative secondary data. I gave a brief overview of some of the prominent themes that have emerged from the mothers' narratives, but showed how these themes have already been investigated by previous studies. I therefore did not want to merely reiterate the findings of these studies, but rather wanted to bring under-researched areas to light. I therefore proceeded to structure my analysis around two main themes that have not received attention within academic scholarship. In the rest of Chapter 4, I analysed and discussed the theme: *The taking of wives: When marriage means rape*. This theme centred on the practice of male militia members to claim Tutsi women as their 'wives' after having raped them. I situated this practice contextually, discussing traditional Rwandan norms regarding marriage, and patriarchal constructions that aimed to regulate and subjugate the identity of Rwandan women. I then moved on consider how powerful gender discourses have framed Tutsi women, and how these discourses have contributed to the targeting of this group. In deconstructing this theme, I analysed the voices of Josette, Charline, Valerie, and Josephine. I showed how these mothers negotiated constructions of their subjectivity along a continuum of victim- and survivorhood, and emphasised the various ways in which these mothers have both reinforced and agentially opposed dominant discourses. I also considered the texture of the mothers' relationship with their social world and revealed the complexities within these relationships that are so vital to participants' sense of self.

In Chapter 5, I continued my analysis and discussion of the second theme: *Negotiating 'good' motherhood in the face of the 'unspeakable'*. I explored how social, cultural, and religious discourses construct motherhood in contradictory ways, limiting mothers' access to attaining the identity of 'good' mother. On the one hand, master narratives construct an ideal image of motherhood, venerating women for their role as bearers of life. These discourses have constructed maternal love as natural and unconditional, and view any different experience as an anomaly. Patriarchal discourses on the other hand, shame and marginalise mothers of illegitimate children, constructing these women as sexually deviant and dangerous. I looked at how these contradicting discourses shape participants' sense of self when they are either forced to choose between their family and their child, or when these mothers are denied the option of abortion but are expected to love their child—culturally considered as belonging to the enemy—unconditionally and unreservedly. I subsequently analysed the narratives of Josette and Philomena. I showed how these mothers constantly shift between the construct of 'good' and 'bad' motherhood, attempting to negotiate a more positive sense of self amid opposing and contradictory discourses, and structural forms of violence. Despite the mothers' struggles, both displayed agency in their narratives, opposing stereotypical representations of genocide-rape victims as either helpless or hopeless.

6.3 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

Within a global context marred with civil armed conflict characterised by extreme war rape, the number of mothers of rape-born children is constantly rising. Through exploring the narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children, we can gain new and more nuanced layers of understanding of their identities. Context-specific conceptualisations and understandings of identity in the aftermath of war trauma—especially of mothers of rape-born children who often face stigmatisation and marginalisation from their communities for raising 'children of the enemy'—are essential to the development of appropriate support measures. Not only may such knowledge enable context-specific support, but may also enhance the possibilities for transformation and healing.

6.4 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The scarcity of secondary qualitative data containing the narratives of mothers of rape-born children posed a significant limit to this study. Although the research falls within a qualitative paradigm—and therefore does not seek to generalise, but rather provide thick descriptions and nuanced interpretations—a broader field of selection might have revealed additional

insights into the themes that I have discussed. A larger number of sources might also have offered additional themes that have not been explored by research before.

Another possible limitation to the study could be located within the method of secondary data analysis itself. Although I still feel that this approach was extremely useful due the sensitive nature of the topic, as I have discussed, I did miss the opportunity to explore emerging areas of interest further. A personal interview setting provides the researcher with this opportunity in the moment of telling. Perhaps the point I raised above about the scarcity of secondary data is relevant here as well. More data sets might have provided more subjective understandings and varied explorations of the relevant themes.

Since the themes that I have analysed received very little to no attention, further studies into these specific areas will aid in understanding the various subjectivities within this highly-vulnerable group in more nuanced ways. Such understandings may open new ways of supporting these mothers in contextually-relevant ways, offering mothers of rape-born children avenues of support that answer to the needs of their lived realities.

