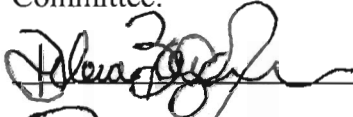


A CRITIQUE OF TESTIMONIES AND THE PRACTICES IN AN ART OF
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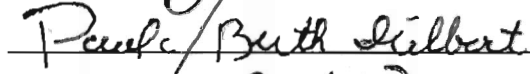
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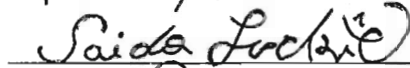
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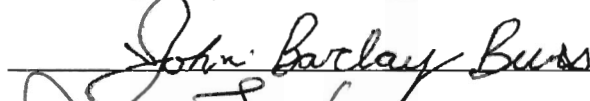
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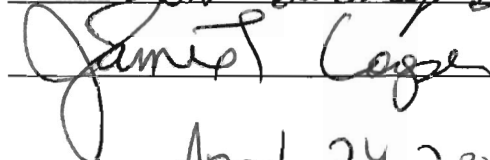
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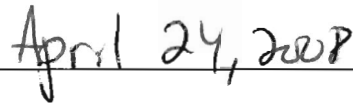


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Spring Semester 2008
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Fairfax, VA

A critique of testimonies and an art of surviving:
Rwandanese genocidal rape survivors, incest and stranger rape survivors

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts at George Mason University

By

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated and written:

for Debra – an amazing and brilliant feminist philosopher who was there to catch me when I fell in love with philosophy.

for Saida, Paula and Nancy – their patience and intelligence.

for Karel, Ingrid and Tom – their enthusiasm for life and love.

and for Alan – without my father, this thesis and life would not have seemed possible.

and many thanks to the GMU Women's and Gender Center – a home, a community and a safe space to grow intellectually.

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Abstract

A CRITIQUE OF TESTIMONIES AND PRACTICES IN THE ART OF SURVIVING: RWANDANESE GENOCIDAL RAPE, INCEST RAPE, AND STRANGER RAPE SURVIVORS

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George Mason University, 2008

Thesis Director: Dr. Debra Bergoffen

This thesis explores and critiques the ways in which testimonies of genocidal rape, incest and stranger rape, affect and are affected by community surviving practices. This thesis is written to continue discussions of subjectivity and feminism. This includes issues of sexual violence and the ethics involved in bearing witness for the individual survivor and her/his community. Within these critiques I begin to explore what it will take to create a safe space within practices of surviving. Testimony is a discourse that helps us better understand sexual violence and practices of surviving sexual violence. Testimonies confront and challenge what it means to survive and what it means to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of sexual violence. An art of surviving must recognize a fundamental need to share experience without suggesting what that shared experience must be. We are all responsible for sexual violence. We are also responsible for the burden survivors carry as we call upon her/him to bear witness to the experience of rape.

Introduction

In this thesis I distinguish testimonies of stranger and incest rape from those of genocidal rape to explore the relationship between the practices of testimonies and the art of surviving sexual violence. The use of testimonies by individuals and their communities suggests the possibilities and the limitations of diverse practices of surviving. These possibilities and limitations give shape to an art of surviving that may help us better understand how testimonies to sexual violence affect and are affected by the individual and the community. Exploring and distinguishing the use of testimonies illuminates an art of surviving sexual violence that connects survivors to survivors. The goal is to formulate strategies and alternative practices of surviving to confront and challenge the epidemic of sexual violence.

I base my analysis on survivors' testimonies because a survivor of sexual violence and the survivor's testimony are critical points of departure for understanding the relation between the individual and the community, the personal and the communal, the social and the political. Testimonies of sexual violence reveal the meaning of sexual violence for the individual and her/his community, and what it means to be survivor.

The practices of testimonies precede and exceed the experience of sexual violence and the survivors. Precede means that the socially acceptable practices of surviving come before our individual experiences of sexual violence. Exceed means two things: what is established are already in place before the survivors' experience and surpasses and may

ignore the experience; and/or, the survivor may transcend the limitations of established practices and provide new ways of understanding sexual violence.

The testimonies of sexual violence speak to a shared crisis of sexual violence at the personal, social and political levels. Critiquing the different ways testimonies of incest and stranger rape, and genocidal rape are used exposes the borders that mark and expel certain survivors from their communities, and shows us how some communities foreclose issues of responsibility.

In testimony to sexual violence a survivor shares her/his experience of sexual violation. The experience itself will never be adequately shared, for we always experience a loss when we grasp for the words that give meaning to our experiences. Despite this loss, it is important that we continue to share experiences of sexual violence. Sharing experiences is about challenging and confronting individual and social change, as well as policies and laws. This is a familiar field of research written and spoken about by feminists, activists and advocates who have dedicated their efforts and time to preventing and educating communities about sexual violence.

When the unspeakable is spoken, we should ask under what conditions and for what purpose. We should also ask what the discourse hides. This thesis poses the following questions; who emerges within the testimonies and at what cost?; how do collections of testimonies differ from one another?; what do these differences and/or similarities suggest?; what do survivors and their community gain and/or lose in these situations?; who benefits from the testimonies?

Background: Testimonies

The practice of surviving rape through testimonies reaches across our universe to address community experiences of genocidal rape. Feminists and activists alike have developed testimonial projects that provide spaces for collective voices. For example, the “National Clotheslines Project” (2008) was created in the United States in the 1990s.¹ This national project is a space that allows survivors, and friends and families of survivors to bear witness to violence against women through testimonies. The testimonies are created on shirts and hung up on clotheslines that stretch across communities, university campuses, city squares, etc. Similar projects take place across the world. Testimonies of sexual violence are collected and called upon to create a shared narrative of sexual violence. This shared narrative addresses and is addressed by the social, political and personal practices of surviving which in part is used to address the criminality of sexual violence.

Throughout this thesis I will use the term “speak/write testimony” to refer to the collection of shared narratives. Speak/write is a complicated task for any survivor, organization, activist, individual and community. The speak/write testimony is when the survivor speaks and writes her or his experience to address a larger audience. Speak/write testimony is an individual’s springboard into a collective of shared experiences. It is the challenge of sustaining the particularity of the person and his/her experience while speaking to and addressing community issues of sexual violence.

¹ “The Clothesline Project” is a National initiative to “bear witness to violence against women.” The history and contact person, as well as images of previous and current projects can be accessed from the

Sexual Violence & Rape

Sexual violence is a symptom of how communities use power and control to defend their boundaries and establish the boundaries of the other. Sexual violence is the forced act of transferring power from one body to another. This historical transfer of power has been done for centuries upon the female body, by individuals and their communities.² There are many feminists, activists and advocates against sexual violence who speak to this system of sexual violence. Therefore it is important that those against sexual violence reflect on how transfer of power may re-occur when empowering survivors through certain practices of surviving.

I use “sexual violence” rather than “rape” because rape is a limiting term when it comes to addressing the sexual violations that survivors experience. Rape is a forced physical penetration of the vaginal and/or anal opening of the body. This can be done with any physical object, bodily object or weapon. Sexual violence includes all forms and acts of violence that are of a sexual nature: emotional, psychological, economic and physical. Rape alone can not fully account for the sexual violence survivors’ experience.

Analysis: Testimonies

Throughout my research I have discovered that one art of surviving is through testimonies. The testimony includes several layers: bearing witness to the self, before,

Official National Network website. Carol Chichetto, “The Clothesline Project: Bearing Witness to Violence Against Women,” (2008).

² Susan Brownmiller (1975) and Mary Warren (1985) both discuss how sexual violence is a community issue of violence that is shared and is not for the female body (or survivor) to bear alone. Christopher Taylor (1999) also provides a similar discussion that focuses on Rwanda gender, sexuality and the genocide rape that took place. For a historical analysis of sexual violence that proceeds colonialism in Rwanda, see Vansina’s research. (See full citations in reference list).

during and after the experience; bearing witness to the experience; and, bearing witness to and for the community. Bearing witness to and for the self and the community is one practice of surviving that suggests possibilities and limitations for the survivor and the survivors' relations to the community.

Testimonies as a practice of surviving formulate the survivor through three dimensions: individual, social and political. Though each of these levels is separate, each affects and is affected by the other. For example, the individual practice of surviving is dependent upon the social and political practices of surviving. The social practices of surviving, how survivors form communities where they share their practices of surviving, and the political practices of surviving, institutional, economic and governmental implementations and changes, often ignore the individual's experience of sexual violence and her/his personal practice of surviving. Personal practices of surviving, include the physical, emotional and/or psychological impact on survivors, their loved ones and their community.

Distinguishing testimonies of stranger, incest and genocidal rape also requires important feminist philosophical analysis. In chapter one I explore feminist discussions of self and subjectivity. This chapter begins to suggest how to explore the use of testimonies and what it may take to ethically respond to sexual violence through testimonies and other practices of surviving. Within this philosophical discussion I also explore the complex relationships and separations between the individual survivor and the community of survivors. Analysis of individual testimonies in relation to community

testimonies begins to suggest the weaknesses and strengths of different types of testimonies.

In chapter two I explore individual testimonies and the spaces in which they emerge. Susan Brison's (2003) rape testimony and my incest testimony continue the discussion of self and subjectivity. I explore Brison and my testimonies prior to the Rwandan testimonies for the following reasons: I can only speak for myself and my experiences; I repeat Brison's testimony to challenge the individualization of her testimony and continue to put her experience into shared conversation; our testimonies, particular and different, together, share a similar struggle. They speak to the issue of community responsibility and expose the limits of our practices of surviving.

In chapter three I provide a brief background of the Rwandan genocidal rape and review the Rwandan, African and international community responses. In my analysis, I explore excerpts of testimonies and full testimonies of Rwandan survivors of genocidal rape that have emerged since 1994. I have provided an appendix where I contextualize the excerpted testimonies within the reports which cite them. This provides the reader an opportunity to critique my interpretation of the excerpted testimonies and shows how the survivors' testimonies are used. I also work with an archive of news articles to show how the use of Rwandan testimonies presumes a gap between issues of sexual violence in the U.S. and Africa.

My goal in this analysis is to show how Rwandan survivors and their experiences are different than Brison and mine. These differences suggest that the practices of surviving for Rwandan survivors are mandated by the local and

international community and their political practices of surviving. The Rwandanese survivors show the possibilities and limitations of surviving in the aftermath of genocidal rape and that current practices of surviving may or may not listen to the survivor and what surviving means for them.

Concluding my analysis with the Rwandanese survivors' testimonies also continues to show the reality of sexual violence. Testimonies of sexual violence show how the individual and community experience sexual violence in everyday life, whether past, present or future. Experience of sexual violence and testimony of sexual violence are not just about victims and survivors, but about a community experience. Putting together different experiences and testimonies of sexual violence, incest, stranger and genocidal rape, will better help us formulate alternative practices of surviving and show that sexual violence knows no boundaries but that each experience of sexual violence is different.

In examining the art of surviving through testimony I analyze the challenge of acknowledging difference and uniqueness in the experience itself, while also building collections of testimonies that hold the community responsible and accountable for the pervasive sexual violence that stretches across our globe.

As of now, collections of testimonies have not succeeded in putting an end to sexual violence. Is this because of 'how' they address survivors and their communities? The universal issue of sexual violence and the questions we are left asking is why it is important to continue to critically analyze the ways testimonies are collected. We must pose the following questions: what is the purpose of gathering testimonies of rape?;

whose obligation is it to provide testimonies of rape?; who are the testimonies for?; what do survivors and their community gain and/or lose in the collection of testimonies? A critique of the art of surviving rape challenges us as we continue to define what it means to survive, to heal, and to live in the aftermath of rape, as both an individual and as a community.

Understanding the Practice of Testimony as an Art of Surviving

Surviving is a necessary experience in the aftermath of any kind of crisis and a process that every survivor and her/his community undergoes. In turning to Judith Butler's (2005) "aesthetics of the self" or what I refer to as an art of surviving, I examine the personal, community and political practices and the ways in which they either effectively contribute or impede the art of surviving:

A practice of critique [...] exposes the limits of the historical scheme of things, the epistemological and ontological horizon within which the subjects come to be at all. To make oneself in a way that exposes those limits is precisely to engage in an aesthetics of the self that maintains a critical relation to existing norms. (Butler *Giving An Account of Oneself* 17)

One practice in the art of surviving is the testimony—speak/write of experience. Testimony, while spoken by the survivor is also contained, restrained, mobilized, translated, and healed by community practices of surviving. Community practices of surviving are social groups formed by survivors and institutional, economic and governmental notions of surviving. My analysis of the use of testimony critiques this practice of surviving in a way that "maintains a critical relation to" the horizon that gives surviving and survivor meaning (Butler 17).

Testimonies as an art of surviving, suggests a horizon in which we begin to see and hear what it means to survive and who, or what survives. An art of surviving rape is a horizon that we may not have thought needed critiquing, because its goal is to end injustices, promote human rights, to empower and give voice to those who have been silenced. An art of surviving is a space in which possibilities for surviving emerge. Therefore, this space is in need of constant critique so that life is continuously open and free to all types and kinds of survivors. A survivor deserves a life the survivor chooses as well as a space to reflect on what surviving means to the survivor and her/his community.

Analyzing a survivor's testimony of sexual violence is critical for understanding the relation between individual and community. I will make one important claim throughout this thesis: if the practice of surviving through testimonies is necessary, then the collection of testimonies, gathered and distributed, must be done in a manner that creates a community of voices speaking to each other. These voices speak to a shared responsibility, whether it is an individual experience of rape or a community experience of genocidal rape. We are all responsible for genocidal rape, stranger rape and incest rape. Recognizing this responsibility, we can prevent further atrocities.

Chapter 1. Subjectivity and Subject

Collections of testimonies from survivors of sexual violence emerge within current conversations of subject and subjectivity. To understand how the experience of sexual violence is translated. I explore notions of the self, giving an account of that self, and the coiling of the self and community that gives shape to the survivor and her/his art of surviving.

This chapter draws on the work of Julia Kristeva (1997) and Judith Butler (2005). Kristeva and Butler come from different philosophical backgrounds. Kristeva is a psychoanalyst. Butler is a political feminist and queer theory philosopher. Both theorists provide theories of the subject and subjectivity. Placing these theories in dialogue illuminates the relationship between the individual's testimony and her/his community. Kristeva's discussions heighten the importance of listening to the unfolding of the individual.³ Butler's discussions suggest that the individual is inseparable from the community.⁴ Together they suggest that we have a responsibility when addressing survivors' testimony to sexual violence that cannot be separated from our sense of self and our community.

³ My use of Julia Kristeva's concepts can be found in Kelly Oliver's translation and collection of Kristeva's works: Kelly Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

⁴ I have explored numerous works of Judith Butler. Each of these books continues with conversations of subject/subjectivity and situation of address. Butler's theory begins to set the stage for how to analyze collection of testimony as a situation of address. What does it mean to address and be

Literature Review: Bearing Witness and Testimony

Testimony to an experience of sexual violence is what Kelly Oliver in Beyond Witnessing (2001) calls “bearing witness.” Oliver states that practices of bearing witness (re)establish borders—invisible/visible, recognition/misrecognition, or voice/silence. She argues that bearing witness is “connection[s] and relationship[s]” that “presume” to “bridge” an “abyss”; the ones that have always connected the “I” and “we” to the “other”:

Only if we imagine ourselves forever cut off from others and the world around us do we need to create elaborate schemes for bridging the gap. We create an impossible problem for ourselves by presuming to be separated in the first place. By presuming that we are fundamentally separated from the world and other people by the void of empty space, we at once eliminate the possibility of connection and relationships even while we make desperate attempts to bridge that abyss. (Oliver 12)⁵

Exploring survivors’ testimonies of sexual violence through theories of subjectivity illuminate the connections that have always been there.

Giorgio Agamben⁶ in Remnants of Auschwitz (2002) examines the complicated structure of testimony that connects the survivor and testimony:

The survivors bore witness to something that it is impossible to bear witness to. As a consequence, commenting on survivors’ testimony necessarily meant interrogating this lacuna, or more precisely, *attempting to listen to it* ... (Agamben 17; my italics)

addressed? Judith Butler: Undoing Gender (2004); Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence (2004); and, Giving An Account of Oneself (2005).

⁵ Kelly Oliver in Witnessing: Beyond Recognition (2001) explores conversations of bearing witness and suggests that what is missing is this assumed separation between self and other. Her theoretical exploration begins to suggest a new ethics and develops new modes of responsibility and bearing witness.

⁶ Giorgio Agamben looks at “witnessing” and the archive in his analysis of Auschwitz. All quotations that I will be using by Giorgio Agamben will be from this specific research and account of witnessing: Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive (New York: Zone Books, 2002).

Oliver and Agamben begin to suggest the complexity and danger in bearing witness, or the term I use, “giving testimony.” Oliver suggests that testimonies are necessary, but that the necessity must be careful not to assume separations and (re)establish borders between self and other. For example, certain practices of surviving suggest that the testimonies of incest, stranger and genocidal rape are separate even though sexual violence knows no boundaries and borders. Some practices establish borders of self (read: stable survivor) from other (read: unstable survivor). This presumption, who is and is not stable, risks marking certain individuals and communities as the other.

Agamben also suggests that one must interrogate the lacuna while recognizing it is complicated and difficult. For Agamben the importance of the testimony is its structure: “the issue [...] is not, of course the difficulty we face when we try to communicate our most intimate experiences to others. The discrepancy in question concerns the very structure of testimony” (12). An attempt to listen to the lacuna—experience and articulation of that experience—is an analysis of testimonies that differentiates “listening to” from “listening for.” To have something you are listening for, is already to know what “it” sounds like. As Agamben points out, any attempt to listen is to attempt to listen to impossibility. To listen for something means that it is not silent; it is already there. To listen for follows a mapped process of listening that may or may not truly hear the process which it maps.

For example, there are many feminist and activists which seek to “break the silence.” To break the silence is about listening for that which is/has been silenced.

Therefore what is silent, something that is already there, is a something they are listening for. This suggests it is important to analyze collections of testimonies and reflect on who or what emerges. As Agamben asks, how can a subject account for its own ruin? And, therefore, “who” is speaking? (142).

Kristeva

To interpret Kristeva I work through her language to capture her “imaginative and drifting open wound” (Oliver 1997; 176-78). This imaginative and drifting open wound is where we work through conversations of subject and subjectivity. Each of Kristeva’s works deals with subject and subjectivity in innovative and radical ways. Her concepts, the absent maternal body, abjection, uncanny strangeness, and subject-in-process, suggest how primary experience (read: sexual violence) is attached/reattached to the affect of secondary experiences (read: testimony of rape). Similar to Oliver’s quotation above, Kristeva argues that the relationship and connection between experience and testimony must remain an imaginative and open wound.

I begin with Kristeva’s “Black Sun.” The black sun suggests the complexity in giving testimony and the precarious attempt when translating experience of sexual violence into testimony. The black sun is the being that bears witness to instability (read: experience of rape) in the face of stability (read: testimony). The survivor works through the meaningless and meanings in the structure of testimony while bearing witness to experience:

Black Sun [...] For those who are wracked by melancholia, writing about it would have meaning only if writing sprang out of that very melancholia. I am trying to address an abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief that at times, and often on a long term

basis, lays claim upon us to the extent of having us lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself. Such despair is not a revulsion that would imply my being capable of desire and creativity, negative indeed but present. Within depression, if my existence is on the verge of collapsing, its lack of meaning is not tragic – it appears obvious to me, glaring and inescapable [...] the wound I have just suffered [...] all of this suddenly gives me another life. A life that is unlivable, heavy with daily sorrows, tears held back or shed, a total despair, scorching at times, the want empty [...] I am a living death, my flesh is wounded, bleeding, cadavarized, my rhythm slowed down or interrupted, time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow [...] Absent from other people's meaning, alien, accidental with respect to naïve happiness, I owe a supreme, metaphysical lucidity to my depression. On the frontiers of life and death, occasionally I have the arrogant feeling of being witness to the meaningless of being [...]" (Kristeva *Black Sun* 180)

A testimony of sexual violence speaks to this life of melancholia. Any testimony bears witness to the black sun, the meaningless of being, and stands on the frontiers of what it means to survive. Somehow that which is a “noncommunicable grief” (Kristeva 180), or what Agamben calls the impossible, is communicated and made possible by the structure and collections of testimonies. Therefore the project is listening to the survivor who speaks through the structure of testimony.

Maternal Body to Abject/Abjection

Abject as an exercising of emptiness.
~Kristeva, *Tales of Love*

Exploring the concept of abjection I first discuss what Kristeva means by the absent maternal body. The absent maternal body illustrates how word has been attached to affect and how meaningless has been structured in the absence of the maternal body. Absence suggests what is missing and what happens when we “presume separation in the

first place” (Oliver 2001, 12). Absent maternal body guides us in our attempt to explore the structure of testimony: how experience of sexual violence comes to be translated and transferred into testimony.

Kristeva locates the absent maternal body in her critique of Freud’s Oedipus Complex and Lacan’s discussion of the symbolic. The Oedipus triangle, Mother, Father and Child, is the symbolic mapping of a developing self. The “symbolic,” Kristeva states, is a “social system” that any human being is “dependent” on for “articulation” (*Powers of Horror* 257). The child must separate from the parents and articulate a self for normal development to occur. This separation is a traumatic and necessary experience. The child, to be a self, which in Freud’s and Lacan’s case is to be normal, one, whole, must function as its own person, separate from the parents.

The symbolic mapping is a strict narrative structure where one articulates oneself through what is “socially useful discourse” (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 29). This developing self parallels the structure of testimony. For example, a black sun survivor experiences meaningless in the face of meaning. To be whole, one and complete, the survivor must separate the self who experienced the rape as instability and attach oneself to a stable self. Attaching one’s instability to stability is to absorb a stable self in the aftermath of experience. Absorbing a stable self is to articulate instability through the stable structure of testimony. In the context of Kristeva’s critique, a survivor is one who separates from experience to articulate a healed and mended Survivor. Thus, communicating instability through stability is necessary for self development. This separation though necessary is also complex.

Returning to Kristeva's critique of Lacan and Freud, the focus on the child's separation, assumes that separation is the primary condition for self development. This presumption distracts us from what is missing in this social mapping process. The separation between parents and the child ignores and denies the initial connection of the child to the maternal body.⁷ By presuming that the development of self is founded on the separation from the maternal body we at once eliminate the possibility of connection and relationships.

This separation, Kristeva argues, is present in "word-presentations" (*Time and Sense* 123). Language, word attached to affect, has been built upon this denial of the primary connection. Word presentations are the desperate attempts to make meaning of the void of separation bearable without ever addressing the connections that make separation possible.

The presumed absent connection between maternal body and child's body, which is also the absent connection between word attached to affect, exposes how word is attached to affect and the assumptions that this model of self development carries. The absent maternal body suggests the denial of the body as a site for meaning. The value of meaning and self development has been located exclusively at the site of the linguistic self and its goal of separation.

Because the relation of this site to the maternal body has been ignored, the noncommunicable of experience has been forgotten, or is subordinated to the site of the

⁷ It is important to understand that Kristeva's use of the "maternal body" is not the Mother. The maternal body signifies the connection between child and parents' body(s). Who that parent may be, Father

linguistic. Acknowledging the linguistic site and the site of the maternal body, is where we can better understand how word and affect work against and with one another, where neither is more valuable than the other. Kristeva also calls this site “word flesh” (*Tales of Love* 311). Word flesh suggests that the symbolic alone is inadequate because it has only spoken of separation. For Kristeva, this means Lacan’s phallic world, or Freud’s antagonistic denial and separation between mother and son, or son and father, as the one and only social map, can be confronted and challenged.

Kristeva’s discussion of the maternal body shows an important “process of naming” that confronts and works through the symbolic order (*Time and Sense* 124). Any testimony of sexual violence is a process of naming. Testimony is about connection and separation that have always existed, as well as about surviving in the face of a Survivor (read: developed self). To ignore the process of naming is to ignore the ways in which experience is attached to testimony. And, to repress the connections and relationships between surviving and Survivor is to risk better understanding what leads to situations of sexual violence.

