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Media Representations of Perpetrators: Case Study of South Africa's Eugene de Kock

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Learning to Assess the Masses: Eugene de Kock in the Global Media

When I was assigned the final paper for Media, Violence, and Transitional Justice I was overwhelmed with the task of finding all the information I needed to thoroughly answer my research question. I wanted to examine on the media portrayal of perpetrators of atrocities and I worried about how to find enough information to make complete, accurate conclusions about media portrayal and how those portrayals impact public opinion. My original idea was to compare several transitional justice situations, but after researching scholarly articles through databases, I narrowed my paper to the portrayal of one perpetrator. Though I thought I would find all the information I needed in academic articles and books, I found they did not focus on my interest area. I needed to access the media sources directly to truly answer my research question, but was overwhelmed with where to look.

My paper focused on how the media portrayal of Eugene de Kock influenced public opinion and hence the transitional justice process in post-apartheid South Africa. As Commander of the Vlakplaas death squad from 1982 to 1993, Eugene de Kock was one of the most notorious perpetrators of the South African apartheid. His 1996 trial was well publicized in the South African and international media. In order to determine the media, public opinion and implications surrounding the trial, I began my research journey with library and link+ books and library databases to find scholarly articles related to Eugene de Kock, media portrayal of perpetrators, and the transitional justice process. I had learned how to use library databases in ID1 and enjoyed discovering how to dig both wider and deeper into academic literature by accessing more journals and databases. I found a wealth of international journals, transitional justice or media journals, and scholarly literature that constantly led me down new avenues, networks as I refined my research and started to make conclusions. I learned how slight word changes can significantly alter my search results; the time I took to clarify my search terms both helped me find a greater number and more relevant articles, but also helped me define my research paper and outline the main points I was exploring and analyzing. I did realize, however, that an important aspect of research involves knowing where to look. Had I not looked at one more specific journal or used one slight wording change, my research paper may not have been as complete or come to different conclusions. The library databases

and books provided me with the background to understand the dynamics of a transitional justice process and the South Africa's specific situation.

I was still far from assessing the media's impact on the transitional justice process. I had not found deep scholarship on the actual media accounts surrounding de Kock or his trial. To fully assess public opinion and analyze links between media portrayal and transitional justice I needed to read and watch media accounts. Looking on the Internet for South African newspaper articles from the apartheid era or even the 1990's and early 2000's did not lead to any substantial research. South African news sites often only had archived articles from 2009 to the present. I was worried that I would not be able to fully analyze my research question given the lack of knowledge I had about the actual media portrayal of de Kock. I met with Dani Cook, the media studies librarian as a last attempt to find resources. She taught me about newspaper databases, primarily International Newsstand. I was amazed at the valuable access I now had to media through history and countries. Dani not only taught me how to search for media from different countries, publication dates, and document types, but also took time to send me articles related to my topic. Through International Newsstand, I read South African and international news accounts related to de Kock's trial and in the years after. I analyzed the language, the general opinion presented, and connected it to the transitional justice process. Meeting with Dani was a turning point for my research paper and my general research skills. I fully appreciate the resources the library allows students and most importantly value work the Claremont Colleges librarians do to aid students with their research.

In addition to finding sources and improving my research skills, I realized the importance of media digitization. I had to rely more on scholarly articles and books than expected because media sources on de Kock were not as widely available in electronic form as I had assumed. Digitization of media sources gives scholars and the public access to different times in history, different parts of the world, and different perspectives on events. I read more New York Times articles or British news sources regarding de Kock because in general the South African sources were not as in depth or numerous. The question of who decides to legitimize and then preserve history came to the forefront of my reflection on my research process. More attention and, essentially, resources have

been placed in digitizing New York Times articles than local media; through this selection process we lose many valuable stories and perspectives. Digitization of sources gives us greater access to reading, hearing, and comparing stories and voices from across time and place. However, because digitization is incomplete, I worried I may be ignoring those perspectives that are not immediately available on the Internet. To resolve this, I would have For a longer project, I would have ideally gone to South Africa to explore physical newspaper archives and the Internet resources in the country. However, the depth and breadth of the Claremont Colleges library provided me with greater access to periods of history and to understanding the views of the people than I would have on my own. I am greatly indebted to the library and to the work of others to digitize, categorize, and publicize mass media and scholarly work.

