

A Linguistic Reading of the Metaphor of Genocide in *Hotel Rwanda*

Macaulay Mowarin

Summary

Historical films on Africa are few and far between when viewed against the backdrop of many social upheavals that plague the continent. One such film is *Hotel Rwanda*, based on the Rwanda genocide of 1994. The film is set in Sabana Hôtel des Milles Collines. The article focuses on the theme of genocidal acts that include amongst others violent destruction of lives and property, and systematic rape of Tutsi females by Hutu extremists. The theoretical underpinning of this study is Systemic Functional Grammar as espoused by M.A.K. Halliday (2004). The article examines how the producer of *Hotel Rwanda* manipulates the resources of language at the levels of syntax and lexis to highlight the distortions created in Rwanda by the genocide. It also discusses how rhetorical devices are employed to illuminate the large number of deaths, rapes and other abnormalities in Rwanda. The article concludes that genocidal acts should be prevented in Africa due to their deleterious effects.

Opsomming

Historiese rolprente oor Afrika is dun gesaai wanneer die menige sosiale euwels wat die vasteland beleef in ag geneem word. Een sodanige rolprent is *Hotel Rwanda* wat op die menseslagting in Rwanda in 1994 gebaseer is. Die rolprent speel hom af in die Sabana Hôtel des Milles Collines. Die artikel fokus op dae van menseslagting wat die moedswillige vernietiging van lewe en eiendom, en die stelselmatige verkragting van Tutsi-vrouens deur Hutu-ekstremiste insluit. Die teoretiese raamwerk van hierdie studie is gebaseer op Sistemiese Funksionele Grammatika wat deur M.A.K. Halliday (2004) voorgestaan word. Die artikel ondersoek hoe die vervaardiger van *Hotel Rwanda* die taalhelpbronne ten opsigte van sintaksis en woordeskat manipuleer om die verwringing wat deur die menseslagting in Rwanda geskep is, te beklemtoon. Daar is ook 'n bespreking oor hoe retoriese middels aangewend word om die groot getal sterftes, verkrachtings en ander onreëlmatighede in Rwanda te belig. Die artikel kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat dae van menseslagting, weens hulle verwoestende uitwerking, in Afrika vermy moet word.

Introduction

The biggest genocide that the world has seen since World War II took place in Rwanda from April to June 1994 (Prunier 1995). Harff (2003) observes that as many as 22 million non-combatants have been killed in nearly 50 genocides and politicides and that genocides and politicides are usually violent and one-sided unlike civil wars.

Despite historical incidents that could provide the film producer with raw materials, no indigenous film-maker has been able to creatively transform these into film. The foreign film producer, noticing this, has taken advantage of African tales that tell us what is true or not true of Africans in Africa.

Ibagere (2007/2008: 10) notes that “[h]istory films are quite few. One wonders why Nigerian film makers have chosen not to dwell on such relevant areas like the Nigeria civil war which offers an inexhaustible range of creative stories”. Even Shaka contends that

[f]or a film to qualify as an African film, the film maker must be African by birth or naturalisation ... its primary audience must be African, and this must be inscribed in the very conception and textual position of the broad range of African subjects, identities and social experiences and its director must be an African.

(Shaka 2004: 28)

The ability of a film producer to commit to film a known historical event of national and international concern like civil war, genocide, natural disaster and economic crisis is known as the recreation of history through film. Some historical films based on events in Africa include the films based on the apartheid policy in South Africa: *Cry Freedom* (1987), *Sarafina* (1992) and *Tears of the Sun* (2003). *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) is based on the tyrannical reign of the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. Two films based on the historical antecedent of the Rwandan genocide of 1994 are *Sometimes in April* and *Hotel Rwanda*.

This article is a linguistic reading of the harrowing experience of Rwandans during the genocide as espoused in *Hotel Rwanda*. It analyses how lexical choices and syntactic selections were manipulated in radio propaganda to inflame the killings to genocidal proportions. It also discusses how Paul Rasesabagina, the protagonist of the film, manipulates language to ensure the survival of his family and that of the hotel’s employees and refugees in Sabana Hôtel des Milles Collines. Finally, it discusses how language is used to illuminate the perception of Rwandans as savage by the Western powers and why they refused to stop the genocide.