The survivor who stands at the frontiers of meaninglessness faces a process that precedes her, but suggests that working through this process, confronting the known with the unknown, is a space in which we can better understand how experience of sexual violence is structured and the motives in giving testimonies.

The absent maternal body exposes the absence of process and the complexity of working through word flesh. This begins to notify us of “abjection.” Abjection is “caused

or Mother, is not important.

by the disturbance of identity, system and order [...] Any crime is abject [...] because it draws attention to the fragility of law [...] heighten[s] display of fragility” (*Powers of Horror* 232). Abjection will always take place because connections and relationships have been buried underneath the symbolic (read: presumed separation). However, this does not mean we cannot explore the fragility of the social map and ask what is absent. This absence can be the site for opportunities and possibilities.

Abjection is the failure of hallucinated boundaries, separation and stability. Here the abject is important in so far as it shows that if the process of naming is not given the space to be explored further we risk re-experiencing the crime of sexual violence.

Abjection, as the “inexpressible container” (*Black Sun* 188) of the incommunicable made communicable, still finds ways of expressing itself through the symbolic:

One can understand that it [abjection] is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being that is none other than the abject. The abjection of self [is an] inaugural loss that laid the foundations of its own being [...] all abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded. (*Powers of Horror* 233-34)

Abjection suggests that any process of surviving in the aftermath of abjection is a challenge of working through the familiar—systems, law and order—in the face of loss. This begins to suggest an art of surviving whose challenge is to confront the symbolic—familiar modes of surviving, identity, system and order—and listen to the familiarly unfamiliar absence of meaning and being in the aftermath of such experiences.

I see the epidemic of sexual violence as an epidemic of abjection. To adequately address this epidemic we must examine current practices of surviving and ask, what is missing and what else can be done? “Abjection,” Kristeva says, “notifies us of the limits of the human universe” (237). It also notifies us of the precarious situation in which (re)structuring abjection can fail, again.

Uncanny Strangeness

In the face of Kristeva’s abjection, she offers a theoretical space to confront and challenge the symbolic and look beyond. “Uncanny strangeness” (*Strangers to Ourselves* 286) suggests that testimony – speak/write—must take place in a space that indicates the “weakness of language” (*Black Sun* 186)—i.e. symbolic—and emphasizes the process of naming:

The “Other” can make us feel we are not in touch with our own feelings, that we reject them or, on the contrary, that we refuse to judge them—we feel “stupid,” we have “had been...” I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container, the memory of experiences when I had been abandoned overwhelm me, I lose my composure ... (*Strangers to Ourselves* 286)

Uncanny strangeness is a shared “loss of composure” that connects “I,” “us,” “you” and the other while simultaneously exposing the connections and undoing the borders that separate us. This concept begins to shape, without foreclosing, the structure of the testimony. The survivor of sexual violence—witness to abjection—is someone whose experience speaks to us through uncanny strangeness. We cannot understand what the experience means however, given that sexual violence is a symptom of the community, an experience to which we are all connected; we can identify with survivors.

The structure of testimony is necessary in so far that it communicates the issue it is exposing. As Kristeva states, the symbolic is weak, but necessary. The art of surviving is a situation in which articulating experience must speak from a drifting and open wound. To speak from the wound is word flesh whose focus is on the process of naming by revealing what is missing.

Through this uncanny strangeness, survivors of sexual violence can speak to their shared loss. They recognize that one will never be entirely healed, and, that they will continue to experience a loss of composure. Survivors, by recognizing that this loss of composure is a shared experience can together explore and sustain an openness to what is unfamiliar. Collection of testimonies and giving testimony are spaces that listen to a speaking wound – speak/write—that is strange, unfamiliar, and foreign and that allows the wound to linger as it begins to speak to this shared loss of composure. The familiarly unfamiliar wound offers us “new ways to reattach language to affect” (*Psychoanalysis of Love* 134).

Subject-In-Process

Kristeva’s subject-in-process helps us continue to address the questions of what makes up the structure of testimony, what is missing and what can be done? The subject-in-process is the potential to transform self and community in the aftermath of abjection in a space that is safe, open and given up to the imagination. It is a space of word flesh, where word and affect are reattached through new modes, and where uncanny strangeness is the foundation of surviving.

Kristeva poses the following question: “on what ground, within what material does *having* [lived experience] switch over to *being* [the subject communicating experience]” (*Tales of Love* 141)? “Having” is the experience of sexual violence and “being” is the discourse that makes up the communication and articulation of that experience. For survivors of sexual violence to bear witness and give testimony is to “incorporate the speech of the other” (*Tales of Love* 141), literally, through a language that binds and transforms, precedes and exceeds the experience through meanings outside the experience/wound. My use of the term, “material,” is specifically addressing what testimonies emerge in the practices of surviving.

Having experience and being are not the same, and something is lost as it switches from one to the other. This loss is a process of naming and a necessary lingering that “corresponds” (*Powers of Horror* 257) having to being. The correspondence is an opportunity to expand and reevaluate the ground and material in which having (lived experience of a subject-in-process) is transformed into being (“I,” or subject). The shift from having to being illuminates an important process. This process is communicating experience. Communicating includes working through and working against the symbolic. This process helps us better understand how the noncommunicable is communicated. Kristeva separates subject-in-process into unconscious experience and social structures that pressure and correspond with that experience. Here the experienced subject, “I,” is a process that is constituted through language and is dependent upon what represents that experience. Kristeva calls this situation the “economy of the enunciating subject”

(*Powers of Horror* 258) which can be read as the material that gives shape to the survivor when bearing witness through the structure of testimony.

The subject-in-process is a situation that begins to illustrate testimony. This necessity to share experience through testimony is the basic want and need to be heard, alive, noticed, and shared, as well as a process of having to being that works through as it illuminates the limitations of the structure of the testimony. Subject-in-process explores and exposes the “I” of the survivor(s) in testimonies as the Survivor is constituted and deconstituted. I capitalize “Survivor” here because a certain subject emerges. Any structure that precedes the experience will influence what Survivor develops. Kristeva’s subject-in-process suggests that any account of experience must not neglect to include the process of correspondence. This means finding new ways to reattach word to affect, allowing the wound to linger within a safe space to speak/write.

To create a safe space is a “precarious process” (*The Subject in Signifying Practice* 26) that must recognize a fundamental need to share experience without suggesting what that shared experience must be. This space is founded on relationships and connections based on strangeness. The priority for such a space is to listen to.

This then means that to give a testimony, or bear witness, must make room for an individual process. Kristeva’s concepts only begin to suggest what it may take to create this space. The individual process and its importance are something that is applicable to a community process of surviving. Kristeva states that we are not yet at the place in which experience of sexual violence can be constructively used to treat ideological issues of sexual violence. For now, the art of surviving is a “work in progress”:

When behaviors and institutions will have integrated the failure of representation not as a misfire on the part of a machine or a suffering on the individual, but as an illusion among others [...] It will remove guilt from the stable image and divest the transcendental Unity that insures its authenticity. It will actualize the seeming, the imagination. For such an open, undecidable psychic space, the crisis will not be a suffering but a sign within a framework whose truth lies in its ability to absorb seemings. I speak in favor of imagination and antidote for the crisis [...] in favor of saturating powers and counter-powers with imaginary constructions-phantasmatic, daring, violent, critical, demanding, shy [...] Let them speak [...] Imagination succeeds [...] Imagination is a discourse of transference –of love. (*Tales of Love* 176-78)

The failure of testimony to represent the Truth of sexual violence, may remove the stable image that has at its foundation shame and guilt. Testimony as a discourse of transference does not undermine the value of testimony and its seriousness, but shows that testimony is a sign that absorbs meanings and confronts and challenges the structure (framework) of those meanings. The failure of representation, better understood as transference, speaks to the community surviving processes, its limitations and truths. Here Kristeva is providing a space that suggests that testimony as a failure of representation suggests alternative practices of surviving.

Survivors whose testimonies are not structured as shame and guilt are survivors who are not facing a stable image of being a certain Survivor and speaking a certain truth. As long as having experience faces a certain stable image of what being a survivor means in the aftermath of sexual violence, the survivor will experience guilt and the testimony will not adequately allow the survivor-in-process to imagine a new possible self, but rather will direct and absorb the survivor within the stable image.

Kristeva's warning of guilt is similar to Agamben's (2002) discussion of shame and the body and bearing witness. Shame "is nothing less than the fundamental sentiment of being a subject [...]" (Agamben 107). For both Kristeva and Agamben, as long as we uphold the illusion and expectation of a certain Survivor to emerge in the testimony, we risk ignoring the subject-in-process. And this ignorance is the foundation for abjection. We cannot ask survivors to bear witness to the experience of violence until we remove the stable image and recognize that stability always exists in the face of instability:

Shame is grounded in our being's incapacity to move away and break from itself. If we experience shame in nudity, for example, it is because we cannot hide what we would like to remove from the field of vision ... so in shame we are consigned to something from which we cannot in anyway distance ourselves. (Agamben 2002, 104-05)

To conclude this section I begin to suggest what this means for survivors of rape, their testimonies and the very structure of testimony. The stable "I" – Survivor with a capital S—is an illusion. Having experience and seeking to articulate that experience through testimony will always fail in the face of the "I" being offered through testimony. Therefore it is important to explore the structure of the testimony, its assumptions, and any underlying tones of responsibility, necessity and consignment.

Because the stable "I"—Survivor—is an illusion, "I" will always fail, through testimony, in the face of this I you consign to me. And yet, it is my responsibility to speak to your "I." You may demand this "I" of me in subtle ways. I am to tell my experience because there are others like me, suffering, and I am responsible to speak on their behalf, to call out and say who "I" am, so that they can call out and say the same. A space for me to speak must be a space that listens to me, removing a stable "I" from the

field and listening to the process unfold. This process is an “opening [...] undecidable space” where absorbing, adjusting, transforming is an honor in which we share. The wound is a “body to be living rather than a corpse under [your] care” (*Tales of Love* 179).

Kristeva’s psychoanalytical approach to the process of individual healing begins to suggest the complications of testimony and collections of testimonies and the motives which mediate the experience of sexual violence. Kristeva shifts the question of testimony from who am I, (being experience), to, where am I, (the process of having experience to being experience). How can we acknowledge the process of having to being, without consigning survivors to a certain stable “I”? What does this mean for collections of testimonies with agendas and motives that precede the survivor and the experience?

Using Kristeva will assist me in my attempt to explore the structure of individual surviving in chapter two. For Kristeva, a testimony is a space that acknowledges the open and imaginative, connected yet strange, place where the survivor speaks/writes and is heard. Testimonies of sexual violence, within Kristeva’s concepts and analysis, must emerge in a space that hears the process, relationships, connections that are assumed to separate and distance us. The survivor is a speaking wound who stands at the edge of the universe, her voice telling, calling and connecting us, as we shuttle across abjection together.

Butler

the “I” has no story of its own
that is not also a story of relation—or a set of relations—to a set of norms
~Butler *Giving An Account of Oneself* (2005, 7-8)

In Giving An Account of Oneself (2005) Butler questions current theories of giving an account – i.e. bearing witness / giving testimony – that focus on the account as a response to a “system of justice and punishment” through a “consequence of fear and terror” (10-11). The formation of my account of “I” is the result of an authoritative structure that pressures (demands) my very being to speak. Butler applies giving an account to other situations that are not just based on justice and punishment, and not extracted through a consequence of fear but through agendas of the humane:

but let us consider that being addressed by another carries other valences besides fear. There well may be a desire to know and to understand that is not fueled by the desire to punish, and a desire to explain and narrate that is not prompted by terror or punishment. (10-11)

What other set of capacities is Butler proposing? Butler refers to this set of norms and set of relations as an “operation” (6). Through different modes and methods, the operation—and this is extremely important for testimonies as a situation of giving an account—has “conditions [...] under which it can exercise violence [for example,] indifference to social conditions [...] at the expense of freedom and particularity” (6-7). Testimonies of sexual violence, as giving an account in the face of the humane, must reflect upon the conditions –motives in bearing witness—and whether or not the conditions leave open the possibilities of surviving. Butler argues that every situation of address needs its critic or self-critic. Any testimony produced in the honor of the humane must be analyzed.

Situation of Address

To begin to explore what a situation of address means, Butler differentiates “telling a story” from “giving an account” (Giving An Account of Oneself 12). To distinguish telling a story from giving an account is to illustrate how the various ways in which a survivor is addressed within both individual healing processes and community healing processes, as well as the impossibility of completely separating them.

Telling a story is a situation where a response is not a publicly demanded or called upon. Telling a story is a personal and individual process of healing whose tale is told alone. At the same time, telling a story, though not publicly demanded or called upon, may still be demanded and called upon. For example, there may be an underlying necessity and expectation by the community, family and friends, or other survivors, for the survivor to share her/his story.

Giving an account, similar to telling a story, is in response to being called upon. To give an account is a “causal relation to the suffering of others” (Butler 12). One is called upon because one’s experienced sorrow is in relation to others’ experienced sorrows. What begins to distinguish telling a story from giving accounts, is that the link from one’s suffering to an others’ suffering is primarily shaped by the situation that addresses the account, rather than listening to or waiting for the survivor to tell her/his story. Giving an account gives shape to the situation of address. A situation of address that calls upon accounts has at its core an agenda that is directed towards an audience with the “aim of persuasion” (Butler 12). A situation of address is gathering and collecting accounts to speak to the issues the situation is working against.

Testimony, may either take the form of story telling, or giving an account. Story telling is an individual practice of surviving. Giving an account is a community practice of surviving. Butler seems to suggest that story telling is an opportunity to work through the experience as the survivor begins to articulate the experience through the symbolic. In giving an account one is being called upon in relation to other survivors who meet the criterion of a Survivor. Giving an account is a testimony that suggests a subject, while telling a story is a subject-in-process.

Sexual violence ideology is upheld by the community. So any account of sexual violence is an account that addresses the community experience of sexual violence. To explore the causal relation, Butler states that “causal agency” is a response that bears the weight of an allegation as it seeks to shape it (18-19). A collection of testimonies, as accounts, sets the stage for “subject’s self-crafting, which always takes place to an imposed set of norms” (Butler 18-19). What is vital about causal agency, subject and subject-in-process, individual and community is the relations of struggles that are visibly linked, in the open, exposed and challenging the conditions of subjectivity:

The subject forms itself in relation to a set of codes, prescriptions, or norms and does so in ways that not only (a) reveal self constitution to be a kind of poesis but (b) establishes self-making as a part of a broader operation of critique [...] This work on the self [...] takes place within the context of a set or norms that precede and exceed the subject. These are invested with power and recalcitrance, setting the limits to what will be considered to be an intelligible formation of the subject within a given historical scheme of things. There is no making of oneself (poesis) outside a mode of subjectification and, hence, no self-making outside the norms that orchestrate the possible forms that a subject may take. (Butler 17)

This quotation emphasizes the precarious situation of address for testimony and testimonies that speak to and for issues of sexual violence. Literally, the situation addressing survivors of sexual violence comes before these survivors' experiences of sexual violence, possibly limiting and prescribing what it means to be a Survivor, the self and life.

Surviving sexual violence is thus entangled in an operation of surviving that orchestrates an intelligible survivor as it seeks to end an ideology of sexual violence. The intelligible survivor is a Survivor who is healed, stable, and can speak for and to the conditions of giving an account that called upon the survivor. This means the experience and survivor is filtered through a relation of norms that entangle the experience and testimony. A situation of address that calls upon survivors bears the weight of an allegation that precedes the subject and sets the limits to the possibilities of the subject. At the same time, the situation of address also displays and encourages self-making.

Butler speaks of giving an account as the stage in which one can "critique [the] primary condition of unfreedom" that "makes possible agency" (19). Because no individual testimony is separate from the community, giving testimony or having a collection of testimonies shows that there is something even more fundamental that goes beyond the structure of testimonies. To critique the situation of address is to expose the situation of address and the foundations that are assumed. It is to also begin to engage in "aesthetics of the self," or what I have referred to as an art of surviving (Butler 17).

The individual survivor is bound to the community of survivors—a complex relation of norms (Butler 26). A Survivor who gives testimony is a tool in which the

norm maintains and mobilizes the horizon of challenging and confronting an epidemic of sexual violence. A norm is dependent upon the consistency and familiarity of experiences to suggest that there is a universal issue. Therefore a norm is also dependent upon the “I” or the Survivor who provides a testimony that speaks to the agenda that makes possible the situation of address.

At the same time a survivor is dependent upon the situation of address. There is a shared desire to speak / write experience and to be recognized and heard. The survivors use the norms and the situation of address to give their account. The situation of address is a “shared act of recognition” (Butler 27) in the face of a set of norm:

One is compelled and comported outside oneself; one finds that the only way to know oneself is through a mediation that takes place outside oneself, exterior to oneself, by virtue of a convention or a norm that one did not make, in which one cannot discern oneself as an author or an agent of one’s own making. (Butler 28)

Giving an account in a situation of address is a shared act of recognition that speaks to individual and community experience of sexual violence. We have now reached a point in which the connection and relationship between the individual healing process and community healing process are inseparable. The situation of address as a situation that survivors are called upon to respond as well as addressing in turn, reveals a relation of suffering and responsibility that exposes what is missing. The focus of a critique in the situation of address is to listen to the experience while simultaneously exposing the limits and constraints of the situation of address.

Testimonies of sexual violence are necessary to undo the ideology of sexual violence. Testimonies, through story telling, begin to speak to the issues of sexual

violence as well as to the connections and relationships from one nation and body to another. At the same time, any collection of testimonies, as a situation of address, contains within it meanings that frame the experience of sexual violence and survivor. This leads us to a question of ethics.

Question of Ethics

To best explore an ethical space is to address the process that makes up the structure of testimony: first, the situation of address, those who establish the set of norms on which one can give an account must reflect on how the “we” governs a recognizable Survivor. Questions to pose are: What is and is not available in the situation of address?; What forms shape the space in which one translates having experience to being a survivor of that experience?

For example, Butler discusses the ways in which giving an account caters to a narrative form. This narrative may be “directed towards a certain audience with the aim of persuasion” (Giving An Account of Oneself 12). Persuasion illustrates that an account should consign itself to “certain criterion” or “framework” (Butler 29). Accounts that are consistent can better persuade an audience that there exists an epidemic of sexual violence. A situation of address that is not consistent risks losing the power of persuasion and the opportunity to hold a community accountable for ideology of sexual violence. A situation of address as a mode of persuasion that is founded on consistency speaks to Butler’s notion of “capacity” that suggests an operation of power:

[the] capacity [...] to read my face [read: testimony]. If my face is readable at all, it becomes so only by entering in a visual frame that conditions its readability [...] a certain practice of reading becomes

possible in relation to certain frames and images that over time produce what we call “capacity.” (Butler 29)

An ethical space for testimony and collection of testimonies must include this notion of capacity as it begins to critique its situation, confront and challenge the issue of sexual violence. To do this, Butler says that the “possibility of an ethical response to the face thus requires a normativity of the visual field: there is not only an epistemological frame within which the face appears, but an operation of power as well” (29). Butler focuses on a visual field that makes up certain frames and images of faces. I situate Butler’s visual field to other situations of address that make up, what I will label, a linguistic field. A linguistic field makes up frames and images of Survivors through the collection of write / speak testimonies. Consistency is dependent upon normativity. This evolves within the linguistic field and becomes the source of persuasion.

For example, consistency of narrative structures, testimonies and accounts must uphold a certain Survivor. What becomes complex is that the linguistic field must sustain capacity for important reasons: to be recognized so that the issue of sexual violence is accounted for; but, the capacity risks building an operation of power. Such a complex linguistic field suggests that experience and survivors are subordinate to the operation that desires to expose and recognize the larger issues of sexual violence. This is not a safe space unless motives for giving testimony include uncanny strangeness:

Question of ethics emerges precisely at the limits of [our self-knowledge] schemes of intelligibility, the site where we ask ourselves what it might mean to continue in dialogue where no common ground can be assumed, where one is, as it were, at the limits of what one knows yet still under the demand to offer and receive acknowledgement: to someone who is there to be addressed and whose address is there to be received. (Butler 21-22)

An ethical space for testimony and collections of testimonies must be a site in which there is no common ground. To better understand no common ground, I return to an earlier discussion of “listening to” rather than “listening for.” To listen for something is to search for a familiar face that risks listening for the agenda rather than to the survivor and his/her experience. Listening to is providing a space in which there is no common ground, no familiar faces and no strict narrative structure. It is to place experience and survivor and his/her complexity at the forefront while challenging the prevailing ideology of sexual violence.

Butler states that an ethical space “would be perhaps [...] based on our shared, invariable, and partial blindness to ourselves” (41-42). An ethical space is a space that acknowledges no common ground. It is a space that listens to, as it understands that there is a certain failure, misunderstanding, and unfamiliarity. Or to use Kristeva’s language a shared loss of composure:

As we ask to know the other, or ask that the other say, finally or definitively, who he or she is, it will be important not to expect an answer that will ever satisfy [...] by letting the question remain open [...] “who are you?” and continuing to ask it without any expectation of a full or final answer. (Butler 42-43)

This discussion of ethics within a situation of address begins to suggest what it means to have an ethical practice of surviving for survivors of sexual violence. The art of surviving sexual violence is about experience, individual and community healing processes, as well as about holding communities and individuals accountable. Any account of sexual violence through testimony is an opportunity to challenge and confront

the norms that make the epidemic of sexual violence possible. Any situation of address that gathers and collects testimonies of sexual violence must avoid the risk of becoming an operation of power. Power is located in a space that understands the need to share and that sharing is about listening to the strange. This includes reflecting upon methods and ensuring that the survivor and his/her experience is kept at the forefront.

Butler & Kristeva

Placing Kristeva's concepts into dialogue with Butler, shows the complex situation of addressing sexual violence, that we face. This conversation also suggests the importance of continuing to critique and explore the ways in which testimonies are structured and what it means to bear witness. Giving testimony is about the survivors, and the community. It is about confronting and challenging a universal ideology of sexual violence. With Kristeva and Butler we begin to understand the difficult project ahead of us, to ensure that an art of surviving is an ethical space.

Kristeva puts emphasis and value on the individual: "I'm interested in individuals [...] more deeply interested in the developments of the psychic experience [...] concern remains with the individuality and particularity of the person" (*Julia Kristeva in Conversation* 339-49). For Kristeva there is a process, a working through, between subjectivity and subject, which is best illustrated at the level of the individual. She suggests that to hear the process, is to focus on the individual, in a safe space, which allows a subject to evolve without ever finalizing what that "I" comes to be. The problem with just focusing on Kristeva's individual healing process is that the ideology of sexual violence is a community issue, and to keep it individualized is to risk losing the

opportunity to speak to a much larger audience, hold them accountable and responsible, and suggest that the survivor's burden of sorrow be a shared burden of surviving.

Butler's theory continues with what is not further explored in Kristeva's works: that every individual account (testimony) is not its own and also carries with it an account of a set of norms. Butler's situation of address shows how an individual account exposes is inseparable from a community account. Similar to Kristeva, this community account, works through, confronts and challenges norms. A critique of the situation of address, the relation and connections between individual and community accounts, show the dynamics and norms that limit the possibilities of surviving. Without critiquing and reflecting the art of surviving, we risk using an operation that drowns out the voices it seeks to empower.

The art of surviving sexual violence, carries with it the valences of a desire to know and understand, to explain and to narrate ideologies of sexual violence and to reduce the risks of sexual violence occurring again, as well as a desire to explain and narrate the self and community, prior to the experience, during the experience and from a perspective of the survivor in the aftermath of the experience. An art of surviving must be mindful and not become an operation that unreflectively sustains modes and methods of giving testimony that subordinates the survivor and survivor's experience.