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APPENDIX A

JOSETTE

The militias came in the evening and locked us in a house. Then they said they were going to rape us, but they used the word *marry*. They said they were going to marry us until we stopped breathing. That night, my sister told me to get ready because she had already been raped. I had never known what sex was like. The militias went away in the morning and came back in the evening with clothes and machetes stained with blood. They told us to wash the clothes and machetes—that was going to be our job because they had other jobs to accomplish. They kept doing that: coming with blood-stained clothes, we would wash the clothes, they would rape us at night, and then the next day, they would go out to kill. That was the pattern of our lives.

Every morning they hit us ten times. After hitting us, we got a different man. Eventually my sister said it was too much, that we needed to commit suicide. There was a river close by that my sister heard people talking about. We went to look for it so we could throw ourselves into the river and die instead of living with torture. But when we got to the river, there were many dead bodies floating in it, and we feared going there.

My sister was pregnant at this point. I also realized that I was pregnant. I was so weak that I couldn't even walk. I had too much pain in my private parts, but that did not stop them from continuously raping me. Eventually they cut my sister, and three days later, she died. When I realized she had been killed, I knew I would also be killed. By the time they killed her, her kid was five days old. The baby was also killed.

My uncle didn't welcome me into his house. He asked me who was responsible for my pregnancy. I said if I am pregnant, then it must be the militias since many of them had raped me. He said I shouldn't enter his house carrying a baby of the Hutus and chased me away. I left, but I didn't know where to go. Later, my uncle told me that I could only enter his house if I agreed to throw away the child. Because of how I was living—the conditions were very difficult—I complied. We left the child in the forest, but as we were going to get into the taxi, I didn't feel comfortable. I went to find my child and put him on my breasts again. My uncle said that if I was taking the child, I shouldn't come back.

I must be honest with you; I never loved this child. Whenever I remember what his father did to me, I used to feel the only revenge would be to kill his son. But I never did that. I forced myself to like him, but he is unlikable. The boy is too stubborn and bad. He behaves like a street child. It's not because he knows that I don't love him; it is that blood in him.

APPENDIX B

CHARLINE

17

Smiling again after fifteen years of torture

Charline Musaniwabo

I am Charline Musaniwabo. I was born in 1976. My parents were farmers. I lived with them up to April 1994.

My life completely changed during the genocide, having been married forcibly and losing many of my family members. I was born into a family of nine children, four boys and five girls. Five siblings and both my parents died during the genocide. Four of us escaped. I did not get a chance to marry a man I loved, because I was taken by force in 1994 by a neighbour who raped and married me. I live with the three children I conceived with this man.

In 1992, genocide took place in Bugesera. In Murama and Kanzenze, people were killed. Hutus burnt Tutsi houses, but in our area nobody was killed. They only ate cows belonging to Tutsi people. Despite all of this, when the 1994 genocide started I still did not think that as many people would be killed as were indeed killed.

The genocide mayhem spread everywhere. When it began, my whole family left our house in order to look for a place to hide. I took my things and gave them to a friend of mine who was a Hutu girl so that she could keep them for me. After giving her my stuff, my sister-in-law and I went to hide at the home of our Hutu neighbour, who was a Pentecostal Church member. We stayed in his house for two days and on the third day we went to a nearby primary school, thinking that it would be a safer place. We spent two days in the school while the war violence increased. Men who were with us advised us to look for another place to hide because

things were getting worse. Since we had nowhere else to go, we took refuge in a nearby swamp where, after four days, a club of Interahamwe found us hiding there.

One of those Interahamwe took me to his parents' house. He lied to me, saying that he was going to hide me. I spent the night in that house and started to trust him. After two days, however, he began to rape me. He told me that the genocide would continue and that I should become his wife. I refused sexual intercourse with him. I continued begging him to leave me alone, wanting to go back to the swamp. He terrorized me and told me that if I went back he would kill me. I was afraid. The situation outside was bad. I stayed with him because I had no choice. It was very hard to be raped and survive. No one supported me during the genocide. A man who should have helped me violated me instead. Many women were killed by their 'husbands' who raped them once they heard that the Inkotanyi were around, but we continued to live together at his place. I did not know him before because he was new in our neighbourhood.

