Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness

Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness: Perspectives on the Unfinished Journeys of the Past

Edited by

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela
and Chris Van Der Merwe

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Edited by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and Chris Van Der Merwe

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This book is dedicated to Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu, who embodies merciful justice, and continues to inspire so many and to lead with grace and dignity across the globe.

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PREFACE

This book is a product of papers presented at a conference held at the University of Cape Town in 2006 to mark the 10th anniversary of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to celebrate Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 75th birthday. The conference was funded in part by the Fetzer Institute. Special public programmes linked to the conference were made possible by a grant from the Sigrid Trust Foundation.

Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness: Perspectives on the Unfinished Journeys of the Past brings together an interdisciplinary team of scholars and explores the relation between trauma and memory, and the complex, interconnected issues of trauma and narrative (testimonial and literary). It examines transgenerational trauma, memory as the basis for dialogue and reconciliation in divided societies, memorialisation and the changing role of memory in the aftermath of mass trauma, mourning and the potential of forgiveness to heal the enduring effects of mass trauma.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was the first truth commission to hold public hearings about past violations of human rights. Victims and survivors of gross human rights violations witnessed about their individual and collective trauma, while perpetrators from all sides of the political conflict testified about the atrocities they committed as agents of the apartheid state, as collaborators with the state or as liberation fighters against the apartheid government. Since the TRC completed its work and published its first report in 1998, the South African TRC model has been replicated in more than a dozen countries as an alternative approach to prosecutorial justice.

The contributors to this volume reflect the scholarship that has developed across disciplines around themes related to the work of the truth commission. The contributors go well beyond the TRC to explore the possibilities and the limitations of the truth and reconciliation model in different historical contexts. The book covers a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, political theory, literary analysis and history.

The chapters are grouped broadly around the themes of individual and collective trauma, lessons from the South African TRC and potential application of the TRC model, literary and testimonial narratives of trauma, and forgiveness and reconciliation after mass trauma.

In the first chapter, Vamik Volkan addresses the enduring effects of massive trauma on large groups and societies that have suffered systematic oppression and inhumane treatment under totalitarian or dictatorial regimes. Volkan argues that these traumatic effects often persist long after political transition has ushered in change in these societies, and that they may be passed on intergenerationally. While Volkan discusses some of the violent manifestations of intergenerational transmission of trauma in large groups, the next chapter, authored by a team of second-generation descendants of perpetrators and survivors of the Holocaust, discusses bold efforts to break the impact of these traumatic effects. The authors, Beata Hammerich, Johannes Pfäfflin, Peter Pogany-Wnendt, Erda Siebert and Bernd Sonntag, are part of a larger group of Jewish and German psychotherapists and other professionals who have been involved in dialogue with one another for more than ten years. In the chapter the authors present a meticulous examination of their process of dialogue and give a clear account of how their encounter with one another often reflected the unresolved feelings of trauma and guilt unconsciously "handed down" to them by their respective victim and perpetrator parents. Through personal narrative, the authors share their journey of trying to come to terms with the past of their parents from opposite sides of history.

In "The lasting legacy of trauma: Understanding obstacles to resolution following traumatic experiences" Dave Edwards discusses specific outcomes of traumatic experiences at both individual and societal levels. He reviews a range of cognitive interventions that have been used successfully to help individuals heal from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic grief and chronic bitterness. He draws a parallel between, on the one hand, the psychologically healing goals of the TRC, and on the other hand the range of cognitive intervention strategies which he refers to as "pathways to healing."

The next group of chapters examine a range of phenomena that have emerged in non-judiciary processes of social healing in the aftermath of political conflict. Paula Green examines the role of public acknowledgement in the application of models of social healing in the aftermath of political conflict. She offers three case studies of post-war social healing, namely, Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to reflect on lessons learned about acknowledgement and social healing in these countries. In "Forgiveness and Narrative", Charles Griswold outlines several criteria that apply for both the victim and victimiser in the forgiveness process. He emphasises the pivotal role of narrative on both sides of the forgiveness dyad: the offender must offer a clear narrative account of how she or he came to do wrong, "how things are (or were), what happened, and why …". In return, the victim will gain new perspective about the act through the victimiser's narrative account.