The Other

A question of ethics is also a question of the other. For Kristeva "uncanny strangeness" is the other who undoes us, challenges us to rethink who we are. We lose our composure and come to question the "I," us and we. Kristeva's uncanny strangeness

is similar to Butler's limits of self-knowledge. It is a space that keeps the question of "who am I?" open without ever expecting a certain Survivor to emerge. Butler suggests that a situation of address is a "social dimension [...] that governs the scene of recognition" (24). The situation of address can also be linked to Kristeva's discussion of the symbolic. Both Butler and Kristeva understand that the situation of address and symbolic is necessary, but that an ethical and safe space includes working through the familiar in face of the strange. If the strange is that which challenges normativity then recognition is based not on sameness but strangeness. Here the scene of recognition becomes the odd sensation of shared unfamiliarity.

Kristeva and Butler in dialogue begin to illuminate the challenge of bringing together individual and community practices of surviving. Combining the aesthetics of survivors' testimonies with the survivor-in-process is a critical opening that confronts the familiar with the strange. The critical opening exposes the relations that connect us, our responsibility and accountability for testimonies of sexual violence, ensuring that survivors are safe as they speak to and against a shared epidemic of sexual violence. We are made to face a breakdown in the situation of recognition. Here we cannot claim to understand or recognize what is before us, nor, assume to know what stands before us, because each survivor is complex. This non-understanding does not mean it is not a shared situation. It means that we have failed to recognize what is shared in the experience of sexual violence. The structure of testimony focuses on the recognition of the humane, the survivors, rather than the issue we are fighting against.

An ethical space of surviving and bearing witness is set within a horizon of strangeness that challenges sexual violence. This safe space is a lingering, s l o w, and patient; it is a process that listens to transformation as it works through what it means to be survivor (read: human). The survivor-in-process allows for the art of surviving to be continually redrawn, redefined and to be perpetually imaginative and fascinating, while also holding the community accountable and responsible for the epidemic of sexual violence.

I conclude with Kelly Oliver's (2001) description of shared responsible love, to show our connections, our necessary response, as well as sustaining openness and acknowledging complexity:

Love is the responsibility to become attuned to our responses to the world and other people, and to the energies [connections] that sustain us [...] When response is cut off [...] life itself, is cut off. We have an ethical and social responsibility [...] Love requires a commitment to the advent and nurturing of difference. (Witnessing: Beyond Recognition 20)

Chapter 2. Critique of the Individual Art of Surviving: Testimonies to Stranger and Incest Rape

Some practices of surviving in the aftermath of rape emphasize the connections and relations between individual and community. They are practices which contribute to the art of surviving sexual violence. A testimony is one opportunity for shared surviving that must be cautious of “how” experience is translated and used. In this chapter and chapter three I hope to show that a survivor has always existed, spoken and fought to be heard and that a survivors’ practices of surviving affects and is affected by personal, social and political practices of surviving. As Kelly Oliver (2001) shares, bearing witness is a situation of connections and relations that always existed (12).

In Remnants of Auschwitz Agamben (2002) says that “the human being is the inhuman; the one whose humanity is completely destroyed is the one who is truly human” (133-35). Understanding what makes up the “human” is to ask those who have been destroyed and stripped of their humanity, what it will take to be “human.” The inhuman, or survivors, are a springboard to better understanding what survivors or humans do emerge. If Agamben is correct and a survivor—inhuman/human—lingers between the experience and the words that give meaning to experience, exploring the relation between experience and testimony allows us to understand how survivors—“humans”—are represented. A survivor stands within the pockets of our universe who confronts and suggests new possibilities of the human in the aftermath of rape. The

survivor and his/her wounds can help us better understand how the survivor of experienced sexual violence is “constituted and deconstituted” (Butler 2005, 105).⁸

Susan Brison’s⁹ (2003) stranger rape and my incest rape suggest the complex workings of the individual processes of surviving. Individual processes of surviving in the aftermath of rape can best be understood by examining how testimony is shaped and reshaped in certain situations of address. This also shows how the survivor is constituted and deconstituted in the situation of address. Every situation of address, Butler (2005) tells us, even a situation in which it is just “I” needs its critic or self-critic. Chapter one’s exploration of subject and subjectivity sets the stage for this chapter’s analysis of how two survivors are called upon and respond to experience of rape. Before I begin, it is important to explain why I have chosen these specific testimonies.

Brison, as a feminist philosopher and a survivor is interested in the coiling of subjectivity and subject through an analysis of her own personal account of stranger rape. I use Brison’s account and stories because she has chosen to share. I do not to speak for her, but rather, examine the shared experience of sexual violence, to point out how her different experience is related to mine. As Butler tells us, a situation of address is about “causal relation to the suffering of others” (12). Brison’s experienced suffering is in relation to my experienced suffering. I create a link between Brison and me which is directed towards my readers with the aim of persuasion. Brison’s experience is familiarly

⁸ Similar to Agamben (2002), Butler (2005) also discusses how the “inhuman [...] establishes a critical point of departure for an analysis of the social conditions under which the human is constituted and deconstituted.” (105)

⁹ Susan J. Brison, Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the self. NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.

unfamiliar. I do not claim to understand or to know her. My aim is to show the connections and links between our different experiences. These connections explore how our practices of surviving make up an art of surviving.

I include my account of incest rape along with Brison's to emphasize our shared want to speak/write our testimonies. I also do this because, ultimately, I can only speak for myself. To share my stories and accounts is to share with my readers the motives that lead me to write this thesis and direct my method of analysis. It gives meaning, as well as forecloses my ability to speak for any of the survivors in this research. My testimony also shows that I am part of the situation of address, working through, confronting and challenging, the realities of sexual violence.

Brison

Feminist Philosopher Brison shares her account of experienced stranger rape in her book Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self (2003). Her philosophical exploration of stranger rape is both a testimony and a process of telling stories. Brison's remaking of the self illuminates a complex situation of address that recognizes a responsibility in bearing witness to experienced stranger rape as well as the particularity of her experience. An exploration of Brison's testimony, as both stories and accounts, emerge in situations of address that expose the cost, as well as the benefits in an art of surviving.

Testimony to Experience of Stranger Rape

Brison's testimony addresses and is called upon, told and retold, in various situations—to herself, to friends and family, in individual and group therapy, published in

articles and books, and accounted for in a hospital and courtroom. She was raped by a stranger one day on her habitual daily walk. Ten years later, taking a walk, everyday, is something that will either paralyze or empower her. Her life is recovered, undone and recovered, bits and pieces of memory clenched and unclenched, as she takes a step forward one day and fails to take a step forward the next. Everyday, Brison tells her readers, is a challenge.

This constant flux of success and failure—loss of composure—reveals the process and the working involved in the art of surviving. It also suggests that the art of surviving is an everyday challenge. Some days she will fail to be a Survivor and other days she will be a Survivor. I use a capital s for Survivor because there are days in which Brison may not meet her and other's requirements of what it means and takes to be a survivor. What is most important is that Brison is always surviving, no matter if she is a Survivor or not.

Brison's accounts take place in various situations of address and her testimony, though dependent upon the situations of address, begins to notify us of each situation's limitations, expectations and norms. In each situation that she speaks/writes her testimony, Brison finds that she is remaking a self and that this is a process, a working through, that she will forever undergo.

Through her testimonies Brison is the black sun and subject-in-process who explores how the self learns and relearns to pick up the pieces and transform who she felt she was before experienced rape, who this self is now, and who this self can or may be tomorrow. For example, Brison shares with her readers what her therapist said in a group therapy session:

When your life is shattered [...] you're forced to pick up the pieces, and you have a chance to stop and examine them. You can say "I don't want this one anymore" or "I think I'll work on that one." (Brison 20)

The process of picking and discarding pieces of the self and rebuilding, Brison says, is for her "the honor to be a survivor ... it's the accomplishment of which I'm most proud" (20). Her honor suggests that the very livability, or the very art of surviving, is founded on her speak/write processes.

Forcing someone to pick up the pieces suggests that the survivor must piece together an image or idea of a Survivor that may or may not fit. For example, this can mean that a survivor must pick up certain pieces, rather than others, or follow a certain mode in the art of surviving. This practice is also to focus on the individual's processes of surviving. The honor to be a survivor is an experience in which it is necessary that Brison, alone, picks up the pieces. This also suggests that the group, a community of survivors, is secondary to the individual.

Brison is reflective and her own critic. For example, she understands that her surviving is different for her than for other women. She clarifies that she is "white" and "(middle) class" (30), a particularity that she offers at the beginning of her account. Brison's privileged position, her art of story telling through her book, rather than responding to a situation of address, allows her to establish and create a space in which she can share surviving. This distinguishes her situation of address from other survivors who do not have the opportunity to explore their shattered selves and share with a community of readers.

Word Flesh

In the aftermath of her rape, left for dead, found by a passer-by and taken to a hospital, Brison was questioned by police officers for hours, and probed by nurses and doctors. Her verbal and physical account was expected to follow certain criterion. She was expected to give a coherent, descriptive, detailed and linear account of her rape. Her body was to also bear an account of rape that was consistent with her verbal account. The worse the body account the better chance that the verbal account—“rape”—would be taken seriously.

Returning to Kristeva’s word flesh (Oliver 1997) we are reminded of the complex process of “how” word and affect are attached and reattached. This situation that addresses Brison and calls upon her exposes a complex mode of how being raped is translated into having experienced rape; how flesh and word are entangled and separate. Brison’s flesh had to speak to a certain brutality: the more blood and bruises, the more credible the rape. Brison’s verbal account had to speak clearly and detailed enough that the experience could be brought to justice –i.e. the perpetrator caught and jailed. At the same time, the verbal account, as an unstable, crying, hysterical, verbal address to the brutality of rape, had to also conform to the brutality of the bodily account. Brison states that it is “crucial [to] bear witness, of living to tell,” but that “it may, if taken too far, hinder recovery” (103). Brison finds comfort in the trial but exposes the complexity in the trial situation of address: “In the trial [...] I was grateful for their [police, judges and jurors] presence [...] the signs of the law and order, of decorum, of “civilization” [...] the props were all in place for me to tell my story. But how to tell it?” (105). “Taken too far”

and “how to tell it” seems to be a privileged space for reflection that protects a survivor’s process of recovering.

The signs of the law and the frame that calls upon Brison and addresses her is comforting to her in so far as it represents justice, justice meaning that her perpetrator will be held accountable for his actions and he will not be free to rape again. As she says, the props were all in place for her to tell her story. However, these props and the situation of address, do not tell her how to tell her story. Here Brison is aware that to tell her story is an account in which she is being addressed through signs and props and that these signs and props encourage and call upon her to give a certain account. The situation of address—the courtroom—suggests ‘how’ she gives her account.

These situations of address enclose Brison’s testimony and obscure the connections to other cases of rape. Her testimony is not made available to the public. The testimony is individualized as well as protected (anonymity). Her testimony upholds barriers of the political justice system, court rooms, and police offices. Her experience is translated into the necessity of her political testimony as she and her experience justify the relevance of the political system. At the same time her testimony is available to the public in so far as it represents the socially useful definition of rape. Because it is a stranger in the bushes case of rape, Brison’s testimony is recognized and taken seriously. For example, let us imagine and put forth a hypothesis, let us say that Brison was not raped by a stranger, but raped by her husband, or even a girlfriend. These rapes would be addressed in an entirely different way, if addressed at all.

This situation of address carries with it certain expectations of how accounts are addressed and should respond. Brison has the opportunity to hold the perpetrator accountable as well as to seek justice for her self. An important question to ask is whether holding the perpetrator accountable is the same as holding a community accountable? Or, if seeking justice in this respect and jailing the perpetrator is still an individualized processes of surviving in which Brison and the perpetrator are left to carry the weight of their experiences and actions? A final question to ask is who benefits from this situation of address? Is this about Brison's surviving? Or, is it about protecting the community? And, if it is about protecting the community, it is ironic that the situation of address only addresses Brison and her perpetrator and not the community.

What the situation does not speak to is that Brison's rape is a symptom of her community. Should she be healing and picking up the pieces alone? The community processes of surviving that are individualized means that the community does not take responsibility for the rape itself. Brison speaks to the importance of the individual healing processes. She also exposes the assumed separations between individual and community in a situation of addressing stranger rape. These situations of address begin to show the complexity of what kinds of testimony are expected and who benefits from the testimony.

Shared Surviving

One of Brison's testimonies is an individual process that unfolds over a decade. During her decade of surviving, she is alone as well as sharing her surviving with friends, family and a community of readers and scholars. This process is a space in which her self

and her self within her community face self-unknowingness. This is similar to Kristeva's black sun, where the survivor bears witness to a certain meaninglessness.

This space for Brison is her book. Between the covers and pages, surviving is recreated by her and for her, so that she can have the honor of piecing together accounts and stories, to reflect on what had happened, and to explore what aftermath, violence and self comes to mean for her and her community. This space is shared surviving. Her book is disseminated to an audience of readers who listen to and for her experiences.

As an author, Brison does not have control of how her words and her account is interpreted, but her book is a situation that persuades her readers that her experience of stranger rape is a shared experience. For example, as a reader of Brison and a survivor, I felt that the book indirectly spoke to me. This suggests the book is a space that holds the community accountable and responsible. And the more readers the book reaches, the more Brison is sharing her surviving with other survivors and friends and families of survivors. Her book shows that her individual processes of surviving is inseparable from the community of surviving. Her book also suggests how long it takes to find the words to share her story. It took Brison over a decade to share her surviving with a community of readers.

Even though Brison's account is an individual account, her book does reach an audience of readers who will possibly remember, write or speak their account. The individual experience of rape maintains the individuality of such an experience, while simultaneously establishing and building bridges of voices that show how the experience

of rape is a community situation of violence and surviving. In her book, between her words, the readers hear a roar of voices, other survivors' presence through her voice.

Brison's story telling supports Kristeva's subject-in-process (Oliver 1997). Brison shows the importance and necessity of the survivor-in-process, grasping experienced stranger rape while embracing her temporary selves through written and spoken words. Brison states that a survivor must have the space to slowly work through and explore how speech and affect converge in an account. For Brison, surviving is about exploring a subject-in-process: "Saying something about the memory of rape does something to it" (56). It is a "communicative act" that "transforms" the sense of self the survivor was while also "reintegrating" and "reestablishing" this sense of self into the community (56).

I

Over twenty years later my experience of incest rape has been accounted for and told within numerous forms and various situations of address. Telling my story of incest rape has taken place through my journals, short stories, poetry, and scribbled notes crumpled and covered in dust. These notes lie hidden in the corner of closets, under the beds I have slept in, and closed up in my memories to never be forgotten. These stories are non-linear, fictive, detailed narratives that speak to my processes of surviving.

My stories spring from my temporary body and selves, altering day by day, little by little. In the aftermath of incest rape—an inescapable, obvious and glaring wound—is not a revulsion, not a tragic, but an arrogant feeling of being witness to the meaninglessness of being (Kristeva's *Black Sun* 180). I write. I write more. I continue to bear witness to what has been noncommunicable at times. This is the subject-in-process that Kristeva

also calls the “wildness of the speaking being” (*My Memory’s Hyperbole* 19). However, to become my own self-critic and to take a step back, the art of surviving for me has been more of an individual surviving process, in which I am alone to bear the burden of my rape. The burden of my family and my community—since rape is a symptom of the community—is forced onto my 6-year-old body, prior to my ever understanding what that mark means, physically, emotionally, psychologically and historically. Yet, I come to carry this burden with me through out the rest of my life. It is not a burden that I am taught to share, but rather, taught to carry alone.

Testimony to Experienced Incest Rape

I experienced incest rape, by a family member, from age 6 to age 8. I did not share my suffering with my community, my mother, father and brother until I was 18 years old, or with my friends until I was near my 20s. Rather, I shared my destructive surviving processes. Destructive surviving processes are both an individual and a community surviving processes that are more about destroying than rebuilding. It is the literal restructuring of abjection, acted by the self, upon the self that seeks to embody abjection within itself.

Destructive surviving processes were for me the only way to communicate the sexual violence my body and mind had experienced. As a 6 year old the rape of my body was my first account of myself. The boy who raped me, called upon me and showed me that my testimony, “I,” was first and foremost my body and that any act of communication, speaking and sharing, was to be done with my body. At the same time I

was my body, I also learned that this body was evil, disgusting and something to be ashamed of.

Returning to Kristeva's "word flesh" (Oliver 1997), destructive surviving processes in the aftermath of incest rape became a word flesh testimony. For over ten years I spoke through my body, from cuts on the inside of my arms and along my wrists. I forced my skeleton to emerge and pierce the boundaries of my skin to embody the look of living death. I became a spectacle with which to reach out to my community, believing that the more absurdly and brutally I displayed my body, the more my community would be sure to listen to me. My body literally became the space to speak/write and hold my community accountable at the cost of my self and my body.

In hindsight, my experience of incest rape taught me to speak/write my experience through destructive testimony of my body. This giving an account is also an act in which I understood that my self and my body were inseparable from my community, my mother, father, brother, friends and intimate partners. To share my suffering, ask for help, was done through the destruction of my self and my body. For me to choose to destroy my body and self was more of an obvious and glaring wound than the rape that was hidden behind closed doors.

The community saw this embodied destructive testimony and a situation of addressed called upon me to communicate my problem. "What is wrong with Kathleen?" Beginning at the age of 7 a psychiatrist and her/his office represents one situation of address that called upon me to give my account. The psychiatrist addressed me from a leather chair, behind a large desk, surrounded by certificates and diplomas, each frame

accounting for the psychiatrist's capacity to address me and medicate my life. Similar to Brison, this situation of address had the props that encouraged me to tell my story. And similar to Brison, these props require a certain account.

The psychiatrist addressed me through psychiatric medical language and my account responded in a way that met the situation of address. My account was manifested through a medical language which I could not understand. My experience of incest rape made less and less sense. It became an account that was not about the experience but more about stabilizing my instability. What was important was to provide an account that justified my need to be medicated so that my problem could be stabilized. The irony is that my account takes upon it a stable form, to justify instability, so that I can become stable.

My account took on a different shape in the office of a psychotherapist. The account there was like a creative story, dependent upon the psychotherapist's tools of surviving. These tools of surviving, similar to Brison's group therapy, are ways in which I learned to pick up the pieces, choose what pieces and rewrite my stories, through more constructive processes of surviving.

Another account would have taken shape if I had sought out legal justice for me and punishment for my rapist. However, the comfort Brison felt in court would not have been the same for me. Brison benefited from this situation of address, her perpetrator locked up and in jail. As an incest survivor, the situation of address, in the court room, in the face of lawyers, judge, the accused, and my family, would have been much more complex. My account is less credible; it would not have fit the familiar criterion of rape.

In the linguistic field of rape, to use Butler's language, the frames that give meaning to rape, my body's account did not conform to the "normal" testimony of rape. There are no marks, bruises, and blood to support my account. My words twenty years later, fail to justify the instability and horror I experienced; therefore, I am too stable to have experienced rape. And finally my perpetrator is not a horrific stranger in the bush. My perpetrator is a family member, someone who claims to love and care for me, who is an admirable person in the family.

There is also the call and demand of feminist and activists alike. They call out for me to give my account, to share my suffering and surviving. As Butler (2005) tells us, any testimony produced in the honor of the humane must be analyzed. My testimony of experienced incest rape is most often translated through statistics and awareness campaigns that seek to end sexual violence. These campaigns do offer a community surviving processes that holds the community accountable and responsible. However, the practice of testimony as another victim, faceless, anonymous who is given a voice that speaks through the agendas of the campaign, what it means for them to confront and change policies, laws and communities may risk being lost and buried.

How my experience is translated into stories and accounts are different in each context. Each situation of address alters my experience of incest rape and my testimony. Some of these situations do not care to address the experience, but rather desire a certain testimony to emerge with which to justify the situation of addresses own structure. For example, in the courts' situation of address the experience is secondary to the primary motive: the order of law and justice that precedes the survivor and her/his testimony. In

these cases the situation addresses me and listens for a certain Survivor. Who I am in these situations becomes a spectacle who is asked to bear witness to a shared problem alone.

My cluster of testimonies—a write/speak witness, survivor, statistic, victim—is a space that listens to a wound that is strange, unfamiliar, and foreign. The familiarly unfamiliar wound of incest rape offers us “new ways to reattach language to affect” (Kristeva 134). It allows us to confront and expose the presumed boundaries and spaces between individual and community, and to transform and work through laws and policies. The uncanny strangeness within the multiplicity of my testimonies begins to hold the community accountable and responsible and may open the horizon to new possibilities.

Brison & I

The operations of surviving, in Brison’s situations of address and in my own, are personalized and individualized. Brison was able to hold her perpetrator accountable, but not her community. For me, my rape was individualized because at first I chose not to share my experience. Later, my family begged me to be silent. I was left alone to deal with the experience of rape. I had to accept that my family needed to defend its boundaries—normalcy—within the home and the community.

This individualization, for both of us, is not silence, but a survivor-in-process who seeks to pick up the pieces, taking our time, discarding and rebuilding. The subject-in-process is our endless privileged space. However privilege has its consequences. As the decades pass by, and Brison and my rapes are enclosed and individualized, we bury our chance to address the community and hold them accountable. We neglect an opportunity to speak to other survivors of stranger rape and incest rape and demand that the situation of address listen to our shared surviving as well as acknowledge our differences. Instead, we speak to ourselves, work through our selves, and possibly miss out opportunities for and possibilities of another life in the aftermath of rape.

This privilege and the consequences involved, suggest the limitations of individual processes of surviving. Individual survivors of sexual violence speak to the loss, recognizing that the self will not ever be entirely healed, but has already and will continue to experience a loss of composure. But this loss of composure is individualized and the confrontation and challenge of working through the symbolic will stay at the level of the individual.

From this analysis, I argue that Brison's stranger rape and my incest rape are individualized through individual healing processes. Individualization is to place the weight and the responsibility of a societal problem on the individual. An ideology of sexual violence and acts of rape is always in relation to the community's symptom of sexual violence. An analysis of Brison's and my stories and accounts shows that what is a symptom of the community is a burden that Brison and I are asked to bear witness to.

Individualized testimony of rape obscures community's responsibility. The individual surviving process, I will put forward, is inseparable from community surviving processes.

What is shared by Brison and me is an art of surviving as a process in which we speak/write. To speak/write is to share our testimony, as one of the sources of our lives.

To speak/write is our livable lives. Returning to Butler (2005), a livable life is a narrativizable life:

The very livability of the subject resides in its narrativizability [...] If I am not able to give an account of some of my actions, then I would rather die, because I cannot find myself as the author of these actions, and I cannot explain myself to those my actions may have hurt. Surely there is a certain desperation there, where I repeat myself and where my repetitions enact again and again the site of my radical unself-knowingness. (Giving An Account of Oneself 79)

Brison's testimony through her book and my destructive and constructive processes of surviving, show that Brison and I share a certain desperation to provide testimony of our experiences. Our testimonies are constantly rewritten and re-spoken, where again and again we are made to face a sort of unself-knowingness.

A livable life, for Brison and me, begins to suggest the challenge for Brison, me and other survivors, as well as those who seek to give voice to and empower survivors around the world. How to maintain a self that recognizes this unself-knowingness, while simultaneously challenging what is known; that rape exists in all different kinds of situations and happens to all kinds of persons. As Butler (2005) and Kristeva (Oliver 1997) suggest this unknowing or uncanny stranger is an opportunity to share and discuss what is unfamiliar, rather than shying away from what is unknown. Listening to Brison's experience is not to listen for a certain understanding in which to provide her some mode

of surviving. It is to listen to her and accept the unknowingness of her experience. It is to hear what her experience of rape has to offer in any situation of addressing sexual violence.

An analysis of Brison and my testimonies exposes the benefits and problems with individual healings processes in the face of sexual violence. The situations of address that calls upon Brison and me to provide testimony to our experiences, are regarded as a threat to the cohesion of our communities. This analysis begins to distinguish the situation of address that calls upon survivors of genocidal rape. The testimonies and collections of testimonies that emerge from the 1994 Rwandan genocidal rape is a situation of address that explores the individual processes of surviving with the community processes of surviving. This situation of address also begins to show that what is the honor of Brison and my surviving, is not available to the survivors of genocidal rape. At the same time, the Rwandanese survivors of genocidal rape also speak to what is missing for Brison and me.