The most traumatic experience related to the genocide was the rape. During the fifteen years after the genocide that I lived with this rapist, he tortured me. I could not speak with him about the way my family was killed or about the death of my siblings. At each period of commemoration, I went to bed and cried until the end of the period. What was most painful is that when he found me crying he liked to tell me, "It is of no importance that Tutsis were killed."

TORTURE Volume 24, Supplementum 1, 2014

Throughout my whole life with him I was always afraid. I never felt happiness. Since the day he took me from the swamp, I expected him to kill me. During the memorial period he insulted me, as if I had no right to cry.

It was not only him who discriminated against me. Everyone stigmatized me. Survivors could not talk to me. Hutus used to tell my perpetrator that it was his own fault that he lived in poverty, because he married a Tutsi woman who was not able to cultivate.

Nobody else was allowed in our home. That man hated all survivors. He used to say that they were all witches, and that all male survivors were my husbands. He used to pour all of the local beer I was intending to sell all over my body, thus wasting it. He also hates his children, because they look like me. All of my siblings hated me too. They could not come to my house. They discriminated against me instead. They were saying that I should leave this husband. Even though my sister told me to leave the rapist, I did not do it because I did not want to become a burden to anyone. On the other side, the family of this man also disliked me. As people stigmatized me, I was afraid of attending the survivors meetings because I also stigmatized myself. I felt as though I was in jail.

In 2009, this man started to behave even worse to me because I refused to sell a plot of land which had belonged to my parents. After this he said that, because we were very poor, he was going to marry a rich woman. The situation was aggravated by the death of one of our four children. In 2010 the child fell sick and was hospitalized. The man refused to pay the hospital fees. During the week I spent in the hospital, he did not come to visit me. After the death of my child, it was my sister who paid the hospital. Coming home, when it was time to bury the dead

body of my son, his father did not want him to be buried in what he considered to be 'his' plot of land, while I owned half of it. He wanted to sell the whole plot in order to marry a rich woman. He told me that if I buried the child in his land, he would kill me just like another man from our neighbourhood had killed his wife. After I refused to bury the child in the ruins of my parents' house, I separated from this man because he was making our lives too stressful. My sister started to rent a house for me.

Throughout the whole period that I spent with this man, I suffered from psychological problems. I was living in isolation, always crying. A time came when I felt hate towards myself and towards everything else. I stopped going to church. I was depressed, living in fear and grief. I always had headaches and nightmares. I experienced *ihahamuka*, especially during the commemoration period. I was always falling ill in April, feeling like a brainless woman. I only went to commemorate once, in 2006, when we buried the remains of my brother whom I loved so much, and who died at the last minute of the genocide.

Even though I was suffering, I did not go to the hospital. I was always at home. I regained my wits after my separation from that man and after I started to join other women and collaborate with them. I was no longer in that man's prison. The separation somehow reduced the sadness and other problems I had. After separating from this man, I had my rights back, the ones I had been deprived of for fifteen years. Before, I was not even allowed to benefit from survivor support. I was told that I was not a survivor. Now separated, I am supported like other vulnerable survivors. I did not benefit from any counselling because I was not informed about which organizations provided counselling.

Through the grace of God, one woman who was my neighbour came to me. This woman, who later became a friend of mine, had completed fifteen weeks of sociotherapy. Because she had stayed near me while I was going through difficult times, I became open and shared my problems with her. She would advise me when I had problems. She became like my mother. I told her everything because she listened to me. After speaking about all my sorrows my heart was released. The deep thoughts I had about my life reduced. Before I spoke to her, I was always thinking about the rape I was experiencing and living in loneliness.