The subject of forgiveness is rarely discussed in the context of survivors of the Holocaust, except perhaps as an inappropriate response that ought to be rejected. Dennis Klein draws mainly on two well-known Holocaust memoirists, Simon Wiesenthal and Jean Améry, whose work has come to assume some kind of canonical status in debates on forgiveness and the Holocaust, to address the question of why Holocaust memoirists utterly reject forgiveness. A unique feature of Klein's chapter is in not providing straightforward answers to this question, but rather accentuating the complex ambiguities inherent in rejecting forgiveness in Holocaust memoirs. The next three chapters discuss data from South Africa's TRC. Marleen Ramsey's chapter offers illustrative examples of perpetrators who received forgiveness from survivors and family members of victims and explores the role of empathy in forgiveness. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela also uses an example of an encounter between a perpetrator and mothers of the victims he helped to murder to show how a perpetrator's remorseful apology may lead to the emergence of human reciprocity between family members of victims and the perpetrator. She explores the meaning of forgiveness and addresses the question: What insights might be drawn from the notion of *ubuntu* to understand forgiveness when both victim and the perpetrator are black Africans? Don Foster demonstrates that the main response from perpetrators who appeared before the TRC was denial. Foster draws from interview data with perpetrators from different sides of the political conflict to show that perpetrators fell short of the truth and apologies that are necessary elements of reconciliation. The next chapter by Grace Akello, Annemiek Richters and Ria Reis takes the reader to another conflict region in the African continent. The authors explore some of the fault lines in the reintegration programs designed for child soldiers in Uganda.

The next three chapters return the reader to the subject of forgiveness. Jill Scott explores a model of "poetic forgiveness" and argues that the way to liberation of both victims and perpetrators lies in sincere apology and expression of remorse by the perpetrator. She concludes that forgiveness is a never-ending, impossible "gift" that should be continuously available. Angelo Ferrillo analyses Ian Gabriel's award-winning film, *Forgiveness*, and explores the film's representation of the continuing struggle with the complexities of forgiveness and reconciliation in South Africa. Jennifer Fish reminds us that while the TRC may have succeeded in ushering in the language of forgiveness and reconciliation in a new democratic South Africa, the issue of economic justice remains unresolved. She analyses narratives of domestic workers to examine themes of forgiveness and social change in post-TRC South African society.

Literary narratives play a vital role in the dialogue about past trauma. Chris van der Merwe points out how Afrikaans writers have dealt with the past by telling “counter-narratives”, that is to say, stories going against the lies and half-truths in the official narratives of those in power. Literary narratives, however, are filled with their own ambivalences and ironies. This is an issue explored in Ewald Mengel’s analysis of seminal texts of South African literature. April Sizemore-Barber explores a different kind of narrative form in her analysis of two theatrical pieces which were created in South Africa. She shows how individuals and groups confront the immensely traumatic material that was brought before the TRC through theatre.

The remaining chapters in this volume deal with the theme of memory of a violent and traumatic past. Mary Bock examines TRC testimonies as communal remembering, using the conceptual framework of collective memory. Kay Schaffer’s chapter explores commemorative projects in post-TRC South Africa and contrasts the sites of memory created by the government with “survivor-initiated” projects of memorialisation. In the final chapter Jenny Parkes and Elaine Unterhalter evaluate themes of violence in the narratives of young people from a coloured, lower socio-economic community in Cape Town.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and Chris van der Merwe
University of Cape Town
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FOREWORD

FACING UNFINISHED BUSINESS

MARTHA MINOW

The wrongs of atrocity, genocide and apartheid spiral deep into subsequent generations. For survivors and their families, psychological trauma can impair trust, communication, connection and well-being; children and grandchildren born after the events often receive the bitter legacies in their own experiences with unexplained sadness and anxiety. Children and grandchildren of perpetrators bear their own burdens as they live with the facts of—or silence about—their parents' conduct. Individuals' pain reverberates in societal cleavages and national political and economic instability. Debates over how to teach the nation's past erupt decades after the events. A seemingly simple matter of the name for a national holiday erupts into prolonged disputes.

Dealing with terrible past events is "unfinished business" for societies, families and individuals long after international media turns to other matters. Yet calling it "business" is perhaps too bland and naming it unfinished may be too hopeful. The German novelist Günter Grass, who has publicly struggled with how to acknowledge his own experiences in Nazi Germany, vividly points to the "clogged up toilet of the past" that can stymie and mess up a society's daily life.[1]

Understanding and attending to the repercussions of mass violence and atrocity challenge even the most insightful psychologists, creative artists, acute philosophers and other sensitive observers of the human spirit. That is why this collection of perceptive essays by individuals with diverse training and global experiences is especially commendable. Ranging across social psychology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, literature, linguistics and art, each of these chapters exhibits specificity, honesty and clarity about matters that are often avoided in both daily life and scholarship. In describing human agony and isolation and in exploring moments of shame and moments of forgiveness, the chapters exemplify the respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each person that is crucial to the appreciation that helps people work through trauma.