A testimony of sexual violence stands on the frontiers of what it means to rebuild, restructure, and to survive. Somehow that which is noncommunicable is communicated. The survivor who stands at the frontiers of meaninglessness notifies us of what is the formation of experience made new. To listen to the lacuna challenges us to critique meanings of life in the aftermath of the experienced rape. Listening to the wound challenges us to explore the structure of testimony and bearing witness and to ask, what are the motives in a testimony of sexual violence, and who benefits? What is put forth and remains primary for a survivor of sexual violence is that the healed self in the

aftermath of experience must uphold, represent and sustain a self as Survivor. These situations of address that call upon Brison and me to provide testimony to rape, generate a certain Survivor. They fail to listen to the experience, they do not examine what surviving means in the aftermath of rape.

I conclude this chapter with a practice of the art of surviving, a poem;

“I”
stands in the same dark peace
this nameless
indivisible place
this universe
undone and always falling apart
the wild speaking being
temporary
body
temporary
self

Chapter 3. Critique of Community Surviving: Testimonies to Rwandan Genocidal Rape

Marie-Claire: You do not know the kind of suffering that women are carrying around inside them. (HRW/A 46 1996)

Maria: what has happened has happened [...] now the question is how to survive. (HRW/A 46 1996)¹⁰

In Rwanda practices of surviving sexual violence and genocidal rape through the use of testimony serves two purposes, for the self and for the community. In the past fourteen years after the genocide collections of survivor's testimonies have emerged. These testimonies can be best understood as bearing witness to the personal and community experience of genocidal rape and the individual and community practices of surviving.

The collections of testimonies are also part of a larger narrative, one that builds a national and international labyrinthine of witnesses in the face of genocidal rape. The practices of surviving for these survivors, the sharing of their personal and community experience of genocidal rape, is a case study which creates a space for a feminist

¹⁰ These two quotes come from the Human Rights Watch/Africa report: "Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath" (1996).

Excerpts of testimonies and my use of quotation marks in the testimonies: throughout the reports, many of the testimony excerpts are interweaved within the analysis of the reports. This occurs prior to, within and after the quotes of the survivors them selves. The quotation marks indicate that the survivor is talking, while the sections without quotation marks are the reports analysis that surrounds the testimony.

I am also providing an appendix of the excerpts of testimonies and testimonies that I use for this research. This is to continue to challenge interpretations of surviving as well as providing an opportunity for my readers to challenge my interpretations of surviving in this research.

philosophical journey regarding issues of subjectivity and subject. Returning to Butler (2005) and Kristeva (Oliver 1997), an exploration of some testimonial practices helps us to better understand how survivors of genocidal rape are constituted and deconstituted, as well as opening the situation that addresses genocidal rape to future critiques. Kristeva's "subject-in-process" suggests that any situation of "abjection" or crisis is a situation that must work through the experience prior to, rebuilding systems, order and identity, or we risk misinterpreting the experience of violence.

This chapter explores testimonies that emerge in news articles and non-governmental reports. An exploration of excerpts from testimonies and testimonies shows how individual is fused with community practices of surviving. Individual and community practices reflect a complex and entangled formation of the self and the community. An art of surviving emerges within the practices of surviving. Similar to my analysis of Brison and me, the use of Rwandanese survivors' testimonies illuminates the practices and the ways in which they either contribute or impede an art of surviving.

Before I begin to examine the situation of address and the use of testimonies, I first define community practices of surviving. This definition continues from the introduction and Butler's theory of a situation of address. Similar to the situation of address, testimonies are the tools that affect are affected by practices of surviving at the individual, social and political levels. These tools begin to give meaning to surviving and shape who a survivor is within each of these dimensions.

I then provide a background to Rwandan genocidal rape. Many academics and advocates have explored the history and the various reasons genocide occurred in

Rwanda. The background is brief and a springboard into my exploration of the situation of addressing genocidal rape survivors. In this section I ask the following questions: what took place during the genocidal rape?; who arrived in the aftermath?; who responds, addresses and calls upon survivors of genocidal rape?

As I explore the situation that addresses Rwandanese survivors and calls upon and uses testimonies of genocidal rape, I include excerpts of testimonies of genocidal rape survivors. These testimonies are written by reporters and survivors and are used to identify practices in an art of surviving. In the appendix I provide the context of the reports and the testimonies to show the complexity in the structure of testimony: the ways the reports give meaning and shape to the testimonies and, the ways the testimonies speak through and beyond the structure. Survivors' testimonies within these reports and SURF online forum speak to the limitations and possibilities within the situation of address and the Rwandanese practices of surviving. In this chapter I again pose my question about the practices of surviving: what is the purpose and motive, and who benefits?

Similar to Kristeva I shift the question of testimony from "who am I?" (being experience), to, "where am I?", (the process of having experience to being experience). I use Kristeva's "uncanny strangeness" to show how some Rwandanese survivors speak/write an art of surviving that is distinguishable from the situation that addresses survivors. This exploration begins to answer my own questions at the end of the Kristeva section. How can we acknowledge the process of having to being, without consigning survivors to a stable "I"?

In this chapter I explore survivors' processes of having to being, while also distinguishing Brison (2003) and my individual surviving practices that in part precede and exceed the situation that addresses Rwandanese survivors. To compare and contrast Brison and my individual practices of surviving to Rwandanese community practices of surviving begins to speak to an uncanny strangeness and the relations and connections. As survivors we are all dependent upon the situation of address. Our voices are an opening to another survivors' voice. This creates a shared act of recognizing sexual violence and our complex practices keeps open and transposes into an art of surviving.

Community Surviving Practices

I separate community practices of surviving into two components: the social and the political. Rwandan genocidal rape and sexual violence were acts committed upon the individual with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a certain community. These acts were also a symptom of colonialism and the international community. Therefore in the aftermath of genocidal rape, community practices of surviving entangle the individual and the community, the social and the political, and the international community.

The use of testimonies is one surviving practice that holds the individual, the Rwandan and international communities accountable and responsible. Through testimonies the individual and community addresses, listens to and speaks about the experiences of genocidal rape and acknowledges an art of surviving. The ways in which the testimonies are used begins to suggest how some individuals and the Rwandan community should practice surviving. Surviving becomes the community's and individual's largest project that is inseparable from the international community's

projects: how to sustain what once was, never forget, while also working through and reimagining the possibilities of what can be. Bearing witness to genocidal rape is very much a part of the social and political spheres as the nation reconstructs and rebuilds and as the international community seeks to aid and fund certain surviving practices and certain survivors.

Definition: Social Practices of Surviving

Social practices of surviving are personal and constitute the day-to-day life. These practices include the individual and the community, how they are remembering what happened and how they translate their experiences. This takes place between individuals and communities as they work towards and against one another. For example, survivors have created diverse groups of survivors, some for women, widows, families and orphan children. Within these groups survivors share their familiarly unfamiliar experiences and their ways of surviving.

The day-to-day practices focus on working and living amongst friends, family, neighbors and enemies. This involves shared efforts between the individual and the community that acknowledges the limitations and possibilities of surviving. How the individual and her/his groups practice surviving begins to contribute, shape and challenge the atmosphere that gives meaning to everyday life and surviving. As we learned in Chapter One, sharing experiences through speak/write testimonies, is spoken by the survivors, but is also impossible to separate from the symbolic and from others' meanings of surviving. This means that the individual who uses the situation of address to speak/write her experience is dependent upon the other survivors, the groups she

participates in and the community's practices of surviving. Therefore, for some survivors, the community's practices of surviving, precedes and exceeds the survivors' efforts to speak/write experience.

Social surviving is sharing notions of a livable life that brings to the center all possibilities of surviving. For Rwandanese survivors this is important. The survivors literally live next to their rapist, or next to the person who murdered and or raped a friend or family member. Survivors are also living next to other survivors who were forced to rape their friends and neighbors. There are also survivors whose neighbors and closest friends turned into enemies over night.¹¹ In the aftermath of Rwandan genocidal rape an art of surviving must spring from this complexity. This complexity is analogous to incest rape. Most often survivors of incest rape must practice an art of surviving in relation to the family member who raped them.

Survivors are dependent upon the every day social surviving practices, as they are dependent upon their own notions of what surviving involves. The social has profound effects on survivors as survivors activate and create social practices of surviving for a livable life in the aftermath of genocidal rape.

Social practices of surviving are dependent upon political practices of surviving. The political, which I will explain further in the next section, influences and gives meanings to practices of surviving and contributes and limits an art of surviving. The social practices of surviving are influenced by national and international organizations

and political agendas and institutions. The organizations and institutions provide aid and funding to the survivors that makes possible some practices of surviving.

For example, in the African Rights' "Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits" (2004) (AR) report, the use of testimonies for "justice" purposes illuminates and begins to distinguish the social from the political practices of surviving. Survivors suggest that legal justice alone can not adequately account for surviving. For some survivors, they will never be able to point to the perpetrators who raped them:

Pauline: there were so many rapists that I can no longer remember the number of men who raped me. (AR 14)

Rachel: couldn't say how many men raped me. (AR 22)

Dative: I have no idea how many men raped me, nor how many times I was raped. There were a lot of them. It became our daily diet. (AR 23)

Josette: I was raped by a lot of people and at different times. I can't think how many times [...] Another act of savagery, which happened often, is that you were tortured by seven génocidaires, or even more, at the same time. (AR 12)

As these excerpts of testimonies suggest, the political practices of surviving is limited. The excerpts of testimonies help us explore and interrogate how this idea of "justice" does not fully address other important aspects of surviving. Each situation suggests possibilities as well as limitations that may or may not benefit the survivors' needs, wants and desires for surviving.

¹¹ The following PBS video, "Ladies First" (2004), provides further explorations on individual and community social processes of surviving. (PBS: Wide Angle. <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/rwanda/index.html>>).

Definition of Political Practices of Surviving

This leads me to the second component, the political. The political practices of surviving are about rebuilding and reconstructing the nation and its borders. This is about institutional, government and economic notions of surviving. Political practices of surviving include the practice and use of testimonies. The institutions, organizations, governments and military use testimonies and are addressed by testimonies to hold the community accountable at the political level. For example, and as I will explain in the political practices of surviving section, testimonies are used to transform the legal situation of address. The testimonies affect the national and international courtrooms, laws and policies and are affected by such situations of address. The political actors address survivors as they establish laws and policies.

Addressing survivors and listening for their response begins to constitute a social order. Refugee and displaced persons' camps are examples of how the political literally shapes the social. The camps are situations created and addressed by governments' funding and aid that rely on national and international political leaders, organizations and governments. These responses also organize and address the social sphere of the camps. The camp as a social whole cannot be separated from the political responses that make the camp possible.¹² Another example is how the political facilitates economic change, and how this affects the social body. What funding is made available for survivors

¹² Malkki's Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania. (1995) is an anthropological and theoretical exploration of history, memory, and nationality among Burundi Hutu refugees. This book captures the complexity of identity and how it is used for myths, past and present ideas of history, and the formation of new communities among displaced individuals.

reorders the social body—i.e. those who access housing, food and property and how they gain access. This article from The New Times: Rwanda's First Daily (2008) is an example of how the political affects day-to-day life for female survivors. In Nakayima Lillian's "Men Bring Multiple Partners to Wed," we learn that the political contract of marriage is how one is guaranteed a certain way of surviving:

KIBUYE — At least 71 couples on Sunday tied a knot in a dramatic mass wedding, at which scores of men turned up with multiple partners for wedding in Gishyita Sector. The event was part of celebrations to mark this year's International Women's Day [...] The wedding was arranged to coincide with the celebrations, to highlight the fact that *women needed stable marriages to effectively engage in development activities*, leaders said. "When a woman is legally married, she is stable because she has a right to own family property," Auguste Museruka, the sector executive secretary said, urging men to be gender supportive in conformity with Rwandan laws. Counseling the newly-wedded couples, Museruka urged them to respect each other in order to have stable marriages. "Most women work hard and in the end all the benefits of their hard work go to their husbands," he said. Scores of women narrated their everyday chores ranging from tilling to other domestic work, noting that their spouses do nothing, other than giving orders on what should be done in their homes. "Leaving women to work single handedly hinders development," Museruka warned. The newly-wed couples were also cautioned against domestic violence; which has reportedly been prevalent in the area. Cases of women battering have been common, according to some of the brides. "Just yesterday [Saturday] when I asked my husband about returning home late, he roughed me up; until our neighbors, who happen to be his parents came to my rescue," said Niwemugeni Mado, one of the brides. The women were urged to report such cases to the police since they were legally married. (March 8, 2008, The New Times: Rwanda's First Daily; my italics)

This article, almost 14 years after the genocide, shows how marriage is how one is given access to property. Surviving from genocidal rape (and/or present domestic violence experiences) is translated into surviving practices that lead to a financial stability. In this case, being a Survivor—a financially stable wife—exceeds the

experience of sexual and domestic violence. This example shows how political and social practices of surviving correspond and limit surviving to certain practices.

Political practices are also intertwined with how the nation and national body choose to reflect upon the meanings and truth that led to the collapse of the community. The political use of testimonies begins to rewrite the nation and the community through narrative memory(s) of genocide and genocidal rape. This affects practices of surviving. The rebuilding and reconstructing of the Nation's body parallels the political efforts to rebuild and mend certain wounds and certain bodies in certain ways.

The "new Rwanda Brand" is a good example of how the National body gives meaning and shape to the social body: Rwandan President Paul Kagame says "The Rwanda Brand is a challenge for all Rwandans to work towards the forging of an identity reflective of Rwanda's vision. The challenge ... is the need for Rwanda to develop a character, a personality, a brand, that is instantly recognizable to the World." President Kagame proposes that the vision of the "new Rwanda Brand" is "a people that are politically conscious, that work hard, and who have discipline and decency."¹³ This example shows how surviving practices are reflective of Rwanda's political vision.

The political practices of surviving, similar to the social practices of surviving, gives shape to certain stable subjects; what it means to be a Survivor, to survive, and how one picks up the pieces and moves forward. These practices determine belonging, solidarity and exclusivity. And, political practices of surviving are dependent and

¹³ Jabiro, Job. (2007) "What is the Media Role in National Development." *The New Times: Rwanda's First Daily*. Retrieved February 25, 2007 from < <http://newtimes.co.rw/>>.

inseparable from the aid and funding of international organizations, which carries with it western meanings of surviving and Survivor.

Exploring community practices of surviving begins to suggest how testimonies of genocidal rape are inseparable from a much larger social and political narrative. This complex situation of address also forces us to reflect on the situation and ask, what is an art of surviving for Rwandanese survivors as individuals, as a social community and as a nation of survivors?

Testimonies¹⁴

Within the community practices of surviving, there are two reports and one on-line forum that address genocidal rape survivors through testimonies. Human Rights Watch / Africa (HRW/A) “Shattered Lives” (1996) is a widely cited report that has been and continues to be used as a model for women’s organizations, feminists and advocates who seek to fight universal issues of sexual and gender-based violence.¹⁵ African Rights (AR) “Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits” (2004) readdresses the HRW/A response to genocidal rape and the genocidal rape testimonies. The AR report challenges what was missing in the HRW/A report and what is still missing for survivors of genocidal rape ten

¹⁴ See “Appendix – Testimonies.” The appendix is a space in which the readers can compare and contrast the excerpts of testimonies and the context in which I extracted them. I do this for the following reasons: I left out parts of the testimonies and some of the summarization provided by the report. I want to show the readers my interpretations of the testimonies. And, because I do not have the time or the space to include a closer look at how the testimonies are used within each quotation, I have provided the space for readers to take this project further. It is an important project for us to consider: the context of the testimonies, the testimonies themselves and how the context may or may not give new meanings or reshape the experience or the survivors’ motives for sharing their experience.

¹⁵ See Nowrojee (1996) “Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath.” Access the Human Rights Watch website for further reports and articles that have addressed the genocidal rape over the past 13 years: Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2007, Available: <http://www.hrw.org/>.

years later.¹⁶ The AR report suggests that certain practices of surviving and Survivors do not contribute to an art of surviving.

The on-line forum is SURF Survivors Funds' "Hearing and Healing: A Remembrance Initiative for Rwanda."¹⁷ The remembrance initiative contains children's and widows' testimonies of genocidal rape experiences. SURF states that "SURF provides this forum for survivors [...] giving access to the world as an audience."¹⁸ In the "Hearing and Healing" project SURF states that "[t]hey [testimonies] are being placed online [so] that the world can know what happened in Rwanda over the course of 100 days in April 1994." In the context of this on-line forum, the experience of genocidal rape is an individual and community practices of surviving. The testimonies are individually posted within the multitude of testimonies that speak/write for the self and the community. Similar to Brison's space for her series of selves, survivors are creating a space to share their experience of genocidal rape.

The three collections of testimonies and excerpts of testimonies arise within a situation of address that speaks to the community's surviving practices, both at the political and social levels. The reports and the forum are used to facilitate social, economical, and political change. The collections of testimonies address the conscience of the international community so that Rwanda and the survivors receive funding and aid.

¹⁶ African Rights (AR). Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits: Living with Genocide, Rape and Hiv/Aids. Kigali: African Rights (2004).

¹⁷ The "Hearing and Healing: A Remembrance Initiative for Rwanda" can be found at SURF's following link: <http://www.survivors-fund.org.uk/remember/index.htm> It is important to note that SURF funds and aids the Profemmes Twesehamwe organization.

¹⁸ The reader can find the "Testimonies" SURF at the following link: <http://www.survivors-fund.org.uk/resources/testimonies/testimonies.php>

What makes these collections of testimonies unique is that the excerpts and forum testimonies illuminate critical openings in the situation of address. The survivors use the situation of address to tell us that they are not silent and powerless, that they are courageous and strong. Their creative ways of surviving exceed the structure of surviving embedded in the situation of address. I situate these testimonies within my exploration and analysis of the community practices of surviving. Posing these testimonies within the critique of the situation of address speaks to, confronts, challenges and suggests a Rwandanese art of surviving that may not be recognized in current practices of surviving.

Background: Rwanda Genocidal Rape¹⁹

Within the complex set of relations that led up to the situation of genocidal rape one can state that genocidal rape was caused by a culmination of social narratives.²⁰ Social narratives are values, beliefs that manifest and mark bodies of males and females. For example some social narratives include: ethnic narratives, Hutu versus Tutsi; gender narratives, men versus women; and, race narratives, or color of skin, light black versus darker black.²¹ The population in Rwanda, though mixed through marriage, was separated by ethnic, race, gender and sexuality. These social narratives pitted communities against one another prior to colonialism, and during colonialism, which led

¹⁹ There are many interpretations of what led up to the Rwandan genocide. The main sources I have read and used for this brief historical analysis, can be further explored within the following resources (see bibliography for full citations): Scherrer (2001), Prunier (1997), Immaculee (2007), Malkki (1995), Halsey and Carr (1999), Taylor (1999) and Hatzfeld (2005). For a historical analysis that precedes colonialism, see Vansina's (2004) research.

²⁰ My use of social narratives as the cause of sexual violence upon certain bodies can be further explored in Christopher Taylor (1999), Susan Brownmiller's (1975) and Mary Warren's (1985) feminist theories and research. (See full citation in bibliography.)

²¹ Another thorough critique of how social narratives of ethnicity, politics and gender led to the Rwandan genocide is Taylor's (1999) research.

to several outbursts of violence and finally to the genocide and genocidal rape that literally wiped-out bodies and the Rwandan community in 100 days.

These social and political groups of persons experienced a state of anxiety when they faced a certain notion of “Rwandanese.” Rwandanese was a stable image that a group of persons had to identify with and claim as its own to be recognized as “Rwandan.” And because persons always faced this certain stable image that transformed over the centuries, there was a constant anxiety, absence, loss and shame. As Agamben (2002) says about shame and the body, shame is the fundamental sentiment of being a stable subject (107). As abjection tells us, no one wants to admit that their subjectivity is marked by vulnerability, absence, instability. Therefore, to be the subject of true Rwandanese, the group of persons or person expels what is unstable within onto the “other.” This expulsion of the unstable self creates a collapse of laws and order, in which persons can begin to rape and kill. Rape becomes the literal act of reclaiming stability through the act of instability, at the cost of others. To rape is to (re)establish power and control over borders and bodies. Ironically, it becomes a desperate and complex situation in which certain stability is seen as necessary, and enforcing stability through instability is the only way to grasp Rwandanese—that which is always represented as stable.

In April 1994 as many as 800,000²² - 1,050,000²³ Tutsi and Hutu moderates were killed in 100 days. In addition, Women for Women International and Women Waging

²² This statistic has been used by Women Waging Peace (www.huntalternatives.org: Rwanda Project), Women for Women International (www.womenforwomen.org), Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org) and many other sources. The distinction between the statistics that have emerged reveals how complicated gathering statistics may be, as well addresses the need for the organizations to provide statistics. What is the purpose in proving how many persons were raped and/or murdered?

Peace, estimate that 250,000 - 500,000 women were raped. According to Human Rights Watch (1996), Rwanda women were subjected to sexual violence on a massive scale. The forms of sexual violence ranged from individual rape to gang rape, rape by objects, systems of sexual slavery, where women were put into large groups, sexually assaulted and some forced into marriages, and sexually mutilated.

Reports claim that women represent the majority of the population post-genocide. Human Rights Watch (HRW) (1996), states that after the genocide, the estimated population was 57-75% women. Amnesty International (2004) reports 7 out of 10 of these women are living with HIV/AIDS. Women Waging Peace (2003) reports that these women suffering from HIV/AIDS are dying, leaving their children, also known as war-orphan, to fend for themselves.

With the increase of disease, poverty, and death, there has also been a significant increase of prostitution. HRW (2004) reports that 33% of “street girls” are raped. Due to the massive scale of sexual violence during the genocide there are babies of rape survivors who have been named “pregnancies of war.” Women Waging Peace states that many of these babies are called “children of hate,” due to social stigma. HRW (1996) reports that 2,000-5,000 babies were born from war rape.

From this collection of data it is important to note the linguistic field that translates the experiences of sexual violence in Rwanda: women raped, HIV/AIDS, mothers who leave their children, disease, poverty and prostitution. The international and

²³ This statistic has been used by The Republic of Rwanda. National Services of Gacaca Jurisdictions. (2007) “Gacaca Process: Achievement, Problems and Future Prospects.” Retrieved April 4,

organizational responses that address survivors through statistics use survivors' testimonies to listen for certain Survivors. This leads to several problems with the use of statistics through the collection of testimonies. There are several important points to make in exploring the statistics that have emerged in the past 13 years: the available numbers of victims and survivors of genocidal rape vary by the hundred-thousands; therefore, what statistics are available are unreliable; and, we must question the importance and relevance of the statistics. It seems that statistics are necessary because they justify to governments, institutions and international community that there is a problem and the community must respond, aid and support, and be responsible for the survivors and their community. At the same time the unreliable statistics that emerge undermines the very justification expected. This means that the survivors who have the courage and are willing to take the risk and provide their testimonies, may not be taken seriously given that the numbers do not add up.

Returning to Kristeva, statistics are like a theatre of brutality. The necessity for the statistics surpasses the experience of genocidal rape and the survivors. This may cause those who gather statistics to misuse the experiences of survivors for the purpose of meeting government and institutional standards and expectations. Returning to Butler, the expectations that surpass the gathering of statistics is a linguistic field where stability (read: statistics) exceeds the instability (read: experience). The higher the statistics the more proof and justification that there exists instability and mass sexual violence to which the international community must respond. The combination of testimony and

2007 from <<http://www.inkiko-gacaca.gov.rw/En/EnIntroduction.htm>>

statistics as a community practice of surviving addresses the questions I pose in this analysis—how experience is translated and who benefits. The use of testimonies for statistical purposes is about listening for survivors that may or may not include listening to.