**Media Representations of Perpetrators:
Case Study of South Africa's Eugene de Kock**

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I. Introduction

“Journalists mediate conflict whether they intend to or not” (Baumann and Siebert, 1997: 5). Journalists not only have the power to witness conflict in media, but also frame conflict in ways that change responses. Witnessing is a concept used to describe how the public sees an event, atrocity, or story and how we then use the information to draw conclusions and act. Much attention has been placed on the importance of witnessing and hearing the victims’ stories to prevent or stop atrocity and to promote healing and reconciliation in a post conflict setting. Media representation of victims is essential to transitional justice. However, there is less attention on the media representations of perpetrators of violence. In the same way that representations of victims influence what the public knows about and thinks about a situation, media representation of perpetrators is highly influential in framing the events, placing responsibility, and building, or blocking, spaces for understanding, action, and reconciliation. Scholars and media personnel debate about the value and methods of showing perpetrators and how the public should be able to witness perpetrators’ actions and beliefs. . To facilitate working upon the past, media need to carefully choose the discourses presented and include context of the past. Media representations of perpetrators are essential for transitional justice if done comprehensively.

Taking caution from other post-conflict regions such as former Yugoslavia, where some war criminals are presented as nationalistic heroes (Volcic and Erjavic, 2009: 25), and Cambodia, where the government wishes to suppress dialogue around responsibility and reconciliation in the 1975-79 genocide (Colm, 1994), we see that neither sensationalizing perpetrators nor ignoring them fosters transitional justice. The question is not whether perpetrators should be shown but how should they be shown and how much time should they be given.

This paper will examine the media surrounding the South Africa TRC and specifically at the media portrayal of Colonel Eugene de Kock, commander of Vlakplaas from 1982 to 1993. Vlakplaas was a death squad unit in the South African police; it's members, including de Kock, were responsible for torturing and killing many anti-apartheid activists (Bauer, 2014). De Kock was arrested in 1994 and in 1996 was sentenced to 212 years in prison plus two life sentences for his role in apartheid terror and the murders he committed (Flanagan and Ajam, 2014). His actions in the Vlakplaas, his trial, his requests for forgiveness, and his requests for parole have been covered extensively in media to the current day. Surprisingly, some of his victims' widows have publicly forgiven de Kock, fueling discussion about his morality, actions, and our own morality, fueling debates about evil and forgiveness. These discussions play out in news media, books, memoirs, and movies. This paper will explore how different media around de Kock helped or hindered transitional justice. De Kock will not be the last perpetrator of atrocity we need to witness; analysis of the representations around him can then therefore help guide the conversation around future perpetrators and reconciliation processes. This paper will look the portrayal of de Kock in South African and

international news media and in two South African books, A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State, published in 1998, and A Human Being Died That Night, published in 2003. When put together these seemingly conflicting representations are facilitate transitional justice by making the public see the apartheid in the macro and micro levels and work upon the past.

II. South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been commended for the amount of public participation in the truth seeking process and the media coverage bringing the TRC into all South Africans' homes (Kerr and Mobekk, 2007: 148). The TRC heard testimony from 1996 to 1998 (Kerr and Mobekk, 2007: 148). It was composed of three committees: a Human Rights Violations Committee to hear victim testimony of their abuses and experiences, a Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee to guide victims towards constructive paths to move forward, and an Amnesty Committee where perpetrators applied for amnesty in exchange for testimony of their actions during apartheid (South Africa History Online). The TRC depended on media to achieve its goals of public awareness, understanding, and reconciliation. The TRC on the front pages of newspapers, international news covered the proceedings, and TV and radio channels devoted several hours every day to TRC coverage (Verdoolaege, 2005: 186). Media determined which portions of the proceedings were broadcasted and how they were framed. The TRC could be one of the mediatized events to ever take place in Africa and one of the most mediatized events worldwide in the 1990s (Verdoolaege 2005: 180). It is therefore important to look at how different media impacted the national reconciliation processes.