We learn how Cypriot Turks kept caged parakeets as symbols of their own experiences until even this did not work anymore. We learn of Kuwaiti fathers who withdrew emotionally from their children after the invasion led by Saddam Hussein, and how some of their children came to identify with the invader. The child of a Holocaust survivor finds a moment of insight while listening to a South African psychologist recount her efforts to listen to a chief perpetrator of apartheid-era brutalities. An act of forgiveness comes to relieve the powerlessness and embitterment of an atrocity survivor. A notorious perpetrator first gains appreciation when he washes the feet of survivors but then is castigated when he holds back from the whole truth and defends himself against criminal sanction. Initially with anger and resistance, mothers of young men murdered by the secret police meet with the informant who led to their deaths, but ultimately forgive him and accept his effort to claim membership in their community. Grassroots survivor-initiated memorials produce more unsettling, contested and inviting narratives than do official monuments and events.

The chapters share wisdom earned by digging deeply into the language, emotions and art of people living in many post-conflict societies. One chapter examines the subtle and not-so-subtle experiences of degradation and subordination of domestic workers in South Africa, neglected by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process even as the domestic labour experience reproduces much of the vulnerability and dehumanisation of apartheid. Another chapter explores how the son of a perpetrator needs to recognise and mourn the human face of his father even while acknowledging his own shame about his father’s actions. Communal activities exempting child soldiers from punishment fail to reintegrate those individuals as they are never held accountable for the violence they know that they committed. Attunement to psychological experience requires attention to the register of moral responsibility.

In the close listening and readings by the chapter authors, works of fiction emerge as imaginative spaces that introduce irony and ambivalence as much as judgement and catharsis; artistic works convey the limits of expression but also open up unrealised possibilities. Repetition of the phrases “I couldn’t believe” and “I can’t remember” in fiction works mirror halting statements by individuals in therapeutic settings.

Several authors examine how for some victims and survivors, acts of forgiveness alleviate psychological burdens and offer a step towards their own healing and self-forgiveness, even while stopping well short of reconciliation or harmonious collaboration between victims, perpetrators and bystanders. Yet different political and historical contexts shape the psychological challenges and processes for individuals. Some perpetrators and survivors live side by side; others live far apart and have no plan to build a shared world. These kinds of differences significantly mould the processes of dealing with the past. Even so, the relinquishment of resentment that is central to forgiveness surfaces as a task and challenge for survivors across many settings and generations. We learn how testimonies by Holocaust survivors refrain from explicit forgiveness and yet include forgiving undercurrents.

The five-volume final report of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission includes a striking acknowledgment of its own incompleteness and a hope that future generations of students, historians and artists will examine and revisit the materials that the Commission assembled.[2] This volume bears pungent fruits from the examinations and re-examinations of post-conflict trauma in South Africa, the Balkans, Germany and elsewhere, and in so doing, offers sustenance for the hard, unfinished business left by cruel atrocities.

Notes

[1] This is from a book by Günter Grass (2002), *Im Krebsgang. Eine Novelle,* quoted in Wette, W. 2006. *Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality,* trans. D. Lucas Schneider. Cambridge: Harvard University.

[2] Foreword by Chairperson Most Reverend D.M. Tutu Archbishop Emeritus, Final Reform, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Volume One, Chapter One, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 (29 October 1998), http://www.truth.org.za/final/1chap1.htm:

> "… The volume of material that has passed through our hands will fill many shelves in the National Archives. This material will be of great value to scholars, journalists and others researching our history for generations to come. From a research point of view, this may be the Commission's greatest legacy." (Par. 4)
>
> "The report that follows tries to provide a window on this incredible resource, offering a road map to those who wish to travel into our past. It is not and cannot be the whole story; but it provides a perspective on the truth about a past that is more extensive and complex than any one commission could, in two and a half years, have hoped to capture." (Par. 5)
>
> "Others will inevitably critique this perspective—as indeed they must. We hope that many South Africans and friends of South Africa will become engaged in the process of helping our nation to come to terms with its past and, in so doing, reach out to a new future." (Par. 6)

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEXT CHAPTER: CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIETAL TRAUMA

VAMIK D. VOLKAN

Keeping in mind the history of South Africa, this chapter focuses on the consequences of societal trauma at the hands of "others" after the historical conditions that created the trauma have been drastically modified and/or no longer exist. There are various types of shared catastrophes that can traumatise a society. These include, for example, natural disasters, such as earthquakes; accidental disasters like the 1986 Chernobyl incident; or the unexpected death of a leader, such as the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Other societal traumas occur due to destruction caused by enemy groups, as happens in wars and ethnic or religious conflicts (see Paula Green in chapter four). Sometimes it is a political system within a country that traumatises a section of the population, as happened in South Africa under apartheid (Maiello 2001; Sinason 2001; Eagle and Watts 2002) or in Albania during the dictator Enver Hoxha's regime (Volkan 1997).