In 2011, after I separated with the rapist, I was invited by another female neighbour to join sociotherapy. Even though I accepted her invitation, I could not see any interest in going to the meeting place in Nyamata every week. During the first four weeks I was wondering why I would go to Nyamata just to cry. Once, one of our facilitators explained to us the importance of crying. I learned that when you cry, you feel your heart being released. After understanding the significance of crying, I continued to participate. After four weeks I started to like sociotherapy.

Before joining sociotherapy, I was always thinking about myself. I was always angry, and I was full of grudges. I also felt that I wanted to live alone. Surprisingly, while I was following sociotherapy, I felt changes in my whole body. The anger, thinking deeply about myself, all these symptoms disappeared. The loneliness has gone. I am no longer crying whenever, as I was doing before. Another problem which has gone is the hate towards all Hutus. During the fifteen years that I lived with the rapist, I had built a kind of hatred in my heart because of his wickedness towards me. The discussions we had in sociotherapy changed me. They

taught me to live peacefully with others. I learnt that if people sinned against me, I have to forgive them. This lesson brought peace in my heart. Being angry and bearing this hatred were gradually killing me while they, the sinners, were sleeping. I felt that I have to forgive my enemy, because forgiving brings peace to a broken heart. I did forgive, and I feel better than before because of that. Since I graduated from sociotherapy, I committed myself to do whatever I can in order to live peacefully with others in the future. And then, I have a dream of having a house. After getting a house, I will work and then develop myself further.

Although I am appreciative of sociotherapy, I do not know whether my family's slaughterers are still alive. They were in prison, but they were released after they confessed. They confessed in prison, and later also in Gacaca. That is how we learnt about the death of our mother. They described how they killed my mother when she went to fetch drinking water; they threw stones at her until she died. After they confessed, I did not see them again. I did not testify against the rapist, afraid of being called a mad woman by the public; because although my heart was full of grief and tears, neighbours considered me his wife. Gacaca is almost over by now. Those who looted our properties and those who destroyed our house paid our brother back. But the rapist is still walking around freely.

I would advise other women who have been taken by force by rapists to leave them if they experienced problems similar to mine. I liked that sociotherapy brought me together with other women and that it allowed me to trust myself and others again. Before I joined, I was like a small animal. When someone tried to do anything bad to me, I was reproducing this bad thing twice in return. I have changed now, and I love other

people. I had forgotten to smile. I am now a changed person who smiles like others and I am looking towards the future.

I encourage all women to join sociotherapy, if they have such an opportunity. If they do not have such a chance, I advise them to search for a friend who can listen to them.

APPENDIX C

VALERIE

The genocide started when I was fifteen. All the Tutsis from this area ran up the hill where the strong men from the area were resisting. We kept repelling them until April 18, when the soldiers from the presidential guard overpowered us. That day they killed many people. My two brothers were killed, my sister died, my father died, and my mother died.

When I awoke the next morning, I heard voices. My heart told me that it would be my father and mother; so I ran to see who was talking. It wasn't my parents, but people I knew, my neighbors. The militias held them captive. One militiaman asked if we had money to give them. When we gave them money, they left us alone and told us to take this road. Little did we know then that they were sending us directly into a roadblock of merciless militias.

At that roadblock, one of the militias knew my aunty. He asked me if I was related to her. When I said yes, he said he would take me to her. My aunt was very happy; she thanked him and gave him a goat for securing me. But later he came back and said he wanted me to go with him. My aunt begged him not to take me, but he said, "I take her or I kill her right here."

He started raping me from that night on for two weeks until we heard that the RPF were near the village. The militias became scared. He told me that they were going to kill us in the evening, but if I trusted him, he would save me. I didn't have a choice. He took me to a place where he had relatives, and I stayed there. When he heard that the RPF were going to take over the government, he decided to go into exile. We went to Tanzania and there, when he realized that I was pregnant, he declared that I was his wife.