Literature Review

Scholarship on the treatment and portrayal of perpetrators is rooted in the trials of Nazi officials after the Holocaust. One of the main debates is whether it is useful to try to explain their motives, to try to fathom how genocide could occur. This idea of attempting to understand criminals often makes the public extremely uncomfortable as it pulls at our moral compass. Emil Fackenheim, a German-Jewish theologian, speaks to the conflicting desires to at once understand perpetrators yet never understand; he calls it a “ ‘double move’ ... to seek an explanation but also to resist explanation” (Rosenbaum, 1998: 395). Explorations of Hitler are multitude and varied. Some argue about his motives (Rosenbaum, 1998: xiv), others focus on his childhood (Rosenbaum, 1998: xviii), while some others philosophize about the definition of evil (Rosenbaum, 1998: xxi). Most return in some way to exploring his personal responsibility; they ask if he can still be considered evil if he believed what he did was right. H. R. Trevor Roper argues that though Hitler’s deeds were evil, his mind was deluded and the man cannot therefore be called evil (Rosenbaum, 1998: xxii). On the other hand, philosopher Berel Lang says that Hitler was aware of his criminality (Rosenbaum, 1998: xiii), while historian Yehuda Bauer goes further to say, “Hitler was insane. He is evil. What I would call near-ultimate evil” (Rosenbaum, 1998: 280).

Explanations that place blame on all Germans are perhaps more contentious. These explanations explore the structures that made genocide possible and argue that evil individuals themselves cannot pull off genocide without bystanders (Rosenbaum, 1998: 339). These explanations take some of the blame off prominent individuals and make the

whole world guilty for watching genocide occur, an idea that makes citizens uncomfortable. Media, perpetrators, and survivors have not properly addressed this collective guilt and so it filters into German society today, raising questions about how long historical guilt lasts and to what extent individuals are responsible for their society (Green, 2014). These different portrayals expose different aspects of the Holocaust, leading to different amounts of justice.

An alternative to trying to get into perpetrators' heads is to focus solely victims' accounts. Holocaust victim accounts have been well documented and victims acknowledged, aiding the healing process. However, this solely victim-centered approach alone does not facilitate true justice. Two of the prominent trials of Nazi officials took different approaches to who was represented; in these cases, both were seen as problematic, suggesting a compromise between the two is most useful to legal and transitional justice. The Nuremberg trials from 1945-1949 used a perpetrator-centered approach, displaying perpetrator testimony over that of victims. The trials have been criticized for taking the focus away from victims; Cole, for instance, argued that not removing victims' voices marginalized victims and limited the ability to understand the effects of the Holocaust (Cole, 2007: 169).

On the other hand, the Eichmann trial in 1961 used a more victim-centered approach where the trial was based on the suffering of the Jewish people and not on Eichmann's actions specifically (Arendt, 1963: 6). While this approach does give victims a voice, it constructed Eichmann as a representation of the guilt of all Holocaust perpetrators. He was not innocent, yet he was also not the only responsible individual as he was portrayed. Justice was then weakened as Eichmann was made into something

greater than he was and other perpetrators were allowed to go free. However, as one of the main organizers of the Holocaust, Eichmann had to be held responsible for any sense of justice to be established.

More than the question of showing perpetrators is how to show them. An important consideration is demonization versus humanization discourses. Humanizing perpetrators is crucial for transitional justice (Price, 2001: 211). One cannot reconcile with monster or with an abstract “system” but one can reconcile, or at least come to understand, a human. A danger in portraying perpetrators as demons or ignoring them all together perpetuates the cycles of violence and the “othering” discourses that allowed the atrocities to occur. This dehumanization follows the same ideas perpetrators used to justify atrocity. Clark points to instances in history where perpetrators dehumanized their “enemies” before committing crimes:

“The Nazis, for example, branded the Jews as, inter alia, “parasites,” “vermin” and “demons”; in Pol Pot’s Cambodia, those identified by the Khmer Rouge as “enemies of the people” were labeled as “sub-people” (anoupracheachon); during the genocide in Rwanda, Tutsis were denounced as “cockroaches” (inyenzi); and the late Serbian paramilitary leader Željko Raznjatović, more commonly known as Arkan, referred to the Bosnian Muslims as “wild dogs” (Clark, 2009: 424)

Post-conflict, if media portrays perpetrators allows as “others,” as incomprehensible monsters, this creates often-insurmountable barriers to understanding and reconciliation. Only through humanizing and listening can we work upon the past.