Even though natural disasters may cause massive societal grief, anxiety and change, victims tend ultimately to accept the event as fate or the will of God (Lifton and Olson 1976). After man-made accidental tragedies, survivors may blame a small number of individuals or governmental organisations for their carelessness. However, when a trauma results from war, war-like conditions or from a devastating political system, there is an identifiable enemy or oppressing group that has *deliberately* inflicted pain, suffering and helplessness on its victims. Such trauma affects the victimised society in ways that are entirely different from those of natural or accidental disasters or the unexpected loss of a leader, even though sometimes it may be difficult to differentiate between types of disasters.

Traumatising Political Systems and Post-trauma Everyday Life for Generations to Come

When a society becomes the deliberate target of other people's aggression, the victimised group has to deal with five interrelated psychological phenomena, namely: (1) a shared sense of shame, humiliation and guilt, (2) a shared inability to be assertive, (3) a shared identification with the oppressor, (4) a shared difficulty or even inability to mourn losses, and (5) a shared transgenerational transmission of trauma. Other phenomena experienced are related to these five main ones. Before examining them individually, let me add that my focus here is on societies that are treated inhumanely due to political systems, such as slavery in the United States, apartheid in South Africa, totalitarian regimes in former communist countries, or other societies under dictatorships. Even when political systems change and traumatising elements are removed, individual and societal responses to the previously devastating system do not disappear quickly. Depending on the severity of the traumatising events and how long they lasted, the trauma shared by the victimised group and their descendants may continue for decades. One major reason for this is the presence of the abovementioned psychological phenomena in the minds of those belonging to the victimised group. These phenomena attach themselves to real-life issues in the affected societies, such as continuing poverty, inexperience in a democratic way of life, corruption in the new political system, and international manipulation. Let us look at them more closely.

1. Shame, Humiliation and Guilt

The experience of shame and humiliation is psychologically unbearable, and affected individuals resort to various defensive mental mechanisms (cf. Angelo Ferrillo in chapter twelve on the film *Forgiveness*). In a war situation or under oppressive regimes individuals' shame and humiliation usually become intertwined with other disturbing affects such as guilt feelings. For example, surviving while friends and relatives perish or finding security while others are subjected to torture induces survivor's guilt, even though it may be unconscious. Also, when a society has undergone a massive trauma, especially a chronic one, victimised adults may endure shame, humiliation and guilt for being unable to look after their children properly (Volkan 1997).

I also observed firsthand the consequences of shame, humiliation and guilt as they occurred on the island of Cyprus. Two major ethnic groups in

Cyprus – Greeks and Turks – lived side by side on the island for over four centuries, first under the Ottoman and later under the British Empires. In 1960 Cyprus gained its independence. Within a few years interethnic violence erupted and Cypriot Turks were forced to live in enclaves restricted to only three percent of the island, until 1974. That year Turkish forces from the mainland (Turkey) arrived on the island and de facto divided it into two sections, northern Turkish and southern Greek. Over thirty years later, the "Cyprus problem" still exists. The list of destructive events that took place on the island from the early 1960s until now is too long to recount in this chapter, but it includes trauma that affected both Cypriot Greek and Cypriot Turkish communities. For the purpose of illustrating shared shame, humiliation and guilt and shared defences to deal with such feelings, here I will only focus on the experience of the Turkish Cypriots.

Since between 25,000 and 30,000 Cypriot Turks became internally displaced persons between 1963 and 1964, and since the island's Turkish population was only 120,000 at that time, it is clear that a fifth of those living in enclaves were refugees. The eleven-year history of the Cypriot Turkish enclaves may be divided into two periods: 1963 to 1968 when Cypriot Turks were imprisoned in these enclaves, and after 1968 when they were allowed to travel to other enclaves. My focus here is especially on this first period. Many enclave dwellings housed more than one family. Since they were not given building material for fear they might use it for building defences against their enemies, some people built "houses" from whatever material was available to them, and some even lived in man-made caves. They were surrounded by UN as well as Greek Cypriot forces. To compare what it was like during the first period of the enclaves, imagine the overcrowded population of Langa township in Cape Town and picture an imaginary barrier encircling it that forbids anyone to leave. Some of the Cypriot Turkish enclaves were much larger than Langa and included large ancestral houses, although enclaves could also be very small, some no bigger than a school building. Food and medicine were brought in from Turkey under strict UN rules.

How did Cypriot Turks tolerate being imprisoned in enclaves? They raised and nurtured parakeets in cages. Interestingly, parakeets are not native to Cyprus, but apparently, some people owned a few as house pets and within a few years following 1963 there were thousands in cages everywhere, in houses, in grocery stores and coffee shops.

