

# A Clash of Narratives

Creating the History of Darfur

# Abstract

“Darfur” has come to be a place invoking many different interpretations and is more politically and emotionally charged, than just a territory on the map. The past events of Darfur during the years of 2003-2007 have been understood to constitute genocide, a violent conflict, a story about the struggle of “good vs. evil”.

I have employed the theory of Hayden White which asserts that through the uses of “emplotment” facts (past events) become structured in a plot, so they become components of a particular narrative. This theory is adapted to examine how narratives have used facts to present their version of history.

The findings are, that in many of the accounts facts are omitted to benefit the overall explanation and the authors have indirectly assigned responsibility to different actors. Some accounts have reduced complexity regarding the identity of people and therefore created narratives told as “Arab vs. Black”. There are discrepancies in which label should be applied to explain the events of Darfur and I have found that the choosing of label is connected with how the narrative is told.

*Key words:* Hayden White, Darfur, Narrative Analysis, Argumentation Analysis, Emplotment

*Words:* 9930

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## List of Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EU	European Union
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
GOS	Government of Sudan
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLM	Sudan Liberation Movement
SPLM	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations Assistance Mission in Darfur

# 1 Introduction

Darfur, a region in the west of Sudan, has come to be more than a location on the map. The history of Darfur during the years of 2003-2007 is a case in which the killings of thousands of people, caught the world's attention and invoked a large number of interpretations. The events in Darfur have been narrated as the place where genocide has occurred, a struggle of good and evil, the atrocities of 'ethnic cleansing', as narrative about ethnic diversity and the land of the proxy militia *janjaweed*. The narratives of Darfur have written about a failed state, international response and the analogy of the Rwandan genocide. However this does not constitute 'Darfur' per se, but the collection of the many interpretations and narratives in which the past events have come to be presumed as.

Unfortunately, whether or not we call the past events of Darfur genocide, seems to matter a great deal and it is a central concern in many of the accounts. It is as if we think that the killings of people in a genocide are more serious, more horrendous and more deserving our attention than the killings of people by 'ethnic cleansing' or any other label.

Regardless of how the past events have been narrativized, the outcome has still been the same, as Prunier writes "[The definition of the conflict in Darfur] makes no difference; the horror experienced by the targeted group remains the same, no matter which word we use"(Prunier, 2005:156). By trying to make sense of the past we engage in narrativizing. When constructing a narrative, we give history meaning, and in a way, the present too. What would the present be, without a meaningful past?

The historian Hayden White has asserted that "stories are not lived; there is no such thing as a real story. Stories are told or written, not found"(White, 2010:xxv). This thesis will therefore examine what the different stories of Darfur are. What meaning do we give the history of Darfur? How have the narratives of Darfur been told?

## 1.1 Purpose and Research Question

At heart of this thesis, is my interest of inquiring different narratives for understanding political issues such as the case of Darfur. My objective is thus to problematize the way in which the different interpretations and narratives have come to understand the past of Darfur. I aim not to engage in finding the ‘true’ version, but rather focus on how the different versions correspond with one and another. My foremost aim is to judge the different narratives in relationship with the others which they represent. The research questions are as follows:

- *What past events are included in the narratives regarding Darfur during the years 2003-2007?*
- *How have the accounts interpreted and explained the past events and how have they written the narratives?*
- *How do the accounts narrativize the past events in relation with each other?*

To answer my research questions I will use a combination of a narrative and argumentation analysis where I emphasize on the connection between the overall explanation and the way in which the accounts narrativize the past events of Darfur. I thereby use the strengths of narrative analysis to understand how the narrative is written and combine this with the merits of an argumentation analysis which allows me to examine what the main claim is of the author.

This thesis will not directly be with concerned with Darfur as presumed externally existing entity, but rather “metaDarfur” the collection of different interpretations which Darfur has come to be (cf. Campbell, 1998a:x). I will therefore not arrive to any explanations regarding the cause of the current case nor will I give a comprehensive account regarding the past events.

### 1.1.1 Selection of Case

Darfur has been selected since it has become an entity that represents an emotionally and politically charged time and space location in history. There are as many interpretations and explanations as there are narratives. No one simply refers to Darfur as a place ‘where people were killed’. I had no prior in depth knowledge about Darfur and thus the reading of the

material allowed me to render my research questions and inquire how the authors have written the narratives more unreservedly.

The years of 2003-2007 makes a good time for comparison, as these years have been the primary focus of study for many scholars. It is also passage in time where atrocities have been committed and violence has been afflicted to the people of Darfur. Other time frames could be equally defensible, but I find, for the purpose of my thesis the selected years very suiting. However, events that the narratives consider to be of central importance in explaining the current situation are also regarded in my analysis.

I will in the next chapter describe my theory and how I will make use of it.

## 2 Theory

The present always passes us by to become the past. Once it does, our relationship to the past, even the ever so immediate past (...) is necessarily mediated. More often than not, that mediation takes form of a narrative, whereby contested events are connected in such a way as to give some meaning. (Campbell, 1998a:34)

Through the creditable work of David Campbell who wrote a critical examination on the narratives of the political entity called 'Bosnia', I came across the theories of Hayden White. White offers a challenging philosophy of history which permits the scholar to assess the material at hand and explore the ways in which the narratives have been written. The many representations of Darfur have come to be a clash of narratives, where there are contesting ideas of the 'real interpretation' of the situation.

White has been viewed as the first scholar to introduce 'theory' into modern historical studies. He has had great influences on how we think about historical representation, the discipline of history and how the historiography intersects with other domains of inquiry (White, 2010:1).

What are the different ways of requiring the past? White distinguishes that there are *annals*, *chronicles* and *histories* or *narratives*.

*Annals* are collections of events that do not make any attempt to find patterns in the past or to represent the 'reality' of the past (Czarniawska, 2004:17).

*Chronicles* aspire to write history, but they do not, instead they assemble longer and more complex lists of events. They make no effort to fill in the 'gaps' between events, to draw connections among events, or to find patterns in events (White, 1987:16).

*Histories* or *narratives* offer "a kind of order and fullness in an account of reality" turning the past into a narrative (White, 1980:15). Narratives contain five important qualities, they have plots, they have social centers, they moralize, they are allegories, they have aesthetics. Plots are used to give the past "continuity, coherency, and meaning" (White, 1987:24). A narrative turns the past into story with a well-defined plot, which entails "central subjects, proper beginnings, middles, and ends, and a coherence that permits us to see 'the end' in every beginning" (White, 1980:27).