The objectives of the article are as follows: first, it discusses how language and figurative expressions are manipulated to chronicle the destruction of lives and property during the chequered period in Rwandan history in the film. Second, it discusses how propaganda is used to mobilise the

interahamwe militia, Hutu Power, and most Hutus to participate actively in the genocide. Finally, the article gives insight into how *Hotel Rwanda* can help prevent genocide in Africa in future.

Methodology

This research article employed two methodologies: the literary and the historical. The literary methodology focuses on gathering data from printed materials like textbooks, journals and the internet, while the historical methodology focuses on investigating documents, sources like books and artefacts which constitute records of the past of films in order to better understand the present.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is Systemic Functional Grammar as espoused by M.A.K. Halliday (2004). This linguistic model has been adjudged as the ideal model for literary stylistic analysis.

There are many interpretations of literary stylistics; however, the one that is germane to this study is defined by Enkvist et al. (1972: 27) as “an autonomous discipline which draws freely and eclectically on methods from both linguistics and literary study”. Other subtypes of stylistics that have evolved in the past five decades include linguistic stylistics, socio-stylistics, computational stylistics, critical stylistics, and literary stylistics. A literary stylistic study of a text is objective in the sense that the evaluations of the text are not made until all the linguistic features have been studied, interpreted and evaluated. In this literary stylistic study, attention will focus on how the producer of *Hotel Rwanda* manipulates diction, syntactic selection and rhetorical devices to foreground the themes of the historical film.

Literature Review

This section of the article undertakes a literature review of published works on the Rwandan genocide and on film. Film is now one of the most important art forms for entertainment and instruction about human behaviour, history, science and various other subjects. According to an online service (cinemarolling: online), the history of film dates back to the 1890s and the pioneers of film are Thomas Edison and the Lumere brothers. The Technicolor System was introduced in the 1960s, and this brought about the production of natural colour film. On certain occasions, historical events

constitute the raw materials of the film-maker. History is didactic in nature since it helps to avoid mistakes in future.

Rwanda is located in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. It covers an area of 26 338 km² and Kigali is its capital and largest city. Prunier (1995: 264) notes that “as at April 1994, the country’s population was 7 776 000. “The country is comprised of three ethnic groups; Hutu approximately 85%, Tutsi 14%, and Twa 1% (Prunier 1995). Prior to attainment of independence in 1962, Rwanda was a colony of Belgium. Although the Tutsis were the minority, the Belgians gave them all the leadership positions. It was the Belgians that created the idea that the Tutsi were a separate race, superior to the Hutu and non-indigenous to Rwanda. Prunier buttresses the above assertion thus:

The Hutu were described as short and thickset with a big head, a jovial expression, a wide nose and enormous lips while the Tutsi were described as very tall, very thin with a high brow, thin nose and fine lips with framing, beautiful shiny teeth.

(Prunier 1995: 6)

In reality, the difference between the Hutu and the Tutsi was a political rather than an ethnic one. They speak the same language, Kingarwanda, practise the same religion and they have been intermarrying for centuries. So, during the colonial period, Prunier (1995: 39) concludes, “a time bomb had been set and it was a question of when it would explode”.

After independence in 1962, the Belgians handed over power to the Hutu and the persecution of the Tutsi by the Hutu commenced soon after. Although there are many remote causes of the Rwandan genocide, the first immediate cause was the invasion of Rwanda in 1990 by the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels. Since this was the beginning of a well-planned invasion by the RPF forces based in Uganda, the invasion created panic in Rwanda. The goal of the invaders was to reach Kigali. By the end of 1990, Rwanda was in the midst of a guerrilla war. In response to the Tutsi invasion, the Hutu began the indiscriminate killing of the Tutsi. According to Andersen (2000: 460), “[t]hese events also marked the beginning of massacres of Tutsi in the country which escalated to genocidal proportions by April 1994”.

The fragmentation of the steadily weakening government of President Juvenal Habyarimana increased as he tried to implement a multiparty system of government. Adelman and Suhrke (1996: 23) describe the multiparty system as “a cloak behind which particular interests encouraged ethnic mobilisation and fed political fiefdoms which usurped the evil administration”.

