GRADIVA

Volume 63 | Issue 10 | October 2024
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13968856

Postcolonial Literary Testimony and Mutating Nature of Documentary Trauma as Memorial in Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana*

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Abstract

This study examines postcolonial literary testimony and the evolving nature of trauma memorialization in the context of a film documentary as a vector for art, particularly within Véronique Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*. The research question guiding this study is: How Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda* serve as a medium for artistic testimonies to trauma and memorialization? How does it reflect the enduring impact of colonial legacies resulting in the Rwanda genocide? Through the application of post-colonial trauma theory, this study analyses Tadjo's exploration of truth-seeking, witnessing, and the intergenerational impact of colonialism. This study aims to shed light on the multifaceted role of postcolonial art in narrating trauma and indicting colonialism as a primary contributor to the Rwanda genocide. The findings of this study demonstrate that postcolonial documentaries, as exemplified in Tadjo's work, provide a vital framework for memorialization and bearing witness to trauma stemming from the ongoing legacies of colonialism. This research highlights the dual nature of film documentary as a source of secondary trauma and as a catalyst for truth-seeking, encouraging individuals to engage with diverse perspectives of art. This study concludes that Tadjo's text serves as a powerful means of memorialization, emphasising the enduring impact of colonialism on the collective memory of Rwandan society.

Keywords: *Postcolonial, Colonialism, Memorial, Testimony, Literature, Trauma.*

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial documentaries provide a framework for memorialising and witnessing the trauma of the continued legacies of colonialism. A film documentary is a source for secondary trauma, and for those who are courageous enough, it motivates them to seek truth through hearing from all sides. Jay Rajira is of write that; "To write in the space marked by the postcolonial is, in a sense, already to narrate a traumatic experience, not only because postcolonial experience is frequently traumatic , but also because the very word itself suggest a troubled division, a feeling that what came before is fundamentally different from what will follow" (7). It is the effect of what after colonialism that Tadjo's art attempt to prserve through the vehicle of art memorializatiom. Post-colonial Literary writers as well as post-colonial trauma theory provide a framework for analysing the past as a continuous model of the present

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that is continuously dependent on the past. A past that provides the continuous complications of the present and the future. Tadjo corroborates the foregoing; thus, "We must never cut off the way back. We must understand, like a song to be hummed, that the world is still standing and that the picture we have of ourselves is absolutely real" (38). She foregrounds the temperament of postcolonial literature and criticism, which is premised on acknowledging the historical and cultural continuity of the presence. Yan Okhtavianus Kalampung opines that; "The postcolonial critique of trauma studies firstly wants to emphasize the traumatic experience in non-Western settings and consider the cultural difference in treating trauma" (212).

Acknowledging this past is a product of resilience and endurance despite the challenges and injustices faced, she underscores the significance of validating one's own narratives and experiences within the context of postcolonial discourse. Tadjo attempts to in the words of Cathy Caruth is her search for how she is precisely implicated in Rwanda's genocide's traumas" (24). Tadjo encourages a reclamation of history and a reaffirmation of cultural identity in the face of colonial legacies. Bill Aschcroft notes that "post-colonial is a way of reading" (xvi). Post-colonial is also way of writing, as illustrated in the appropriation of language and historical records, and in doing this, wherever colonialist effects have continuously disrupted the existence of the periphery by western hegemony. Joshua Pederson is of the opinion that history and trauma are interwined and stories told provides a glimpse into traumatic past and can be tools of recovery (97).

Postcolonial literary testimony of trauma as memorial is a syncretic referential to the continuous effect of the legacies of colonialism in inducing genocide in Rwanda. Stephen Slemon observes that "the post-colonial is grounded in the overlap of three competing research or cultural fields; each carries a specific cultural location and history" (73). Post-colonial trauma theory is foregrounded in cultural location and history, as foregrounded in Tadjo's text. This cultural location and history are embodiments of human interactions.

Gayatir Chakravorty Spivak corroborates the foregoing; thus, "The best postcolonialism is autocriticism" (xv). Spivak suggests that the most effective approach to postcolonialism involves critically examining and reflecting on one's own culture, history, and actions. Amy Novak corroborates the foregoing thus; "The traumatic legacy of colonialism is not only evident in the large scale events of history but also in the daily private dives of citizens" (34). In the context of postcolonial studies, it implies that meaningful progress and understanding can be achieved by engaging in self-critique and acknowledging the impact of colonialism on both the colonised and the colonisers. Irene Visser affirms the foregoing thus; "Postcolonial literature provide many examples that support the claim that trauma itself instigates a strong need for narrative in order to come to terms with the aftermath of colonial wounding" (9). This approach emphasises the importance of introspection and self-awareness in addressing the legacies of colonialism and working towards a more equitable and just future.

Kalampung accounts for the approach to the past as foregrounded in postcolonial literature thus; "The trauma of the postcolonial world is a collective experience" (212). Tadjo provides premise for understanding the Rwandan cultural context of genocide as an essential fact in understanding and addressing the complexities of postcolonial issues surrounding Rwandan genocide. This approach emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and self-awareness in the context of postcolonial discourse and the impact of colonial legacies. Frances Hemsley accounts for the Rwanda genocide in animate mourning for everything else that remains.

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METHOD

This qualitative research method employs a discursive approach to analyse data within the field of postcolonial literary studies. The study is grounded in post-colonial trauma theory, which serves as a framework for understanding the enduring legacies of colonialism in postcolonial societies. By utilising postcolonial trauma theory, the researchers aim to comprehensively account for the impact of colonialism as a contributing factor to events such as the Rwanda genocide, as exemplified in the analysis of Véronique Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*. Jennifer Yusin in theorising on the concept of postcolonial trauma submit that; "Postcolonial criticism has tended to critique, analyze, or describe the nature of the relation between the "postcolonial" and trauma by focusing on the manners in which the wounds from which peoples of non-Western cultures or minority groups suffer cannot be accounted for by traditional psychoanalysis" (239). This thoery accounts for the specificity of the collective trauma as experienced by non-western people of what Irene Visser refers to traumatization as been culturally determined (130). This approach enables the researcher to critically examine the data by subjecting it to postcolonial trauma theory as an interpretative framework. Silk Arnold-de Simine corroborates the foregoing thus; "The lense of "trauma" situate the subject in a specific temporalitym illuminating the hold the past has on us…" (142). Postcolonial trauma theory accounts for how Rwanda colonial past triggered the genocide in Rwanda and how Film documentary becomes a vector in the composition of Tadjo's art. The foregoing foregrounds Caruth's submission that trauma itself may provide a link between culture. This allows for a nuanced exploration of the mutating nature of film documentary and the persistent effects of colonialism, particularly within the context of trauma memorialization in written travelogue. By employing postcolonial trauma theory, this study seeks to shed light on the complex interplay between colonial legacies, artistic representations of trauma, and the ongoing impact on postcolonial societies.