## 2.1 Emplotment

White writes about ‘emplotment’ which is when facts (past events) become structured in a plot, so they become components of a particular narrative (Campbell, 1998a:34). This theory is interesting, since it holds that facts do exist but can be understood and used in different ways. Facts can be ‘emplotted’ in a particular narrative chosen by the author to fit the overall historical explanation of the past. White claims that the narratives are constructed so they are ‘emplotted’ in the structures of four tropes; romantic, tragic, satirical and comic (White, 2010:xx).

However, I will use White’s theory somewhat differently, since I will draw the linkage between the ‘emplotment’ of the facts in connection to the overall argument of the texts. This implies that I agree upon the presumption that narratives are the results of the author’s choice to make use of the facts and position them so that they become sequences in a particular plot. The written narrative is thus connected to the meaning and main argument which the authors explain the past with.

Campbell employs White’s theory in the same fashion and writes that for White narratives are a performance (Campbell, 1998a:35). They are a performance when they emplot facts and fictionalize them. Nonetheless, White is careful to argue that historical events are different from fictional ones, they can be allocated to a specific time-space location, further, they are observable, whereas fictional events are imagined, hypothetical or invented. However, White maintains that historical narratives are “verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented as found*”(Campbell, 1998a:35, see also Chorell, 2003:14f). This seemingly provocative statement is the ground of much of the critique which has been raised against White. For White emplotment is a “fictional function” in a non fictional discourse. The events which are presumably real, “are real not because they occurred but because, first, they were remembered and, second, they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence” (Campbell, 1998a:36, see also White, 1980:23).

White holds that facts do not ‘dictate for themselves’ at all, but are the subjects of specific preference, inclinations, and prejudices of the author (White, 2010:xxiv).

White further argues that “when it comes to apprehending the historical record there is no grounds to be found in the historical record itself for preferring one way of constructing its meaning over another”(Campbell, 1998a:36). But does this then mean that White should stand the charge of relativism? Are historical accounts merely an imagined construction with no ontological substance and is there no legitimate way to represent the past? And ultimately, how can we separate ‘history’ from blatant

revisionism, state propaganda, Holocaust denial and so on (White, 2010:xxvf)?

The sceptics to White's approach have dual concerns, first, ontological grounds if there is a reality of facts, and second, epistemological question of what knowledge can be achieved if all accounts are made equally "true". On the first concern White is straightforward arguing that 'data' (facts) does exist, however the troublesome part is how we acquire and use these facts (White, 1973:ix). If all accounts are made to be considered as equally real, how do we protect ourselves from not ending up with a "Nazi version of Nazism's history" (Campbell, 1998a:38)?

White provides his thoughts about this and renders these questions (1987:76): Do you mean to say that the occurrence and nature of the Holocaust is only a matter of opinion and that one can write history in whatever way one pleases? Do you imply that any account of the events is as valid as any other account so long as it meets certain formal requirements of discursive practises (White, 1987:76)? And his answers are the following ones: "we come to the bottom line of the politics of interpretation which informs not only historical studies but human and social sciences in general. The bottom line is ethico-political and the revisionist account of the Holocaust is "as morally offensive as it is intellectually bewildering" (Ibid.). What also needed to be stated here is that propagandist and Holocaust deniers do not present their ideas as *alternative* account, but as the *true* one. They would therefore have no interest to use White's theories which holds that no narrative is more *real* than the other. Furthermore White draws a theoretical conclusion that an interpretation falls into the category of a lie when it denies the reality of events of which it treats (Campbell, 1998a:40).

How do I relate to this theory and 'facts'? I agree upon White's assumptions about that there are facts or 'real' past events, and that these, as soon as they are emplotted into a narrative become fictionalized. I differ from White's idea in that the emplotment is done in such a way that it is characterized by the four tropes he suggests, namely romantic, tragic, satirical and comic. This has much to do with the material I have chosen, while White mainly examined historical accounts by historians, I have made a selection of primarily scholars of social science. The role of emplotment of which I am interested in, is the authors' main argument in relation to the way they have written the narrative. This will be elaborated more in depth in chapter 4.

In reference to 'Darfur', it has come to be place and an encounter labelled as genocide, 'ethnic cleansing', human crisis, violent conflict and so on. Nobody refers to Darfur by only stating "people have died there". To link back to the figurations of emplotments where we must ask ourselves, how do we judge between competing interpretations? What is left, White argues are the *moral* and *aesthetic* interpretations of the authors

for preferring one interpretation of past events over another (White, 1973:432-33). This comes from the notion that the discourse of the narrative, it is thus a question of “appropriateness”, rather than historical knowledge and the only aesthetic and moral limitations are that one of the author (White, 2010:xxvii). The aesthetic and moral choices of the authors will be dealt with in depth in the third part of the analysis, section 4.3.2.

Thus as stated above, the narratives will not be judged upon how ‘real’ they are but rather in which way the authors have chosen to write the discourse. As Campbell argues no external criterion should be imposed on the narratives in which they should ‘measure’ up to, but how these narratives should be judged is “*in terms of the relationship with the other they embody*” (Campbell, 1998a:43).

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Narrative Analysis

Since it is of my interest to scrutinize different interpretations of the history of Darfur, I find narrative analysis suitable for my aim. Narratives are written to capture a time-space location of the past. It is ever so difficult to understand a passage in time where events such as the ones in Darfur have occurred. Narrative analysis allows me to examine the way in which the writers have described the history of Darfur. It gives me the tools for understanding which of the “facts” (past events) have been used, and how the narratives have been written.

I have consider other methods as well, such as the discourse analysis or a linguistic analysis, but for the purpose of my thesis and the selected theory, I nevertheless found narrative analysis most suitable.

What is then a narrative? White has suggested that a narrative is a “metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted” (White, 1980:2). However, this definition does not provide too much clarity, but is still to some extent illustrative. I have interpreted it as how the different events in the chronicle of Darfur during the years of 2003-2007 have been put together or ‘emplotted’ in the material, with a beginning, middle and an end. It is thus the way in which the different facts have turned into a narrative. As stated above “through the operation of ‘emplotment’, facts are structured in such a way that they become components in a particular story” (Campbell, 1998a:35). In this thesis, I have chosen to start the examination of the narrative of the time-space location beginning in the year of 2003.

Robertson (2005) inspired by Chartman (1987) has provided a scheme of how the structure of a narrative analysis could be. I have modified the scheme and the structure I use, is the following one:

#### The Narrative and Chronicle

‘what’	= a summation of the facts (past events) in the narrative, who are the actors, when and what happened
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## Discourse and Emplotment

‘how’

= how the narrative has been written  
and the discourse of the narrative

= how the facts have been emplotted in  
the narrative (cf. Bergstöm, Boréus,  
2005:230)

The ‘narrative and chronicle’ part of the analysis has the following components; the time location and the actors or sequences that have to do with the plot. This part answers the question of *what* has happened in the narrative. In accordance with White’s theory, the events that will be selected for inclusion in the chronology, are identified to be important by the various narratives in the material. They are described in the same way as in the narratives from which they are drawn from (Campbell, 1998b:264).