Aftermath of Genocidal Rape

Responses in the aftermath of genocidal rape are impossible to separate from international and Rwandan communities. The responses are intertwined and complex. The only claim that can be made almost fourteen years after the Rwandan genocidal rape is that the community still needs to work on listening to survivors of genocidal rape to better understand Rwandanese practices of surviving as well as help us formulate alternative strategies and practices of surviving.

The French government was one of the first responders to the mass rape and murder in Rwanda. It sent soldiers to Rwanda in the early 1990s. The irony is that the French military, at that time, was being accused of raping civilians within their military camps and placements in the Central African Republic as well as in Mauritania (“Dangerous Liaisons...,” The Economist, July 1994).

In 1994 the following organizations and responses came to the Rwandan scene: United Nations for Refugee Relief; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Children Funds; and, French relief agencies, Doctors Without Borders and Lawyers Without Borders; International Relief Community; Rwandanese Human Rights League (based in Canada); World Food Programme; CARE Canada; International Red Cross; Zairian Army; and, Uganda Government. Similar to the French military, the

United Nations, to which the U.S. contributes millions of dollars for UN Peacekeeping initiatives, has also been accused of sexual violence and rape (see Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping Sandra Whitworth, 2004). The reason I mention the rape accusations already addressed in the French, U.S. and UN military and peace operations, is to show that rape is already an issue in these countries' own contexts, under recognized.

Political Practices of Surviving

African Rights provided the first detailed account of the mass rape, "Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance" (1994).²⁴ African Rights is an organization located in London that is "dedicated to working on issues of grave human rights abuses, conflict, famine and civil reconstruction in Africa." The motivation for setting up African Rights' is that they have "become aware of the limitations upon existing human rights, humanitarian and conflict resolution approaches to Africa's most pressing problems. The United States (U.S.)/United Nations (UN) military occupation [...] has shortcomings [in their] current international approaches to problems of famine and war" (African Rights website)²⁵:

Any solution to Africa's problems—the emergency humanitarian needs just as much as the long-term demands for political reconstruction and accountability—must be sought primarily among Africans. International organizations should see their principal role as facilitating and supporting attempts by Africans to address their own problems. It is Africa's tragedy that the existing institutions for addressing these problems have not looked to the African people for answers. African Rights tries to *give a voice* to Africans concerned with these pressing issues, and to press for more accountability from the international community. (my italics)

²⁴ For further information about the report see the African Rights website. This report has recently expanded and been made into a book for purchase: <http://web.peacelink.it/afrights/rw-book.htm>

²⁵ Pierino Martinelli, "African Rights": <http://web.peacelink.it/afrights/homepage.html>

African Rights analyzes the situation of address—existing institutions for addressing these problems—and criticizes the institutions. African Rights suggests that international institutions are listening for what is familiar to them rather than listening to the African people for alternative practices of surviving.

In September 1994, African Rights called for the “Rwandan government to pursue its own prosecutions” (The Gazette, Montreal, Quebec). A year later African Rights produced another report, “Rwanda: A Waste of Hope—The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Field Operations (HROFR)” (1995) that again criticized the U.S. and UN for focusing on refugees and displaced persons, rather than survivors in Rwanda, and not providing the basic essential protection and anonymity for witnesses of the genocide. African Rights’ critique of the situation of addressed the human rights discourse that emerged from the UN and U.S. whose human rights ignored African rights (1995 report).

This accusation was also announced by Ms. Kagame in Rwanda, at that time wife of current vice president Paul Kagame: “Why are they [UN and U.S.] helping the murderers and not the victims?”:

The United Nations organized the camps in a way that reinstated the political power of the genocidal political leaders. Today the humanitarian emergency in those camps is over. People who live in the camps have medical care and water supplies superior to the people who live in Rwanda, and superior to those available to villagers who live nearby in Tanzania and Zaire. What they do not have is the *chance to hear what life is like...* (“Help the Victims and Not the Murderers,” The Washington Post, March 1995; my italics)

In 1994 Ms. Kagame, a survivor herself, responded to the situations of address that called upon them. As Ms. Kagame stated it is necessary to hear what life is like for survivors. My interpretation of life is that the political response must include social practices of surviving and that listening to the survivors and their day-to-day struggles is how we can better understand what surviving means. This chance to hear survivors is different from the listening for that emerges in international and African responses:

Annunciata Nyiratamba: Women are alone. They have lost everything. But there are no programs for them. No-one speaks about the survivors. No one talks about their problems. We are watching what the world will do for the survivors and what it does for the returnees and the refugees. This is a problem for reconciliation. There needs to be assistance for victims, not just for refugees, prisons and returnees. It's unbalanced. Concretely, there is nothing for the women and yet they constitute the bulk of survivors. (HRW/A 47)

The reason I include African response as a situation that listens “for,” is because African Rights “gives voice” to and places value on political witnessing rather than social. They tell Rwanda that it is “essential for the world to see the prosecution of genocidal criminals” (1994). In the African Rights situation of address, they state that because they are Africans, (living in London), they therefore can *give* a voice to Africans. Giving voice confines rape survivors’ testimonies to those who are willing to participate in the prosecution of criminals.

Amnesty International fights for human rights across the globe. In 1995 Amnesty International responded to the rapes in Rwanda, identifying the mass sexual violence as a form of torture. This response to rape differentiated from the situation of responses at that time. The U.S. did not recognize or stop the rapes that occurred in Rwanda prior to the

genocide and a year later. Rape in the U.S. and in Rwanda was recognized as a domestic problem (read: individualized problem) (“Another side of Rwanda's blood bath; Onus may be misplaced in tribal war,” The Washington Times, August 1994). “For the moment,” a genocidal rape survivor tells a reporter for the New York Times, “there is no official program to help these women or their children [...] No international relief agencies have provided direct assistance to the victims.”²⁶

Amnesty International in 1995, in The New York Times stated that their efforts were just as much about political response as social response. Dr. Schulz, the Director at that time, discussed the problem that Amnesty International’s project in Rwanda was facing: “there is no functioning government to appeal to [...] we have to change our approach, we can’t just appeal to governments.” Dr. Schulz stated that U.S. based human rights organizations needed to go through Amnesty International and touch base with the local human rights organizations in war torn countries. International organizations should get in “touch with local organizations and find out what they need.” Here, Amnesty International addressed the gap between the political and the social practices of surviving.

The Canadian Government played a leadership role in drafting and promoting the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and later addressed the witnessing of rape in Rwanda in the United Nations’ International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (The Gazette, December 6, 1996). The Canadian International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development hired a Canadian lawyer to be an on-site

²⁶ The following information comes from “A Wave of Rape Adds New Horror...” The New York Times, May 1995.

monitor at the ICTR to help ensure that gender-related crimes were addressed, while facing the difficult task of adequately protecting victims and witnesses (1996).

The International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR)²⁷ was developed in 1994 to recognize the “serious violations of humanitarian law were committed in Rwanda [...]”

The purpose of this measure [ICTR] is to contribute to the process of national reconciliation in Rwanda and to the maintenance of peace in the region. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established for the prosecution of persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law [...]”

The ICTR is founded and dependent upon UN volunteers and funding from the international community.²⁸

Canada’s response politically addressed Rwandanese survivors of rape through Canada’s social practices of surviving. Addressing genocidal rape in Rwanda, Canada first held their own community responsible and accountable for violence against women to further address the survivors in Rwanda. The situation that addresses Rwandan genocidal rape, in the article below, springs from the memories of an event on December 6, 1989, when fourteen young women at the Universite de Montreal were murdered. However, “Addressing the needs of Rwandan women” is strictly about the political practices of surviving:

Canadians have shown that they are concerned about the refugee crisis in central Africa and about violence against women. Addressing the needs of Rwandan women now is one way to bring these two concerns together and to make a contribution to lasting democratic development in the region.

²⁷ For more information on what the ICTR means and what kind of work they do, access the following ICTR website: <http://69.94.11.53/default.htm>.

²⁸ See “2 Tribunals on Atrocities...” The New York Times (February 23, 1996).

We remember today what every one of us experienced on Dec. 6, 1989.
We must not be paralyzed by our grief, but move forward to eliminate
violence against women in all its forms. (December 1996)

In June 1997 The Coalition on Women's Human Rights in Conflict, which includes Rwandan and international women's rights organizations, coordinated by the Montreal-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD) encouraged the Office of the Prosecutor to adequately prosecute crimes of sexual violence at the ICTR. They did this by urging adequate witness protection, proper training for ICTR investigators, the addition of more women on investigating teams, and other similar measures. In September 1998, The Coalition on Women's Human Rights in Conflict, was also the major force behind a case that set a milestone in the prosecution of crimes of sexual violence committed in armed conflict (see "Rwanda; Women's Coalition Monitors Tribunal on Sexual Violence," [Africa News](#)).

The Coalition's efforts were supported by the "facts" (read: testimonies of experienced genocidal rape) collected in [Human Rights Watch's](#) (HRW) 1996 report "Shattered Lives." It distributed the testimonies to the ICTR to urge the prosecution of rape and sexual violence crimes ([Africa News](#) 1998). Individual testimonies of social practices of surviving from the HRW report were used to call upon Rwandanese survivors as political witnesses. This example shows that social practices of surviving, Rwandanese survivors sharing their stories, became intertwined with the international community's political practices of surviving.

"It was the gruesome pictures of bodies and bones," that led a New York bred lawyer to volunteer at the ICTR for Rwanda. "I was moved," the lawyer says to [The New](#)

York Times, when “a US State Department mission showed slides of rotting corpses in mass graves, victims of mass killing” (“US Lawyer A Champion for Victims in Rwanda,” November 1998):

I realized it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference in the world [...] having seen the ruthlessness on the streets of America [...] helped prepare him [the New York lawyer] for what he encountered in Rwanda. Except for the rape.

How this lawyer’s drive and passion is contextualized in the article is an example of how the international community responds to genocidal rape in the Rwandan context. The gruesome and horrific testimonies for this lawyer, is a world that is similar to the ruthlessness on the streets of America, in so far that he is prepared. However, what the lawyer was unprepared for was the “thousands of women and girls publicly gang-raped [in Rwanda], often before being killed” (1998). This article’s discussion of the absence of public rape in America in comparison to the mass rape in Rwanda begins to expose the inadequacy in accounting for the sexual violence that permeates the American community. What is not addressed is that “public rape” in America does not just occur at a mass rate in the streets, but rather occurs in the privacy of America’s homes. The way in which the article is contextualized, allows for the unfit and gruesomeness to be produced and reproduced, marking, expelling and shaping meanings of Rwanda as Other: images of skulls, dead bodies, and mass rape.

A New York prosecutor who volunteered as a co-counsel for the ICTR provides another account. In “Inching Towards Justice in Rwanda” the prosecutor states that there

were many issues that delayed the court procedures. She discusses how the political surviving practices is influenced and encouraged by the international community:

It took courage for these witnesses [genocidal rape survivors] to venture far from their farms to testify in a courtroom. But they were not intimidated. Even during the grueling cross-examinations, they forthrightly recounted the unspeakable acts they had suffered and seen. Their *lack of sophistication* actually made the proceedings more *credible* [...] but as impressive as the witnesses were, I often doubted the tribunal's success [...] language problem [and] *getting witnesses [...] required daily cajoling, flattery and even deception* [...] (“Inching Toward Justice ...,” The New York Times, September 1998; my italics)

This quotation explores the expectations from the international community as it calls upon and addresses Rwandanese survivors of genocidal rape through political practices. “Lack of sophistication,” in this context means the survivor’s account is made more credible. As I discussed in chapter two, the unsophisticated (read: unstable) is an account which faces a stable form, to justify the unstable, so the testimony of experience can access stability (read: credible). This lawyer’s account suggests that the use of testimony in the context of the court is not about the experience of genocidal rape, but more about proving the veracity of the experience and its stability through the level of instability that the survivor experienced. This opinion is very much linked to the court situation of address for Brison and me. The witness of rape must experience a certain level of brutality to become a credible witness who speaks to a credible experienced rape.

In December 1998, 120 nations, except for the U.S. government, had agreed to create the International Criminal Court (ICC) (which is different than the ICTR). The ICC was established in Rome, Italy in 1998. The court also recognizes “rape and sexual

enslavement” (“Citizen Activists on Human Rights,” The New York Times, December 1998):

The ICC is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICC is a court of last resort. It will not act if a case is investigated or prosecuted by a national judicial system unless the national proceedings are not genuine, for example if formal proceedings were undertaken solely to shield a person from criminal responsibility. In addition, the ICC only tries those accused of the gravest crimes.

The U.S. government was one of the few nations that refused to sign the treaty.²⁹

The U.S. has been supportive of the ICTR as well as providing aid and funding to refugees and displaced persons, however the U.S. government did not want to risk their own military being prosecuted within the ICC.³⁰ My use of the term “context” includes the context of military bases that are housed in foreign countries. Similar to the UN, the U.S. military is also guilty of rape and sexual violence.³¹ The most recent case of a US military rape can be found in BBC News “New rape allegation in Okinawa” (February 21, 2008).³² This is the second incident in a ten day period of time and the latest of a string of US military rapes in foreign countries. The U.S.’ refusal to sign the ICC treaty, but their willingness to fund the ICTR and respond to and aid Rwandan survivors of rape

²⁹ There are only 105 nations who have signed the treaty, as of now. For more information on the ICC access their website: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/home.html>.

³⁰ See “A Turn in the Road,” The New York Times, July 1998.

³¹ There has been an abundant amount of research that discusses the US Military and sexual violence within military bases across the African continent, in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the Air Force Academy in Colorado and the domestic violence, sexual assault and murders of women in Fort Bragg. See Lucida Marshall’s “Militarism and Violence Against Women,” Z Magazine, Volume 17, Number 4. Website: <<http://zmagazine.zmag.org/Apr2004/marshall0404.html>>.

³² Hogg, Chris. “New US Rape Allegation in Okinawa,” BBC News Tokyo (2008).

who are suffering from HIV/AIDs or displacement, shows how some communities deflect responsibility for sexual violence within their own communities while specularizing issues of sexual violence in unfit communities like Rwanda.

Exploring the situation of address and the Survivor that is affected and affects that situation of address, it is important to note that political surviving practices are steered by international women activists and their practices of surviving:

The new court can aggressively prosecute rape and sexual enslavement [...] this is largely due to international women's groups, which lobbied the governments writing the court's statutes and raised prosecutor's awareness of the issue. Outside pressure was unable to persuade Washington to join the court. Private citizens cannot push leaders where they refuse to go. ("Citizen Activists ...," The New York Times, December 1998)

It can also be argued that without the political community practices—international women's groups working with Rwandan organizations and the international court—rape would continue to be recognized as a personal, individualized and domestic experience for which the survivor and her or his perpetrator are alone to be accountable and responsible. For example, the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia was the first international court where political witnessing held the perpetrators and community accountable for mass rape and sexual violence. Without this community of political witnesses, Rwanda may or may not have addressed the rape and sexual violence in the ICTR.³³ This is a revolutionary change for women and communities across the globe:

³³ The prosecution and political witnessing in the ICTR has created a "new atmosphere of openness" for survivors of rape to bring forward evidence and provide their testimony. This new atmosphere stretches history and nations, from Germany, Yugoslavia, Africa, China's "Comfort Women," to East Timor. See "Crimes Against Humanity..." The New York Times, March 2001. And, "The New Punishment for an Ancient War Crime," The New York Times, April 1998.

Over the last decade, there have been significant changes among the vulnerable women themselves [genocidal rape survivors] These women [...] have begun to speak out often aided by human rights organizations and women's crisis centers. For many, this has been a revolutionary change. ("An Old Scourge of War Becomes Its Latest Crime," The New York Times, June 1998)

However, for some Rwandanese survivors, already in 1994 they were against international influence when it came to political surviving processes:

Rwanda, which voted against the establishment of a United Nations ICTR, said Wednesday it would set up its own courts to try suspected war criminals. Rwanda's U.N. ambassador Manzi Bakuramutsa said he voted against Tuesday night's resolution because it did not establish an "efficient" way to try 30,000 people suspected of killing up to one million Rwandans. He said the genocide actually began in October 1990, while the U.N.'s court would only prosecute crimes committed between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 1994 [...] The international court should also have been established in Rwanda to teach the people a lesson, he argued. The Rwandan government would not interfere with the working of the international court, he said. But it would try its own suspects and execute them if found guilty, he added. The U.N.'s court does not provide for the death penalty. ("Rwanda to set up National court for War Tribunals," Deutsche Press – Agentur, November 1994)

Exploring the political processes of surviving, that give shape and meaning to a situation of address reflects a certain practice of surviving. The art of surviving focuses on political witnessing. This is not to undermine the importance of political practices of surviving and the political witness, however any situation of address must reflect and ask what it means to survive and if this surviving, bearing witness and seeking justice through court, are what the practices of testimonies survivors want to offer.

As I stated earlier, the political community practices of surviving confront and challenge international law. Sexual violence and mass rape are being recognized as crimes of war and survivors across the globe are seeking justice for their experiences.

However as this survivor's testimony states in the African Rights (AR) report (2004), political testimony is a duty to attest to the truth of her experience at the cost of her safety and her life:

Gisèle: I shall continue to accuse them before the courts. Even if I have to die, I would be proud that I'd done my *duty* and the other inhabitants would know that I was a *victim of the truth*. (AR 18; my italics)

Social Practices of Surviving

In May 1994, Augustin Bizimana, the Defense Minister of Rwanda tells the International community:

It is very difficult to end these hatreds [...] The UN should start by separating the belligerents and starting talks to end the war. But the *ultimate solution must be between the people*. There must be an end to the vicious circle. ("Tutsi refugees face choice of starvation or being murdered," The Times)

The ultimate solution for this particular Rwandanese is the social practices of surviving. It is about sharing experiences and surviving between the people, the day-to-day life in the aftermath of genocidal rape; living as an individual survivor and forming community of survivors that speaks to the various aspects of surviving. Similar to the political practices of surviving the social practices of surviving are inseparable from the influence of the African, international and Rwandan communities. The social practices of surviving the genocidal rape suggest that social suffering and practices of surviving are funded and shaped by the international community.

Within the articles, excerpts of testimonies and testimonies there is a certain linguistic field that shapes those who bear witness to the Rwandan genocidal rape.

Returning to Butler we learn that the capacity to listen to a survivor's testimony of genocidal rape becomes possible only by entering into a linguistic field that conditions its listen-ability; and, the practice of listening is in relation to a field that over time produces our capacity to listen (Butler Giving An Account of Oneself 29; or, see my Chapter 1 pg. 23).

What image or frame—Survivor—is the Rwandanese survivor of rape given in the social practices of surviving, and how is this reflective of and influenced by the political practices of surviving and vice versa? In this section I also provide testimonies of Rwandanese survivors that speak through and beyond, as well as challenge the capacity of the linguistic field that shapes testimonies of experienced genocidal rape.

One way of calling upon Rwandanese genocidal rape Survivors is framed within testimonies that carry a certain trope of motherhood. What emerges in the aftermath of genocidal rape, are not survivors struggling in the aftermath of rape, but rape survivors who do not want their children. The “Survivor” that emerges are survivors who practice illegal abortion, or successfully kill their babies. The real victims, some of these testimonies state, are the unborn, unloved and unwanted babies. For example, a French child psychiatrist, funded by French Foundation, arrived on the scene months after the genocidal rape took place. Dr. Catherine Bonnet, the psychiatrist stated that the “rape-impregnated women” are bearing “unwanted babies by the hundreds, even thousands”:

90 per cent of the rape-impregnated women do not want to keep the babies [...] Many women have sought abortions, even though they are illegal. Hospital officials report numerous cases of women suffering infections and hemorrhages because self-abortions. (“Hutu Terror Campaign Breeds Generation of Unwanted Children,” The Associated Press, February 1995)

In “Rwanda’s Time of Rape Returns to Haunt Thousands” testimonies of Rwandanese survivors, spoken through UN volunteer medical and social workers, are also framed as incompetent: the survivors of rape find the “rape was so common [...] they think it is normal” (The Observer, Feb. 1995). A UN volunteer who coordinates the trauma program in Kigali, Rwanda stated that a rape survivor “had been forced by militiamen to kill and bury her six children. The same men then raped her repeatedly. “She had given up on life, [...] *and her child is the unborn victim.*” (my italics):

the youngest victims are only now coming to light. Abandoned at the roadside or neglected until they die of starvation, these are the unloved and unwanted babies of women who were raped during the war. (“Rwanda’s Time of ...” The Observer, Feb. 1995)

In this quotation it seems that the real victims are the unborn or neglected babies and not the “women” (read: survivors/victims?) who were raped during the war. This response to survivors of genocidal rape subordinates a life that was shattered by the rape to a life created by the rape. The field that calls upon Survivors transforms the victim or survivor of rape to an unfit mother.

In “Rwanda Copes With Babies of Mass Rape,” a Rwandanese survivor is addressed non-anonymously—as a “symbol of suffering and shame” who “hates” and “despises the child [her baby]” (The Christian Science Monitor, March 27, 1995). The Rwandan Family and Promotion of Women Ministry, that is supported and trained by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)³⁴ that also provides social workers, medical

³⁴ Rwandan “Rwanda’s Time of Rape Returns to Haunt Thousands,” The Observer, February 25, 1995.

staff and community leaders, is quoted saying “that up to 5,000 Tutsi women are bearing children conceived by rape during the killing spree [and] more than 80 percent of the mothers are deciding to abandon such babies” (1995). Testimonies of genocidal rape survivors are marked by their inability to take care of and love the children of rape [“Generation of Rape is Born in Rwanda; Doctor Describes Nightmarish Abortion Plight of Victims,” (The Guardian, February 1995) and “The Thousands Born of Rape”]:

Some days when she looks at her round faced baby boy, [L.M.] feels that she no longer wants to live. It is not the child’s fault. He peers back at his mother with innocent eyes [Another survivors tells the reporter,] ‘This child is for me a problem’ [...] ‘What can I do? I had him [the baby of rape]. What can I do? I have to love him. (“The Legacy of Rwandan Violence ...,” The New York Times, September 1996)

In “The Outcasts” the Rwandanese genocidal rape survivors “are once again slipping underneath the radar of International, and national interest” (The New York Times, January, 1997), but the article puts the spotlight on survivors who are unfit mothers: a Rwandanese genocidal rape survivor says, “I tried to abort the child but no one would do it.” The article explains that the mothers’ call the babies “devils’ children.” Rwandanese survivors and their testimonies are framed as “outcasts” or “women [who] gave birth to and simply abandoned their children; [or] another alternative, rarely voiced, was infanticide.” In the same article but in another testimony, a woman says “My other children were gone,” she says *flatly*, “so I had to accept this one’ ” (“The Outcasts,” The New York Times, 1997; my italics).

“The Outcasts” goes on to explain that the “Rwanda community is fairly closed and the women don’t easily express their trauma.” This explanation that the survivors

don't easily express their trauma and that the reporters find the community closed, suggests that the survivors may not want to express their trauma in the midst of the situation that is addressing them; or that "trauma" itself is different than western notions of "trauma." Though there is work being done that connects survivors to the Rwandan and international community, it is important to note that the connections carry with it certain stable images, and that these certain stable images may foreclose the survivors' practices of surviving:

Rape victims especially speak in measured sentences that betray little emotion. But health workers [Doctors Without Borders] in Rwanda report "widows [...] are withdrawing and dysfunctional, not capable of properly looking after their children [...] the rape of more than a quarter of a million girls and women astounds and horrifies Westerners...." ("The Outcasts," The New York Times, January 1997)

It may not be that the survivors withdraw and/or are dysfunctional or incapable of "properly looking after their children." Rather, it may be that the situation of address defines survivors' ways of "looking after" and expressing "emotion." In "The Outcasts" another woman with a baby daughter, is quoted saying that "the community isn't interested in me or her." Given the situation of address that intertwines a social and political, as well as individual and community practices of surviving, it is important to ask *whose community*. *What* community isn't interested and what *kind* of Survivor is this community interested in?