Mutating Nature of Documentary Trauma

The Rwanda genocide film documentary acts as a catalyst for Veronique Tadjo's search for truth in Rwanda genocide as a product of colonialism. Visser note that; "Narrativization of trauma allows insight into specifics of the colonial past as a pathway to integration of the traumatic memory" (10). This insight accounts form patterns induced by colonialism leading to Rwanda genocide. Ian Currie corroborates the foregoing; thus, "Tadjo's text arises out of the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide" (3), and implicates the continuous legacies of colonialism in Africa, which are highlighted in such issues as climate change, genocide, and conflicts as results of colonial actions. Elena Lamberti and Vita Fortunati note that "for an individual as well as for a nation, cultural memory is a complex and stratified entity strictly connected not only to the history and the experience of either the individual or the nation, but also to the way in which that very history and experience are read in time, individually and collectively. Each time, the past acquires new meanings, and the same fact, even though it stays the same, is nevertheless shaped through remembrance. (1). Rwandan genocide is a product of individual and collective memory of trauma. Stef Crap and Gert Buelens corroborates the foregoing thus; "Colonial trauma, however is a collective experience, which means that its specificity cannot be recogniczed unless the object of trauma research shifts from the individual to the larger social entities such as communities or nations" (5). This need for a shift is a welcome development as trauma manifests in different ways in the collective lives of the communities. Postcolonial documentaries as well as art emerge as vital instruments for memorialization and witnessing to the traumas inflicted upon colonized peoples. John Lowney

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observes that "literature must also be reckoned as a special kind of cultural memory in itself: as a complex lieu memoire with its very own forms and strategies of observation and writing from order memories and their diverse representation" (x). Film documentaries as well as art testimony as witnesses to issues of genocide act as mediums of transfer of memory and trauma for those who view such documentaries. Astrid Erll affirms that "media are important agents of transformation between two levels of collective memory; personal memories can assume social relevance only when they are medially externalised" (37). Through art medium Tadjo medially externalised personal memories of Rwanda genocide along with collective memories. Kalampung implicates Tadjo's art through the submission on postcolonial trauma theory thus; "…the postcolonial trauma tries to develop its theoretical framework based on realism and indigenous literary practices" (213).

Tadjo presents the reality of human carnage as result of the Rwanda genocide and provides dimensions of pain and suffering occasioned by the genocide. In her writing on the functionality of art memorials and testimony, states that "emotion can help us understand what the genocide actually was. The silence is the worst thing of all. We must destroy indifference. We must understand the real meaning of the genocide and the accumulation of violence over the years. "Is Africa's orality a handicap to collective memory? We must write to give the information some permanence. The writer pushed people to listen to his voice in an attempt to exorcise their buried memories. He can put balm on the wound and speak of everything that may bring a little hope (27). Tadjo highlights the importance of emotional testimony and creative expression in memorialising and understanding the Rwanda genocide. Art through the verisimilitude of emotion help us grasp the true nature of the Rwanda genocide and to keep the memories of those who were affected. Saadi Nikro infers the foregoing; "With respect to the study of trauma in postcolonial literature, the question of context becomes…more pressing when we consider how trauma embodies existential experiences of atricity and survival, of coping in the aftermath of personal and social disintegration, while disclosing the limits of narrative, reference, representation" (2), It is this context that made her suggests that emotional responses, such as empathy and sorrow, can provide deeper insight into the horrors of the Rwanda genocide than mere intellectual understanding. Russell West-Parlour avers that "*The Shadow of Imana*... such space perverse inversions of time and space are reversed once again to bring us back to some that can have no other name than life. Tadjo's text is an African attempt to come to terms with Rwanda" (115).

Tadjo, before her sojourn for truth, informs us that silence and indifference are barriers to acknowledging and addressing the issues of the Rwanda genocide. Kalwe Wosu, in writing about Tadjo's work, notes, "In a style reminiscent of the African storytelling session where the storyteller and the audience share in the collective patrimony..." (58). Tadjo through the African storytelling method, attempts to combat the silence that surrounds the Rwanda genocide and to allow all sides to speak. She attempts to mediate between past and present, bringing buried memories to the surface and exorcising the trauma of the Rwanda genocide through creative narratives. Lowney observes that "literature is more than just a passive medium that saves data; it is the realm of active design of memory that engages critically with earlier literary recollections" (7). Tadjo, through her art, gives voices to the experiences of survivors and victims of the Rwanda genocide, and they bear witness to the atrocities of the colonial legacies of the Hutus government. She does this to seek closure and healing for those who experienced the genocide and herself, who is affected by the image she saw on television. She response to film documentary art and fulfills Lamberti and Fortunati's submission that "it is impossible to offer a final and absolute vision of the past, especially of the event to be

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recalled, which affects at once both the private and public spheres of a heterogenous community." (1). Tadjo's text brings new dimensions to the Rwanda genocide by allowing all through art to testify.

The Rwanda genocide documentary is a memorial and vector for the creation of testimonials and witnesses as a memorial for victims and survivors of the Rwanda genocide. This is in line with Silvia Martinez-Falquina submission that; "…postcolonial trauma theory as contact zone where trauma criticism and the postcolonial are interrelated and mutually transformed, and where unequal power relations are also attended to" (834). The Rwanda art documentary provides a framework for analysing this contact as well as the effect of colonialism on postcolonial discourse in Africa. Lowney notes that "the memory of literature is thus to be found in strategies of covering and recovering other representations, strategies that can be identified and described by the reader" (7). Postcolonial documentaries explore the lasting effects of colonialism and its traumatic legacy. They serve as a form of memorialization, providing a platform for victims to share their stories and for audiences to understand the complexities of postcolonial societies. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin affirm that "all post-colonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved their problem" (6). Tadjo critically highlight the colonial knowledge system and its contribution to the Rwanda genocide.