It was the “Akazu”, the informal council that made preparations for mass killings by mobilising the *interahamwe*, “those who strike first”. The *interahamwe* militia was the youth wing of the ruling political party, the

National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), and the *impuzamugambi* militia was the paramilitary wing of the extremist party Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), made up of a coalition which became known as Hutu Power (Prunier 2005). The second immediate cause of the genocide was the assassination of President Habyarimana when his plane was shot down in Kigali on 6 April 1994. Harff (2003) opines that

[s]tate sponsored mass murders – genocides and politicides are perpetuated by state authorities to destroy certain groups in society but also because the violence is large scale and one sided for different definitions of genocide.
(Harff & Garr 1988; Krain 1997)

The militias erected road blocks, distributed weapons and systematically carried out killings of Tutsis immediately after the president's plane had been shot down in Kigali in April. The radio station Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines (RTL) was the official broadcast station of Hutu Power. The inflammatory statements broadcast by the station included the allegation that the Tutsis were involved in conspiracy and that the RPF wanted to seize power from the Hutu. Dehumanising language was also used in the broadcast as the Tutsis were referred to as *Inyenzi* or cockroaches.

Syntactic Choices

Under syntactic choices, the study will focus on how syntax helps to illuminate the subject matter of *Hotel Rwanda*. Most sentences in *Hotel Rwanda* are an admixture of paratactic and hypotactic structures. Sentence fragments, also known as psychological sentences, abound in the historical film *Hotel Rwanda* that begins with a radio broadcast by RTL.

The broadcast is made up of descriptive statements:

- (1) When people ask, my good listeners, “Why do you hate all the Tutsi?” I say: It is the history. The Tutsi were collaborators for the Belgian Colonialists. They stole our Hutu land. They wiped us. Now they have come back. These Tutsi rebels. They are cockroaches. They are murderers. Rwanda is a Hutu land. We are the majority. They are the minority of traitors and invaders. We will squash the infestation. We will wipe out the RPF rebels. This is RTL. Hutu Power radio. Watch your neighbours.

Kuperman says:

The *Inyenzi*, cockroaches in Rwanda were used by the Tutsi refugees who tried to take power in 1961 when they launched attacks in Uganda and Burundi and they earned the name for their propensity to return repeatedly at night despite attempts to stamp them out. The name carried disrespect when

used by the Hutu rebels in 1994. The name cockroach was adapted by the rebels themselves “as a symbol of their relentlessness”.

(Kuperman 2001: 7)

Out of the fifteen sentences in the broadcast, one is a question and thirteen are simple parataxis structures that are mainly descriptive statements. The parataxis structures are contrastive in nature and they highlight the differences between the Hutu who are described in the broadcast as “my good listeners” and the Tutsi who are demonised as “traitors and invaders”. This broadcast’s parataxis structure is of stylistic significance as the ideal language of propaganda. The parallel structures below, which are taken from the broadcast above, illuminate how RTLTM fans the ember of hatred between the Hutu and the Tutsi.

(2a) Tutsi:
They stole our Hutu land
They wiped us
They are cockroaches
They are murderers
They are a minority of traitors and invaders

(2b) Hutu:
Rwanda is Hutu land
We are the majority
We will squash the infestation
We will wipe out the RTF rebels

The horrendous announcement of hatred being pumped into the air through the purposeful repetition of syntactic structures reinforces and elaborates the theme of impending genocide.

The only imperative in the broadcast, “watch your neighbours”, also prepares the Hutu for armed confrontation with the Tutsi. The anaphora “They” and “We” contrast the two opposing groups. McNulty suggests great significance should be attached to this militarisation when he asserts that

Rwanda’s transformation in less than four years from a stable “hard state” to a “weapon state” and hence to a genocidal state would not have been possible had it not been for extremely sponsored utilization.

(McNully 2000: 107-108)

At the group level, the Verbal Words Groups “will squash” and “will wipe out” are meant to goad the Hutu extremists, the Hutu Power militia, into participating in the genocide.