‘The discourse’ part considers *how* the narrative has been written. (Bergstöm, Boréus, 2005:230) In the examination of the discourse I will not merely focus on the uses of the facts, but also on the way in which the narrative has been written. How the narrative has been mediated, what emphasize and meaning the authors given the different actors and what is the overall description they have of the current situation in Darfur. This is ultimately what White argues to be the *moral* and *aesthetic* interpretations of the authors for preferring one interpretation of past events over another (White, 1987:433).

To analyze how the accounts narrativize the events and issues, I need to be able to judge them in *relation* to a set of events that the different accounts, in my case academic scholars, consider important. I will therefore not impose an external criterion upon them and see how well they measure up. Instead, I will isolate the events selected by the narratives (the chronicle) and consider how those events are included in some narratives while excluded from others. This in order to reveal the ways those events are represented and the manner in which they are articulated so as to construct an argument (Campbell, 1998a:56).

## 3.2 Argumentation Analysis

As a complement to my narrative analysis, I will do an argumentation analysis. I will do this in order to understand and assess what the main argument is, and its relation to the narrative of the account analyzed. However, I want to emphasise that the main focus will be on the narrative analysis.

The argument analysis serves a complement since it helps me distinguish what the main argument is, and how this argument is connected with the way the narrative has been written. It permits me to examine how the author has given meaning and explanation to the current situation of Darfur.

What is then an argument and which arguments am I interested in? I interpret an argument to be something the author wants to convince the reader about. My primary interest is to analyze the main argument of the article, which proposes an explanation of how the past event of Darfur should be interpreted. I am interested in finding out what the proposed ‘explanation’ or claim the text has and what the ‘facts’ of information provided is for such a claim.

One of the most prominent scholars writing about argument analysis is Stephen Toulmin (2003). He developed a scheme of how to ‘find’ and examine the arguments of a text. The original scheme is done by four steps, however, I have modified it slightly in order to relate it better to the narrative analysis. Hence, the structure is the following one:

*Claim*

(So)

An arguable statement

*Information*

(Evidence/facts)

Information used to support the claim

*Warrant*

(Since)

An explanation that links information and the claim

My argumentation analysis will be guided by these three steps. The first step is the *claim* of the account and this is the statement which the author is arguing for, here I distinguish what is the debatable assessment. The second step, is the *information* provided to support the claim. I consider what facts or such the author presents to reaffirm the main claim. Finally, the third step is *warrant* which is the link between information and the claim, I thus present the additional explanations the author gives to secure the claim (cf. Bergstöm, Boréus, 2005:104f see also Toulmin 2003:87-134).

### 3.3 Methodological discussion

It is important to highlight some critique regarding subjective readings such as the narrative analysis and the argument analysis. Would other scholars have understood and interpreted the material as I have? If others cannot reproduce the same analysis, how valid is it? I hold that there is no reading which can completely be free from interpretation of the scholar. With that being asserted, I still think it is of utmost importance that I explicitly and clearly display the ways in which I have analyzed the narratives in the material. I aim to expose direct quotes from the material which can serve as confirmation of the interpretations I have made. I also strive to have coherence with theories and other research that has been made within the field of my thesis (cf Bergstöm, Boréus, 2005:254f).

Barbara Czarniawska writes that it is the scholars' duty to treat the material with respect and responsibility and to recognize that there are many interpretations of one narrative (Czarniawska, 2004:62). I will strive to do this, by examining the material in relation to one another, and not to cast judgment upon whether one narrative is *trueer* than another. I think that in order to answer the question of *how* a story has been told, one must acknowledge that there are many answers, depending on who interpreters the material at hand.

In the argumentation analysis there are, as in with the narrative analysis, some pitfalls which should be avoided. One of the foremost, besides the one discussed above about the subjectivity of the interpretations, is the imposing of the structure of the text. What is left out from the findings when the structure is imposed upon the material? Not all arguments follow a logical order as suggested from the scheme, and when I analyze the text, I need to do so with caution about the validity of my findings (Bergstöm, Boréus, 2005:142).

I will concern myself with this, by using quotes from the text to display the conclusions which I draw. Additionally, I have stated clearly where the information can be found in the article as well as provided complementary explanations to confirm this. I have tried to exemplify how I draw my conclusions and present them in accessible and naturally *contestable* way.

### 3.4 Demarcation of Material

I have chosen to examine only academic articles published in academic journals. The two main reasons for this are because the scholars are supposed to write *objectively*, and because the authors are not directly

involved in the current situation, they are *observers* of the past of Darfur. The question of objective writing will not be rendered at length here, but I do want to emphasize that the material I have chosen, allegedly should be the result of objective writings.

I hold that it is important to recognize the role the author has in relation to the case I have chosen. If the author, for example, has the role of a politician, this could presumably have implications on the political practice of giving the past a certain meaning and label.

This leaves me with two groups of authors, academics and journalists. I find it more suitable to examine academics since, contrary to journalists' texts published in academic journals are peer review and should follow certain standards in structure, research and accountability.

I have chosen my material based on three criterions; the material has to contain a narrative about Darfur covering the years of 2003-2007; it has to be published after December 31st 2007; and finally, it has to have a main argument, implicit or explicit. Why the texts need to be published after December 31st 2007st because the events examined in this thesis had to have already occurred before the account was written. I have chosen to include one article by the same author, in order to include a variety interpretations and arguments.

I have examined eight accounts and the final selection was made upon the criteria that the text specifically dealt with the current situation. The number of accounts scrutinized has also to do with the restriction in length of the thesis.

## 4 Analysis

Considering my criteria mentioned above, I have scrutinized eight articles for my analysis. The analysis is divided into three parts following the order of the posed research questions. This chapter demonstrates the *clash of narratives* which the past events of Darfur have come to be.

### 4.1 The Narrative Analysis – What is told?

As I mentioned in section 3.1, the first part of my analysis will be a list of the events that are followed in a sequence, the *chronicle* of the narratives. I have drawn the included events from the examined material and they represent time-space locations which the *accounts* hold to be important. The events are described in an equivalent way, as they are written in the narrative, they are therefore not necessarily neutrally described. I have not selected the events from any other source than the examined material and there is no narrative that captures all of the events. It thus becomes interesting, and important, to assess what events have been included in a specific narrative in the exclusion of others (cf. Campbell, 1998a:56). The chronicle will be used in section 4.2 for the analysis and discussed at length in section 4.3

#### 4.1.1 The Chronicle

Chronicle over the events in Sudan 2003-2007. The references to these events will be found in chapter six. The chronicle is supposed to be read as a *complement* to the second and third part of the analysis, section 4.2., 4.3.