Elsewhere (Volkan 1979) I examine Cypriot Turks' bird hobby extensively, but briefly stated, the birds in cages represented the Cypriot Turks' imprisoned self-images. They displaced these helpless and humiliated self-images onto the birds, unconsciously sharing the belief that as long as they took care of them they could survive their massive trauma. Focusing on the birds—particularly their reproduction, singing and feeding—protected Cypriot Turks from actually sensing their annihilation anxiety.

In 1968 political pressure on Cypriot Greeks led to the opening of the enclave borders and Cypriot Turks could now visit relatives and friends in other enclaves. However, travelling through the Cypriot Greek-held territories also involved humiliating incidents, and Cypriot Turks tell many moving stories of their experiences of that time. Also, with the borders now opened, the "caged bird" symbol stopped working for them, the bird hobby soon disappeared and, interestingly, people even began to repress their memories of the birds. Now they had to face the reality of being helpless and humiliated directly instead of raising birds, and without this illusion they suffered from depression. They became more aware of feeling guilty because they survived while others died and this also stimulated the appearance of depression. Most people, whenever they could, medicated themselves. Since there was no law against buying medication without prescriptions, self-medication became endemic.

Cypriot Turks were "saved" in 1974, but even today the consequences of their trauma from living in enclaves continue. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine this, but it can be said that Cypriot Turks still possess an "enclave mentality". The main characteristic of the "enclave mentality" is intolerance for certain individuals or organisations within the community that become successful. The society, without being aware of it, becomes aggressive towards the successful ones and tries to bring them down; there is no room for a jewel in a pool of mud.

The story of Cypriot Turks between 1963 and 1968 illustrates that at times direct observation of shame, humiliation and guilt in a traumatised society may be difficult. What we see on the surface may be the society's defence/adaptation against such "bad" feelings, and it is only when such defence/adaptation breaks down that the observation of shame, humiliation and guilt becomes easier.

The Cypriot Turks' trauma in the enclaves was a chronic one, but in other cases societal trauma can occur in a very short time. I observed the rapid development of shame, humiliation and guilt firsthand after the liberation of Kuwait following its invasion by Saddam Hussein's forces. The United States' Ambassador to Kuwait, Nathaniel Howell, Jr, had to remain in the American Embassy surrounded by Iraqi forces for seven months after the invasion of Kuwait. After he returned to the United States, Ambassador Howell joined a team at the University of Virginia's

Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction (CSMHI), an organisation involved in psychopolitical fieldwork in many troubled spots of the world and of which I was the director. The CSMHI received an invitation from the Emir of Kuwait to study post-invasion Kuwait, and CSMHI members travelled to that country during a three-year period to examine the effects of the Iraqi invasion on the Kuwaiti people.

We learned that during the invasion, Kuwaiti fathers were humiliated by the Iraqi soldiers in front of their families. Without actually being aware of it, these fathers wished to hide their shamed and humiliated selves from their children, even after Kuwait was liberated, and they continued to feel guilty for not protecting their youngsters. This led to these fathers withdrawing from their children, which in turn made the children's, especially male children's, identification with their fathers difficult. Instead they identified with the aggressor, Saddam Hussein, and expressed this identification indirectly. For example, during one school play the CSMHI team witnessed, the children applauded the character playing the role of Saddam more than any other character (Volkan 1997).

2. Inability to be Assertive

For a long time we have known that the blocking of external motor activity increases the probability of a psychological breakdown after a trauma; foxhole waiting is more damaging than active warfare (Fenichel 1945). Similarly, a person living under a totalitarian regime, or under the guidelines of apartheid, experiences the blocking of motor activities (such as being barred from certain locations) as well as mental activities (one cannot protest against the authorities because it is too dangerous). This increases the sense of helplessness and causes an inability to be assertive.

When Gaza was under Israeli occupation, Palestinians, before the first Intifada movement, were unable to assert themselves openly. They had to find "secret" ways to do so in order to maintain their pride as Palestinians. One thing they did was paint small stones with the Palestinian national colours and keep them in the pockets of their trousers. When they came to a checkpoint where Israeli soldiers would check their identities and humiliate them, they would put their hands in their pockets and touch the stones. They knew that other Palestinians would do the same (Volkan 1988). Like the Cypriot Turks' parakeet hobby, sharing stones was in the service of defence/adaptations of injury.

To be assertive means finding a non-destructive channel for the expression of aggression. Instead of fighting with or hiding from an opponent, a person with "normal" assertiveness has the ability to say "no".