A few days before the president’s plane was shot down RTLTM (Hutu Power Radio) further sowed the seed of mistrust between the Hutu and Tutsi with this imperative:

- (3) I have a message for our president:
Do not trust the Tutsi rebels
Do not shake a hand that will stab you.

The imperatives in parallel structures are meant to abort the multiparty government that President Habyarimana is trying to negotiate at Arusha, Tanzania. The negative markers goad the president into aborting the proposed agreement with the Tutsi rebels because the Hutu Power militia does not want to share power with the Tutsi rebels.

When the president died, the following statements were immediately issued:

- (4) Listen to me good people of Rwanda. Terrible news. Horrible news. Our great president has been murdered by the Tutsi cockroaches. They tricked him to sign their funny peace agreement. Then they shot his plane from the sky. We must cut the tall trees, cut the tall trees now.

So, the incident that immediately unleashed the genocide was the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana. Prunier succinctly describes the incident thus:

At 8.30 pm on April 6, 1994, President Juvenal Habyarimana was returning from a summit in Tanzania when a surface-to-air missile shot his plane out of the sky and all on board died. Within 24 hours after the crash, Hutu extremists had taken on the government and blamed the Tutsi for the assassination and began the slaughter.

(Prunier 2005: 108-109)

The sentence fragments “Terrible news”, “Horrible news”, are meant to psyche members of Hutu Power into action. The imperative “cut the tall tree now!” is also of stylistic significance because it is meant to spur the militia into genocidal acts. This battle cry by RTLM was also corroborated by Thomas, Paul Rusesabagina’s neighbour, who said he had been advised to flee the country because there is an impending pogrom: Thomas says:

- (5) I heard it from a reliable source.
He is an interahamwe. He is a friend.
There is a signal. It is “cut the tall trees”.

The signal is meant to symbolically distinguish the Hutu, who are human beings, from the Tutsi who are inanimate objects. The signal is a projection of the impending madness and mayhem that would soon envelop Rwanda in *Hotel Rwanda*. The signal also projects the extent to which the Tutsi have been dehumanised.

The Akazu’s opposition to the implementation of the Arusha Accords stemmed from their fear of losing power and privileges. Their opposition is

widely documented by evidence that can be found in the Human Rights Watch Report (<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/Geno-1-3-09.htm#p20284408>. 10 April 2005).

Simple parataxis statements are fragments that are also used to describe the massacre in *Hotel Rwanda*. When Fred, the leader of the white journalists from the West, sees the footage that Daghish, the cameraman, brought from Kigali city, he calls his boss, Fred, and states:

- (6) David: I've got incredible footage.
It's a massacre. Dead bodies are everywhere.

The simple parataxis statement and sentence fragments stylistically highlight the harrowing nature of the genocide.

Daghish employs an admixture of hypotactic structures and sentence fragments to highlight the unwillingness of the Europeans and Americans to stop the genocide when Paul Rusesabagina states that the footage will spur them into action.

- (7) Daghish: I think if people see this footage, they'll say oh my God, it is terrible, and they will go on and eat their dinners.

The events which took place between April and July 1994 certainly fit into Horowitz's (1977: 23) understanding of genocide as "the wholesale massacre of people in an attempt by those who rule to achieve total elimination of a subject people".

Thompson (2007) observes that during the months of the genocide, Rwanda was qualified by the *New York Times* as a "small, poor, and globally insignificant country that was in an uncontrollable spasm of lawlessness and terror". This was why the West did not come to the Rwandans' rescue. As Daghish and the other Europeans are being evacuated, his Tutsi lady friend pleads with him:

- (8) Please Jack please
They'll put me on the street (SPCA)
They'll chop me (SPC)

The parallel structures above describe the fate that will befall her once she is forced out of the hotel. The simple verbal word group (VWG) "chop" stylistically foregrounds how the Hutu Power militia "chop" people with machetes.

The negative attitude of the West towards stopping the genocide in Rwanda is stylistically foregrounded through the use of parallel structures by Col. Oliver of the UN force thus:

- 9(a) Paul: Who is we?
Col: The West. All the superpowers
Col: The West. All the superpowers
- (b) They think: You're dirt
You're dumb
You're worthless
You're black
You're not even a nigger
You're an African
It concludes
- (c) They're not gonna stay here
They're not gonna stop this massacre.