The film documentary about the Rwanda genocide functions as a medium of memorial and rememory that triggers the composition of literary testimonies and memories for victims and survivors of the Rwanda genocide. Nneoma Betty Otuegbe function of remembering implicates film documentary thus; "…the responsibility of remembering the collective traumas and retelling, this fresh interest in the investigation of trauma as a collective, instead of individual experience is the main crux of postcolonial trauma studies" (13). Genocide film documentary allows one to participate in an experience that is not theirs but highlights the effect of such experiences on people who share the same humanity as the one who has experienced it. Madhumita Purkayastha, in writing about rememory, submits that "rememory" in terms of narrative strategy, counter-hegemonic storytelling, and multi-perspective discourse in Beloved. Literary narratives partake of the fundamental characteristic of narrative discourse, which is to have not only a tale—an underlying sequence of events with a beginning and an ending—but also a teller. The central concern in studying literary narratives is the role of the teller in the deployment of the tale" (2). Art memorials as testimonies participate in engaging all sides on the issue of Rwandan genocide, including the dead who could not speak for themselves. James E. Young affirms that "writing from and about the Holocaust has not been called upon merely to represent or stand for the epoch whence it has derived, which would be to sustain the figurative (i.e., metonymical) character of its literary documentation. But rather, writers and readers of Holocaust narrative have long insisted that it literarily deliver documentary evidence of specific events, that it not stands for the destruction or merely point towards it, but that it be received as testimonial proof of the events it embodies" (13). Readers and writers of the Rwanda genocide use their art as testimonial proof of the events it embodies in witnessing to Rwanda Genocide.

The mutating nature of the documentary of trauma as a memorial in Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana* foregrounds varied responses from the viewers and can vary widely depending on individual responses and the specific content of the film. The Rwanda genocide documentary is a trigger for Tadjo and acts as a motivation for her to seek the truth from all parties involved during and after the genocide. Renate Lachmann avers that "Literature is culture's memory,

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not as a simple recording device but as a body of commemorative actions that include the knowledge stored by culture and virtually all texts a culture has produced and by which culture is constituted. Writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation by which every new text is etched into the memory of space (300). Her text is participating in the Rwanda genocide as a witness and memorial to trauma and death. Fortunati is of the opinion that "testimonial writing can be closely connected not only with the autobiographical experience of the writer but also with the complex and difficult process of remembrance, which implies an emotional participation intimately connected to the mind as to the body" (46). She participates in erecting a memorial for victims of the Rwanda genocide and allows the dead and the living to participate through autobiographical memorials in her work.

The Rwanda genocide depicts harrowing scenes of violence, suffering, and loss. These experiences, as indicated in Tadjo's case, intensified her emotions, such as sadness, anger, or empathy. These emotions can lead to a deeper understanding of the human cost of genocide and a heightened sense of social responsibility. She affirms the foregoing; thus, "It had long been my dream to go to Rwanda. No, "dream" is not the right word. I had long felt a need to exorcise Rwanda. To go to that place where those images we had seen on television had been filmed—images that had flashed across the world and had left an indelible horror in every heart. I did not want Rwanda to remain forever a nightmare, a primal fear" (3). Tadjo's experiencing Rwanda's genocide through a film documentary creates in her a quest to exorcise such images from her being by travelling to the site of such images and to identify with the persons and their experiences, and through this medium, authenticate the experiences of these individuals, whether dead or alive, through literary testimonies as memorials. Piotr Cieplak corroborates the foregoing and affirms the functionality of the film documentary on Rwandan genocide; thus, "one cannot understand or remember the genocides of the past in any direct manner" (3). Tadjo's journey in seeking a comprehensive memorial even for the living indicates that a film documentary is not a comprehensive memorial for victims and survival in the Rwanda genocide. Although film documentaries perform an important function in the concept of memorial and testimony to the decimation of humanity in Rwanda, Cieplak, in writing about photography and documentary film participation in animating the Rwanda genocide, submits that:

> …their inaccessibility impedes us from working towards complex understandings of these events and appropriate ways of responding to them. We look to certain genocide films that provoke public understandings of atrocity and meaningful social and political responses. These films direct us towards representational strategies and interdisciplinary perspectives that advance theoretical and empirical understanding of genocide. Attention to such efforts not only underscores the work of images in shaping criminological discourse but also makes for a better—because more deeply informed—criminology of genocide (3).

Tadjo's art seeks to provide the same understanding that the Rwanda genocide film documentary engages in. In this case, we heard from all sides that were involved in the conflict. A film documentary on genocide is a non-fictional cinematic work that explores and sheds light on instances of genocide against particular people. Lamberti says that "remembering is a human action; memory deeply belongs to man, but remembering can also be a painful, complex, and difficult act that overwhelms the actor and turns him/her into a pillar of salt. Yet man keeps remembering, bearing witness to the experience of war..." (115). A genocide documentary aims to educate viewers about the events, causes, consequences, and often the

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human stories behind such atrocities. Victoria Burrows in writing on the functionality of narratives with regards to trauma observe that; "The acknowledge method of working through and healing trauma is through words, or the creation of a narrative…"(162). Film documentary provides a medium for healing and the interrogation of collective trauma in postcolonial state. This film documentary is a victory for art and medium for the courageous to seek the complete truth from all sides that were involved. The attempt to seek the complete truth foregrounds the mutating nature of documentary, which is transformed through art. Film documentaries often include interviews with survivors, eyewitness accounts, archival footage, expert analysis, and historical context to provide a comprehensive understanding of the genocide being depicted. Film documentaries can indeed serve as carriers of secondary trauma, particularly when they depict graphic or emotionally distressing content. Secondary trauma refers to the emotional response experienced by individuals who are indirectly exposed to traumatic events through media, stories, or images. Charles R. Figley affirms the foregoing; thus, "There is a caring cost. Professionals who lived to a clients' fear, pain, and suffering may experience similar fear and pain because they care" (1). Tadjo experiences the trauma and pain of survivors of Rwanda because she cares, and it is this care that makes her journey to Rwanda in search of the complete narrative that surrounds the images she saw on television. Her art testimony aims to raise awareness about the Rwanda genocide by portraying real-life stories and experiences.

Film Documentary of Genocide as vector for art

A film documentary provides a framework for testimonial art by postcolonial writers in the twenty-first century. Henry Schward observes that "postcolonial studies question the violence that has often accompanied cultural interaction and attempt to frame explanations of it as well as provide alternative models of accommodation." (5). Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imans: Travel in the Heart of Rwanda* attempts to provide a comprehensive artistic picture of testimonies on the remote colonial cause of the Rwanda genocide. Cathy Caruth acknowledge that; "For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (18). Tadjo's quest is as a result not fully understanding the film documentary she saw on Rwanda genocide. This quest is triggered by a film documentary about the Rwanda genocide.