In the SURF Survivors Fund (SURF) forum a survivor's testimony challenges notions of what it means to be dysfunctional or incapable. For some survivors, they are never silent, absent, they have always existed and been there. Rather, the issue is how

survivors choose to survive. For Nyinawamariya, surviving is about sharing a space with another survivor. She does not have to speak her experience:

Nyinawamariya: I found my sister there and we stay together now. We never speak about our experiences. (SURF)

Murorenkwere: [T]hat night he came with another woman whom they raped the whole night. I heard her screaming and crying. We saw each other in the morning but we were both unable to speak to each other. We were held in the house for five days [...] all this time, when we were left locked up, we didn't speak but stared at each other in fear. On the sixth day, I asked the other woman her name. She told me she was called Venerandah. (SURF)

For Murorenkwere, surviving is also about recognizing shared surviving in silence. What is interesting about this testimony is that the first opportunity for Murorenkwere to speak, she asks the woman who she is. This may seem overly simple to the reader, however the simplicity of asking someone who they are, may be more important than expressing “trauma” and “emotion.” Their experience may be similar, but listening to one another is approached in a way that does not foreclose the opportunity of learning about one another. These two survivors of genocidal rape already know where they are; now they ask, who are you?

In July 1998 a dispute at the UN Conference in Rome delayed the rule making for the ICC. The Vatican as well as American anti-abortion organizations, who refused to include enforced pregnancy along with rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, and enforced sterilization, risked thwarting the overall inclusion of whether sexual violence would be declared a war crime (“Semantics Stalls Pact Labeling...” The New York Times, July 1998). Social testimonies that listen for genocidal rape survivors as mothers

who neglect their babies may or may not have deterred the ICC's decision to make rape recognized under genocide. The political and social practices of surviving shape the possibilities in the situation of address as well as set limitations for survivors.

In the AR report and SURF testimonies, survivors' share their experiences of genocidal rape and the aftermath of having a baby of rape. The testimonies challenge and make more complex the images of the "unfit mother":

Mukandoli: after the genocide [...] I had conceived due to the killers. The child was born but most of the time, I am not happy about him especially because he reminds me of the bad images of the people who raped me. I lost seven children and I am now bringing up a child of bad luck; he can't substitute the seven children that I lost. It is very hard for me because all the time I hear my children's' voices asking for food. The pain never goes away and it feels like yesterday. I cannot love this child. Knowing that he is the only one I have I can't say that I am living. Its hell on earth and the genocide continues to live with me. (SURF)

Mukandoli is a survivor of genocidal rape whose experiences speak to a body after rape and the site of the maternal body. Listening to Mukandoli's testimony in the context of genocidal rape suggests that the experience of genocidal rape and the difficulty of surviving after losing seven children is more complex than that of a "woman who is raped" whose "child is the victim." Mukandoli is not an unfit mother who cannot find the strength to love her child, rather she is a mother who cannot let go of the children she once had and who cannot seem to find the capacity to face the experience of rape that birthed a child that she did not *choose* to have.

Returning to Kristeva, the site of the maternal body is also to return to the subject-in-process where creativity, life and the art of surviving are spaces that are open for the imagination and alternative practices of surviving. A situation of address that

subordinates the experience of rape to the mother who neglects her child is similar to Kristeva's claim that the symbolic ignores the process of connections and relationships and rather focuses on separation and "neglect."

In the testimonies below survivors are concerned for the well being of their children, for themselves and their community. These survivors do not fit within the field of the "unfit mother." Survivors' testimonies from SURF acknowledge the site of the maternal body and the responsibility. For some survivors, the maternal body is a biological site, where the women bear the children, as well as a site in which they adopt orphans who have lost their own mothers during the genocide. These survivors acknowledge their responsibility and how the self is always in relation to the community. They worry about their children's lack of a home. They are concerned for their psychological, physical and social well beings. For Nyirashema, facing death knowing that her children will be cared for is her practice in an art of surviving:

Nyirashema: I was beaten, stabbed and then raped [...] When I gained consciousness, the first thing I thought of was my children; they were fine. I carried the youngest and hid him in a hole [...] I realized that my health wasn't good after the war and when I told the doctor about what I went through, he advised me to take an HIV/AIDS test, the result of which was positive. My only worry is my children's education and their future without me. (SURF)

A practice of surviving for *Nyirashema* is founded on her "children's" livability. For some survivors the maternal body, not solely as the biological reproduction of the community and population, but also through adoption, is a site where women *choose* to create their meanings of surviving. What seems important is that a choice is available for some survivors. This choice is to distinguish between the rape survivor, who chooses to

birth a child, and therefore someone she chooses to care for; and, a rape survivor who births a child of rape who the woman did not want nor care for. If the situation of address ignores the complexity and the process a pregnant survivor of rape and her body undergo, and not recognize that a baby was not her choice to begin with, is to neglect to work through the process of how a survivor of rape may or may not be able to face a child of rape.

As Kristeva discusses, the link between the maternal and child's body is a "word flesh" relationship in which both bodies are consoling one another. This consoling is a process of working through that is a source of creation and the site for new values. Survivors that recognize that shared loss of composure, as an act of misrecognition, responsibility and life, may be better able to deal with the situation of what it means to experience rape and be a mother in the aftermath of rape:

Virginie: [T]o be raped is a degrading stain. So I told myself that I couldn't have a husband. But instead of dying without having a child, I gave birth as a way of consoling myself. (AR 75)

Mukamukomeza: [G]ot an orphan to stay with so that I could have somebody to talk to but when I am ill my neighbors take care of me. (SURF)

Some genocidal rape survivors do find a community that supports and welcomes them and their child into their homes:

Gratia: They [family] welcomed me warmly and took pity on me. They thought I had died. I was with my child [of rape] and they weren't upset about that. (AR 24)

Another frame that shapes the image of the Rwandanese genocidal rape survivor and testimony is HIV/AIDS. Jean Comaroff in "Beyond Bare Life: AIDS, (Bio)Politics,

and the Neoliberal Order,” speaks to the discourse of AIDS that has marked locations and bodies for western political purposes:

AIDS also casts a premodern pall over the emancipated pleasures, the amoral, free-wheeling desires that animated advanced consumer societies. And, as is often the case when Western self-images of reasoned control face homegrown disruption, the disease was deflected onto Africa as primal other, Africa as an icon of dangerous desire, Africa as the projection of a self never fully tamable.³⁵

In “Rwanda’s Time of Rape...,” The Observer (1995) first introduces Rwandan genocidal rape through the victims of rape who produce unborn victims, and then concludes the testimonies of rape survivors with those survivors who are now marked for a more “gradual, agonizing murder”: “According to Unicef, before the war more than 40 per cent of women surveyed in urban antenatal clinics tested positive for HIV. That figure is set to multiply” (The Observer, 1995).

In the aftermath of genocidal rape, survivors are faced with new burdens—HIV/AIDS. For example, the U.S. was not there to stop or speak to the mass rape that took place in 1994 nor offer assistance to the survivors in the aftermath. However, the U.S., even today,³⁶ is more than willing to treat the epidemic of HIV/AIDS upon these survivors’ bodies. However, the “ABC” focus of the policy, “abstinence, be faithful and

³⁵ Jean Comaroff, "Beyond Bare Life: Aids, (Bio)Politics, and the Neoliberal Order," Public Culture.1 (2007).

³⁶ See George Bush’s 2008 visit to the Africa. He visited Rwanda and apologized for not responding to the genocide, criticized the UN’s slow response, admitted that the US government still believes it made the right decision and finally focused on the real issues, HIV/AIDS. Website and access to archives for the week of Feb. 17, 2008: The New Times: Rwanda’s First Daily, 2008, The New Times, Available: <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/>.

use a condom,” does not speak to the population of genocidal rape survivors who were forced.³⁷

Genocidal rape is communicated and translated through socially useful discourse—HIV/AIDS—that both triggers international response as well as shapes the capacity to listen to genocidal rape. For example, the testimonies below, from African Rights (AR) “Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits” (2004) and Human Rights Watch / Africa (HRW/A) “Shattered Lives” (1996), address surviving through HIV/AIDS. In these excerpts of testimonies we learn that practices of surviving the experience of sexual violence is subordinated to HIV/AIDS. Some survivors are unwilling to get a HIV test because they have yet to survive the experience itself:

Adèle: was “gang-raped during the genocide” and has recently learned that she is HIV positive: I’ve had enough of life. It means nothing to me. (AR 49)

Widow: it is as if we are now beginning a new life. Our past is so sad. We are not understood by society [...] we are the living dead. (HRW/A 49)

Véronique: I regret that I did not die that day ... I regret that I’m alive because I have lost my lust for life. We survivors are broken-hearted. We live in a situation which overwhelms us. Our wounds become deeper everyday. We are constantly in mourning. (AR 52)

Alodie: [I will] die more of sorrow than of illness. (AR 60)

Many of the survivors do not want to identify with illness or as a victim of HIV/AIDS:

Dorothee: I can’t describe the state that I was in when I found out what the

³⁷ “Aids, Oil and africom on Bush Tour,” BBC News, Liberia. February 22, 2008. website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7257170.stm>

results were. I felt as though my life was already over. (AR 36)

Alodie: when we went to collect our results, the doctor asked me what I would do if I had contracted the Aids virus. I replied that I would probably commit suicide. So the doctor said that the results weren't back yet [...] (AR 30)

Jocelyn: I immediately wanted to commit suicide. (AR 38)

Josiane: “felt powerless in the face of the knowledge that she was HIV positive”: I was in such a state of anguish that I'd have committed suicide if I'd had the opportunity. (AR 40)

Emma: “learned that she was HIV positive”; “immediately [she] plunged into a cycle of fear and depression”: When they told me the news, I felt as though I'd been given an electric shock, as though the day of my death had already arrived. I was very anxious because if the neighbors ever found out, they'd ostracize me. My biggest fear was that other people would identify me as HIV positive... I feared that they'd throw me out if they knew my secret. (AR 43)

Social practices that address themselves through HIV/AIDS foreclose some of these survivors' lives in the aftermath of genocidal rape. Even the African Rights (2004) report encourages survivors of genocidal rape to identify as victims of HIV/AIDS, though this may only increase their suffering:

Rape victims who took an HIV test did so mainly with the encouragement and assistance of an NGO. Women rarely came forward on their own initiative. The sad truth is that there may be few personal advantages, at present, to testing and acknowledging HIV infection in Rwanda [...] The realization that they are HIV-positive may simply “increase their burden.” (28)

The community practices of surviving that focus on HIV/AIDS subordinates the experience of genocidal rape. For example SURF provides a space in which survivors speak to the limitations of dealing with HIV/AIDS prior to coming to grips of the experience of rape or just when life starts to become “normal”:

Mukanyungura: life began getting back to normal. I got scared [...] and I went for an HIV test which was positive [...] I have become the laughing stock in my neighborhood now that my skin has started showing signs. Everybody can tell that I am HIV positive which deprives me of my sleep. (SURF)

Marcelline: was encouraged to take a test. As soon as she found out that she had contracted HIV/AIDS “her world crumble[d].” I felt deeply agitated and the whole thing was unbearable for me. I was completely desperate. Friends came to visit me in order to comfort me, but it was as if I couldn’t see them. I remained enveloped in my solitude. (AR 38)

Some survivors’ testimonies show how surviving from rape in the face of identifying as HIV/AIDS takes away, again, a life of her own. As I concluded in Chapter one the stable “I”– Survivor with a capital S—is an illusion. Having experience and seeking to articulate that experience through testimony, will always fail in the face of an “I” being offered through testimony. Therefore, it is important to explore the structure of the testimony, its assumptions, what makes up the linguistic field—unfit mother and HIV/AIDS—and the underlying tones of responsibility, necessity and consignment:

Mushimire: learning that I was HIV positive. I hated myself and everything around me including my own son [...] I left my son [...] I stayed with my sister in Kigali but I was more of a moving corpse than a human being because at times I would go into the road and move aimlessly. I have come to hate all men irrespective of their race or looks. I am only glad that my son did not contract the HIV virus. (SURF)

Testimonies of genocidal rape are produced through a certain frame and criterion of brutality. Yet another image of an unfit Rwandanese woman speaks to the experience of genocidal rape: “Rwanda’s minister for women’s affairs at the time of the 1994 war is accused of an incomprehensible evil—inciting Hutus to rape thousands of female Tutsis

women [...] the first woman ever on trial for genocide” (The New York Times, September 15, 2002).

The situation that addresses the Rwandan genocidal rape suggests that the more atrocious, horrifying and brutal the account—incomprehensible evil—the more testimonies meet the criterion for accounting the genocidal rape. Though these testimonies seek to hold the international community accountable, the theatre of brutality suggests that experience of genocidal rape is a foreign concept that happens over there—Africa—not here—the homes of America. Unfit mothers, HIV/AIDS and evil return us to abjection. These frames give meaning to Rwandan genocidal rape and suggests how genocidal rape testimonies are used to establish boundaries between western/first world and third world to expel the abject/other—rape—from the community’s own context.

Genocidal rape is made translatable through what is socially useful. Testimonies are misused to reestablish the boundaries between worlds and suggest that responsibility and accountability makes up a certain criterion. Experienced genocidal rape comes to serve political motives that listen for a certain Survivor. The situation of address denies and ignores the complex connections and relationships between first world/third world and the issues of sexual violence that we share.

This suggests that addressing genocidal rape is a process of societies who believe they are outside of the crisis. For example, we are here and the crisis over there; the testimony of genocidal rape can be (re)presented over here through modes that fit our needs. This assumed separation and distance from the crisis is also to address the crisis’ instability from the position of our stability. This enforces dependency from one nation

onto another. The situation maintains the abyss to which sustains the dependency of one community on the other and sustains a reflection that we, over here, are stable and can give your instability some stability.

Genocidal rape as abjection—a situation caused by the disturbance of system, order and identity—is also an opportunity to see how genocide is the result of such ideologies. Genocidal rape shows us that such frames of separation and borders are fragile; that system, order and identity constitute certain subjects by deconstituting others, and that it is what makes such atrocious mass rape possible. Genocidal rape as abjection speaks to the precarious situation in community practices of surviving. If abjection is the collapse of identity, system and order, the surviving of abjection must reconstitute certain subjects. Practices of surviving genocidal rape that confront and challenge the symbolic notify us of the precarious situation in which restructuring abjection may collapse again. Genocide ideology and sexual violence still prevail. There are numerous articles that support this in the archive of Rwanda's on-line newspaper, The New Times: Rwanda's first Daily,³⁸ since August of 2005. Paul Ntambara in "Who Will Stop the Killings in Southern Provence," claims that genocide atrocities still take place:

The nature of the gruesome murders is not any different from those employed during the 1994 Genocide. This clearly points to the fact that the genocide ideology and the desire to finish the 'unfinished business' is still entrenched in people's minds. (The New Times: Rwanda's first Daily, February 22, 2008)

³⁸ The New Times: Rwanda's First Daily, 2007, The New Times, Available: <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/>. One example article is, Genocide ideology and survivors' rights and protection is still being dealt with, almost 14 years after the genocide. BOSCO R. ASHIMWE, "Upcountry Insight: Citizens' and Church's Role in Fighting Genocide Ideology," The New Times: Rwanda's first daily (2007), vol.

Genocidal rape testimonies emerge within a relation of norms or powers that serve larger global agendas. Collections of testimonies are mobilized by western notions of surviving that speak to universal agendas, gender-based violence and empowering women. The operation of the universal forecloses the possibilities in an art of surviving. Following the operation of the universal the situation of address risks listening for what is a credible Survivor rather than listening to what it means to survive in the aftermath of genocidal rape. The experience of genocidal rape is framed within images of bodies, corpses, framed by pictures and statistics for shock value. The most bloody and painful accounted for and a photo of an “unfit mother” despising her child as the final touch. This is a situation in which those who seek to help and assist survivors, possibly, begin to listen for certain survivors. The genocidal rape survivor, risks becoming object/abject to her western readers and audience.

What happens, too often, with social (and political) practices of surviving is that the silence which they, organizations, seek to break, the voices that they claim to empower and give voice to, becomes a noise and operation that neglects to listen to the genocidal rape survivors’ experiences and ask what is missing and what can still be done. To return to Brison, the “honor,” her survival and her very life depend upon the process of rebuilding her self, retelling her story(s) and giving her accounts. To empower and give voice to is a form of listening for, rather than listening to. To break the silence cannot listen for powerless and the silenced; it must listen to the survivors and ask what it means to survive.

Returning to Kristeva's uncanny strangeness, we are reminded that we do not know, can not claim to know, how to survive genocidal rape. Somehow genocidal rape, that which is a noncommunicable grief is communicated. Exploring testimonies of genocidal rape and the situation of address notify us of the limits of the symbolic. Testimonies notify us of what makes up the survivors and exposes the boundaries. Listening to survivors challenges us to critique meanings of surviving. We can only hear and begin to explore what life may mean to the survivors and celebrate their courage to speak out a life of their own. As Kristeva tells us in *black sun*, a survivor will live a life of melancholia as long as a survivor's experience is absorbed into others' meanings of surviving. Therefore those who wish to empower survivors must be cautious of 'how' they empower. Testimony, bearing witness are necessary situations for social and political change to occur. However, how it is done is an important ethical question that must be constantly posed and reposed.

Widow: it is as if we are now beginning a new life. Our past is so sad. We are not understood by society [...] we are the living dead. (AR 49)

Shared Surviving

Judith Kanakuzi: We must look for solutions together. Everyone has problems, not just the rape victims. Take the displaced women who does not know how to get back home. Or the woman whose husband was killed and has her own children and her brother's orphans to raise. Or the woman whose husband is in prison. The consequences of the genocide are being carried on the backs of women. (HRW/A 46)

Six years after the genocidal rape, Anne Aghion, a feminist film producer, asked Rwandanese survivors of genocidal rape what surviving meant to each of them. "How do you survive? How do you pick up after a cataclysm?" ("Filming Rwanda's Efforts to

Heal Wounds,” The New York Times, April 4, 2003). In the article Aghion recalls one survivor of experienced genocidal rape:

At one point a woman with a baby on her back came out of the crowd and spoke to the prosecutor in a low voice [...] After she finished, he [the prosecutor] addressed the crowd [Rwandan community] This woman has allowed me to tell you that during the genocide this man sequestered her for days on end, that during the day he would go out and kill, and at night he would return to rape. (The New York Times 2003)

Aghion then goes on to describe this mix between social and political witnessing that differs from the horrific accounts western viewers hear and read during, and even thirteen years after the Rwandan genocide:

Nobody [the crowd and community] gasped. In Rwanda you can have huge crowds and silence. Rwandans are disciplined, respectful of authority and able to remove themselves from their emotions. That’s why the genocide worked so well. People did what they were told to do. (The New York Times 2003)

Aghion’s documentaries³⁹ and description of the ways in which survivors are surviving is still reframed through the eyes of Aghion’s perspective, but unlike other first responders, Aghion stays around long enough, listens to and asks what the survivors want and need as they begin to pick up the pieces and rebuild a life for their selves and their community: “The kind of attention that Rwanda has received after the genocide has been dominated by people who came from the outside, who formed quick judgments” (The New York Times, 2003). The testimony Aghion shares with her readers and viewers is

³⁹ Anne Aghion has produced two documentaries, “In Rwanda we say ... the family that does not speak dies” (1999) and “Gacaca, Living Together in Rwanda Again?” (2001). In both documentaries Aghion asks the same question to Rwandanese survivors, how to survive in the aftermath of genocide and genocidal rape. See her website for more information: <http://www.anneaghionfilms.com/index.html> .

vastly different than the testimonies that are produced through the reports. As Aghion mentions in the above quote, there is a certain detachment from emotions that allows for practices of surviving to be respected as well as listened to. However, a question this account poses is are the survivors removed from emotions or is this a way they express their emotions?

Prior to and right after the Rwandan genocidal rape several Rwandanese survivors established organizations. These organizations speak to a situation of address that suggest an art of surviving that is different and dependent upon the funding, aid and attention of the international community. The Profemmes Twesehamwe is one of the largest and most productive women's organizations in Rwanda. The organization has approximately 40,000 members. This organization networks with forty internal organizations, at collective and grass-roots levels, responding to issues dealing with female-headed households, family, business, food, economic empowerment, education, solidarity among Rwandanese women, widows, mothers, schools for girls, defense of children's and women's rights, orphans, rural development, and working against AIDS/HIV.

Widows of Genocide in Rwanda suggests that individual and community surviving practices are not just about political testimony but about finding a space to share the experience of rape:

Mujawayo managed to escape with her three daughters and started an organization called the Widows of Genocide in Rwanda. She says many women lost not only their husbands, but their children and extended families." The way they were killed was so cruel. People could not even cry because they had to hide." Even today, victims of the genocide do not want to express their grief in public. "The people around you are the ones who killed your family," she says. "If they see you are miserable, it will make them happier, so you have to be strong on the exterior. But you also

have to have a place to cry in order to keep that balance." Her organization also arranges medical treatment for rape victims, helps women learn skills to support their children and rebuilds their homes. ("Suffering Continues for Genocide Survivors," Africa News, April, 1998)

"So No One Makes a Mistake About Me"

Survivors' testimonies offer alternatives meanings of an art of surviving that is inseparable from the community practices of surviving:

Solange: I can't get married unless I find someone I can tell everything to and who will agree to live with me despite that. (AR 68)

What is unfamiliar is marriage as a surviving practice that puts the experience of genocidal rape at the forefront. There are is also an art of shared surviving where survivors chat, talk and express their struggles with other survivors:

Yvonne: "felt "tortured"" after she found out her test results. But Yvonne spoke with her husband and shared her frustrations. "At one point she felt so angry that she considered revenge "to spread the disease to every Hutu who might ask me [her] to sleep with him." But her husband helped her to overcome these feelings and encouraged her to believe." (AR 39)

Alodie: I even wanted to commit suicide, and spoke ...I continued talking about ending my life to friends, and they made me see reason. (AR 61)

Chantal: when we meet, we chat and raise each other's spirits. (AR 99)

Rachel: "appreciates" the opportunity to chat and give each other encouragement. (AR 99)

Marceline: when I went for a test, I realized that I was HIV positive. My despair worsened. I went to one organization for treatment. Someone told me about another organization. Once there, I met other widows who have undergone the same experiences and are in the same situation as me. I was happy to find a place to which I can

belong. It has given me hope, especially when we meet as people living with HIV/AIDS. (SURF)

For Marceline, identifying as a survivor with HIV/AIDS helps her access practices of surviving that speak to her desires. While for other survivors the organizations may or may not speak to an art of surviving that deals with the experience of genocidal rape:

Suzanne: we cried and wept. We shared our experiences of the genocide. Other family members came to join us. My friends try to help me but they have the same problems as me so we meet only to complain. Organizations or individuals don't help us. I always think of expressing my thoughts in a song or poetry or drawings, but when I start doing something like that I start weeping then I stop. (SURF)

Jacqueline: I came to this organization [SURF] after meeting another widow in a meeting. She told me that it was a place where people would take time to listen to others. I have found this place is more than just a place to pray; I have been comforted. Since I came, I do not hate people anymore. We began a group in my area and we have started various activities in our groups, such as soap making, which can generate income. With the vision of the organization which helps us, we learned how to care for one another and visit one another, especially those who are sick. A number of our members contracted AIDS during the genocide so we now care for one another. (SURF)

Marcelline: I needed to have people around me to listen to me. I was unable to recover from the emptiness left by the death of the people I loved [...] Avega [widow's organization] at least provided a framework for expressing our feelings. (AR 38)

Praying is one method of shared surviving. However, these survivors form of praying challenges familiar practices of praying. AR report says praying is not a situation enclosed by a church and priests: "We heard a few women speak of compassion shown by members of their church or clergy, but in this largely Christian society, it is striking

that most women did not mention their church at all, indicating that they have found little or no assistance from this source” (African Rights (2004) 61). For example Judith tells us why some survivors praying is not about the institution of the church but about personal practices of surviving that is separate from the community:

Judith: We don't have close relations [neighbors who reject her after she testifies her experienced in a local church]. I don't visit them and they never visit me. (AR 68)

Praying takes on new meanings in the testimonies. For some, praying is the only practices of social surviving where they are willing to bear witness to their experiences:

Mercia: I calm myself down by confiding in God. I tell myself that it [rape] was God's will. (AR 74)

Grâce: In my case, only God, who knows that it wasn't my fault that I caught this virus, could perform a miracle and heal me [...] Unfortunately, it's impossible for me to remain indifferent to my situation. The génocidaires murdered my husband and have left me to die slowly from their AIDS. (AR 36)

Unlike the international responders, Grâce recognizes that AIDS is “their” (read: génocidaires) mark and burden not Grâce's to carry alone. For Dorothée we learn that life her experience of rape is subordinate to her identity as an AIDS/HIV survivor. What makes surviving even worse is that she has lost her choice to have a child:

Dorothée: The life I lead today is indescribable. It is only thanks to God [...] Worse still, before I had the time to come to terms with this first hardship [rape], I learnt that I had been infected with HIV. What overwhelms me the most and that I can't accept, is that I don't have a child. (AR 36)

Marcelline: our words are rejected before they have ever been heard. God alone can respond to my problems. When I think about it, I find that I can't think and I tell myself that death is taking it's time. (SURF)

Emma: was afraid of what the neighbors would say to me. I sought refuge in prayer, and little by little, I was able to accept my fate. [As time passed by Emma] found a neighbor who did understand because she too had been raped in 1994. Following her advice, [Emma said she decided to “break the silence”:] I’m no longer afraid to speak about my situation. Being able to *speak out* is a relief. I know that I’m not the only one to have gone through this terrible ordeal [...] That’s why I talk openly [...] so that no one makes a *mistake about me*.” (AR 43; my italics)

“So no one makes a mistake about me” suggests that the purpose for giving testimony is to have the choice to talk openly and identify as a certain Survivor. Emma continues to speak out in the open, telling her *story* and her fate as a rape and HIV/AIDS survivor, over and over again, so that she choose to continue to claim her self. A livable life within the consignment of a rape survivor and AIDS victim, for Emma, is a narrativizable life.