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2003

(1.) 26<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) launched the current Darfur crisis on attacking Gulu near Jebel Marra, killing uniformed personnel (Government officials). The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) went into action a few

- weeks later and attacked government outposts in their region.
- (2.) After  
26<sup>th</sup> February 2003
- The Government of Sudan (GOS), Sudan Defence Forces and its civilian and military agents including its proxy militia, the *Janjaweed* attacked the villages of SLM/SLA = Sudan Liberation Army and JEM.
- (3.) February 2003
- Amnesty International, issued its first press release relating to Darfur, warning the international community of the newly emerging tensions.
- (4.) March 2003
- In the United Nations, the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Sudan first reported an ‘ostensible effort by the Sudan government to purge Darfur of African tribes’.
- (5.) 25<sup>th</sup> April 2003
- A joint operation of SLA and JEM attacked several hundred government personnel and took prisoners. The barracks near El-Fasher (the airport) were burnt and six small aircrafts were destroyed on the ground.
- (6.) After  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2003
- General and Sudanese President Al-Bashir and Deputy Minister Ahmad Harun appointed a Special Task Force to unleash an attack on the insurgent groups “reign of terror”.
- (7.) June 2003
- The International Crisis Group report on the region.
- (8.) July 2003
- Sudan Deputy Minister, Ahmad Harun and Musa Hilal as leading figures in the Darfur attacks, hold a public gathering together in West Darfur.
- (9.) September 2003
- The subsequent first interval of attacks ended with a negotiated ceasefire that promised government disarmament of militias.

- (10.) September 2003 The UN launched a “Greater Darfur Initiative” funding drive for \$23 million.
- (11.) December 2003 The second interval began with a declaration by President Al- Bashir to annihilate Darfurian rebels.
- (12.) December 2003 Jan Egeland, UN, assert that Darfur was possibly is “the worst [crisis] in the world today”.
- (13.) December 2003 Tom Vraalsen, UN, clarified the nature of the crisis when he described Darfur as “nothing less than the organized destruction of sedentary African agriculturalists– the Fur, the Masalit and the Zaghawa”.

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2004

- (14.) Early 2004 The *Janjaweed* used Antonov bomber aircraft, fighter jets and combat helicopters to bomb “non-Arab” target villages ahead.
- (15.) January 2004 International newspapers – The New York Times and Le Monde – published the first accounts of events in Darfur.
- (16.) 19<sup>th</sup> March 2004 Outgoing UN humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, said that Darfur was “the world’s greatest humanitarian crisis” and that “the only difference between Rwanda and Darfur is now the numbers involved”.
- (17.) March 2004 Human Rights Watch produced its first press release.
- (18.) March 2004 International Crisis Group produced its first extensive investigation of the conflict a report entitled Darfur Rising: Sudan’s New Crisis.

- (19.) 2<sup>th</sup> April Human Rights Watch followed with its first in-depth report on the crisis.
- (20.) April 2004 A UN Human Rights team led by the acting High Commissioner Bertrand Ramcharan was sent to investigate “reports of massive and criminal violations of human rights”.
- (21.) May 2004 The Managing Committee of the Washington Holocaust Memorial became the first major organization to describe the Darfur conflict as genocide.
- (22.) July 2004 In Capitol Hill, the U.S. government pronouncements in a resolution calling the fighting in Darfur a “genocide” and holding the Sudanese government culpable.
- (23.) July 2004 A Save Darfur Coalition, cofounded by the American Jewish World Service and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Commission.
- (24.) 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 US Secretary of State Colin Powell testified before American Congress, and declared that the events had the characterization of genocide in Darfur.
- (25.) September 2004 European Parliament in September of the same year passed a resolution calling the crimes committed in Darfur “tantamount to genocide”.
- (26.) September 2004 The UN Security Council set up an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate the crimes committed in Darfur and more specifically to determine whether genocide had occurred.

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2005

- (27.) 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2005                      The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Naivasha.
- (28.) 2005    Resettlement and return of the victims has begun as part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
- (29.) January 2005                                A UN appointed Commission of Inquiry found that the GoS was not responsible for genocide, but was responsible for “serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law amounting to crimes under international law”.

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2006

- (30.) 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006                                Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed in Abuja, Nigeria between officials of the Government of Sudan (GoS) and one, small Darfuri faction, headed by Mini Minawi (SLA) Two other factions refused to sign, despite considerable pressure from international mediators.
- (31.) August 2006                                 UN Resolution 1706, passed, the first UN resolution to deploy UN peacekeepers was never implemented.

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2007

- (32.) July 2007                                      Resolution 1769, the UN Security Council established the joint AU-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)
- (33.) 22<sup>th</sup> October 2007                         An Amnesty International report detailed the Sudanese government’s refusal to allow UNAMID permission to the land.

## 4.2 The Narrative and Argumentation Analysis – How is it told?

Here, I will present my narrative and argumentation analysis. I begin my analysis with explaining the *discourse* of the narrative and after this I will use Toulmin's model of argumentation analysis in three steps. These steps are the *claim*, the *information* and the *warrant*. I will also use the chronicle which I presented in section 4.1.1 to scrutinize which events are included in the narratives. I have divided the analysis into three parts, which are based on general themes discussed in the accounts. There could arguably be other divisions made regarding the material, but I think there three severe to ease the reading of the analysis. Please find a complete list of the accounts in chapter six, section 6.1.

### 4.2.1 False response, International Guilt and the Memory of Rwanda

Gill Lusk's account *False Premise and False Response to the Darfur Crisis*, puts the events of Darfur in a context where the narrative is described as the Khartoum regime's deliberate politics of achieving Islamic purification. Lusk *claims* that the repeated emphasis on Arab-versus-African ethnicity, suited the Khartoum regime well, since it was "deflecting attention from both its national and international Islamist "civilization project" and its "ethnic cleansing" program (genocide if you prefer) in Darfur" (2008:172).

Lusk only comments on the events (1, 5) where she holds that the crisis was already on its way in 2002, but that the rewriting of history started with the "rebel attacks" on the government installations in February 2003 (2008:170). She writes that it began when the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) became more military. Lusk describes the event (5) when the SLA created headlines by destroying aircraft at the airport, as an excuse for the regime to use, in order to reorganize and continue having its way in Darfur (2008:172).

Lusk's strongest *information* is that two obviously linked modifications of history have occurred. This being that the fighting only started with the SLM attacks in February event (1), and that the conflict was described as rebellion or resource/tribal war. For Lusk this is a result of the contemporary notion that history does not matter, and the skilfulness of the Sudanese regime in manipulation events (2008:172).