I had never had sex until I was raped during the genocide. I never loved that man at all. I always feared him. Even now, when I hear people say they enjoy sex, I don't know what it means to enjoy sex. For me, sex has been a torture and I associate it with torture. As we stayed for a second year in Tanzania, he insisted that he wed me in a church. I had no alternative. When we got back to Rwanda, I went to my church and told them what happened to me and that I wanted a divorce. At first they refused. I got annoyed and wrote a letter to the chief of the big parish and told him my story. He understood me, and the church allowed me to divorce. Now I am free. I feel satisfied and have hope and faith in God and in the survivor organizations that support us. They encourage us to live positively. Whatever I do, I strive to see that my parents' killers are not going to laugh at me. Instead, they are going to see me progressing every day and keeping alive.

APPENDIX D

JOSEPHINE

I got married when I was sixteen years old to a Tutsi man. By the time genocide started, we had six children. My husband told me I should take the children and hide in my birthplace. Because I'm Hutu, we thought that maybe I would not be targeted there.

On the way, we came to a very strong checkpoint. One of the militiamen there recognized me. She said, "This one is ours (Hutu), but her children are wrong." They said that they would either kill me with my children or I could give them my children to be killed and be set free. I wanted to be killed with my children. They killed my two boys while I was watching. Then, they told me to flee with the girl, that they just didn't want to look at the boys. Another militiaman got up and said, "Why don't we kill the girl too?" He threw his machete at her. It hit her leg, but as luck would have it, another militiaman then said, "Let me go and kill the girl." He took her, but he never killed her.

When the neighbors at my birthplace saw my daughter alive, they were angry. They organized to kill her, but not with a machete this time. Instead, they put beans in her nose—four beans in each side of her nose so that they would rot there and expand her nose to look more Hutu.

When the militias knew that I was around, they came saying they wanted to see the woman who married a Tutsi. They raped me and told me that I should be there for them to have sex whenever they want, that I was no longer anyone's wife, but a sex object as punishment for marrying a Tutsi. As a result of those rapes, I got pregnant and later I gave birth to that girl.

Because I reported these people in Gachacha, my family does not accept me. They said I should have kept quiet, but I couldn't keep quiet. They killed people in broad daylight when I was watching, when everybody else was watching. I am one of them (Hutu), but I'm not embarrassed to say that the Hutus are beasts.

My neighbors are not friendly. They attack my house everyday. They say I'm stupid, that the Tutsi bewitched me. They ask how I could report what the Hutus did as if I were a Tutsi myself, how I could do this in addition to sleeping with the Tutsis and giving birth to their children. Despite this, I don't regret having married a Tutsi. It is agony and trauma to remember how my children were killed, how my husband was killed. But I think this is what gives me the courage to stand in Gachacha every day.

I think God gave me the gift of being tolerant. The world should learn to respect all people when they consider what I went through, my being led to slaughter as if I were an animal just because I married into a certain ethnic group. God created each one of us differently, but we should learn to live together and to respect each other. Just in case I don't live, I want my children to remain with these words: Be friendly. Love one another. Learn to be patient just like I have been patient in the trying moments of this world.

APPENDIX E

PHILOMENA

When the genocide started, I was thirteen and in the first grade of secondary school. We had a small bar, and my father was having a drink with friends, when all of a sudden, there was a big blast. People were wondering, is it thunder? Is it rain? A gun? We later heard the news that the president of Rwanda's plane had crashed and both he and the president of Burundi were dead. We kept the radio on, tuning into Radio Rwanda, and all we could hear was classical music, slow songs, as if it were a mourning period.

We stayed inside for some days until the militia came. They killed my father, and I knew they were going to kill my brother too. They had my mother and sister in the sitting room. They said, "We are going to have sex with you." I said "Can you please wait? After the war, I will be your wife. You can take your time." One of them said, "Who said you will still be alive when the war ends?" I kept pleading that I was a virgin. So he said, "If you are such a coward, let me show you something about it." They removed all of my mother's clothes and raped her. I looked away, but he said, "No, look here and be prepared because I want you to see how it is done. And then after this, we will come to you." They closed the door and raped my mother, one man after another. Then they raped my elder sister. Then they raped me.