Some survivors are able to find a space in which they speak and share experiences with other survivors and through praying:

Clothilde: Avega’s representatives gave me a great deal of moral support. I used to live with a feeling of total desperation, but they made me stronger. I pray that God will look after them. (AR 95)

Praying to a God is one safe space in which survivors are able to not only create a life, but also create a life in the face of the unknown.

Jacqueline: Today, because of the love of God, I feel peace in my heart and I believe I have forgiven them [génocidaires]. (SURF)

Surviving for these survivors does not mean one should heal the wound, cover it up and protect it. It means one should share the wound. As these survivors suggest one practice of surviving is listening to experienced genocidal rape, sharing struggles, without entirely knowing or naming those struggles and what they mean.

Rosine was beaten. She and her two daughters, among 62 other Tutsi and moderate Hutu, were thrown into a lake to drown. Rosine and her daughters survived:

I was so traumatized that I almost committed suicide. I did not want to cope with living [...] I was disgusted with myself [...] By sharing my experience with other women, I have come to feel better about myself. (Salbi, The Other Side Of War (2006) 227-29)⁴⁰

Beata, also survived atrocities:

Thinking about those images, meditating on my problems, at times, I find it difficult to sleep at night. The images comes to me often [...] I had lost appreciation for life and myself [...] Now through the program⁴¹ things are different. I value myself. (Salbi, The Other Side Of War (2006) 233)

Rosine's and Beata's experiences mediate a certain criterion and/or expectations of community practices of surviving after the genocide. Their testimonies draw attention to how much they are dependent upon the community practices of surviving, as they are dependent upon their own notions of what surviving can mean. These two survivors expose how an art of surviving has profound effects on the way some survivors acquire a livable life.

As some survivors tell us, one practice of surviving is about shared surviving. This speaks to what is missing for Brison and me. Individual practices may not speak to a larger community of survivors and therefore cannot hold the community accountable for the experienced rape. Rwandanese survivors show us that community practices of surviving as a shared surviving that listens to and speak to the community, holds the

⁴⁰ Women for Women International's director, Zainab Salbi has published numerous testimonies from survivors of rape across conflicted areas. A section is dedicated to the Rwandanese survivors. Zainab Salbi, The Other Side of War: Women's Stories of Survival and Hope ed. Women for Women International (National Geographic, 2006).

community accountable and responsible. The community practices of surviving are challenges to keep open and not frame and foreclose the survivors' needs, wants, and desires to share, speak and tell the story of their experiences.

⁴¹ Women for Women International. (2007) "From Victim to Survivor ... to Active Citizen"
Retrieved April 4, 2007 from <<http://www.womenforwomen.org>>.

Conclusion: Theory of Shared Humility

Practices of surviving through testimonies proceeds and exceeds survivors of sexual violence. Some practices of surviving revive ways of marking survivors by listening for Survivors and naming experiences of sexual violence according to pre-established tropes. Other practices of surviving by the survivor and the community confront, challenge and create an art of surviving that speaks/writes new practices of surviving in the aftermath of sexual violence.

The translation and mobilization of sexual violence through testimony, the goals and agendas that structure testimony, illuminate and suggest the danger, limitations and possibilities, of what surviving may or may not mean for individuals and communities. My analysis of the practices of surviving, through incest, stranger and genocidal rape helps us formulate alternative practices of surviving. Within these situations of address we ask: What are the motives in the practices of surviving?; Who does this benefit?; and, What is still missing?

Distinguishing the personal, social and political use of testimonies addresses the difficult projects we face when we use testimonies to address sexual violence and help a individual and his/her community survive. An art of surviving through testimony is a challenge. How do we recognize difference and uniqueness in experience itself, while also holding a community responsible and accountable for the pervasive sexual violence that stretches across our globe?

In conclusion I hope that my research shows the difficulties of any situation of addressing sexual violence and the complexities involved in the use of testimonies. I hope it shows the importance of protecting and listening to survivors as they literally begin to pick up the pieces of the self and re-establish their relationship to their community.

Results

- An analysis of the testimonies that have emerged from Rwandan genocidal rape shows that what is necessary for the cohesion and surviving of one community, Rwanda, threatens the collapse of another. The Rwanda community's surviving practices are often misused to protect other nations from having to take responsibility for the sexual violence in its own context.
- At the same time the use of testimonies speak to community practices of surviving and hold the Rwandan and international communities accountable for the 1994 genocide. Individual experiences of genocidal rape through testimonies are gathered and shared to demand social and political changes.
- The community practices of surviving mandates individual and community testimonies at the cost of certain survivors—i.e. HIV/AIDS and unfit mothers. The individual and community practices of surviving and the (S)urvivors risk being marked, subordinated and made dependent on another community's practices of surviving;
- Brison's and my testimonies suggest that individual practices of surviving force the survivor to carry the burden of rape alone. The individual experience of rape and her testimony is encouraged and not denied; however, the individualization and personalization of the testimony means that the community is not held accountable.

- At the same time Brison and I show the value and importance of working through experienced rape. Brison and I discover a safe, constructive space to become our own self-critics, reflect, look within and then begin to acknowledge our connections to other survivors.

- In the final analysis, there are Rwandanese survivors creating and imagining practices of surviving that are different from the community practices of surviving that focus on the political. There are critical openings within the testimonies where survivors offer alternatives to mandated modes of surviving that address their desires, their needs and the desires and needs of their community. A life for some Rwandanese survivors is a shared surviving where survivors draw support from each other without claiming to know exactly who the other is or what her experience was / is. It suggests that each one of us is the other.

The rich collection of testimonies and the use of these testimonies to sexual violence fuse together and illuminate innovative and complex practices of surviving that speak to the individual and the community. We continue to face the challenge in the use of testimonies that give shape and meaning to an art of surviving. How can we focus on an art of surviving that speaks to the individual and community? How can we speak of universal issues of sexual violence if we do not listen to experiences of sexual violence? Is there an underlying responsibility for an individual survivor to take social and political action regarding the problem of sexual violence? What will it take to create a ethical and safe space in which speak/write experience of sexual violence addresses issues of sexual violence across our world?

This research and these questions also begin to suggest what is still missing from a critique of the situation of addressing Rwandan genocidal rape. How does the rape that occurred in the Rwandan genocide force us to redefine notions of sexual violence and rape? How does it challenge the ways in which we understand victim and perpetrator? These questions also lead us to consider the imbalance in how sexual violence is addressed and called upon. As of now women are given the attention as survivors of sexual violence. There is only one account of a male being raped in the African Rights report. The response to women as victims and men as perpetrators re-defends the borders of what it means to be man and woman. It also re-defends a heterosexual structure of sexuality. It is important to note that homosexuality is banned and illegal in Rwanda.

I conclude this thesis with what is perhaps still missing for survivors of sexual violence and what may or may not challenge, confront and work through a situation of address. A theory of shared humility begins to give shape to a horizon in which individual surviving and community surviving address and speak to one another as well as share alternative practices of surviving that may or may not fit within the frame of a Survivor.

Theory: Shared Humility

Shared humility recognizes a shared loss of composure. We are made to be undone. To be undone is external and internal, physical and psychological. It includes processes and acts that shock real and imaginary boundaries of body and mind, self and community. We are constantly disrupted and disturbed. What is perceived or feels to be stable is unstable; what is unified or whole, is shattered.

Self

For example, I experience my self as a self. There is something that is essential about me that seems to exist, body and mind. There seems to be something constant and stable, about me, which allows me to experience my self and live a day-to-day life. In many ways I experience this constant stability through perceived feelings of control of my self and my surroundings. Of course, I understand that my control is limited, but I do possess an agency that allows me to move through and beyond my environment. I can work with as well as reinforce and affect my surroundings.

There are moments during which I lose that feeling of control and stability. The self I felt to be shifts, unfolds and is undone. During these moments I am made to face a temporary self; my self as a constant falters. It is a moment that forces me to question the self that I was prior to that moment which, at the same time, already gives new shape to the evolving self I am now. Here the self is always in process, a constant undoing and forever lingering.

Community and Self

I live in a world, today and yesterday, which does not allow me to feel stable. There are many “moments” that change and alter me.⁴² Because of this expected spontaneity I am forced to face that nothing may truly be stable, for the self I claim to be will not be, may not be the same self I am tomorrow. Even though, there is a familiarity

⁴² Kristeva criticizes the sciences who claim “unity.” “The sciences ... who claim unity ... have a long march ahead of them” (29). She argues that the cluster that language and subject create are “moments” that are reproduced through language and expanding what it means to be “intelligible.” Kristeva calls these moments the “shatterings of discourse” (29).

in the spontaneous undoing, it is still unfamiliar. I cannot be prepared; I am vulnerable. Life is unknown and foreign, a mystery. Pockets of the universe cradle situations that are violent, altering and changing me. I am undone. My temporary self notifies me of two important factors: my dependency on others who contribute and shape the atmosphere which does and undoes us. It also shows me that this undoing is familiar to you, shared, but different.

Experience of Sexual Violence as Humiliation / Testimony as Shared

Humility

The experience of rape is a violent act of a self being undone. The experience of genocidal rape is a violent act of a self and a community being undone. To violate, a term that comes from violence, is to “break into, through, and/or with force”; and, to “transgress... infringe [or] disturb.”⁴³ As this research has shown, the focus is not on what and who is being disturbed, but rather how we seek to restabilize disturbance. Here it is important to distinguish between two notions of disturbance: humiliation, the act of forcefully being undone—read: rape; from, humility, as a shared act of undoing.

To humiliate another is to physically, emotionally or psychologically force a destruction of the self they esteem to be. It is an act that is aggressive and hostile. The force imposes a process that one may or may not choose to undergo a process that is to unfold, slowly and patiently. To humiliate is also to project uncertainty and instability onto another while refusing to bear it for one self. It becomes a forced contract where one

⁴³ “Violate” and “Trauma” are from Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1) (Random House, Inc., 2008).

did not consent to bear the weight and responsibility of another. There is no open communication prior to the force. There is only the act itself and the mark (burden) left in its wake. This is what it means to humiliate: to force another to be undone; and then, to force them to carry the weight of what that humiliation has come to mean without considering how this weight can be transformed.

Is it ever appropriate for someone to initiate the undoing of another? No, is my answer. However, this situation of humiliation as a forced contract is part of our world. Many persons, because of their vulnerable and non-privileged location(s), do not have the opportunity of consenting to bear the weight and responsibility to transform this contract. This leads me to ask: how then is it possible to transform humiliation into shared humility? Or, because humiliation has already occurred—i.e. genocidal rape—how is it then that we can transform what was done to someone to something we all share?

Being undone is a shared act of recognition based on strangeness. To shift from humiliation as an act done to someone, to shared humility, something we all share, is to open the conduits of conversation, narrative to share our vulnerability as persons who are always and forever susceptible to having been undone.

In the case of genocidal rape, humiliation is something done to someone's body. The body, returning to Agamben (2002), is something that we can neither move away from, nor break. Humiliation is consigned to us as something that cannot be removed. In the HRW/A and AR survivors' testimonies, the survivor cannot move away and break from their raped body. Many have tried. Humiliation is (re)consigned to the survivor's body in these reports, even after the forced act is over and done. HIV/AIDS and unfit

mother are marks left in the wake of exposure. This impossible separation of body from the mark of humiliation shows how important it is to transform humiliation to shared humility. In gathering testimonies of such humiliation we must seek to work through the self and the community, and the meanings of the body and the communities of bodies. Testimonies of experienced sexual violence must take place in a space that allows humiliation to work through and to a shared humility.

To be undone is an experience that alters, breaks through, disturbs and transgresses a sense of self and community. And, I argue, it is a necessary experience. Necessary, because it is always there; we face this situation of relations—"I", "us" and "we"—daily, moment by moment, expected and unexpected, through a constant relationship of connection that is always faltering and failing, but never separated. This does not limit the me "I" am, but rather opens up the possibilities of who you, "I" and we can be. Here, we, face a shared humility.

Assuming our shared humility is to recognize that we are temporary, different, and strange. This requires a certain strength. It is the challenge of speaking out to the strange other and of having the capacity to experience the strange without trying to know who this other is. That is, without reducing them to the familiar. Not only must we endure this ever changing and evolving "I," we must also prepare and assist one another in developing the courage to live with this instability. As Brison tells us in her stories and account, the process of picking and discarding pieces of a self and rebuilding, is the "honor" of being a survivor (20). The honor of the survivor is also an honor of the

community. The *very* livability of a survivor and her community is founded on the sharing and telling of such processes.

Giving an account of “I,” in the face of a “we” that relies on failings and faltering, asks this “I” and “we” to experience humility. The necessity of undoing illuminates a vulnerability of self and community and shows that “we” have and still are able to endure these most complicated processes. We do not know what to expect, what lies around the corner. I and we, are made to face in these moments a certain humility in which I and we come face to face with the unknown. For our survival we share a situation of humility in which we are aware of our own limitations and failings. Shared humility is the very site for potential and growth.

Friedrick Nietzsche does well in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: First Part* “On the Three Metamorphoses”⁴⁴ when he suggested that the camel carries with the burden of his community. Nietzsche, or, Zarathustra, tells us “how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally a child” (137). However, what Nietzsche, or Zarathustra, does not say, is how or why, some camels “kneel down [...] wanting to be well loaded” or “take upon itself” particular burdens that others do not carry (138). “Wanting” and “take upon” are descriptions that assume there is a moment of choice when the burden is being transferred and again when it is removed.

“Burdens” for Zarathustra are the “values, thousands of years old” of the community and can only be “renounced” when “new values” are created; this is done when one frees oneself of such burdens (139). Survivors of sexual violence and their

testimonies expose the community burdens that they have carried across the decades and still carry today. My concern throughout this research is this: at what point do demanding testimonies become another burden which particular survivors must bear?

To call upon survivors through the practice of testimony risks a new form of humiliation that enforces new burdens that exacerbate the burdens that already exist for survivors. To call and demand testimonies of genocidal rape, without discussing and renouncing the burdens, and without opening the space to “create new values” risks the renewed humiliation of survivors. To create new values, new meanings, the wound must speak and be heard. Out from the wound pours forth a complex relation of familiar and unfamiliar burdens that survivors have come to carry.

A situation of addressing the experience of genocidal rape must also include the history of value systems that have shaped and marked the community in various ways. It must explore the particularity of the survivor within their community. As Kristeva tells us, the individual is important in so far as she is heard and the process of accessing the situation of address is exposed.

A space that reflects on value systems will show how different value systems are connected across borders and cultures. This research offers another chance, to recognize the unfamiliarity of the familiar. It opens the way for alternative practices in the art of surviving.

Shared humility returns us to Nietzsche’s camels. We carry and share the burdens of our communities’ cultures, histories and conflicts. We are responsible for rape and

⁴⁴ Walter Kaufman, ed., The Portable Nietzsche (New York: Penguin Books, 1976).

genocidal rape. We are responsible for the survivors. We are responsible for *how* we translate the wound, and what it comes to mean. As Agamben (2002) says, we cannot separate ourselves from what marks us; however, we can come to question the ways it is gathered, formed, takes shape and what it then comes to mean.

This returns me to the earlier discussion of my experience of incest rape. The “burden” and mark of my family and my community were forced onto my 6-year-old body, even prior to my understanding what that mark means, physically, emotionally, psychologically and historically. Yet, I come to carry this burden with me throughout the rest of my life. It is not a burden that I am taught to share, but rather, taught to carry alone.

Testimonies of the experience of genocidal rape carry the markings of different burdens. At the same time, documenting genocidal rape reveals that the experience of rape from an individual perspective is always a community responsibility. This shared responsibility for rape connects Rwanda to the U.S. and forces us to face the familiarly unfamiliar. The Rwandanese survivor offers us new ways of experiencing the self after such atrocities. She also offers us the courage, hope and new ways of life itself. She tells us that we can not ask, nor expect a lone survivor to carry the burdens of her community alone. Rather, we must begin to shape a horizon in which all survivors and their community come to share the burden(s) while maintaining the particularities of how these burdens are carried, felt and transferred. This shared humility must be done in a safe space, where the survivor speaks in the face of the strange. As M. Oliver shares with us, in her poem *Heavy* and *Coming To God: First Days*, we must all

learn to kneel down / into the world of the invisible, / every motion; / even words [...] ⁴⁵ Its not the weight you carry/but how you carry it--/it's all in the way/you embrace it, balance it, carry it/when you cannot, and would not/put it down./So I went practicing./Have you noticed?/Have you heard/out of my startled mouth?⁴⁶

Even though the face of the stranger is continuously frame survivors still find the courage, strength and imagination to speak/write. They continue to speak/write in the face of certain values that threaten to mark them the moment they step forward. It is a feat that many survivors throughout our universe have taken on with seriousness. Their capacity is amazing. To recognize the integrity of those who work through what it means makes the situation of address even more critical. Survivors' experiences should not be uses as tools by politicians to further their projects of war, government, equality and humanity. The genocidal rape wound should not become a specularization of brutality that reinforces boundaries between first world/third worlds.

Returning to Nietzsche's *On the Three Metamorphoses* Zarathustra tells us that the spirit must "become a child": "The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement ... [the] spirit now wills his own will" (139). A child is the embodiment of shared humility. A child signifies the acceptance of growth in the face of strangeness. Nietzsche's project of forgetting is not about repressing, but about the innocence of creating. What does such a childlike horizon mean? How can suffering offer us an ethical space? Can innocence be reclaimed after rape? What do you want to live creatively to? Nietzsche creates a testimonial labyrinth of

⁴⁵ "Coming to God: First Days".

⁴⁶ M. Oliver's "Heavy."

selves. No one speaks for Nietzsche and in fact, he himself does not claim finally to speak for his own self. Rather, similar to Brison, and similar for me, Nietzsche gives himself a space to speak(s) and asks others to *listen to* him.

The Rwandanese survivors challenge Nietzsche's condition of creativity. To create does not mean one must leave behind that which is experienced. In fact, for survivors of rape, the burden, will not let go, cannot be discarded; the experience is a part of me. Moving from the camel to the child is not the whole story. As Kristeva tells us "working through" is the only way in which the burden can be transformed and a (nonmelancholy) livable life created.

All we can really do is listen to and share our surviving. Here the process from having to being spreads and expands the possibilities and practices of surviving. The process allows us to confront the unknown and "work through it" (Kristeva *Strangers to Ourselves* 288):

*To write and/or to think can become, in this perspective
a constant calling into question of the psyche as well as the world.
(Kristeva *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt* 432-33)*

Those who give shape, who call out to experienced genocidal rape survivors are those who most often give meaning and shape to what surviving means. I speak/write for a safe space in which we begin to build a network of speak/write survivors. It is important that we listen to each other. To listen to each other is to understand that our experiences connect us, always have, and offers up possibilities of peace. Speak/write is,

few words together and don't try/to make them elaborate, this isn't/a
context but the doorway/into thanks, and a silence in which/another voice
may speak[...]⁴⁷

a love/to which there is no reply?⁴⁸

Surviving takes time. Surviving at the individual and community levels may
distance us as it seeks to pull us closer. Critiquing practices of surviving may also force
us to face a horizon of strangeness where a whole memory of connections and
confrontations emerges, familiarly unfamiliar.

⁴⁷ M. Oliver's "Praying."

⁴⁸ M. Oliver's "Heavy."

Appendix: Testimonies

Reference:

- Page numbers—“pg...”—refer to the thesis pages where the quotations are located.
- First quotation is a replica of the quotation used in thesis.
- Second quotation is the report’s summary and use of the testimony in the report.
- I do this for the AR and HRW/A reports, unless the quotation I use has not been modified. Then the page number provided in the thesis can direct one to the actual quotation in the report.
- I do not provide SURF quotations because most quotations are cut due to length. If the reader would like to access the testimonies the reader can find the web link to the SURF forum to access the full testimonies.

1. African Rights’ “Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits” (2004) (AR).

pg. 63-64

Pauline: there were so many rapists that I can no longer remember the number of men who raped me.

AR (14): After the death of her Tutsi husband and only child, 32 year-old Pauline and her Hutu mother-in-law shared a house with a group of Tutsi women in Gashoga, Cyangugu. They spent most of the genocide there, prey to the many men who descended upon the house with painful regularity.

They came every evening to abuse us sexually. This continued until we left this place, probably at the end of June or the beginning of July. We were abused by whichever man came by; many of them were unknown to us. In any case, we didn’t have the courage to look; it was like drinking bitter medicine. We didn’t dare open our eyes. There were so many rapists that I can no longer remember the number of men who raped me.

Rachel: couldn’t say how many men raped me.

AR (22): Squatting in the sorghum fields with her cousin, Rachel was a frequent victim of rape, so much so that she “couldn’t say how many men raped me.” Some of them came from nearby cellules, but many others were unknown to her. After a while, the girls were advised it would be safe to return home. When arrived in Sahera sector, Butare, they saw that their house had been demolished. Soon afterwards, Rachel ran into Philippe who belonged to the same prayer group as she did. He took her home, “saying that he was going to take me as his wife.” But after two weeks, his parents threw her out. Back in the woods, Rachel had no alternative but to go with a stranger who also made her his “wife.”

I lived with him for two months. A prominent killer, he was cruel towards me. Moreover, his home was a slaughterhouse. Other killers came to the house, not only to have meetings about killing, but also to actually carry out the murders.

Dative: I have no idea how many men raped me, nor how many times I was raped. There were a lot of them. It became our daily diet.

AR (23): A Hutu friend in Cyimbogo, Cyangugu, sheltered Dative for a while and then suggested that her best chances lay in staying in a house where a group of Tutsi women had gathered. When two militiamen came to escort her, her friend's husband, who was wary of them, accompanied her. But when they ran into two of his acquaintances, he left her in their hands. He had barely gone a few metres when they, and two other men, joined forces in raping her. And things did not change when she reached the would-be-refuge.