Eugene de Kock: “Prime Evil”

These dynamics play out in the media representations of Eugene de Kock. As in portrayals of Hitler, “an enormous amount has been written but little has been settled,” (Rosenbaum, 1998: xii). Foremost to creating de Kock’s character is his nickname, “Prime Evil.” The origin of the name is unclear even to de Kock; it either first came about from the press or from one of his colleagues in Vlakplaas (SABC). Whatever the origin, news media and academics latched onto this name, often introducing him by saying, “the man who was called the “Prime Evil by his colleagues,” (SABC, 1996) “a psychopath known to the public as “Prime Evil,” (Barrow, 1996) or “the man dubbed ‘Prime Evil’” (Mphaki, 2012). This naming immediately frames the discourse and public perception around de Kock. He had, “not just given apartheid’s murderous evil a name. He had *become* that evil” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003: 6). De Kock become more than the human doing atrocious actions but came to be a bigger force, the force of all apartheid’s atrocities. Holding individuals accountable is essential for transitional justice. De Kock was morally and physically responsible for many deaths and countless instances of trauma; this is undeniable and inexcusable. However, making one perpetrator responsible for all atrocities allows others to go free, leaving all survivors feeling that justice was not served and weakens the trust citizens have in the justice system. This is a theme in criticism of the TRC; critics argue that the TRC placed too much emphasis on individual responsibility, thus obscuring the systemic apartheid and other peripheral actors that made wide-scale oppression, possible. As seen from the repetition of atrocity and continuation of tensions in post-conflict societies, focusing on several responsible

individuals while ignoring the context and structures of atrocity does not lead to enduring peace. In South Africa, these representations lead to an individualistic view of apartheid. A 2001 survey found that, “43% of whites and 41% of Africans believed that ‘Abuses of apartheid were due to evil individuals, not state institutions themselves.’ And only 28% and 35%, respectively, thought this was false” (Brankovic, 2013: 8). Representing de Kock in a sensational manner, as a demon killer, removes the responsibility from the general public, government officials, and others to reflect on their role in apartheid (Schalkwyk, 2004: 13).

The media’s sensitization and demonization of de Kock affected how the public perceived him. Though he was a leader in death squads and responsible for thousands of death, naming de Kock “Prime Evil” elevated him to the level of a monster. In current debates about whether or not to grant de Kock parole, some commenters under the articles expressed their intense hate for de Kock and the actions he aided and performed. For instance, under a November 20, 2014 article in *Independent* “d-dawg” commented, “This guy should rot in jail his the worst type, washing feet does not redeem you,” (IOL, 2014) referring to de Kock’s requests for forgiveness. Journalist Jacques Pauw said that for a long time he, “resented no one more than Eugene de Kock and it gave me an immense satisfaction when he was condemned to life behind bars” (Pauw, 2006: 149). These perceptions confirm the idea some white had that the TRC was a conducting a witch-hunt against the Afrikaner minority (Hein, 1998). Framing de Kock as “Prime Evil” furthered hate rather than promoting reconciliation.