When circumstances make “normal” channels unavailable, victimised group members turn their aggression inward. This leads to helpless rage and what can be called social masochism. For people in these circumstances, victimhood becomes part of their large-group identity, and even as they complain about being victims, they may have a tendency to reject involvement in processes that might ease their trauma. Meanwhile, the expression of direct rage towards the oppressing group remains life-threatening and often psychologically impossible. Thus, on many occasions direct rage is expressed *between* the members of the victimised group in what can be called social sadism. We know of many occasions when Palestinian groups have turned against each other in Gaza. We see a similar development in South Africa. Eagle and Watts (2002), for example, make reference to 1996 data there describing very disturbing statistics: an average of fifty-two murders a day, a rape committed, on average, every thirty minutes, a car stolen every nine minutes and an armed robbery committed every eleven minutes.

Even after the traumatising conditions are removed, the inability to be assertive may continue for a long time. Actual poverty does not disappear quickly, and this alongside other external factors such as the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, helps to perpetuate helplessness and an inability to be assertive. This, in turn, increases envy and resentment within the formerly victimised group towards those individuals who were able to assert themselves and become rich or important for another reason (Šebek 1994). In this dynamic we see another example of “enclave mentality”. Furthermore, the inability to be assertive increases tensions in subgroups within the society, which further complicates the existing difficulties.

3. Identification with the Oppressor

Anna Freud (1936) described a psychological phenomenon called “identification with the aggressor”. Imagine a male child who is going through the oedipal phase of his life. He, mostly unconsciously, perceives his father as an aggressor as well as a competitor in relation to the child’s love of his mother. The older man can use aggression, at least in the oedipal child’s mind, to punish his son. Accordingly, “identification with aggressor” in *individual* psychology refers to a positive psychological movement in a child’s development, because through such identification the child learns how to become a man himself.

In *large-group* psychology, however, a similar but shared process, the “identification with the oppressor”, usually has negative consequences. When I was involved in bringing together influential Israelis and

Egyptians and other Arabs for years-long unofficial diplomatic talks (Volkan 1988, 2004, 2006), now and then Arabs would accuse Israelis of being like Nazis. The Israelis, of course, perceived such accusations as insults. No Israeli could ever imagine being like a Nazi. Nevertheless, we have seen Jewish individuals in psychoanalysis who identified with Nazis (for a detailed case study see Volkan, Ast and Greer 2002). As a large group, Israelis have opened up the traumatic experience they endured under the Third Reich, examined it in literature, arts, through building museums, and so on. I do not think that their relationship with Arabs can be strictly defined as identification with the oppressor, as some Arabs are inclined to think. To label it as such would be a grave mistake, because it would inhibit the necessary examination of multiple factors that contribute to preserving the chronic large-group difficulties in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, identification with an oppressor can occur in a society. The oppressing group, which limits the victimised group's actions and freedom, if it lasts long enough, becomes internalised as a shared "external superego". Michael Šebek, a psychoanalyst practising in the Czech Republic, who lived under the communist system, was able to observe the oppressed group's identification with what he calls "totalitarian objects" (Šebek 1994).These are characteristics of former oppressors that members of the victimised group carry unconsciously within themselves. Now they do to themselves, or a subgroup within the society or a group outside of the society, what the oppressors did to them.

In post-apartheid South Africa perhaps we could call such internalised objects "racist objects". The shared internalisation of an external superego, such as totalitarian or racist objects, does not disappear when policies and laws become more humane. It creates confusion when the oppression is lifted and when there is a new external environment. This confusion is reflected in a variety of new moral dilemmas and ethical issues. The expression of freedom can be difficult due to the continuation of the totalitarian or racist internal objects. People feel that if they do not overcome the "other", the "other" will overcome them (Šebek 1992). Sometimes, new freedom and the secret wish to defeat the continuing internalised oppressive powers—with the fear this wish induces—combine to support a lack of respect for authority while still fearing it. Criminal acts, such as stealing, result. Thus, the way new freedom is utilised in the post-oppressive period becomes corrupt.

4. Difficulty or Inability to Mourn

“Group mourning” is a key concept in explaining societal processes in everyday life during a post-trauma period. Sharing shame, humiliation and guilt, being unable to be assertive and identifying with the oppressor complicate group mourning and in turn become the main reasons for the transgenerational transmission of trauma—a concept to which I will refer later. In order to understand group mourning I will start with an individual’s mourning.

The loss of an important person or thing initiates grief and mourning. In psychological literature a grief reaction and a mourning process are not often differentiated. A grieving individual, in a sense, keeps hitting his or her head against a wall, a wall that never opens up to allow the dead person or lost thing to return! It is a painful process. A typical grief reaction takes some months to disappear, and may also periodically reappear for a time at the anniversary of the event that produced the loss. In truth, there is no typical grief reaction, because the circumstances of a loss are varied, as are individual degrees of internal preparedness to face significant losses.