The Rwanda film documentary as well as the art that arises from it serve not merely as historical records but as potent tools for challenging dominant narratives, amplifying marginalised voices, and fostering collective reckoning with the enduring wounds of colonial oppression. Tadjo affirms the foregoing; thus, "I was starting from a particular premise: what had happened there concerned us all. It was not just one nation lost in the dark heart of Africa that was affected. To forget Rwanda after the sound and the fury was like being blind in one eye, voiceless, and handicapped. It was to walk in darkness, feeling your way with outstretched arms to avoid colliding with the future" (3).

What happened in Rwanda, as attested by the Tadjo, is not just about a dark part of Africa because it was triggered by colonial actions and knowledge systems. Edward W. Said, writing about postcolonial studies, notes that "Appeals to the past are among the most common of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms." (36). The colonial past is continuous and triggered the genocide in Rwanda.

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Tadjo affirms Said's interconnectedness of colonialism with African decimation of themselves when she submits, "As I had been invited to a conference a few days before my trip to Rwanda, I told myself that it was a good jumping-off point. Post-apartheid South Africa might perhaps be able to offer some answers to my questions, especially in relation to the problem of reconciliation on a national scale" (3). Colonial activities in Africa are the premise for conflict requiring national reconciliation, as they are indicative of South Africa, Rwanda, and Nigeria. African trauma is interconnected, as Africans, through travel, bear the psychological marks of their subjugation and exploitation from colonialism to the present. Tadjo's narrative affirms the foregoing when she writes that "Durban, South Africa, A beach-side parking lot. Life is filled with random events that cannot be explained. The man was guarding the cars in the parking lot where we had left our vehicle. He arrived eight months ago by way of Zaire. He made the journey on foot from Rwanda. He lives in a township, in a small room he shares with others who, like him, have ended up here"(5). Even in South Africa, those who have fled the genocide in Rwanda carry the burden of their experience with them. The excerpt indicates that traumatic memory lives within the memory of the survivor even when they have fled the land of their torment.

Tadjo, in her artistic testimony of art in the Rwanda genocide, corroborates the continuity of the past in animating art; thus, "Occasionally, someone will reveal a secret to you that you have not asked to know. Then you are crushed under a burden of knowledge too heavy to bear. I could no longer keep Rwanda buried inside me. I needed to lance the abscess, lay bare the wound, and bandage it. I am not a doctor, but I could still try to administer first aid to myself" (3). Through art as illustrated in the genocide film documentary, attempts to illuminate the multifaceted dimensions of trauma, offering spaces for remembrance, reflection, and resistance.

Genocide film documentary as well as art testimonies are sites of memorialization and witness to trauma, which highlights the capacity to confront the complexities of colonial histories and to engender processes of healing, justice, and reconciliation in their wake. Tadjo's text highlights the intersections of memory, representation, and colonisation and, through art, reveals the profound impacts of the colonial knowledge system in triggering the Rwanda genocide. Her narratives shape the past and visions for the future as the art testimonies bear witness to the transformative power of film as a conduit for art and collective remembrance and as a catalyst for forging pathways towards justice and liberation in a postcolonial world.

Tadjo arrived in Kigali, and she is amazed at the laughter and smiles that flow in the street, irrespective of the people's sad experiences of the horrors of genocide in their land. Tadjo's art testimonies continue to contrast the image of the documentary with the reality she is experiencing. She notes that "Kigali in peacetime is a very calm Kigali" (9). In this calm once-held storm that destroyed the land and forced Tadjo's visit, amidst this calmness live wounds that are trying to heal and write; thus, "May my eyes see, may my ears hear, may my mouth speak. I am not afraid of knowing. But may my mind never ever lose sight of what must grow within us: hope and respect for life" (10).

Her art is a search for truth, a search motivated by care, and a secondary experience to the pain and suffering of the dead, living, and dying Rwandans and their experiences during the genocide, which were motivated by the colonial narratives. In this search for truth, Tadjo acknowledges a model when she says, "The truth is revealed in people's eyes. Words have so little value. You need to get under people's skins. See what is inside. Evil changes its tactics and chooses different battlefields. It emerges whatever we have lowered our guard" (11).

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This is the pattern in which Tadjo's work takes place in search of truth and to exorcise her experiences, which were occasioned by her watching a documentary about genocide, which becomes a process of her search search. Her search engages in marking memory and erecting creative memorials through witness testimonies. Tadjo's first act of memorial is in Nyamata Church, a site of genocide. She noted:

> Plus or minus 35,000. A woman bound hand and foot. Mukandori. Aged twenty-five. Exhumed in 1997. Home: the town of Nyamata. Married. Any children? Her Wrists are bound and tied to her ankles. Her legs are spread wide apart. Her body is lying on its side. She looks like an enormous, fossilized fetus. She has been laid on a dirty blanket, in front carefully lined up skulls and bones scattered on a mat. She has been raped. A pickaxe has been forced into her vagina. She died from a machete blow to the nape of her neck. You can see the groove left by the impact. She has a blanket over her shoulder, but the material is now encrusted into the skin (11).

The foregoing indicates a pattern of art memorials and testimonies. Tadjo *The Shadow of Imans: Travel in the Heart of Rwanda* bears testimonies to the thousand persons killed, which have now lopped together to 35, 000 or more. She proceeded to account for the horrific experience of Mukandori, who was raped and killed in the most dehumanised form for any human to experience. Tadjo, through her art, indicts the international communities as contributors to the genocide in Rwanda. Said foregrounds Tadjo's interconnectedness; thus, "The main idea is that even as we must fully comprehend the pastness of the past, there is no just way in which the past can be quarantined from the present. The past and present inform each other; each implies the other" (37). The Rwandan past is implicated in its presence, and the foreign power engaged in a blood trade in which the weapons that were purchased were used for the extermination of the Rwandans. Tadjo corroborates the foregoing when she submits that:

> Grenades, rifles, hammers, spiked clubs, axes, matchets, hoes. The matchets came from France and China. Mines in the surrounding country. To wipe all out all evidence, the skulls could be burnt. They say, too, that when the United Nation forces arrived, the soldiers removed the bodies. Only those bodies that could eventually be identified were buried in accordance with the rites. All others are there, to bear witness, and will have no burial. They are nothing but bones. Those blackened skulls are those which were found n latrines or buried in the earth. Those white ones were found in the open, among the tall grasses. But these dead are screaming still. The chaos remains palpable. The events are too recent. This is not a memorial, but death laid bare, exposed in all its rawness (12).