Many men visited daily to abuse us sexually. I have no idea how many men raped me, nor how many times I was raped. There were a lot of them. It became our daily diet. After a while, some of us were taken as their wives, but others were killed.

Josette: I was raped by a lot of people and at different times. I can't think how many times [...] Another act of savagery, which happened often, is that you were tortured by seven génocidaires, or even more, at the same time.

AR (12): Josette went to her native sector in Butare, hoping it would be safer than Kibungo, where her husband had been assassinated. But three days later, she and her sisters were raped. This was the beginning of a pattern of attacks, so frequent Josette can barely recall the details, let alone recognize the perpetrators. "They transformed their act of violence", she said, "into a habit, like drinking water." She tries not to think about this period of her life and found it an ordeal to recount her experiences.

I was raped by a lot of people and at different times. I can't think how many times. Each time that the killers found me in the sorghum field or in the house, they did nothing but rape me. Once they tried to throw me in the toilet at the home of my older brother. As we were in a crowd, I slipped between them and escaped. On the way back, when they had just killed all the people who were with me, they found me in the field again. They gave me the big blood-stained stick that they had just used in massacring my people, a short distance away, and they began to rape me in the same field. They were many of them. I didn't even dare look at them and so I didn't recognize them. The génocidaires raped me whenever we met, until they felt satisfied.

Sometimes, you would meet a very nasty man who would beat you before or after his vile deed. Some women or girls were also tortured in their private parts, but that didn't happen to me. Another act of savagery, which happened often, is that you were tortured by seven génocidaires, or even more, at the same time.

pg. 84

Gisèle: I shall continue to accuse them before the courts. Even if I have to die, I would be proud that I'd done my *duty* and the other inhabitants would know that I was a *victim of the truth*.

AR (18): Gisèle has identified her husband's killers and was recently distressed to discover that one of them had been acquitted. She was planning to complain about his release at the time of the interview. Although she has not yet seen justice done, either for the rape or for the murder of her husband and children, she is resolute, saying:

I shall continue to accuse them before the courts. Even if I have to die, I would be proud that I'd done my duty and the other inhabitants would know that I was a victim of the truth.

pg. 93

Virginie: to be raped is a degrading stain. So I told myself that I couldn't have a husband. But instead of dying without having a child, I gave birth as a way of consoling myself.

AR (75): Under section "Warding Off the Lonliness: The Longing for a Child":

Virginie's only surviving relative is her sister. She decided to have her own baby and to take in an orphan, but sees no prospect of getting married and leading a stable life.

To be raped is a degrading stain. So I told myself that I couldn't have a husband. But instead of dying without having a child, I gave birth as a way of consoling myself. And then I felt humiliated. I wasn't a girl anymore but nor was I a woman. I then decided to adopt a child.

pg. 93

Gratia: They [family] welcomed me warmly and took pity on me. They thought I had died. I was with my child [of rape] and they weren't upset about that.

AR (24): A band of killers descended on the house and led Gratia away ; one of them proposed that she be given to him as a wife, and he took her home.

He forced me to have sex with him. When I wanted to resist, he really beat me up and I ended up by accepting. He did everything he wanted, and when he left the house, he locked me inside for fear that I would run away. When the RPF arrived in the region, this militiaman made me leave with him to Tanzania. I climbed aboard the vehicle going to Tanzania by force. On arrival, my health became precarious; I was pregnant and I caught malaria often. The living conditions in the camp were very difficult.

My so-called husband didn't concern himself with me. On the contrary, he treated me roughly, saying that my inkotanyi brothers were the origin of our suffering. Finally, he abandoned me in a such a state that I didn't have the strength to return to Rwanda. I was also discouraged from going back because I thought I wouldn't find anyone who would take care of me there. Eventually, I found some work at a camp which sheltered Tutsi women and girls who had gone through experiences similar to mine.

Gratia gave birth in the camp and made the journey back to Rwanda. She was overjoyed to find that her mother and two of her younger brothers were still alive.

The other members of the family had been killed. They welcomed me warmly and took pity on me. They thought I had died. I was with my child and they weren't upset about that.

pg. 95

Adèle: was "gang-raped during the genocide" and has recently learned that she is HIV positive: I've had enough of life. It means nothing to me.

AR (49, 55): Under section “In the Dark: Fear and Powerlessness”: Adèle was gang-raped during the genocide and has lost the will to try and fight her current illness.

I haven’t gone for a medical examination. But I’m very unwell with a cough that won’t go away. I am getting thinner from one day to the next. I’ve had enough of life. It means nothing to me.

Adèle lost five children and her husband. Along with grief, she now battles with the memory of the rapes.

The cruelties I experienced during the genocide have affected me profoundly. I can’t forget them. It is unthinkable to see someone who has just killed your brothers and sisters, your parents, and then turns around to you and asks you to sleep with him. Our morale was badly tortured and even now the feeling hasn’t gone away. It’s impossible to put it out of your mind.

Véronique: I regret that I did not die that day ... I regret that I’m alive because I have lost my lust for life. We survivors are broken-hearted. We live in a situation which overwhelms us. Our wounds become deeper everyday. We are constantly in mourning.

AR (56): Véronique was raped by so many men that she lost consciousness only to wake up and witness the killing of people around her at the commune office in Muhazi, Kibungo. She was beaten again, and then stayed among the corpses for three days. She has not been tested for HIV/AIDS.

Today I regret that I did not die that day. Those men and women who died are now at peace whereas I am still here to suffer even more. I am handicapped in the true sense of the word. I don’t know how to explain it. I regret that I’m alive because I’ve lost my lust for life. We survivors are broken-hearted. We live in a situation which overwhelms us. Our wounds become deeper every day. We are constantly in mourning.

Alodie: [I will] die more of sorrow than of illness.

AR (60): Alodie is HIV-positive but she believes she will “die more of sorrow than of illness.” Her concerns for her children are at the heart of the matter. She is living in a rented house, but is already far behind with the payments. The owner has been patient and understanding, but she cannot be sure how long he will remain so.

My circumstances are bad in every respect. But if I had a house at least, which I could leave for my children when I die, I would be a bit happier. Maybe some kind-hearted person will help them, but such a person will have to be found somewhere.

pg. 95

Dorothée: I can’t describe the state that I was in when I found out what the results were. I felt as though my life was already over.

AR (36): Dorothée’s two young children and her husband were murdered and she was raped by a stranger in Runda, Gitarama. Aged 35, Dorothée still lives in Gitarama. After years on her own, she recently thought of remarriage as her best hope of starting life again: “I was finding it very difficult to face up to life on my own, with only a modest

amount of money and with nobody to give me moral support.” In preparation for this possibility, Dorothee took an HIV test.

I can't describe the state that I was in when I found out what the results were. I felt as though my life was already over.

Dorothee found it a challenge to describe her situation and express her emotions. She generally prefers not to talk about the rape and the series of subsequent events, but she gave a clear picture of her sorrow and anxiety.

My life is getting worse day by day. I'm very ill and often the illness requires money I don't have. Because of the sinusitis, I'm allergic to dust and that hampers me in everything I do. I can no longer sweep out my house or my yard; I can't travel by moped or by bicycle. To find appropriate means of transport or to pay a cleaner requires money. The life I lead today is indescribable. It is only thanks to God, and the benefactors he sends my way, that I make ends meet. I became a widow when I was still a young woman. Worse still, before I had the time to come to terms with this first hardship, I learnt that I had been infected with HIV. What overwhelms me the most and that I can't accept, is that I don't have a child. At present, I'm able to take care of myself, but I do worry about my future, about the time when I will no longer be able to get out of bed, because I don't have any family to look after me.

Alodie: when we went to collect our results, the doctor asked me what I would do if I had contracted the Aids virus. I replied that I would probably commit suicide. So the doctor said that the results weren't back yet [...]

AR (34): Eventually, following the birth of her third child, both Alodie and her husband were tested for HIV/AIDS at Butare University Hospital. She described the process and its impact on their family life.

When we went to collect our results, the doctor asked me what I would do if I had contracted the AIDS virus. I replied that I would probably commit suicide. So the doctor said that the results weren't yet back. Two months passed by and I was none the wiser.

I was worried because my husband had got his results back, but had hidden the fact that he was HIV positive from me. I decided to get tested again in Kabutare. This time I got the results the same day. I was frightened, and I had every reason to be. The results came back positive. I passed out. When I regained consciousness I took a bike taxi and went home. I haven't been able to take any drugs because I don't have any means of transport.

Jocelyn: I immediately wanted to commit suicide.

AR (38): Jocelyn refused to accompany her husband and four children—two sets of twins—when they ran for cover in Kigali. She remained with her youngest child near Jali, where the militia made her cook their meals and raped her, at least 12 of them a day, for two days. She became pregnant and had to spend most of her pregnancy at CHK hospital in Kigali. In 1998, overcome by a series of gynaecological ailments, she consulted the

doctor who had helped her with her difficult pregnancy. He advised an HIV test which came back positive.

The doctor tried to calm me down. He resorted to injections to make me sleep. I was out for three days. When I regained consciousness, I immediately wanted to commit suicide, but the doctor continued to monitor me closely. He gave me lots of medicines and 5,000 francs from his own pocket. He promised to treat me for free whenever I had gynaecological problems.

Josiane: “felt powerless in the face of the knowledge that she was HIV positive”: I was in such a state of anguish that I’d have committed suicide if I’d had the opportunity.

AR (40): The genocide continues to define Josiane’s life and explains why she felt powerless in the face of the knowledge that she was HIV positive. Aged 41, she lives in Ngoma, Butare. She realized she would have to take an HIV test when a man who had raped her in 1994 was released from prison due to ill health, and then died of AIDS.

I took the test in July 2001 and the results came back positive. I was in such a state of anguish that I’d have committed suicide if I’d had the opportunity. My friends helped me to come to terms with the situation, and eventually I’ve learned to live with it. I told myself that I would be better off dead, because I don’t have either children or relatives to care for me.

Emma: was planning the future of her education and her life until she “learned that she was HIV positive”; “immediately [she] plunged into a cycle of fear and depression”: When they told me the news, I felt as though I’d been given an electric shock, as though the day of my death had already arrived. I was very anxious because if the neighbors ever found out, they’d ostracize me. My biggest fear was that other people would identify me as HIV positive... I feared that they’d throw me out if they knew my secret.

AR (43): Emma heeded the advice of her aunt, but was immediately plunged into a cycle of fear and depression when she learned that she was HIV positive.

When they told me the news, I felt as though I’d been given an electric shock, as though the day of my death had already arrived. I was very anxious because if the neighbours ever found out, they’d ostracise me. My biggest fear was that other people would identify me as HIV positive. I was afraid of what the neighbours would say to me. I sought refuge in prayer, and little by little, I was able to accept my fate. When I came to live in the settlement with my grandmother, I said nothing to anybody. I feared that they’d throw me out if they knew my secret.

The initial response of those she spoke with only made her feel worse.

Some people tried to make me understand that I was responsible for what had happened to me, that I should never have gone into exile, that I should have escaped the interahamwe. That was another blow. But how? How could I have eluded their vigilance? I’m not so stupid as to ruin my life if I could have done

otherwise. It was obvious that the people who said this had not experienced the genocide.

Fortunately, Emma found a neighbour who did understand because she too had been raped in 1994. Following her advice, Emma said she decided to “break the silence.”

I’m no longer afraid to speak about my situation. Being able to speak out is a relief. I know that I’m not the only one to have gone through this terrible ordeal.

pg. 96-7

Marcelline: was encouraged to take a test. As soon as she found out that she had contracted HIV/AIDS “her world crumble[d]” (AR 38). I felt deeply agitated and the whole thing was unbearable for me. I was completely desperate. Friends came to visit me in order to comfort me, but it was as if I couldn’t see them. I remained enveloped in my solitude.

AR (38): I felt very alone; I needed to have people around me to listen to me. I was unable to recover from the emptiness left by the death of the people I loved. I became a member of Avega which at least provided a framework for expressing our feelings.

She fell ill in 1995, with a persistent cough, malaria and then TB. But it was the knowledge that she had contracted HIV/AIDS which made her world crumble.

When I got the results in 1996, I refused to accept them. I felt deeply agitated and the whole thing was unbearable for me. I was completely desperate. Friends came to visit me in order to comfort me, but it was as if I couldn’t see them. I remained enveloped in my solitude.

pg. 104

Solange’s: I can’t get married unless I find someone I can tell everything to and who will agree to live with me despite that.

AR (68): Solange, 19, has not been tested for HIV but fears she may be infected and that she may also have internal injuries which will prevent her from having children. Her neighbours make it difficult for her to meet potential partners.

If my Hutu neighbours find me chatting with someone, they tell him that he’s going to be infected with AIDS because they know everything that happened to me. When I think about all these things, I wonder why I survived.

Her only salvation, she believes, would be a partner who was exceptionally understanding, a prospect about which she is not very optimistic.

I can’t get married unless I find someone I can tell everything to and who will agree to live with me despite that.

Yvonne: “felt “tortured”” after she found out her test results. But Yvonne spoke with her husband and shared her frustrations. “At one point she felt so angry that she considered revenge “to spread the disease to every Hutu who might ask me [her] to sleep with him.” But her husband helped her to overcome these feelings and encouraged her to believe.”

AR (39): Yvonne’s husband was taken into hospital with a diabetes crisis. While there, she decided to ask the doctor to help her convince her husband of the need for an HIV test. They took three tests and each time Yvonne’s results were positive, but they confirmed that her husband had escaped infection. Further tests showed that their children were also free from the virus. Although she felt “tortured” Yvonne gained strength from the care of her husband. At one point she felt so angry that she considered revenge “to spread the disease to every Hutu who might ask me to sleep with him.” But her husband helped her to overcome these feelings and encouraged her to believe that “drugs to combat AIDS would soon be discovered”, and if not, he assured her that he would look after her if she fell sick. The couple took precautions to avoid transmission of HIV/AIDS and maintained a “good relationship” until his death.

After my husband’s death, both my moral and physical wellbeing plummeted. I picked up various different illnesses and developed an allergy to dust. Before I’d always been very brave and studious, but at some point everything crumbled to nothing and I became idle.

Alodie: I even wanted to commit suicide, and spoke ...I continued talking about ending my life to friends, and they made me see reason.

AR (61): When she heard she had contracted HIV/AIDS, Alodie collapsed. Her commitment to her children and the encouragement of her friends helped her to regain some strength.

I spent two whole months at home, doing nothing but waiting for death. I used to think that there was nothing left for me but to die. I lost my sanity, worrying about my children, who would be condemned to a life alone. I felt guilty that I had brought them into the world. I even wanted to commit suicide, and spoke to my older sister about my plans. She stopped me from carrying out my intentions. I continued talking about ending my life to friends, and they made me see reason. My children are fine. I’ve had them tested and the results came back negative. After a while, my husband fell seriously ill and passed away in February 2002. I no longer needed to live with him, because of his perpetual threats. I put up with it for the sake of my children. If it hadn’t been for them, I’d have left him.

Chantal: when we meet, we chat and raise each other’s spirits.

AR (99): Chantal is among those learning dressmaking at Abasa and she also received a goat. She commented on the social aspects of being a member: “When we meet, we chat and raise each other’s spirits.”

Rachel: “appreciates” the opportunity to chat and give each other encouragement.

AR (99): Rachel is grateful to Abasa for arranging an HIV/AIDS test. She understands that Abasa is not yet in a position to offer her any financial assistance, but appreciates “the opportunity to chat and give each other encouragement.”

pg. 105

Marcelline: I needed to have people around me to listen to me. I was unable to recover from the emptiness left by the death of the people I loved [...] Avega [widow's organization] at least provided a framework for expressing our feelings. (See pg. 96-7 above, under AR testimonies.)

pg. 106

Judith: We don't have close relations [neighbors who reject her after she testifies her experiences in a local church]. I don't visit them and they never visit me.

AR (68): People who live close to Judith's home in Gitarama know that she is HIV positive because she testified about her experiences in the local church. The distance between them grew wider.

We don't have close relations. I don't visit them and they never visit me.

Mercia: I calm myself down by confiding in God. I tell myself that it [rape] was God's will.

AR (74): At the age of 22, Mercia was raped by several men, first in Greater Kigali and then at CHK hospital in Kigali. Later, when she found someone she wanted to marry, a man whose first wife had died in the genocide, she told him everything. Her husband was understanding, but Mercia's own attitude to the child born of the rape is more ambiguous.

Sometimes, when I think of the circumstances in which he was conceived and of his birth, I'm overcome with negative feelings and I wonder why I didn't abort, or why the child didn't die at birth. But I calm myself down by confiding in God. I tell myself that it was God's will.

Grâce: In my case, only God, who knows that it wasn't my fault that I caught this virus, could perform a miracle and heal me. (AR 32)

AR (36): Grâce's attitude to anti-retrovirals was instructive. She does not even see the point in seeking help.

I've never thought about taking anti-retroviral drugs. I don't even believe that they work. I'm convinced that there's no drug that can fight AIDS. In my case, only God, who knows that it wasn't my fault that I caught this virus, could perform a miracle and heal me. I find it totally inconceivable that I have AIDS and I avoid thinking about it a lot.

Grâce's mood wavers between anger and pure anguish.

Unfortunately, it's impossible for me to remain indifferent to my situation. The génocidaires murdered my husband and have left me to die slowly from their AIDS.

Dorothée: The life I lead today is indescribable. It is only thanks to God...

AR (36): Dorothée took an HIV test.

I can't describe the state that I was in when I found out what the results were. I felt as though my life was already over.

Dorothee found it a challenge to describe her situation and express her emotions. She generally prefers not to talk about the rape and the series of subsequent events, but she gave a clear picture of her sorrow and anxiety.

My life is getting worse day by day. I'm very ill and often the illness requires money I don't have. Because of the sinusitis, I'm allergic to dust and that hampers me in everything I do. I can no longer sweep out my house or my yard; I can't travel by moped or by bicycle. To find appropriate means of transport or to pay a cleaner requires money. The life I lead today is indescribable. It is only thanks to God, and the benefactors he sends my way, that I make ends meet. I became a widow when I was still a young woman. Worse still, before I had the time to come to terms with this first hardship, I learnt that I had been infected with HIV. What overwhelms me the most and that I can't accept, is that I don't have a child.

Emma: was afraid of what the neighbors would say to me. I sought refuge in prayer, and little by little, I was able to accept my fate." As time passed by Emma "found a neighbor who did understand because she too had been raped in 1994. Following her advice, Emma said she decided to "break the silence": I'm no longer afraid to speak about my situation. Being able to *speak out* is a relief. I know that I'm not the only one to have gone through this terrible ordeal [...] That's why I talk openly [...] so that no one makes a *mistake about me.*" (my italics)

pg. 107

AR (43): Emma heeded the advice of her aunt, but was immediately plunged into a cycle of fear and depression when she learned that she was HIV positive.

When they told me the news, I felt as though I'd been given an electric shock, as though the day of my death had already arrived. I was very anxious because if the neighbours ever found out, they'd ostracise me. My biggest fear was that other people would identify me as HIV positive. I was afraid of what the neighbours would say to me. I sought refuge in prayer, and little by little, I was able to accept my fate. When I came to live in the settlement with my grandmother, I said nothing to anybody. I feared that they'd throw me out if they knew my secret.

The initial response of those she spoke with only made her feel worse.

Some people tried to make me understand that I was responsible for what had happened to me, that I should never have gone into exile, that I should have escaped the interahamwe. That was another blow. But how? How could I have eluded their vigilance? I'm not so stupid as to ruin my life if I could have done otherwise. It was obvious that the people who said this had not experienced the genocide.

Fortunately, Emma found a neighbour who did understand because she too had been raped in 1994. Following her advice, Emma said she decided to "break the silence."

I'm no longer afraid to speak about my situation. Being able to speak out is a relief. I know that I'm not the only one to have gone through this terrible ordeal.

She has given some thought to the question of whether she would take anti-retroviral drugs, although she has never actually been to see if she can obtain them. She is informed about the conditions under which they work and believes they are unlikely to be suitable for her anyway because of her poor diet.

I decided not to take them in order to avoid the unpleasant side effects which are inevitable if you are malnourished like I am. I'm not being stubborn or ignorant in not taking the drugs.

Even before I had myself tested, I didn't want to have relations with a man. That's why I talk openly about being HIV positive, so that nobody makes a mistake about me.

pg. 10

Clothilde: Avega's representatives gave me a great deal of moral support. I used to live with a feeling of total desperation, but they made me stronger. I pray that God will look after them.

AR (95): Avega also prompted her to take an HIV test when it was rumoured that a woman raped by the same man had died of AIDS. Buoyed by the negative result on the first occasion, she was left with nothing to hold on to when it was later confirmed that she was indeed HIV positive. Again, she turned to Avega.

Avega's representatives gave me a great deal of moral support. I used to live with a feeling of total desperation, but they made me stronger. I pray that God will look after them.

2. Human Rights Watch / Africa "Shattered Lives" (1996) (HRW/A).

pg. 58 and 103

Judith Kanakuzu: We must look for solutions together. Everyone has problems, not just the rape victims. Take the displaced women who does not know how to get back home. Or the woman whose husband was killed and has her own children and her brother's orphans to raise. Or the woman whose husband is in prison. The consequences of the genocide are being carried on the backs of women.

Marie-Claire: You do not know the kind of suffering that women are carrying around inside them.

HRW/A (46): "Judith Kanakuzu, the director of Duterimbere, a Kigali-based credit union for women said: "We must look for solutions together. Everyone has problems, not just the rape victims. Take the displaced woman who does not know how to get back home. Or the woman whose husband was killed and has her own children and her brother's orphans to raise. Or the woman whose husband is in prison. The consequences of the genocide are being carried on the backs of women." "You do not know the kind of suffering that women are carrying around inside them," said Marie-Claire Mukasine, "If someone does not do something, they are going to explode.""

pg. 58

Maria: what has happened has happened [...] now the question is how to survive.

HRW/A (46): “What has happened has happened,” Maria said, “Now the question is how to survive. They have ruined my future.” She continued, “I hope God will punish them. I am not the only one. What they did to me they did to many others. But what can I do?” Maria’s one wish is to continue attending school to complete her studies. However, she had not money to pay school fees.

pg. 77

Annunciata Nyiratamba: Women are alone. They have lost everything. But there are no programs for them. No-one speaks about the survivors. No one talks about their problems. We are watching what the world will do for the survivors and what it does for the returnees and the refugees. This is a problem for reconciliation. There needs to be assistance for victims, not just for refugees, prisons and returnees. It’s unbalanced. Concretely, there is nothing for the women and yet they constitute the bulk of survivors.

HRW/A (47): “. . .”

pg. 101

Widow: it is as if we are now beginning a new life. Our past is so sad. We are not understood by society [...] we are the living dead.

HRW/A (49): This is under the section “Stigma, Isolation and Ostracization” and leads up to the “Health” section: “One widow said: It is as if we are now beginning a new life. Our past is so sad. We are not understood by society... We are not protected against anything. Widows are without families, without houses, without money. We become crazy. We aggravate people with our problems. We are the living dead.

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Curriculum Vitae

Kathleen M.E. Gless graduated from Seward High School, Seward, Nebraska, in 1981. She received her Bachelor of Arts from University of Nebraska—Lincoln 2004. Kathleen (“Kaught-lane”) has been the Sexual Assault Services Outreach Specialist since May 2006. Her focus in her research and activist work is on how sexual violence affects communities across the Mason campus, Arlington community and conflicts in Africa, as well as how individual, community and structural responses affect sexual violence. She is interested in exploring an art of surviving, where survivors speak to as well as address experiences of sexual and intimate partner violence to individuals, communities and institutions. In the future Kathleen hopes to sustain her community work while focusing more on the individual through counseling and social work professions. The individual’s art of surviving is a unique opportunity to see how one person can confront and challenge communities and structures as well as suggest new possibilities for prevention of sexual violence across the universe. She received her Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Gender and Women’s Studies from George Mason University in 2008. For more information please contact Kathleen at kgless@gmu.edu or maria-etienne@hotmail.com.