Mourning is a more silent, internal phenomenon. It begins when the individual still exhibits a grief reaction and typically continues for years. The physical loss of a person or thing does not parallel the “burial” of the mental representation—a collection of mental images—of the lost person or thing. Obviously the mourner possesses mental images of a person or thing before its loss, but after the loss the mourner—and here I am speaking of adults’ mourning—turns his or her attention to such mental images and becomes preoccupied with them.

It can be said that the adult’s mourning process refers to the sum of mental activities the mourner performs in reviewing and dealing with the mental representation of the lost person or thing. As long as we live we never lose the mental representation of significant others or things, even when they are lost in the physical world. If a mourning process is completed, for practical purposes, we make the mental representation of the lost person or thing “futureless” (Tähkä 1984). The mental representation of the lost item is no longer utilised to respond to our wishes; it has no future. For example, a young man stops having sexual fantasies about his wife some time after she has died. Or, a woman stops dreaming of bossing her underlings at a job from which she had been fired years before. It can be said that we “bury” the mental representation of a lost person or thing when we manage to make them futureless.

During the mourning process mourners review, in a piecemeal fashion, hundreds of mental images of what has been lost and, in so doing, are able to keep aspects of those images within their own self-representation. This is possible due to the mourner's identification with certain aspects of the mental representation of the lost item.

When such identifications are (unconsciously) selective and can help the mourner to enrich his or her own ego functions, the mourning process is considered normal. The mourner, after going through the pain of grief and after spending considerable energy reviewing many mental images of the lost person or thing, "gains" something from the experience. By assimilating the functions of a deceased person, the mourner can now perform such functions himself. A year or so after his father's death, for example, a wayward young man becomes a serious industrialist like his father used to be.

Sigmund Freud (1917), who gave us an excellent description of the psychodynamics of mourning decades ago, was also aware of *unhealthy* identifications. If a mourner related to the lost person or thing with excessive ambivalence while the person still lived or the thing still existed, the mourner may now identify with the mental representations of the lost item in an unhealthy manner. Such persons are unable to create selective, enriching identifications. Instead, they assimilate the mental representation of the lost item "in toto" (Smith 1975, 20) into their self-representation. Accordingly, the love and the hate (ambivalence) that originally connected the mourner to the lost person or thing now turn the mourner's self-representation into a battleground. The struggle between love and hate is now felt within the mourner's self-representation. Freud called this condition "melancholia" (depression).

In studying complications encountered in the mourning processes, my co-workers and I also focused on a specific type of complication, which creates so-called perennial mourners (Volkan 1981; Volkan and Zintl 1993). Perennial mourners do not bring their mourning processes to a practical end, but neither do they develop melancholia. Instead they are doomed to remain preoccupied with aspects of their mourning process for decades to come and even until the end of their own lives. During their daily lives their minds try to link again and again to the mental images of the lost person or thing. There are various degrees of severity of such a condition. Some perennial mourners live miserable lives. Others express their unending mourning in more creative ways, For example, a young mother whose child is killed by a drunken driver champions a social organisation against drinking and driving. Another woman who loses her mother when she is in her early teens becomes a well-known artist in her community, painting angels who represent her mother in heaven.

However, when not obsessed with their creativity, creative mourners feel uncomfortable.

Members of a large group that have been traumatised by others lose people, limbs, homes, land, dignity, prestige and self-esteem. After the oppressive regime is changed, such individuals struggle and cannot easily give up, modify, or make adjustment to the new external reality. The loss of the familiar injured self is compounded with losses that have occurred during the traumatising period of the group's history. Because of the continuation of shame, humiliation, guilt, helpless rage and identification with the oppressor, such a person's mourning process becomes complicated and unending. In both "normal" grief and "normal" mourning there is a degree of anger towards what is lost, as if the mourner wants to say: "How dare you leave me and inflict a narcissistic wound on me?" Such anger helps the mourner, in routine situations, psychologically to accept that a loss has occurred. However, the rage felt by the members of a victimised group, even though it is a helpless rage, becomes unconsciously connected with the "normal" anger of the mourning process and magnifies it. This prevents a "normal" mourning process from taking its course. In addition, mourners' identification with the oppressor creates hidden ambivalence towards their internalised mental representation of their oppressor. Accordingly, after societal and legal changes remove the traumatising external conditions, they face problems mourning the loss of the oppressor as well as of their former victimised selves.