As the remains of those killed bear witness to their deaths and a lack of burial places, Tadjo Art erects a memorial for them by accounting for their existence in her literary testimonies. She implicates the actions of world powers who sold the elements of mass destruction to the leaders that perpetrated the genocide in Rwanda. The skulls are a presentation of people, and they look at death to indicate their method of preservation or the method of their death. Amidst their memorial in art and at the site of their "interment," they function as a memorial and a representation of the horrors of genocide. Tadjo, through art, informs us that even the dead were dishonoured because of the multitude of dead resulting from the genocide.

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For those who were dishonoured, she erected a memorial for them as a means of atonement for the wrong done to them. She avers:

> At the end of the war, it was the survivors who retrieved the skeletons and the scattered bones. It was all done in a great hurry. They look like things destined for the scrapyard. Skulls are piled on top of each other, torn and mouldy clothes mingle with the scarcely recognizable remains. Driver ants crisscross the red earth. What they remember of the genocide? The Belgian priest was no longer there when the massacre took place. The little town is surrounded by marshes. Survivors hid there until 14 May, when the RPF, the liberation army, arrived. They slept in the water, lived in the water. Many of them died among the papyrus (13).

The skulls are unidentified humans, and Tadjo's art collectively erects a memorial for them, and she is perplexed if the ants remembered what happened since the ants participated in the decomposition of the corpses, which are now skulls and bones. Art holds the liberation army accountable for their contribution to the deaths of many who died in water and attempts to erect a memorial at the site of their deaths by acknowledging what led to their deaths. Through her work, shows that art is a process of remembrance for those who are not able to travel to the site of genocide. Art is a re-memorial of the existing memorial. Tadjo corroborated the foregoing through her work when she submitted that "On the other side of the fence, a woman is watching us. I smile at her. She waves at me. The guide invites me to come and write in the register. I am number 7317. I write my surname and my first name" (13). She acknowledges the memorial and people's visits to acquit themselves of what happened in Rwanda. Tadjo, through art, erects a literary memorial as testimony for people who were murdered in Ntarama Church; thus, "Site of genocide. Plus, or minus 5,000 dead" (14). Like a physical memorial, art transmits the uncertainty of the number of people killed at a particular site of the genocide. Art participates in witnessing and testimonies to the Rwanda genocide through the framing of such sites in literary art and testimonies. Tadjo sees a memorial within a memorial when she observes that:

> I wonder what will happen to him. why is he there, amid these human remains, these bones? He explains, replies to questions without betraying any emotion. He touches the relics, pushes open doors, guide the visitors to the places where the remains lie in piles. He displays them as he would display anything else, as if he were a museum. He talks, knowing that our imagination will never be able to get anywhere close to the reality. Deep down, he does understand what we have come here to seek, what is concealed in our hearts. What hidden motive drives us to gaze wide eyed at death distorted by hatred (15).

The human remains are not properly preserved and through art, she attempts to properly preserve their existence in literature. Although the guide did not understand what they sought, what Tadjo sought was to reconcile the film documentary with the realities that produced the film. She attempts to hear all sides of the genocide to provide a memorial for those who failed to speak because of the finality of death. Tadjo acknowledges the emergence of memorials for the dead; thus, "From April 1994 to 1997, the bones remained as they were found. In 1997, the construction of the memorial began. But the stench of death has become unbearable. Particles from the massacre are floating in the air. The dead point an accusing finger at the living, who are still making use of them. The dead want to return to the earth. They rise in protest. They want to melt into the earth" (16). An art memorial gives voice to what is happening along the site of what it is framing. This is seen in Tadjo's submission: the dead are protesting their

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continuous existence on the surface of the earth. She erects a memorial for Tonia Loatelli, a nurse who was killed by the perpetrators of the genocide. Tadjo submits that "Tonia Locatelli died on March 9, 1992. RIP. (Rest in Peace). She was an Italian nurse. Back in 1992, when the first massacres of the Tutsis began, she protested to the authorities. Faced with indifference, she launched an accusation on a foreign radio station: 'We must save these people; we must protest them. It is the government itself that is doing this" (16). Literary testimony and memorials are acts of remembrance and witnessing to the remote causes of the genocides. Loatelli paid with her life to prevent the genocide, and art bears testimony to her act of courage. Tadjo chronicles the process of her death; thus, "Two days later, she was murdered by soldiers on the doorstep of her home. They were killing in the surrounding villages, burning the dwellings. Those who resisted were disarmed and wiped out" (17). Loatelli was killed by the soldiers for her stand against the genocide.

In bearing witness and erecting a memory art, gives the dead voice to speak at their memorial site in art. Tadjo, in her art memorial, submits that:

> The dead paying regular visits to the living and when they were with them, they would sked why they had been killed. The town streets were filled with spirits moving around, whirling in the stifling air. They jostled the living, clambered on their backs, walked alongside them, danced around them, followed them, through the crowded alleyways. The dead would have liked to speak but no one could hear them. They would have liked to say all that they had not had time to say, all the words whose utterance they had been denied, cut from their tongues, torn from their mouths. They were in every neighbourhood. You would feel them as they scurried past people. The spirits were hurrying home to visit everyone they had known, in the places that they had loved and which were still their own. And even if nothing remained but houses in ruins, they needed only a stone to rediscover the days gone by. They floated among the living whose memory was starting to fade. Wounds remained embedded in their flesh, but those were slowly closing over their nightmares (41).