A Long Night's Damage: De Kock's Voice on Paper

Moving away from the sensationalism of news clips, perpetrators can be also be represented through media such as books, biographies, and memoirs. Memoirs written by perpetrators or based on perpetrator's lives and inner feelings can be uncomfortable for survivors and the general public. Here the portrayal is more intimate than a statement in a news story. This leads the reader and writer to wonder if perpetrators deserve the platform to tell their perspective. Should we allow perpetrators to proclaim their innocence or justify their actions? Just putting their perspective on paper forces the writer and the reader to question if atrocity is ever morally excusable, putting us in an uncomfortable position of balancing humanity, humaneness, morality, and personal stake. Readers have to also confront their propensity to sensationalism and perhaps twisted desire to witness the story of a killer (Suliman, 2009: 3). These questions are initially raised in Eugene de Kock's 1998 memoir, as told to journalist Jeremy Gordin, A Long Night's Damage: Working for the Apartheid State. While there is an initial fear that de Kock may try to justify himself and lessen his crimes, the book is commendable in that Gordin frames de Kock's actions and beliefs in a neutral, unemotional manner. He emphasized that the book was, "not as a sign of agreement with his views or crimes, not as a mark of any abiding interest in cruelty or sensation, and not for the sake of indulging in ... moral indignation" (Earl-Taylor, 2000: 76). The idea was to tell a story without making excuses. Another important aspect of the book is that it gives context to de Kock's actions, complicating the view that "Prime Evil" was solely responsible for atrocity. He is allowed to talk about his work but also name his bosses, P.W. Botha and F.W. de Klerk, from whom he took orders (Brauner, 1999). This is useful to

understanding the mechanisms of apartheid and where the information in news reports, trials, and personal experiences fall in this machine. Journalists Hein Marais described the book as, “valuable supplement to the truth commission process, which has failed to pierce the structural and organizational folds of “apartheid’s savagery,” but warns against its tendency to promote a view of people like De Kock as “mere instruments... deprived of individual choice” (Coetzee, 1999: 128). These nuances are important to recognize in order to establish justice for all impacted by apartheid. Additionally, Gordin did not profit from any sensationalism of showing perpetrators; he donated all profit from the book to a trust fund for the victims of apartheid and their families. In this way, Gordin is emphasizing that this book fits into transitional justice and reconciliation by working to expose the past, facilitate understanding, and to promote the future.

This less sensationalized portrayal is useful, as it allows the public to read the accounts and make their own conclusions. Some readers may not want to sympathize, but rather just understand what happened. As Jann Turner, an apartheid survivor discussed, “For me this process is less about forgiveness than it’s about understanding. It’s not that I don’t want to forgive, it’s that I can’t actually locate forgiveness in me for this. I’d like to understand what happened and I think when I do understand what happened, I’ll at least be able to accept that the assassin and I are going to go forward and live in this country and get on with our lives” (Bird and Garda, 1997: 342). This book contributes to a solid understanding of one man’s actions and how apartheid happened. This comprehensive portrayal of apartheid helps survivors work upon the past.

Forgiving a Remorseful Man

As South Africa continues its reconciliation process, media continues to make sure South Africans and the world are witness to de Kock after his conviction and time in prison. This reflects the continued focus on reconciliation and the treatment of perpetrators and victims in South Africa even after the TRC ended. One of the most important representations to have emerged, one that changed the conversation surrounding de Kock, is psychologist Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's book [A Human Being Died That Night](#), published in 2003. The book draws from Gobodo-Madikizela's interviews with de Kock in prison. Gobodo-Madikizela works to portray a man who is remorseful, contemplative, and above all human. De Kock is currently being reviewed for parole after serving about 20 years of his 212 year sentence; Gobodo-Madikizela's book fits into this conversation of trying to decide how to view de Kock, how the world sees his guilt, and the fairness of keeping him jail. Her message is one of empathy and reconciliation through humanization. She takes issue with the earlier media representation of de Kock as "Prime Evil", showing him instead as human that was an individual in a system. Media clips from trials of de Kock explaining his actions in apartheid and short news articles calling him "Prime Evil" are not able to provide the necessary context to understand apartheid. In the book, Gobodo-Madikizela does not solely use de Kock's voice from their interviews; she also includes vital historical events, her own experiences interviewing de Kock, and interviews with other survivors. These bring de Kock's voice into the time period and put him into history rather than holding him at a distance.