The Western powers stood by and just watched, thereby ignoring a resolution adopted by the United Nations on 9 December 1948 after the Holocaust, which stated that “[t]he contracting parties confirm that genocide whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish”.

The anaphora “You” in the first set of parallel structures and the “They” in the other parallel structure represent Rwandans and the whites. The derogatory attributes of the blacks as “dirt”, as “dumb” and “worthless” people corroborate Daglish’s assertion that the West will not intervene. So, the parallel structures stylistically foreground the theme of the abandonment of the victims of the genocide.

There are a few questions, mainly of the Wh-subtype in the film. Two such questions asked by Tatiana and the answers given by her husband are of stylistic significance as shown below:

Tatiana: What is it?

- (10) Paul: All the whites are leaving. They are being evacuated.
Tatiana: But ... what about us?
Paul: We have been abandoned.
Tatiana: But Paul, the soldiers will stop the killings.
I say all the whites are leaving; the French, the Belgians, even the UN soldiers.

This dialogue illuminates the theme of betrayal by the whites. It is the answers to Tatiana’s Wh-questions that made clear the fact that she and the other refugees in the hotel and the endangered Tutsis in the streets have been abandoned. The hotel manager employs parallel structures to illuminate the effect of the betrayal on him.

- (11a) Paul: I am a fool.
They told me I was one of them.

I have no history
I have no memory
I'm a fool, Tessy.

(11b) Tatiana: You are no fool. I know who you are.

He uses the negative markers to project his perceived gullibility. The parallel structures here stylistically foreground the theme of betrayal by the whites.

Paul uses sentence fragments and simple paratactic statements when he is on the verge of mental breakdown. First he cannot knot his tie when he recollects the ladies he saw being raped while returning from George Rutaganda's store and the hundreds of corpses Gregoire pushed him into. He breaks down in tears and exclaims:

(12a) Oh! God.
Oh! God.

When Dube wants to come in, Paul exclaims:

(12b) Don't come in
I'll be fine.

This scene stylistically foregrounds the psychologically disorientating effect of the acts of genocide on the survivors. The hotel manager's altruism and kind-heartedness are stylistically projected with parallel structures and simple paratactic statements. When General Bizimungu tells Paul Rusesabagina that he will take him to their new headquarters at Gitarama due to the advance of the RPF rebels, the hotel manager declines, using parallel structures:

(13) Paul: I don't want to go to a Gitarama
I want to go back to the hotel
I want to see my family.

The negative structure in the first anaphora stylistically highlights Rusesabagina's altruism. When refugees from Sabana Hôtel des Mille Collines evacuate behind enemy lines some of them come to show their appreciation to him in simple paratactic statements.

(14) A: Thank you, Paul
Paul: We have made it.
B: Mr. Manager, I just want to thank you.

So, the syntactic choices and purposeful repetitions at the level of syntax help to stylistically foreground the various sub-themes in *Hotel Rwanda*.

Lexical Selections and Rhetorical Devices

The lexical selections in *Hotel Rwanda* constitute the film's register. Lexical choices in paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations are employed in the film to underscore the themes of propaganda, anarchy and violence which result in the loss of lives and properties, corruption, unwillingness of the West to stop the genocide and finally loss of hope. Under lexical selections, lexical innovation and collocational overlaps are also discussed. Some of the rhetorical devices evaluated in this section of the article include: symbolism and imagery.

Lexical choices in paradigmatic relations based on sub-themes include:

(15) Propaganda

	Tutsi		Hutu
i)	Collaborators for the Belgian colonialists	i)	Good people of Rwanda
ii)	Very important cockroaches	ii)	Hutu Power
iii)	Minority of traitors and invaders	iii)	Good Hutus
iv)	The Tutsi cockroaches		
v)	The smell of cockroaches		
	The infestation		
	Tutsi whores		

The demonisation and dehumanisation of the Tutsi are meant to justify the need for the Hutu to embark on the genocide. While (i-iii) are Complex Nominal Word Groups of MHQ structures where Q is a prepositional phrase, lexical sets (from iv-vi) have MH or MMH structures. The head of all the Nominal Word Groups is meant to dehumanise the Tutsis in the lexical sets. On the other hand, the Hutus are valorised as “good people” and “Good Hutus”. The stylistic significance of the lexical sets is that they goad the Hutu into preparing for the extermination of the Tutsi who are derogatorily referred to as “prostitutes”, “collaborators”, “rebels”, “cockroaches” that cause “infestations”.