The foregoing highlights a powerful and haunting portrayal of the presence of the deceased in the lives of the living within a postcolonial context. It depicts a world where the boundaries between the living and the dead are blurred, and the spirits of the deceased continue to interact with the living, seeking understanding and closure for the violence inflicted upon them The imagery of the streets and spirits, creates a sense of pervasive and inescapable presence. The spirits are depicted as yearning to communicate and to express the words and emotions that were violently taken from them. Their inability to be heard reflects the silencing and erasure of their voices during their lives. The description of the spirits rushing to revisit the places and people they loved, even if those places are now in ruins, conveys a deep longing for connection and a desire to reclaim what was lost. The mention of wounds embedded in their flesh and nightmares slowly healing suggests the enduring trauma and pain experienced by the deceased, as well as the slow process of healing and reconciliation. The dead speak through Tadjo's art and come as witnesses within the sight of the art memorial. Art listens to the wailing of the dead by animating their condition and appealing to human conscience to give them a permanent resting place. The work foregrounds the lasting impact of Rwandan genocide within a postcolonial framework, highlighting the unresolved legacies of historical injustices and the ongoing struggle for remembrance and healing. Her art testifies to the horrific experiences of Rwandan genocide by laying a memorial at the place of their murder. Tadjo's art memorial observes, "And when they were angry, the dead gathered on empty lots among the debris, in

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places that had drunk of their blood and suffering, and, once again, they would release the last mortal cries of their fleshly envelope. The wind carried away their rage and pierced the eardrums of the survivors. Consciences were darkened by anguish, making the days and nights unbearable" (42). Art memorial paints a vivid picture of the lingering presence of the deceased in the aftermath of violence and suffering within a postcolonial context. It conveys a sense of unresolved anger and anguish that permeates the environment, impacting both the deceased and the living. The imagery of the dead gathering in places marked by their blood and suffering creates a haunting portrayal of the lasting imprint of violence on the physical landscape. The release of their "last mortal cries" suggests a profound and desperate expression of the pain and injustice they experienced during their lives, emphasising the depth of their unresolved trauma. Tadjo's memorial art description of the wind carrying away their rage, which then pierces the eardrums of the survivors, conveys a visceral and inescapable quality to the emotions and memories associated with the deceased. The impact on the survivors' consciences, darkened by anguish, speaks to the enduring psychological and emotional toll of the violence, making each day and night unbearable for the survivors of the Rwanda genocide. Amidst these highlights of the deaths bearing witness to their conditions, Tadjo's art memorial indicts colonialism as one of the factors that inaugurated the Rwanda genocide. Although there were colonial elements who were against the genocide, there were some whose utterances inaugurated the genocide in Rwanda. Tadjo affirms the foregoing, thus:

> One of the reasons for the persecution of the Tutsis come from the theories suggested by European historians, Belgian in particular, who, towards the end of the nineteenth century, attributed to them foreign origins. According to those historians, the 'watussi' shepherds, whom they characterized as tall and slender, in contrast to the smaller Hutu farmers, were not originally natives of central Africa. Some thought they could have come from as far off as Tibet or Egypt. But the link with Ethiopia remains the most common claim. It would even seem that the Tutsis themselves have confirmed this, for their traditional costume is very similar to that worn by the Ethiopians. There is no historical proof to verify this theory. But this claim initially made as a form of flattery, has had terrible consequences. During the genocide, thousands of Tutsis were thrown into the water of the Kagera river so that 'they can return to Ethiopia (22).

The European intellectual system that contributed to the genocide in Rwanda. The Belgian settler propagated this thought to bring disharmony between the Hutsis and Tutsis. The European settler, by their actions, inaugurated genocide in Rwanda. Mahmood Mamdani affirms the foregoing when he submits that:

> If the genocidal impulse is as old as the organization of power, one may be tempted to think that all that has changed through history is the technology of genocide. Yet, it is not simply the technology of genocide that has changed through history, but surely also how that impulse is organized, and its target defined. Before you can try and eliminate an enemy, you must first define that enemy. The definition of the political self and the political other has varied through history. The history of that variation is the history of political identities, be these religious, national, racial, or otherwise. I argue that the Rwandan genocide needs to be thought through within the logic of colonialism. The horror of colonialism led to two types of genocidal impulses. The first was the genocide of the native by the settler (9).

Mamdani affirms that racial theories propagated by European colonial powers, particularly Belgian colonisers in Rwanda, played a significant role in shaping the social

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divisions and conflicts that ultimately led to the Rwandan genocide in 1994. He argues that the classification of Tutsis and Hutus as distinct ethnic groups with inherent characteristics was a colonial construction that exacerbated tensions within Rwandan society. The classification of enemies as informed by colonial practices as indicated in Mamdani's submission is also implicated in the Hutus method of killing their perceived enemies. Tadjo's "Hutu Power" testifies to the foregoing, thus:

> The Ten Commandments of the Hutus:
>
> > 1 every Hutu man must know that a Tutsi woman, wherever she may be, works in the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. Consequently we consider a traitor any Hutu man who:
> >
> > . marries a Tutsi woman
> > . becomes friendly with a Tutsi woman,
> > . employ a Tutsi woman as a secretary or mistress (112)

These is illustrating the effect of colonial method of defining enemies which the people of Hutu later practiced on Tutsis. Mamdani further note that:

> It became a reality where the violence of colonial pacification took on extreme proportions. The second was the native impulse to eliminate the settler. Whereas the former was obviously despicable, the latter was not. The very political character of native violence made it difficult to think of it as an impulse to genocide. Because it was derivative of settler violence, the natives' violence appeared less of an outright aggression and more a self-defense in the face of continuing aggression. Faced with the violent denial of his humanity by the settler, the native's violence began as a counter to violence. It even seemed more like the affirmation of the native's humanity than the brutal extinction of life that it came to be. When the native killed the settler, it was violence by yesterday's victims. More of a culmination of anticolonial resistance than a direct assault on life and freedom, this violence of victims-turned-perpetrators always provoked a greater moral ambiguity than did the settlers' violence (10).

The foregoing indicates the complex dynamics of violence and resistance in colonial contexts, particularly focusing on the relationship between settlers and natives. The violence employed by colonial powers during the process of pacification is described as extreme. This violence is depicted as despicable and oppressive. Mamdani contrasts colonial violence with the native response. It suggests that, while colonial violence is clearly condemnable, the native impulse to eliminate the settler is more complex. This violence is seen as a reaction to the ongoing aggression and denial of humanity by the settlers. The native violence is portrayed as initially arising as a form of self-defense against the settlers' violence. It's described as a response to the denial of the native's humanity. The violence perpetrated by the natives against the settlers is depicted as having greater moral ambiguity compared to the violence of the settlers. This ambiguity stems from the historical context of the natives being victims of colonisation who have turned into perpetrators. It's seen as the culmination of anticolonial resistance, which complicates the moral judgement surrounding it. In essence, Mamdani's explores how violence in colonial contexts is not simply a one-sided affair but rather a complex interplay of oppression, resistance, and shifting power dynamics. It challenges simplistic notions of violence and highlights the nuances of colonial relationships. Mamdani attributes these complexities to the premise that underlies the Rwanda genocide, as also corroborated by