The author humanizes herself and de Kock throughout the book. The reader first notices the author's apprehension as she drives to meet de Kock for the first time: "As I drove the last half-mile of the road that leads to South Africa's notorious Pretoria Central Prison, I felt a dread unlike any I had felt in my earlier visits," (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003: 1). The reader sees Gobodo-Madikizela is human with the same moral dilemmas the reader may have. This conversational tone and story telling continue throughout the book, drawing the reader in as she discusses de Kock, the moral dilemmas surrounding de Kock and forgiveness, and the stories of apartheid. The tone of the book is important; by drawing the reader in personally, it avoids sensationalism and instead tries to make the reader think for him or herself. She works hard to humanize de Kock, showing his emotions as de Kock tells his stories and answers Gobodo-Madikizela's questions. The first time the reader meets him, we see that the public currently has more power than he does: "His feet were chained to a metal stool bolted to the floor. He smiled politely, making eye contact from behind his black-rimmed thick lenses. I could hear the clattering of his leg chains as he awkwardly steadied himself" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003: 5) and see a polite man, acting in a way that fits societal norms: "extending his hand to greet me. He spoke in a heavy Afrikaans accent: 'It's a pleasure to meet you,'" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003: 5). Gobodo-Madikizela intentionally avoids "othering" de Kock when describing his actions by using second person in key places: "In the language of apartheid, de Kock explained to me, this kind of killing was referred to as "pre-emptive killing." You move in to kill rather than arrest your victims before than can cause any destruction" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003, 31). She attempts to facilitate understanding by giving the reader agency in the story.

Finally, Gobodo-Madikizela asks the moral questions around forgiving perpetrators, the same questions with which the reader is struggling. She explains why forgiveness is uncomfortable, recognizes it is difficult for her, but also explains why it is essential for reconciliation, essential for working upon the past. She gently explores both sides of these moral issues and draws her own conclusions, but in a way the readers still have room to in turn decide the right path for themselves. The conversations about forgiveness help to change the conversation around perpetrators and require the world to see them as human and understand each case:

“There are many people who find it hard to embrace the idea of forgiveness. And it is easy to see why. In order to maintain some sort of moral compass, to hold on to some sort of clear distinction between what is depraved but conceivable and what is simply off the scale of human acceptability, we feel an inward emotional and mental pressure *not* to forgive, since forgiveness can signal acceptability, and acceptability signals some amount, however small, of condoning. There is a desire to draw a line and say, “Where you have been, I cannot follow you. Your actions can never be regarded as part of what it means to be human.” Yet not to forgive means closing the door to the possibility of transformation” (103).

A Human Being Died That Night was well-received by reviewers. It became a best seller in South Africa, showing the power it had as a thought provoking, interesting book (The Market, 2014). Some reviewed the book positively and found it compelling and stimulating. Kris McCracken reviewed it as, “a persuasive argument for the act of forgiveness to triumph over that of vengeance. Gobodo-Madikizela does a great job here, even when confronted by the very depths of man's inhumanity to man. Recommended”

(McCracken, 2014). This sentiment was common in reviews and seen in the widespread impact of the book. Others reviewers focus on the unfairness of leaving de Kock in jail when other leaders of apartheid have been pardoned, a complication Gobodo-Madikizela notes in her book: “Personally I think pardoning Eugene De Kock would be a great step. He was nothing but the product of his time, political system. Neither he nor many people like Vlok were apartheid. Hertzog etc are in their graves but De Kock who shed light on the death of a human being is in in jail” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2010). Here, the media representation opened a space for the public to grapple with the idea of justice; how is justice served?

However, not everyone agreed with Gobodo-Madikizela’s ideas and the debate continues as de Kock is being reviewed for parole. Some find the idea of forgiveness “problematic” and find the argument for compassion and empathy does not align with their values and assessment of apartheid: “There are many flaws in Professor Gobodo-Madikizela's argument for the pardon and release of De Kock, and I find her arguments deeply deeply problematic. To set free a notorious murderer requires very good reasons - and I don't see them here” (Mail and Guardian, 2010). Another commenter addresses the fact that while de Kock may now be remorseful, he still committed horrible atrocities: “What was so shocking was the systematic and relentless 'perfecting' of an abhorrent system. De Kock was central in this process. Everybody has an inherent 'plumb' that pricks his conscience between right and wrong. If de Kock could not grasp the utter despicableness of his crimes AT THE TIME OF DOING IT, he exhibits an extreme case of psychopathic indifference. Maybe his parents and teachers need to be incarcerated with him!” (Mail and Guardian, 2010). This sentiment is valid and fuels the media and

public debate about justice, reconciliation, and the future. We see that past experiences and past representations of de Kock make South Africans uncomfortable with the idea of forgiveness. Even given the ideas presented by scholars about the value of forgiveness, forgiveness is still not possible for some. De Kock committed crimes, atrocities, and as he should be, he will always be guilty for causing pain and suffering to thousands.