This interpretation differs from the one of Bechtold, since he argues that the regime was busy negotiating with Sudan Peoples' Liberation

Movement (SPLM) in the south and had *no time to respond to the attacks* in Darfur (Bechtold, 2009:155). This is interesting to note, since the regime is given very different roles in the two narratives, one of “skilful of manipulating” and the other of “unable to respond”.

Lusk provides a version of history that asserts that the ruling elite and many of the leaders of Sudan have come from three riverain Northern tribes. The two largest, traditional and traditionalist Northern political parties are the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) are both dynastic based on the Mahdi and Mirghani families respectively. She writes that “it is hardly surprising that ethnicity remains pretty constant in Northern politics (...) customarily, Northern Sudanese are supposed to marry the closest available cousin; no melting pot here, then“ (2008:168).

The *warrant* of Lusk’s article deals with the notion that the National Islamic Front (NIF) wanted monopoly of the interpretation of the faith, Lusk holds and explains that this meant “persecution and cooption” with the Umma party and DUP, but in the underdeveloped Darfur, it meant Genocide (2008:173).

Derren Brunk’s *Dissecting Darfur: Anatomy of a Genocide Debate*, opens with the premise that the Rwandan genocide was a prominent historical referent and framing mechanism for the Darfur crisis. The tenth anniversary of the 1994 Rwandan genocide “replayed the message of ‘never again’ before an attentive international audience “(2008:38). According to Brunk, Darfur was previously seen as a marginalized conflict and emerged as a prominent cause for concern in a reflective context. Clearly, Brunk *claims*, the memory and meaning of Rwanda is “tightly woven into the current Darfur debate (2008:38)”

The narrative begins with event (16) when the UN coordinator for Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, declared that “the only difference between Rwanda and Darfur now is the numbers involved (2008:26)”. Brunk provides the *information* that although a vast number of things separated these two unique regions of Africa, the comparison first publicly expressed by Kapila found widespread significance with politicians and observers of the international community. Brunk states that “Darfur entered international concern as a reincarnation of the Rwandan past, rather than as an independent and novel event (2008:26)”.

Brunk scrutinizes the events (1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19), which are many of the events related to proving and reaffirming his main argument. He further asserts that the framing of the Darfur crisis led it go from a humanitarian crisis to a political and genocidal one.

Intriguing to note s that event (15) is not found in the narrative of Brunk. Event (15) is mentioned in the article of Smith and he claims that the newspapers New York Times and Le Monde published articles in

January of 2004, where “the Darfur crisis was labelled ‘genocide’ almost from the moment it first attracted attention (Smith, 2011:180)”. This would be three months prior to the statement of Kapila.

Brunk provides the *warrant* that “a survey of 19 British national newspapers between 1 January 2003 and 31 March 2004 identified 19 articles mentioning ‘Darfur’, though not a single instance of ‘Darfur’ appeared in an article headline during this period (2008:28f)”. After March 2004, he writes that the international response underwent a rapid transformation, through the month of April, Darfur featured in 27 articles nationwide in the UK.

#### 4.2.2 An Ambiguous Debate about Genocide

In his article *The debate over genocide in Darfur, Sudan*, Michael Kelly sets out to describe the debate, but does more than simply that. He offers a narrative about “Arab” versus “Black” and tells that the aim of the politics of president al Bashir’s government is to require oil. He writes that “this tale begins when the large-scale suffering of the people in Darfur – a western territory in the East African country of Sudan – drew the world’s attention in 2003. The Sudan (...) has always existed simultaneously in two worlds – one Arab, the other Black (2012:206)”.

Kelly asserts that general Omar al-Bashir led the 1989 coup and installed an Arab-dominated and Islamist government and practiced strict Islamic law into the non-Islamic South of Sudan (2012:206). This broke out into a war between the north and the south and later against the west (Darfur). He asks “but why did the government turn its guns from the people of the South onto the people of the West? The easy answer is oil”(2012:208). Kelly argues that the economic future of the Khartoum regime led by al-Bashir is depended upon a continued oil production (2012:208). Thus, Kelly *claims* that there is a pattern which is being repeated. First, by the North-South civil war which was armed by Chinese weapons and served as a proxy war where villages were attacked and land cleared for oil concessions, and the current situation in Darfur.

Kelly presents *information* that by 2001 President al-Bashir’s government awarded the concession of oil-rich southern Darfur in the West to the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). This builds a tight relationship between the Sudanese government and Chinese oil. He writes that “oil and guns tend to mix when security and economic interests overlap in cases such as this. China takes 55% of Sudan’s oil exports and supplies much of Sudan’s weaponry – including almost 90% of its small arms (2012:209)”.

None of the other accounts emphasize China's role in the narrative of Darfur. Smith barely mentions China in his account (Smith, 2011:180) and Lusk writes that both China and Russia have supplied the regime with weapons (Lusk, 2008:173)

The events listed in Kelly's article are (1, 2). However, he does not directly comment on the events, instead he rather focuses on the consequences of the atrocities. Kelly argues that the beginning of the crisis in Darfur, was not invoked by the rebellion event (1), but rather that the rebellion was provoked when the non-Arabized Black agrarian villages were defending their land against marauding Arab and Arabized Black rival tribes and militias known as the *janjaweed* (2012:206f).

Kelly's *warrant* is that Beijing uses its influence and its veto as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council to politically protect Sudan from censure whenever possible (2012:208f).

The authors Vanrooyen et al. of the article *Employment of a livelihoods analysis to define genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan*, write a narrative from the perspective of the victims. It is a detailed encounter where they explain the atrocities that have been committed. The central notion of the narrative is the description of humanitarian and human rights violations which include starvation as a method of war and destruction or removal of objects considered indispensable for survival of civilian populations (2008:356).

Their *claim* is that prior studies have attempted to count the loss of life due to direct violence in the region, while their study finds evidence of purposeful destruction of the livelihoods of a significant proportion of the people of Darfur (2008:343).

They begin the narrative by stating that the GoS and their proxy forces the *janjaweed* military, have waged a war against the non-Arab civilian population of the Darfur region. They include the events (2, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33), which is fitting, since it deals with the perpetrators attacking the victims and the international community's response to these atrocities. Interesting to note is that they do not mention the events of (1, 5) which in most other narratives is described as rebellion that sparked the crisis. In the account of Vanrooyen et al. the current crisis of Darfur seems to appear out of nowhere since they do not write about the historical context.

They instead lay heavy weight on the testimonies of the victims, which is presented as *information* to support their claim. The victims stories testify that the *janjaweed* and the GoS had deliberately worsen the conditions of life for the victims making it virtually impossible to survive.

