Abstract

Focusing on documentaries that resurrect traumatic memories of school tragedies in Kenya, this article demonstrates the centrality of media witnessing in advocacy for human rights. It reads representations of injustices committed by students and, importantly, attributes causal and moral responsibility to them as instigators of arson, gang rape, and murders in schools. The article is anchored on the faith that the witnessing of atrocities drawn from memory builds communal awareness and, thus, vigilance against injustices. Moreover, it posits that knowledge of traumatic encounters drawn from memory enhances the grieving for the human wastage incurred through transgression of internationally recognized right to life. The revival of the mourning process the witnessing facilitates enables deep reflections on the possible lessons drawn from the occurrences. The advocacy of this nature purposes to procure a transformed society where the lives and fundamental rights of individuals as well as communities are respected and protected not only by institutions but also by every member of society. Paramount in the media witnessing advocacy for human rights is the foregrounding of human compassion and empathy in relation to the suffering of the distant other as well as the condemnation of political networks and perceptions bent on defeating justice.