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Tadjo's art testimony and memorial. Tadjo indicates that even after the killing of Tutsis, the colonial government was still seeking their own interests, thus:

> The world powers knew that massacres were being carried out in Rwanda, but they were slow to react and to admit that what was going on was genocide. A military intervention force of modest proportions could have stopped the extremists and quickly put an end to their plans. Instead, the United Nations balked at playing their part. In the end, it was France who became involved on the ground. But what did France play? Through operation Turquoise, the French solders saved lives, that is certainly true, but they also made it possible for a large number of murders to escape using the safe humanitarian zone as a protected passage. Consequently, it can be said that France and Belgium continued until the very end to support a genocide regime because, as far as they were concerned, only the Hutus ethnic majority could guarantee democracy in Rwanda. But the massacre were without a shadow of doubt the result of the political maneuverings of the elite, who in order to retain power, created a climate if hatred and division by urging ethnic majority against the minority (33).

Her art, amidst memorials, bears testimonies to the (in)actions of world powers who were colonialists in Rwanda and had their colonial interest in the administration of Rwanda by the Hutus. Tadjo highlights the failures of world powers Like France and Belgium to effectively intervene during the Rwandan genocide. Marie Fierens and Jacques Fierens corroborate the foregoing; thus, "more than a hundred days of noise, during which the UN, Belgium, and France choose the silence of cowards..." (100). Fierens and Fierens like Tadjo criticised this delay and suggested that timely intervention could have prevented further atrocities. She criticised the United Nations for hesitating to fulfil its responsibility in intervening to stop the genocide. A UN military intervention force, possibly under UN auspices, could have been effective in halting the extremists' actions. While France's involvement in Rwanda through Operation Turquoise is mentioned as saving lives, Tadjo criticises France for allowing many murderers to escape by providing them with safe passage through the humanitarian zone. Her art raises questions about the effectiveness and motives of France's intervention because France and Belgium continued to support the genocidal regime in Rwanda, viewing the Hutu ethnic majority as the guarantor of democracy. This highlights the geopolitical interests and complexities involved in the conflict, where major powers may have prioritised political alliances over human rights concerns. Ultimately, Tadjo emphasizes that the genocide was orchestrated by the political elite in Rwanda, who manipulated ethnic divisions and fueled hatred to maintain their grip on power. This underscores the role of internal political dynamics in perpetuating mass violence. She paints a grim picture of international inaction and questionable interventions during the Rwandan genocide, while also shedding light on the complex web of political interests and power struggles that fueled the conflict in Rwanda.

Her art testimony and memorial first laid a narrative tomb for the victims of Rwanda genocide before gradually implicating the government as well as colonialism as premises for Rwanda genocide. She holds a memorial for those who are alive but are constantly traumatised by their experiences. Tadjo used the Kubwimana family to illustrate the plights of families and their experiences. Therese lives with her three young daughters, including her husband, who was imprisoned for taking part in the genocide, and most visit the military barracks every Friday. While their son Isaac is traumatised by his experience to the extent that he has refused to continue schooling, Isaac testifies to his horrific experience, thus:

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> During the war, the militia were taking young people by force and making them fight and kill: "if you do not kill, we will kill you. If you do not kill them, they will kill you!"
>
> "The adults betrayed us," Isaac thinks, "they ruined our lives, sent us to hell and abandoned us" (22).

Isacc's experience of the genocide kills his dream of studying, and the trauma of his experiences could not allow him to concentrate as he was forced to participate in the genocide, which he later flees because of the intervention of the French.

Her narrative is comprehensive as it acknowledges the sufferings of others because of their family involvement in the Rwanda genocide. Tadjo laid a memorial as a symbol of remembrance for all those who suffered, either falsely or rightly, in the crime of genocide in Rwanda. Tadjo avers:

> Consolate's story
>
> Consolate has a face of astonishing sweetness. Her skin gives off reflections of copper and ivory and her graceful body sways to the rhythm of her steps. The rain suits her as it falls in the garden waters the flowers, dissolve time. (…). Consolate speaks in a hushed tone, but her words come out of her mouth with a clarity that makes you shiver. Her manner is not assertive, nor her speech emphatic. Her father is dead, her mother is in prison, as her brother. Her two sisters are in the city somewhere. For her, the country is an interminable exile. She is left long ago, after the beginning of the war and genocide. She does not recognize the land which has betrayed her and which continues to reject her, for she can find nothing to hang on to anymore (28).

The narrative captures the hopelessness and loneliness occasioned by the war and the genocide, which have left people like Consolate without a family to stay with. The foregoing highlights the dimensions of losses occasioned by the Rwanda genocide, and Consolate mourns her losses as, through her witnessing to Tadjo, she erects a memorial for her dead father by associating with him through her narrative and bears witness to her mother, who is in prison. At all turns, Consolate encounters losses—losses that are associated with being family-bound, which should have provided her with a kind of stability in a society that was torn against itself. In art witnessing to trauma and as memorial, all persons, the victims, the victors, and none of the of the state acts are allowed to speak. The journalist noted:

> In the initial days of the genocide, the members of the Hutu interim government launched a campaign of disinformation. No one realized this at the time because they appealed for international aid and demanded an immediate ceasefire. In this way, they succeeded in convincing the greater part of the public opinion that the massacres were the result of an explosion of tribal violence as unforeseeable as it was uncontrollable (32).

Misinformation is a tool for international rebranding, while the genocide in Rwanda ranges. The Hutu interim government watched as the Tutsis were murdered. The journalist, through journalistic testimonies, bears witness to the unidentified persons killed before the genocide became fierce and all-consuming. After journalistic witnessing, Tadjo introduced Nelly, a woman who is putting up efforts to survive the aftermath of the genocide and raising a generation that is uniquely different from her as she tries to protect them from the narratives that are associated with the genocide. Isaro is also a representation of the effect of the historical past occasioned by the colonial-induced Rwanda Genocide, which led her to search for the

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existence of her husband in someone else. Isaro's husband was accused during the genocide, and he killed himself. She had various unanswered questions, and these questions are what kept haunting her. Tadjo's art memorial observes:

> Isaro remembered Roman's burial. Very few people attended, only a few family members. She had not told the priest that Romain had committed suicide. It was after the ceremony that she had been overwhelmed by the full force of grief. Before, there had been practical details to take care…. Isaro kept telling herself that, as things have a soul, Romain would reveal himself through them. Yet, she had been expecting his return a long time now (56).