Vanrooyen et al. use the *warrant* to link the information to the claim by displaying parts of the study which has documented the use of racial appellation and offensive language by the perpetrators towards the non-

Arab ethnic groups during the attacks. This reassures that the perpetrators intent was to destroy a particular group of people (2008:353).

Kledja Mulaj in *Forced Displacement in Darfur, Sudan: dilemmas of Classifying the Crimes*, describes the narrative as a conflict, in which the four main factors of understanding its origins are: land, settlement of disputes, national policies, and ideology (2008:28). Mulaj gives a historical background where she writes about the important set of issues related to land jurisdiction. Mulaj holds that these issues led to an escalation of more common and bloodier disputes between the ethnic groups. Subsequently the Khartoum, Darfur's regional government, allocated fewer resources to maintain law and order, and as a result the system collapsed and communities acquired guns to protect themselves (2008:28).

After Omar al Bashir ceased power and became president in a coup d'état in 1989 a group called the non-Arab Islamists Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) was formed. They took upon themselves to fight against political marginalisation in Darfur. Later, Mulaj explains, the elite of the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa communities established the Darfur Liberation Front, renamed the Sudan Liberation Movement/ Army (SLA) in 2003 (2008:29). She writes that all these groups were involved in the conflict and responsible for killings.

This is in stark contrast with the narrative of Vanrooyen et al. whose narrative is written as there were only one-sided killings. The difference is that in the account of Mulaj the current situation of Darfur is explained as a conflict whereas in the accounts of Vanrooyen et al. and Hagan & Kaiser they are referred to as genocidal killings.

The central aim of Mulaj is to present the terminological debate surrounding the atrocities in Darfur and shed light on the differences between "ethnic cleansing" and genocide. She *claims* that the difference is that genocide is concerned with the extermination of targeted people, and "ethnic cleansing" is concerned with their removal and dispossession (2008:39). Mulaj holds that the atrocities in Darfur should be labelled "ethnic cleansing" and she does not refer to the events as a crisis, nor to specific groups as victims, but rather that they are actors of counter-insurgency.

The events which Mulaj include in her narrative are (5, 6, 24), she is not primarily concerned with the international community's response to the conflict, but rather examines the implications of the confusion about the terminology of genocide and "ethnic cleansing".

The *information* she provides to support the claim is that a new convention of mass expulsion which considers "ethnic cleansing" to be a special case, should be negotiated and adopted by the UN General

Assembly, or that an appropriate protocol may be added to the ones of related treaties (2008:40).

She ends with the *warrant* and argues that “weak and unspecific law in relation to ethnic cleansing and a misleading analogy with genocide” will lead to the “extent that genocide will be devalued and cheapened whereas the nature of ethnic cleansing will be obscured rather than explained”(2008:40).

John Hagan and Joshua Kaiser’s article *The displaced and dispossessed of Darfur: explaining the sources of a continuing state-led genocide* is written as a narrative about state-led killings of the government of Sudan (GoS). The intention of the perpetrators is clear and the atrocities were committed as partial extermination and elimination of the victims from Darfur. The victims are “Black Africans” predominant from the ethnic groups of Zaghawa, Masalit and the Fur. The perpetrators are Musa Hilal commonly identified as the head of the Arab *janjaweed* militias and leader figures of the GoS including president Omar al-Bashir and deputy minister Ahmad Harun.

There is a cleavage along Arab/non-Arab lines in livelihood and language, and that is today combined with attention to subtle perceived differences in skin tone. All this amplified, Hagan and Kaiser assert, when al-Bashir seized the power by a military coup in 1989 and excluded any non-Arabs from his government. Moreover, this created more polarization between the groups identified as non-Arab and the Arab, although they were both predominantly Muslim. The authors state that this collectively framed the differences in racially defined terms (2011:5f).

Hagan and Kaiser’s main *claim* is that intentional state-led attacks on food and water massively displaced Black Africans in Darfur from February 2003 to August 2004 constitute genocide (2011:1).

The narrative of Hagan and Kaiser include events (1, 2, 8, 9, 11, 16) and have a central focus on those who are identified as the perpetrators. There is little mentioning of the attacks by the SLA/SLM and JEM or any other actors for that matter. An example of how the events are used to fit the discourse and claim is event (8). This is when Hilal and Harun made a public speech which according to Hagan and Kaiser was characterised as “very racist” (2011:6). This event is not mentioned in any other of the accounts, nor is the role of Hilal and Harun underlined as in the narrative of Hagan and Kaiser.

The *information* that Hagan and Kaiser provide is that the 1948 Genocide Convention include extermination by mass killing and elimination through forced migration as two distinct elements of genocide. The argue that “genocide scholars and public discourse emphasize extermination by killing, but they give far less explanatory attention to the

elimination processes that the Genocide Convention describes as ‘deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction’“(2011:1).

To confirm the linkage between the claim and information, Hagan and Kaiser provide the *warrant* that the shortage of food and water display how the tactics of the perpetrators intentionally aimed for genocidal elimination of group life in this region (2011:20). This is done by the authors giving thorough descriptions of testimonies by the victims.

### 4.2.3 A Call for Complexity

Peter Bechtold has in his article, *Darfur, the ICC and American Politics* written a narrative in which he tries to enrich and add complexity to the events of Darfur. Bechtold states that the politics of Darfur have very much to do with completion over limited recourses of land and water and that losers are the smaller “Arab” tribes who usually are relatively poorer in Darfur than the more settled ‘Africans’. These interest aggressions, led to the formation of the two political movements the Zaghawabased JEM and the more Fur- and Masalitbased SLM (2009:156). These two groups initiated the current Darfur crisis by attacking the government events (1, 5).

Bechtold’s *claim* is that the outsiders concerned about Darfur oversimplified the situation and could be grouped into three categories. First, there are Western activists who “insist that ‘justice for the victims’ must prevail in Darfur regardless of political consequences“(2009:149f). Second, there are the “realists” among political actors and observers, who admit that justice is a most worthwhile principle but “should not take precedence over peace”(Ibid.). Third there are the “academic experts on Sudan in Europe and the United States who reject the genocide charges, pointing to shared responsibility among rebels, government forces and proxies”(Ibid).

In the narrative of Bechtold, events (1, 4, 5, 22, 23, 24, 30) are covered where he gives detailed information about the formation and attacks by the JEM and SLM. He states that the Khartoum government was focused on negotiating with the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the south and was in no position to directly respond in Darfur. Bechtold also holds that a large proportion of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) was recruited from the impoverished region of Darfur. He states that the SAF “could not be trusted to shoot at their cousins. What to do? The regime decided to revive an old tactic used in parts of the southern campaign, i.e., arm tribes with historic animosities against the current rebels and let them do the fighting”(2009:155).

