

MEMORY DIALOGUES PANEL I: LEGACY

Kigali Genocide Memorial Center: July 2018

Panelists:

- Eric Nagangare : Actor, hip-hop artist, spoken-word poet (Rwanda)
 - Edouard Bompariki: MP/ Actor/ Poet (Rwanda)
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Moderated by:

- David Cotterrell
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Extracts from preliminary discussion

Eric: How do I trust that if I tell you something you will not report it to the government? That that is not going to then affect my family? I mean you have your truth and I have mine, and together it's a collective truth. And the thing is that, I think, somehow the government believes it knows what is best. Its like God, you know? It knows what's best for the people, so it demands, and puts in strategies that the people have to follow.

However the level of knowledge also has an impact. If you ask people 'where do you want Kigali to be in the next twenty-five years?', If you had asked that question twenty-five years ago, they would not have known how to respond because they didn't have... their imaginations were not open enough.... they didn't have the education that expanded their imagination to that level.

But, now we are at the level where the policies have been in effect for the last twenty-five years. Now we can see the problem. Now *we can see*... we can see the problems materialized: the manifestations of these ideas.

But then we come to another problem – and this is the problem of inclusion. The system is not inclusive. I don't know how to address people anymore – people say 'KG and then a number'. Our minds aren't designed to deal with numbers like that. We don't know numbers, we don't know time, we don't know distance, you know? And so this seems like it's a constant but it's not. It's not based on who I am as a Rwandan. Now I live in the city. Everything around the city doesn't feel native. It does not feel Rwandan to me. It's an export. What we used to enjoy when we were kids was very different. Now we have this, and our problem is that... and I was basically not prepared over the last twenty-five years to live this way.

David: Yeah.

Eric: But what's happening now ... what I'm seeing is that the government pushed that boldly. So, it was like, okay, to those people who are able to live in that time period-

David: -So, what you're saying in a way is a heightened sense of that boldness that any government needs which is heightened because of the particular kind of government it is, in the same way of my experience of the terror of the absence of government was heightened by being in Afghanistan, where there was *no* government.

I met the Director of Health and he was sitting in a room and had nobody to ring, it was just, *he* was the health service, and nobody bothered answering his calls. And you know, when you see the absence, it's as scary as seeing a totality of government. But it raises these fundamental questions about hatred, about whether... can we have the courage to make any assumption about the future beyond our own careers, beyond our own lives, and certainly beyond our own imaginations in that way.

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Eric: -managed to speak... cos it's translated from English [?]

David: Also because to be in government you have to, probably, become very senior in, I mean, Eduoard...

Eric: -but... what are you... what are you waiting for? [?]

David: I mean, certainly if you were looking at being an artist and designing a big part of the city, you'd be at the top of your career. You'd probably be fifty to sixty, in a way, the greatest achievement of a very wonderful career. You might start building small buildings, making extensions of buildings, if you're lucky you might be able to leave a mark in the whole city. So, you're sixty, and this is your signature project. Now I don't think I'll be able to live much beyond seventy-five myself. So, if it takes twenty-five years for a city to be rebuilt, for it to be populated, for those people to be born and live in it, I probably won't even see whether I make a failure or success with that design. And the irony is, that the people most likely to be able to make these fundamental decisions are the ones that possibly are the least likely to find out whether they failed or succeeded at it. Because, to have that control and power you need to have lived long enough to be in the later stages [inaudible] [0:01:05] rather than the beginning.

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Eric: My question is also like, okay, so, when you do that, is... my son is seven years old, is he gonna be able to live in that time and deal with the scene at that time? Because for me, it's about education, you know? It has to go both hand-in-hand.

If we build a city, 'who is it for?' is the question we ask from the start. I mean, my friends get away from the city because we can't live there... too [early?]. If we're building that country, in the next thirty-two years, who's gonna live in that country?

Eduoard: You have give a good example of your son, who is seven years old. He was not the one to set this vision but he is the one who will reap its pleasure. So when you are setting this vision we have in mind, 'we are not the ones who'll be there, the kids are the ones. I am sure, they will destroy some stuff, because they will not be happy. But, in setting a vision you have to go there. If it's the year 2050, you have to shift from today, 2050. Then you need to come back, but you have to reach there first. You come back, and then you start to go there again, slowly, very slowly. Bearing in mind what you are looking for. Bearing in mind that it's not for you.

So, it's not easy to explain but this country faced more challenges because our country did not have a vision of their young children; they used to do something that will finish in two... three years, with them. So, if you have a vision, I'm sure you... you have to be careful, because what

you're sending it's elastic, it has to stay longer, it has to be sustainable. You don't think for you, you think for others.

Yeah, I'm sure you can do some mistakes when you are setting something for someone after you, but I'm sure it will be easy for your son, who is seven today, to start on that vision that we are setting can start [inaudible] [0:02:23] ... because he's not able, he can't do it.

Eric: Well, he might not even be able to live, for example, let's say we're talking about [inaudible] [0:02:29] and so, [inaudible] [0:02:35-39] it's cool, it's fast... [inaudible] when the government collects taxes [inaudible] [0:002:52].

So, you remove people from the streets, like the streets of Kigali. The city is very clean it's sparkling. But what about the people [inaudible] [0:03:09]...

David: So what you're talking about, in a way, is the unexpected consequences, and that is-

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David: - The ability of the proposal to be continuously adjusted and amended as more information and evidence comes along is vital. I was thinking as you were talking, about my thirteen year old daughter. What if I started buying her clothes that I thought she would need to wear in twenty years' time? What if I kept it in a suitcase as a present and said 'open it in twenty years' time'? She'd say 'Dad! Please, no! Don't think you can judge now what I will wear in twenty years' time.' I probably could not judge what she would wear the next weekend. So the important thing for me, in a way, would be to recognize that it's probably more important to get a sewing kit, a pair of scissors and a range of material so that my daughter in twenty years' time will be able to completely amend the poor assumptions I made. As well as knowing that I loved her enough to want to create something for her. I would somehow allow her the option of undermining my assumption.