Later, they took me to one of their militia headquarters, where I stayed for two months. Our life, our routine was eighty percent sex and twenty percent cooking food. We stayed on the ground floor, while the guns and weapons were upstairs. After their meetings, if a man wanted sex, he came to us. Whoever he wanted that day, he would have.

When we heard there was no more fighting, I said to myself, "Let's go and try to get home." My elder sister was there, but my mother was in Gitarama. When she returned, she said I looked pregnant. At that time, we were free to abort a child of a militiaman. But my mother said, "No, I am Christian. I can't allow you to kill. Just bear with it. It will be your child, and you will love it later."

Today, I have a big challenge: I am a mother but feel unwilling to be a mother. I don't love this child. Whenever I look at this child, the memories of rape return. Whenever I look at her, I imagine those men holding my legs open. I understand that she is innocent, and I try to love her, but I fail. I don't love her like a mother ought to love her child. I don't see a future for her. I have asked God to forgive me. Maybe, with time, I will love this daughter of mine. But for now, no. Sometimes, I regret not aborting; other times, because she is the only daughter I am going to have in my life, I don't regret it. For a long time, I really hated God. I asked myself, why did people die? Why did my family die? Why this extreme violence? Why am I HIV positive? Where was God? Why did he let it happen?

APPENDIX F

UFS ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Faculty of the Humanities

22-Nov-2017

Dear Miss Nothing

Ethics Clearance: A qualitative exploration of identity among mothers of rape-born children conceived during the 1994 Rwandan genocide: A secondary data analysis

Principal Investigator: Miss Michelle Nothing

Department: Centre for Africa Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities. I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Research Ethics Committee of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2017/0544**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted from 22-Nov-2017 to 22-Nov-2018. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours Sincerely

Prof. Robert Peacock
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of the Humanities

Office of the Dean/Kantoor van die Dekaan/Ofisa ya Dine
T: +27 (0)51 401 2240 | F: +27 (0)51 401 7363 | E: humanities@ufs.ac.za
P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa/Suid-Afrika | www.ufs.ac.za



APPENDIX G
WRITTEN CONCENT:
ANNEMIEK RICHTERS



University of the Free State

Consent to use published data

A qualitative exploration of identity among mothers of rape-born children conceived during the 1994 Rwandan genocide: A secondary data analysis

Dear Annemiek Richters

I, Michelle Nöthling, am a postgraduate student with the inter-disciplinary research unit Trauma, Forgiveness and Reconciliation Studies at the University of the Free State. I am conducting a secondary analysis of qualitative data for research for my master's degree. The focus of my study is the construction of identity among Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children. The reasons I chose to conduct a secondary analysis of qualitative data are due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the potential for re-traumatising participants, as well as to avoid over-burdening victims.

With this letter, I ask for your consent to re-use the narratives of female survivors of the Rwandan genocide contained in the article, "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors", that you authored, and published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1).

The secondary data obtained from your publication stipulated above will be incorporated into my research for a master's dissertation, with the potential of future publication in journals and conference presentations.

All the data obtained from the narratives in the article "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors", will be cited meticulously in my dissertation, and any future publications or presentations. You, Annemiek Richters, will also be given full recognition as a key contributor of secondary data for my study.

Purpose of the study

My study aims to explore narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children in order to gain insight into the identities that they construct through their narratives. I will also focus on the intersection of gender, victimhood and agency that may emerge from the mothers' narratives.

The research questions this study will ask are:

- i. What kinds of identities do Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children construct in their narratives of their experiences before, during, and after the genocide?
- ii. Are there any significant moments/turning points that have shaped their sense of self? What are these significant moments, as narrated by the mother?
- iii. How do the mothers narrate their relationships with others in their social world (in their family/community/larger social sphere)?

Procedures

I will be conducting a qualitative narrative analysis on the secondary data. One of the sources of secondary qualitative data that I will draw on is the article "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors", published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1).