Bechtold's *information* comes by writing that the journalist Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times advocated for action against "genocidaires" in Khartoum. He did so, because he went to a Chadian refugee camp, met and hired a Zaghawa translator to accompany him to Zaghawa land in Western Darfur, and later generalized his singular experience to describe what has been going on in all Darfur (2009:154).

Bechtold de-emphasize the importance of the racial/ethnic differences among the people in Darfur to secure the argument that Westerners have imported those concepts. As a result, he at the same time downplays the experiences of the targeted groups which the narratives of Vanrooyen et al. and Hagan & Kaiser strongly underlined.

Bechtold uses the *warrant* to assert that several scholars have documented grim fighting in Darfur throughout the 1980s and 1990s battles involving Fur, Rizaigat, Masalit, Abbala, Zaghawa and Baqqara tribes. Often these battles pitted landless tribes, usually "Arab" against those with recognized Dars (2009:154). He assesses that the events of Darfur are neither genocidal nor specifically special in Darfur's history. Bechtold writes that "mass killings, yes; crimes against humanity, yes; forced dislocation of large numbers of innocent civilians, yes – but genocide, no (2009:160)".

Stephen Smith's, *Sudan: In a Procrustean Bed with Crisis*, gives a multifaceted and broad narrative of the crisis in Darfur. Smith argues that the historical representation of Darfur has become very oversimplified and put into a context of a genocide discussion. He writes that the civil war in Sudan spans half a century. There is a large variety of explanations for this permanence of conflict and it is premised on the diverse civilizational foundations of the Sudanese state.

However, he *claims* that none of these explanations are entirely comprehensive and that the scholarship only provides a "palimpsest" of the multilayered manuscript, where the erased and overwritten are difficult to understand and often confusing (2011:184).

It is difficult to know, Smith *informs*, of who manipulates whom in the interaction between the "strong" and the "weak". His example is that the racialized interpretation of the Darfur conflict undeniably has local roots, but it would not have manifested in such a way if it was not for the imported and re-exported Western media (2011:184). Smith adds "in the process, the genocide label has become, for the rebels in Darfur, their ultimate weapon and, for the outside world and namely the American public, a Rosetta stone for what otherwise might have remained senseless killings"(2011:184f).

The events that are found in Smith's narrative are (5, 6, 15, 21, 30), where he pays little attention to the atrocities committed by the (GoS) but more about the consequences of labelling these as genocide.

Smith puts forward the *warrant* and states that local realities are translated into global concepts and, in return, global concepts come to influence the local realities they are supposed to cover. He reaches a conclusion which he puts provocatively: "as conflict analysis/resolution cannot be practiced in a power vacuum, it is a warlord in its own right" (2011:185).

## 4.3 Emplotment – How do they relate?

### 4.3.1 Assessing the Chronicle

When analyzing the chronicle, the immediate finding is the numerous of "gaps" between the past events, and therefore in the narratives from which they are drawn. As an example, in year 2003 there are gaps between the events (6 and 7), (8 and 9) (10 and 11), as a result the narratives do not cover the months of, May, August, October and November. Should we think that nothing happened during this months? The historical record is simply too varied for the narratives to include all the events of the past. This consequently assists as proof of White's claim that the events in a chronicle "*does not consist in the fact that they occurred* but that, first of all, *they were remembered* and, second, that *they are capable of finding a place* in a chronologically ordered sequence" (my emphasis, White, 1980:23). By assessing the chronicle and the 33 events which are found in the narratives, I argue that only some chosen parts are included in the comprehension of Darfur's history during the years 2003-2007 (cf. Campbell, 1998a:36).

The second insight I have identified is that, the listing of events *does not constitute a historical account*. As Campbell puts it "listing the events in this form [chronicle] does not provide a narrative account for the events and cannot reveal either the existence or salience of one story over another" (Campbell, 1998a:36). White's most important statement is therefore verified, that *for there to be a historical account*, the events need to be *emplotted in a narrative*. He also argued that the historical record does not present itself with inherent meaning, but that the narrator is responsible for that (White, 1980:27). I therefore direct my attention

towards how the narratives are written in relation to the others they represent (Campbell, 1998a:43).

### 4.3.2 Aesthetic and Moral Choices

The three general themes which I distinguished within the narratives in section 4.2, only serves *as an overview of the topics* which the accounts are concerned with.

There are a lot of discrepancies within the three groups and all of the accounts have different understandings of the current situation and have chosen different perspectives. They all have, as White would have argued, made these choices upon *aesthetic*, and more significantly *moral* grounds. White asks “has any historical narrative ever been written that was not informed not only by moral awareness but specifically by the moral authority of the narrator”(White, 1980:24)?

I will now analyze and exemplify what role the accounts have given the different actors. I will discuss the moral and aesthetic choices of the authors and thus illustrate White’s theory regarding this. I do this by highlighting three central issues that arise when the narratives are scrutinized in relation to each other and these are concerned separately under the following sections.

#### 4.3.2.1. Responsibility of the Actors and the Dichotomizing of Identity

In some of the narratives there is a strong emphasis on the accountability of the government of Sudan and the stories are cast as “evil” vs. “good”, or as “weak” vs. “strong”. These stories are found in the accounts of Kelly, Hagan & Kaiser, Vanrooyen et. al. and Lusk.

In Kelly’s narrative we read that accountability should be directed to the GoS, since they started their killing campaign to require oil, whereas Lusk assigns responsibility to the GoS because they wanted to cover up their campaign of Islamic purification. These two contrasting narratives serve to illustrate how authors shed away from their role as observers and present subjective narrativizations to fit their overall argument or *claim*.

In the accounts of Hagan & Kaiser and Vanrooyen et al. we are told a story about one-sided killings and more specifically genocidal killings. Both accounts omit event (5) which would deteriorate their narrative casted as “strong” vs. “weak”. The attacks were performed by representatives of the targeted group which they victimize in their accounts. There lies a risk in this, since the reader is invited to take pity

and sympathize with the target groups and ultimately disregard them to be able of resistance.

Even though Bechtold challenges the notion of dichotomizing the people of Darfur into categorizes of Arab vs. Non Arab, he states in his account that “this situation would be challenging enough if the country and its people were homogeneous. Unfortunately, Sudan is one of the world’s most heterogeneous nations” (Bechtold, 2009:151).

This is, in my opinion, an example of identity politics, which reduces the identity of people into an intractable problem. Bechtold does not simply describe the situation of Darfur but reinforces the logic of “problems of heterogeneity” and thus invites for a “solution” which in the case of Darfur meant killings.