The Verbal Word Groups used by the propagandists are mainly active verbs referring to harming and killing the Tutsi. They include:

- (16) i) Will squash/will kill
 ii) Will stab
 iii) Will chop
 iv) Will butcher
 v) Wipe out
 (i-iv) are complex Verbal Word Groups of MH structure where the H are meant to kill or cause bodily harm. On the other hand, (v) is a multi-word verb (HQ) which denotes complete elimination of the Tutsis.

(i) Genocide

Lexical items in paradigmatic relationship are Nominal Word Groups and Verbal Word Groups, and they are used in *Hotel Rwanda* to aptly describe the genocidal act itself.

(17)

	NWG		VWG
(i)	An incredible footage	(i)	Wipe out
(ii)	A massacre	(ii)	Wipe out
(iii)	Dead bodies	(iii)	Started killing
(iv)	Ten thousand corpses	(iv)	Cut (the tall trees)
(v)	500 000 (deaths)	(v)	

The lexical items in paradigmatic relationship, “the incredible footage” of Tutsis and moderate Hutus being chopped with machetes and the “dead bodies” strewn everywhere in the footage brought by Daglish, coupled with the large number of deaths are Nominal Word Groups apposite to genocide. The three verbal word groups connote the extermination of a people.

The inaction of the West as well as the UN is illustrated with the complex Verbal Word Groups below:

- (18)
- i) Are leaving
 - ii) Are being evacuated
 - iii) Not gonna stay
 - iv) Not gonna help
 - v) Not allowed to shoot

The imagery of people who are in a position to stop the genocide but abandon the victims creates a mental picture of betrayal. It is the abandonment of the Tutsis that escalated the wanton destruction of lives and properties by the Interahamwe militia.

The prejudice of the whites against the Rwandans as a group of savages is stylistically highlighted by simple and complex Nominal Word Groups in paradigmatic relationship. Thus

(19)

Dirt	Not even a nigger
Dumb	An African
Worthless	
Black	

Although Col. Oliver was referring to Paul when he uttered the racial prejudice-induced Nominal Word Groups they are mostly descriptive adjectives that refer to all Rwandans who are either perpetrators or victims in the genocide.

Lexical innovation is also used in the film to highlight and to locate the scene of the genocidal act geographically and illuminate the effect of

language in contact occasioned by colonialism. B.K. Tsou (2013) describes how language contact engenders lexical innovation thus:

When languages come into contact either directly through the personal contact of the speakers of these languages, or indirectly through the media, one common outcome is the diffusion of cultural items across linguistic boundaries. One clear manifestation of this cultural diffusion is the emergence of new lexical items in receipt languages. The new lexical items are replicas, models in the donor language and they can be manifested in phonetic and semantic adaptations, including calques or translation loans.

(Tsou 2002)

Two instances of language-induced lexical innovations that abound in African Literature are translation loans and cushioned loan words. Although the language of *Hotel Rwanda* is English, there is an instance of cushioning. The word *interahamwe* is a cushioned loan word with English gloss in the film since it means “Those who strike first”. Members of this cruel militia are the main perpetrators of the genocidal act. Stylistically, the word also locates the place of the genocidal act geographically – Rwanda.

A rhetorical device used to illuminate the theme of *Hotel Rwanda* is imagery. Although different types of imagery abound in the film, a few that are of stylistic significance in the film will be discussed below. The first is the olfactory image of the cockroach described by Gregoire in his dialogue with the hotel manager in the hotel.

Paul: You had better get out of this room and go downstairs, I am in charge now. Get out of this room right now.