Societies also mourn. Since a society is not one living organism with a single brain, it adjusts to perennial mourning by initiating new *societal* processes associated with loss. For example, an individual perennial mourner's continuing wish to recover a lost object may become a shared process in a society during the post-trauma period and may evolve as a political entitlement ideology. An example of this is what the Greeks call "Megali Idea", as I will describe below. Such societal processes vary according to the severity of the shared trauma and often, more importantly, according to the length of time during which the traumatic situation existed. Sociologist Kai Erikson (1975) states that if the "tissue" of the community after a shared trauma is not broken, the society eventually recovers in what Williams and Parkes (1975) refer to as a process of "biosocial regeneration". For example, during the five years following the deaths of 116 children and 28 adults in an avalanche of coal slurry in the Welsh villages of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale, the birthrate increased significantly—mostly among women who had not lost a child themselves. The increased birthrate made up for the number of lost children.

Therefore, according to these authors, the society as a whole “regenerated” itself without its members being aware of the process.

I have written about “biosocial degeneration” when the shared trauma breaks the tissue of a society (Volkan 2006). For example, after the Chernobyl accident the birthrate in Belarus declined (Volkan 2006). The concepts “biosocial regeneration” and “biosocial degeneration” include more than balancing the previous loss of lives with an increased birthrate or a decreased birthrate due to shared realistic or imagined fear of having deformed children. These concepts also refer to society’s sharing collective cultural or political processes that are destructive or potentially harmful. For example, after the war between the Georgian and South Ossetian forces following the collapse of the Soviet Union, one of the devastating effects of South Ossetian’s inability to mourn their losses, associated with inability to reverse their shame and humiliation, was the statistically significant increase in the number of rapes in South Ossetia (Volkan 2006).

Long-lasting political regimes that aim to humiliate and cause severe losses in a society break the tissue of that society to one degree or another. The mental representation of the historical trauma and how it has been internalised remains in the minds of the members of that society and perpetuates their preoccupation with such representations whenever a new difficult situation arises. In the early 1960s I worked as a young psychiatrist for two years at Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, North Carolina. It was then a segregated mental hospital only for African Americans. I observed the continuing psychological influence of African Americans’ traumatised history in the patients’ psychological expressions. For example, some patients’ delusions of being white reflected the identification with the oppressor. When desegregation occurred, six African-American youngsters, suddenly and without preparation, were enrolled in a previously all-white high school. This became a very difficult situation for the youngsters and they exhibited behaviour that the school authorities perceived to be bizarre. They were diagnosed as experiencing a psychotic condition, and were admitted to Cherry Hospital. While I was working with these youngsters, they collectively wrote poems to express their inner feelings and thoughts. These poems also reflected the continuing influence slavery and segregation had on their psyches, and symbolically expressed what existed in their society (Volkan 1963, 1966). Maurice Apprey, a University of Virginia psychoanalyst originally from Ghana, illustrates a similar concept in his work on how the massive trauma experienced by the ancestors of African-Americans plays a major role in black-on-black crime in the United States (Apprey 1993, 1998).

In order to deal with the biosocial degeneration, the victimised society in perennial mourning may evolve what can be termed entitlement or irredentist ideologies, as I indicated above. This happens especially when losses are caused deliberately by others. Such ideologies create a shared hope that it is possible to recover what has been lost to the enemy, thus justifying the society’s inability to mourn. For example, since the birth of modern Greece in the 1830s, after their struggle for independence and separation from the Ottoman Empire, the Greeks had an ideology called the “Megali Idea”, which was a response to their experience of many “losses” while they were Ottoman subjects. The Megali Idea refers to regaining all of the lands that Greeks considered they had lost to others. This ideology was accompanied by a shared sense of entitlement to reverse helplessness and humiliation, turn passivity to assertion and regain lost objects. Many authors (see Markides 1977; Herzfeld 1986; Koliopoulos 1990; Volkan and Itzkowitz 1994) have written about how the Megali Idea played a significant role in Greeks’ political, social and especially religious lives, since the Greek Orthodox Church was instrumental in keeping the Megali Idea alive and active. Since Greece’s membership in the European Union, its investment in this ideology has been waning.

There are other large groups, such as Serbians and Armenians, that have assimilated victimhood into their shared identity as a response to their difficulty with large-group mourning. (See Emmert 1990 and Markovič 1983 on the Serbian sense of victimhood, and Libaridian 1991 on Armenian responses to a collective sense of loss.)

Entitlement ideologies such as these can continue from generation to generation, which brings us to the concept known as transgenerational transmission of trauma.

5. Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma

Our understanding of transgenerational transmission of trauma at a societal level owes a great deal to studies made of second- and third-generation Holocaust survivors and others directly traumatised under the Third Reich (references to many studies on this topic can be found in Kogan 1995; Kestenberg and Brenner 1996; Volkan, Ast and Greer 2002; see also chapter two by Hammerich et al.). Again, if we want to understand the tenacity of a societal sense of victimisation as it is consciously and unconsciously associated with large-group conflicts, we must first understand the mechanisms at work at an individual level.