A secondary analysis will enable me to recognise potentially new or previously-unexplored themes of identity that may emerge from the narratives and thereby add deeper, more nuanced understandings of women's agency without burdening participants.

I will ground my narrative analysis in a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework. Poststructuralism posits that subjects are constructed through dominant discourses – in other words, socially produced and positioned. Identity is therefore regarded as multiple, ambiguous, and constantly in flux. Employing this theoretical framework lends the study an ontological approach that enhances an African worldview that regards the self as relational and interdependent. A feminist approach also allows me to investigate participants' gendered positionality, power dynamics, and sites of agency, and will enable me to interrogate gendered scripts of patriarchy.

Potential benefits of the study

Apart from helping me to complete my master's degree, further exploration of the narratives of Rwandan mothers of genocide-rape children may contribute to new and more nuanced layers of understanding of their identities. Context-specific conceptualisations and understandings of identity in the aftermath of war trauma – especially of mothers of rape-born children who often face stigmatisation and marginalisation from their communities for raising 'children of the enemy' – are essential to the development of appropriate support measures. Not only may such knowledge enable context-specific support structures, but may also enhance the possibilities for transformation and healing.

Potential risks of the study

Latent risks may potentially reside in the study's methodology pertaining to matters of contextuality and bias. In order to address these potential risks, I propose the following strategies.

Before releasing my dissertation to examiners, I will give you, Annemiek Richters, the opportunity to read through my dissertation in order to confirm that I have represented the narratives published in the article "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors" in an accurate way. In addition, I will employ specific strategies to confront bias in my research. These strategies encompass practices of reflexivity that will include triangulation (using multiple sources of secondary data), peer review (including feedback from my supervisors), and keeping a research journal to track my own situatedness, judgement, reasoning, and emotional reactions. In line with feminist research practice, I will make these practices of reflexivity transparent throughout my dissertation.

Payment

No payment is involved in the request for or the permission to use the narratives published in the article, "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors", published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1).

Confidentiality

I, Michelle Nöthling, will duplicate any personal information of participants as published in the primary article, "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors", replicating any pseudonyms, demographic information and place names exactly as it has been published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1).

Identification of investigator

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

The primary researcher, Michelle Nöthling: 072 39 36 236 / michellenothling@gmail.com, or

The research supervisor, Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela: +27 21 808 4018 / PumlaGM@sun.ac.za, or

The research co-supervisor, Dr Samantha van Schalkwyk: +27 21 808 9742 / samanthavs@sun.ac.za.

Kind regards



Michelle Nöthling

22 September 2017

Date

Permission by Annemiek Richters

I, Annemiek Richters, hereby give Michelle Nöthling permission to re-use the narratives contained in the article "Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors", published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1) for the purpose of a secondary analysis for academic study. The data obtained from the publication stipulated above may – with full citation – be incorporated into the research for Michelle Nöthling master's dissertation, with the potential of future publication in journals and conference presentations.

(Signature)

Annemiek Richters



21-11-2017

Date

Additional Terms

APPENDIX G
WRITTEN CONSENT:
GRACE KAGOYIRE



Confidentiality

I, Michelle Nöthling, will duplicate any personal information of participants as published in the primary article, “Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors”, replicating any pseudonyms, demographic information and place names exactly as it has been published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1).

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The research co-supervisor, Dr Samantha van Schalkwyk: +27 21 808 9742 / samanthavs@sun.ac.za.

Kind regards

22 September 2017

Michelle Nöthling

Date

Permission by Grace Kagoyire

I, Grace Kagoyire, hereby give Michelle Nöthling permission to re-use the narratives contained in the article “Of death and rebirth: Life histories of female genocide survivors”, published in the 2014 edition of *Torture*, volume 24 (Supplementum 1) for the purpose of a secondary analysis for academic study. The data obtained from the publication stipulated above may – with full citation – be incorporated into the research for Michelle Nöthling master’s dissertation, with the potential of future publication in journals and conference presentations.

(Signature)

Grace Kagoyire

14/11/2017

Date

Additional Terms