Gregoire: Mr. Manager, if you notice the smell of cockroaches, if I were to leave this room, I am sure I will find one. I know people who can cleanse it. Maybe it doesn't bother you. Why is that? You are used to the smell, not me. And there is not room to escape it.

This olfactory imagery of the cockroach, which is anti-Tutsi, resonates throughout the film. The cockroach derogatorily refers to the Tutsi and in Gregoire's speech it refers to Tatiana, a Tutsi and Paul Rusesabagina's wife. It is due to the perceived repugnant smell of the Tutsi who have been dehumanised by the prejudiced Hutu that makes the presenter in RTLM radio assert; “[W]e will squash the infestation”. Apart from the imagery of the repugnant odour of the cockroach, there is also the imagery of the cockroach infesting places, causing disease and damage. This imagery of the cockroach as the harbinger of disease was used as the justification for the extermination of the Tutsis. The stylistic significance of this imagery in the film is that it is used to justify the killing of the Tutsi by the Interahamwe militia.

The visual imagery by Lady Archer of the Red Cross while watching the children being slaughtered in St. Francis orphanage depicts the brutal killings of innocent people in *Hotel Rwanda*:

Lady Archer: When I arrived there (the orphanage) they had started killing the children. They made me watch. There was one little girl with her little sister wrapped on her back. As they were about to chop her, she cried out to me: "Please don't let them kill me, I promise I won't be Tutsi anymore."

This is the most spine-chilling scene of the killings in *Hotel Rwanda*. It foregrounds the Interahamwe militia's lack of respect for life and, more importantly, for innocent children's lives. It also shows the brutality of the killings since the innocent girl and her sister were about to be butchered.

Lady Archer explains the Interahamwe militia's justification for the brutal killing of innocent Tutsi children: "They are targeting Tutsi children, Paul, to wipe out the next generation". The imagery of arson, rape, nauseating death and putrefaction abound in *Hotel Rwanda*. The images are shown to the viewers on occasions when Paul and Rusceabagina are in the streets of Kigali on their way to George Rutaganda's shop to buy goods. When Dube, a Tutsi, drives a bus with the Hotel manager as companion, they see houses on fire and Interahamwe roadblocks. The Interahamwe are a group of unruly, uncouth brutes, wielding clubs, knives and mostly machetes. When Titiana asks Lady Archer to find her (Titiana's) brother, she cannot oblige, as she is aware of the terrifying cruelty and violence of the Interahamwe and knows that there are Interahamwe roadblocks everywhere. The imagery of women being raped by members of Interahamwe militia is nauseating and gruesome, and the goading on of the rapists by the RTLM equally terrifying:

Remember how those Tutsi women used to look down their long noses at Hutu men. Now they beg for their lives. I say, taste those Tutsi whores before they die.

The images of decomposing corpses that Paul sees in a bush draw attention to the large number of corpses. The United Nations Radio "News Service Africa" corroborates this fact thus:

Today the Red Cross representatives have claimed that the number of deaths in the Rwandan conflict is up to 500 000. Ten thousand corpses were found in Lake Victoria alone.

The deteriorating condition in *Hotel Rwanda* is projected with the imagery of refugees in the hotel fetching water from the swimming pool. When Paul sees this, he asks Duke.

Paul: What are they doing fetching water from the swimming pool?

Gregoire: I'm sorry. They shot down the water. This is all we have.

The imagery here projects the potential outbreak of water-borne disease and highlights the deteriorating conditions in the Hotel which is overcrowded with refugees.

The two collocational shifts in the film are Paul's description of Hotel Sabana as an "Oasis of Calm" when Mr. Tillens contemplates closing it down. The other metaphorical expression is the reference to "tall trees", the signal by the Interahamwe militia to "cut the tall trees". In the first metaphor, the source "oasis" is mapped to the target domain, the calm of the Sabana Hotel, which is a source of refuge to a total number of 800 refugees, including orphans from St. Frances Orphanage. When Sabana Hotel is contrasted with the violence and mayhem ravaging the other parts of Kigali, the hotel is really an "oasis of calm".