This is the complicated nature of the Rwanda genocide and the trauma that is associated with it. Isaro witnessed the burial of her husband after he committed suicide because he was suspected participating in killing a family. Isaro bears the guilt of her husband's death because she felt her husband did not believe her and knew that he did not participate in the killings. A literary memorial of art brings the human side to the site of the memorial and allows us to see the emotions that are associated with human actions and activities within the context of the Rwandan genocide.

Narrative Style in the Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana* and function

There are diverse artistic techniques used in Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana* to erect literary memorials for victims of the Rwanda genocide as witness. Tadjo's the Shadow of Imana is structured based on the principles of trauma. Caruth submit that "trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11). *The Shadow of Imana* as a product of collective and individual trauma unfolds in uncontrolled repetitive and fragmented form as it bear witness to the carnage and pains of Rwanda genocide. Gerd Bayer observe that; "All literature that deals with war exists in this gray zone between the didacticism of educating readers about the horrors of the battlefields and the enticement that stems from drawing on extreme emotions" (213). The Shasow of Imana educates readers on the traumatic event of Rwandan geoncide as product of colonialism. As an author, Tadjo takes on the role of a witness, conveying the harrowing experiences and suffering of the Rwandan people. In bearing witness, Tadjo's work becomes a form of testimony, preserving the memories and stories of those affected by the genocide. This act of testifying is crucial in acknowledging the trauma and giving voice to the voiceless; the individual and collective experiences, such as the testimonies of survivors which creates a powerful and poignant account of the genocide. Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana* incorporates various forms of trauma testimony, including personal narratives, eyewitness accounts, and collective memories of the genocide. These testimonies serve as a means of processing and understanding the trauma experienced by the Rwandan people. They provide a platform for the victims and survivors to share their stories, which is essential for the healing process and the preservation of historical memory. The inclusion of trauma testimony in the narrative also challenges the traditional ways of representing and documenting historical events. By centering the voices and experiences of the affected individuals, Tadjo's work subverts the dominant narratives and offers a more nuanced and multifaceted understanding of the genocide. Through witness-bearing and traumatic testimonies, Tadjo engages in a literary narrative memorialization. The act of memorialization is intrinsic to Tadjo's novel, as it seeks to preserve the memory of the Rwandan genocide and honour the lives lost. Through the incorporation of trauma testimony and the exploration of individual and collective experiences, the narrative

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becomes a form of memorial, serving as a tangible record of the events and the human impact. The memorialization in *The Shadow of Imana* extends beyond the written text, as the author engages with various forms of cultural memory, such as the use of symbolism, metaphor, and the evocation of natural landscapes. This process of memorialization honours the victims as well as challenges the reader to confront the realities of the genocide and to reflect on the broader implications of such traumatic events of Rwanda genocide.

Tadjo's writing style challenges the dominant narratives and official histories surrounding the genocide, which often focus on the political and historical aspects. Tadjo focus on the personal an collective experiences and testimonies of survivors, the novel gives voice to marginalised perspectives and counter-narratives. This shift in focus challenges the reader to move beyond the broad, generalised accounts of the genocide and engage with the individual human stories and traumas. Tadjo's vivid sensory descriptions, use of symbolism, and incorporation of personal narratives evoke a deep sense of empathy and emotional resonance in the reader. This empathetic connection encourages the reader to engage with the survivors' experiences on a more profound level, fostering a greater understanding of the human impact of the genocide. By humanising the victims and survivors, the novel counteracts the tendency to reduce such events to mere statistics or historical facts. The novel's inclusion of trauma testimonies and memorialization of the victims serves as a form of historical preservation, ensuring that the stories and experiences of the Rwandan people are reanimated through art. This preservation of historical memory is crucial in challenging the erasure or distortion of the genocide, which can occur in the absence of such personal and collective narratives. Tadjo's narrative approach, which presents diverse perspectives and avoids oversimplification, encourages the reader to grapple with the complexities and moral ambiguities inherent in the genocide. This challenges the tendency to reduce such events to binary narratives of good versus evil, or perpetrator versus victim. By embracing the nuances and contradictions, the novel invites the reader to engage in a more thoughtful and critical discourse surrounding the genocide. The act of bearing witness and preserving the testimonies of survivors in Tadjo's work contribute to the collective healing and reconciliation process in post-genocide Rwanda. The *Shadow of Imana* creates a platform for the voices of the victims and survivors to be heard, the novel helps to validate their experiences and promote a more inclusive and holistic understanding of the genocide. This, in turn, can shape the public discourse and collective memory, fostering a more empathetic and restorative approach to the aftermath of the genocide. Veronique Tadjo's artistic representations in "The Shadow of Imana" have the potential to significantly shape public memory and discourse surrounding the Rwandan genocide. By challenging dominant narratives, fostering empathy, preserving historical memory, and embracing complexity, the novel contributes to a more nuanced and impactful understanding of this traumatic event.

CONCLUSION

Postcolonial literary testimony of trauma serves as a syncretic reference to the enduring impact of colonial legacies, particularly in relation to the tragic events of the Rwandan genocide. Tadjo’s text bears witness to the traumatic experiences of individuals and communities affected by colonialism and its aftermath in Rwanda. Through various forms of testimonies, serves as a means of preserving memory and acknowledging the often overlooked or silenced narratives of Rwandans impacted by colonial violence. Tadjo’s *The Shadow of Imans: Travel in the Heart of Rwanda* in Bearing Witness to Trauma through Literature also functions as a form of memorialization. By documenting and recounting the experiences of

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trauma, literary testimonies serve to honour the memories of those affected and ensure that their stories are not forgotten. It suggests that the trauma and violence experienced during the colonial era have had a lasting impact, contributing to the conditions that led to the genocide in Rwanda. This study also demonstrates that a film documentary is a vector for the birth of creative literary art for those who have the courage to confront the memory that is presented to them. Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imans: Travel in the Heart of Rwanda* is a framework for memorialising and witnessing trauma in the continued legacies of colonialism. Art participates in witnessing and memorialising through the reframing of memorial sights and animating human experiences through emotions and vivid descriptions of genocide carnage. This study underscores the active participation of postcolonial art in shaping trauma narratives and emphasises colonialism's culpability as a chief contributor to the Rwanda genocide. This study illuminates the intricate connections between art, trauma, and colonial legacies.

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