Kelly’s account disregards many of the historical inclinations and the complexity of the different identities of people of Darfur. Their identity is reduced to the dichotomies of “Black” vs. “Arab” whereas in several of the other accounts such as Bechtold’s, Lusk’s and Smith’s, this categorization is contested. By dichotomizing the identities of people and reducing complexity one arrives at a story which does not entail the richness of reality it claims to represent. Additionally as Campbell has argued the authors become agents of the reality they merely claim to explain (cf. Campbell, 1998a:56).

#### 4.3.2.2. Different Interpretations of a Historical Moment

In this section I exemplify one significant historical event which is mentioned in several of the accounts that very well shows how past events are used to fit the *discourse* of the narrative and the *overall explanation* of the current situation of Darfur. This event is when Omar al-Bashir took power in a coup d’etat in 1989.

In the narrative of Hagan & Kaiser it is explained as “Omar al-Bashir, who seized the presidency with a military coup in 1989, more *brutally excluded* non-Arabs from his government“(my emphasis, Hagan & Kaiser, 2011:5) and in Mulaj it is written that “Omer al Bashir, who came to power by means of a coup d’etat in 1989, initially *sought to broaden the base of the Islamic movement* in Sudan from the Arab elites to non-Arab Muslims” (my emphasis, Mulaj, 2008:29). There is also a difference in how the accounts understood the level of violence of the coup. Bechtold writes that “it *punished* members of the former regime *more drastically* than any earlier government since independence. This led to accusations of *massive human-rights violations* and a significant exodus of political refugees” (my emphasis, Bechtold, 2009:152). In Smith’s account he states that “on 30 June 1989, a *bloodless coup* brought to power a junta presided over by General Omar al-Bashir” (my emphasis, Smith, 2011:174). How

could the accounts have narrativized and understood this event so differently? This serves to reaffirm White's theory regarding employment.

#### 4.3.2.3. A Question of the Right Label

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the central concerns in the accounts have been the matter of genocide. I will consider this concern in two ways; what genocide is understood to be and what the international community's response has been to the alleged genocide. Whether the current situation of Darfur constitutes of genocide or not, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

First, the account of Mulaj, on the one hand, and the accounts Vanrooyen et al. and Hagan & Kaiser, on the other, disagree about two things. Their examination of the past events, how they have written the narratives and what they assert "ethnic cleansing" and genocide to be. Vanrooyen et al. and Hagan & Kaiser write their narrative as stories of *one-sided killings* and Mulaj, on the contrary, write her narrative as *conflict* where all the actors of the conflict are responsible for killings. Additionally, she argues that the crimes committed constitute "ethnic cleansing". There is thus a *clash of narratives*, where the authors have different ways of interpreting the past events.

Moreover they disagree on whether or not "ethnic cleansing", or *forceful displacement* as Vanrooyen et al. and Hagan & Kaiser call it, is a part of genocide. Mulaj claims that "ethnic cleaning" and genocide are two separate crimes and uses the events of Darfur to argue that "ethnic cleansing" should be made in to hard law. Vanrooyen et al. and Hagan & Kaiser use the past events to argue for their case "that forceful displacement and/or purposeful destruction of the livelihoods" are evidence and initially a part of genocide.

This vividly displays how the *claim* and hence the overall explanation of the accounts inflicts on how the narrative is cast or emplotted. The accounts adopt contrasting versions of the past and understand the concepts differently.

Secondly, the accounts of Brunk and Smith adopt a perspective focusing on the international community's role in the current situation of Darfur and give dissimilar reasons of how and why the international community has responded as it did. As discussed above Brunk claims that the genocide label was brought by the analogy of Rwanda. Smith on the other hand emphasizes that the label was brought by an oversimplification of the Western media which used this label to gain empathy and to explain the events as something else than senseless killings. These two contrasting narratives make use of different events and leave out events that would weaken the discourse of the narrative.

But more importantly, they highlight the consequences of labelling the situation in Darfur as genocide. They both discuss how the sometimes too

simple analysis of the Darfur crisis created a segregation and hence an expectation of an immediate end to the violence. Smith uses the event (27), the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan, as an example to affirm that labelling the crisis as genocide had severe consequences. He writes that “by January 2005, for the first time in history, both the legislative and the executive power in the United States had stigmatized an ongoing conflict as ‘genocide’”(Smith 2011:180).

## 5 Final Reflection and Conclusions

History *does not* always repeat itself. The way of thinking always repeats itself. It is therefore inevitably important that attention is directed towards the way authors narrativize past events such as the ones of Darfur. White has stated “All stories are fiction” (White, 1980:xxv) which adds to the importance that authors’ interpretation of complex and multilayered issues are sensitive regarding the relationship with the other they represent.

I have extensively demonstrated how eight different narratives present their version of the past and how they have done so by inclinations of their moral and aesthetic choices. My main findings and issues deserving critical reflections are: how authors assign responsibility to the different actors; the reduction of complexity regarding the identity of people; how post factum constructions of events are adapted to prove an argument and the discrepancies in understanding which crimes the events constitute of. All these topics have been discussed throughout the thesis, I only aim here to problematize possible consequences and provide thoughts for further consideration.

Firstly, when accounts explicitly or implicitly assign accountability to certain actors they ultimately become agents of the realities they merely claim to explain. If the role of the author is to be an observer, she or he cannot adopt a certain position in the conflict, because by doing so, the author indirectly adopts a participating role, such as the actors involved in the conflict.

Second, if accounts diminish the possibility of the people having multiple identities they fall back on ethnic essentialism, which sequentially is the same type of reasoning that creates fractions amongst groups. As a result, this could possibly invite solutions of “homogeneous territory” which not seldom are associated with dreadful consequences.

Third, White’s theory has enabled me to question and examine how the different accounts relate to one another. Through this, I have become aware of how authors interpret and narrativize past event differently and use historical facts to fit their overall argument. This has left me with the conviction that more careful and critical readings should be done and that I have to concern myself when engaging interpretation of historical events. Fourth and final, I have found that disagreement in labelling the atrocities has invoked a lot of accounts to debate and discuss which label is the appropriate one. It would be naïve at best to argue that labels do not matter, they matter a great deal. My aim was never to come to an answer of which label is the right one, but I assert that examining the accounts’ *arguments* and *they way they have understood the history* of Darfur is of

utmost importance. I hold this combination is crucial and provides much clarity to the reasons of discrepancies.

This thus leads me to suggest ideas of further research. I propose that more research should critically assess how academic writings, or writings in general, approach the history of their subject. How do they as White has argued, “fictionalize facts in a non-fictional discourse”? I find this important since it is the reality and experiences of people the researcher take on to explain. How do we generate research that does justice to the complexity of reality?

On a final note, I hope that the reader has appreciated the value of narrativity in the representation of reality (White, 1980), considering the clash of narratives, when creating the history of Darfur.

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