Conclusion:

Media portrayals of perpetrators have wide reaching implications. They differ in the amount of context, or lack of context, provided, the tone surrounding the subject, humanization or demonization, the amount of time given to perpetrators' explanations and victims' explanations, and if perpetrators are even shown at all. In the case of South Africa, perpetrators were purposely given a place to speak in the Amnesty Committee and hence in media. Media closely followed these testimonies and these individuals, framing South Africans' perceptions. Eugene de Kock's portrayals range over time, medium, and content. Taken alone, one trial testimony, one news article outlining "Prime Evil," or one book showing de Kock as a tortured man, would not be useful to transitional justice as they provide limited perspectives to the complex issues of perpetrators, responsibility, and forgiveness. As a whole, however, these media give a comprehensive look at a man deeply responsible for many crimes, subsidiary to others, and seemingly remorseful for all his actions.

De Kock's is a unique case in the amount of media coverage he has and is receiving. This keeps the debate about apartheid and race relations in the South African public eye, promoting important conversations about reconciliation. Moreover, de Kock expressed more remorse than most other perpetrators and has been forgiven by some of

his victims (Pauw, 2006: 149). Not all perpetrators feel their cause and actions were wrong. While it is easy to not forgive someone who does not feel remorse, it is more difficult to decide how to reconcile with someone who acknowledges and regrets his atrocious actions. This complicates the moral dilemmas about forgiveness and the different representations that can surround de Kock. Finally, the important representations of de Kock have come from South Africans, giving them greater legitimacy and power. The local will to represent perpetrators is not present or possible in all post-conflict societies, causing outsiders to attempt to make representations that are often limited and problematic. South Africa avoided these issues with its strong local media.

While this example is unique, it can still serve as an important model for other regions dealing with their own traumatic pasts. For instance, in Cambodia working upon the past has been sidelined as officials prefer to “dig a hole and bury the past” (Seper, 1999) rather than exposing it and working for justice and reconciliation. Between 1975 and 1979, the Khmer Rouge attempted to establish a Marxist government and killed about two million people it deemed enemies of the state. The effects of the genocide continue to the present, but the official strategy for peace is to promote reconciliation by suppressing the past rather than establishing justice and accountability (Um, 2014). This is problematic as there has been media suppression to avoid portraying the events and perpetrators (Colm, 1994), leaving survivors unacknowledged and justice unfulfilled. Most Cambodians want to understand what happened during the genocide, showing the need for truth seeking processes and media accounts of actions and motivations (Pham et al, 2011: 5).

After about 30 years, a tribunal court was been established in Cambodia and tried five top Khmer Rouge officials. These trials were beneficial to establishing responsibility, justice, and dialogue around the genocide, but were limited in scope. After the trial Kaing Guek Eav or “Duch,” a Khmer Rouge official, more than half of survey respondents had forgiven him, an attitude Gobodo-Madikizela sees as useful to transitional justice. That said, about half of respondents also felt that Duch was given too much time to explain himself (Pham et al, 2011: 3). Following the model of South Africa, these problems in transitional justice should be solved not by giving Duch less time to speak, but by expanding the media in which he speaks, in which victims speak, and in which historical context for genocide is shown. Moreover, the tribunal is only charging five top Khmer Rouge leaders, removing responsibility from local Khmer Rouge leaders (Chan, 2006: 3). Portraying these local leaders is especially important in Cambodia, as many are still living integrated into towns with survivors, creating local tensions. Bearing witness to all perspectives in the genocide will help Cambodia to work upon the past and build a more peaceful society where Khmer Rouge still live in society, but are held accountable for past atrocities. Media has a responsibility to facilitate comprehensive, fair witnessing in order to promote justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and finally peace. While it is not easy or quick, as South Africa shows, it is possible and, more significantly, essential to effective transitional justice.

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