In the metaphor of the "tall trees", the mapping of the source domain to the target domain, which euphemistically represents the Tutsis, illustrates their physical characteristics. It also stylistically illustrates the dehumanisation of the Tutsis by the Hutu militia.

Symbolism plays an important part in *Hotel Rwanda*. In the dialogue between Dube and Paul, the importance of a Cohiba cigar as symbol of bribery is stylistically highlighted.

Dube: That is a fine cigar, Sir.

Paul: This is a Cohiba cigar. It is worth ten thousand francs.

Dube: Ten thousand francs!

Paul: But it is worth more to me if I give a businessman ten thousand francs. What does it matter to him? But if I give him a Cohiba cigar straight from Havana, that is style to him.

George Rutaganda corroborates Paul's assertion while smoking the cigar thus:

George: Cohiba! The fantastic cigar.

Paul: The best, Sir.

The value of the Cohiba cigar as a symbol of bribery and corruption is stylistically highlighted in the dialogue above.

Conclusion

In this article, a concerted effort has been made to expose the evils of genocide as espoused in *Hotel Rwanda*. The film's ability to manipulate language in order to illuminate the significant role played by the "hate radio", RTLM, in fuelling the violence by creating a "herd mentality"

among the Hutu extremists foregrounds the fact that RTLM is responsible for an increase in violence during the genocide. The syntactic selections, lexical choices, cushioned loan words, rhetorical devices like lexical and syntactic parallelisms, imagery and symbolism help to expose the adverse effects of genocide on the people of Rwanda. The article fills a gap in knowledge by chronicling how propaganda fuels violence, and gives viewers useful insight into intercommunal conflicts in postcolonial African countries. Viewers are also showed how genocide can be prevented in Africa. Finally, the article projects the skilful and manipulative use of the English language in this historical film.

References

- Adelman, H. & Suhrke, A.
 1996 Early Warning and Conflict Management. *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*. Copenhagen: Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR).
- Andersen, R.
 2000 How Multilateral Development Assistance Triggered the Conflict in Rwanda. *Third World Quarterly* 21(3): 430-472.
- Bittner, R.J.
 1989 *Mass Communication: An Introduction*. 5th edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cohen, R.
 1994 *Theatre: Brief Version*. California: Mayfield.
- Enkvist, N. et al.
 1964 *Linguistics and Style*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Harrf, B.
 2003 No Lessons Learnt from the Holocaust?: Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955. *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 57-73.
- Horowitz, I.
 1977 *Genocide, State Power and Mass Murder*. 2nd edition. New York: Transaction Books.
- Ibagere, E.
 2008 The Film Industry in Nigeria. *Abraka Humanities Review* 4(2):3-22.
- International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
 2003 Case No. ICTR-99-52-T. Judgement. Online: <<http://www-ICTR-org/cases/Barayagwizaa/judgement/summarymedia-pdf>>. 26 June 2013.
- Krain, M.
 1997 State-Sponsored Mass Murder. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41(3): 331-360.

- Kuperman, A.J.
2001 *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- McNulty, M.
2000 *French Arts War and Genocide in Rwanda; Crime Law and Social Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Melvin, L.
2000 *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*. London: Zed.
- Ogunsayi, A.
2007/2008 Dramatic Undertones in the Documentary Film. *IJOTA*, No. 2-4. Ibadan, University of Ibadan, pp. 251-266.
- Prunier, G.
1995 *The Rwandan Crisis: The History of a Genocide*. London: Hurst.
- Shaka, O.F.
2004 *Modernity and the African Cinema*. Trenton: African World Press.
The Nigerian Film Corporation
2008/2009 Online: <<http://www.nigeriafirmcorp.com>>. 26 June 2013.
- Thompson, A.
2007 *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide*. London: Pluto.
- T'sou, B.K.
2002 Language Contact and Lexical Innovation. Online: <www.wsc-uni-erlangen.de/pdf/tsou.pdf>. 26 June 2013.
- Vokes, R.
2007 *Charisma, Creativity and Cosmopolitanism: A Perspective on the Power of the New Radio Broadcasting in Uganda and Rwanda*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Macaulay Mowarin
Delta State University, Abraka
Nigeriammowarin@yahoo.co.uk