



Edited by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition

A Global Dialogue on
Historical Trauma and Memory

Barbara Budrich Publishers



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Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (ed.)

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Barbara Budrich Publishers
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Nelson Mandela.

Acknowledgements

This edited collection is the product of an interdisciplinary conference titled *Engaging the Other: Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition*, which took place at the University of the Free State in December 2012. The conference was followed by a series of research forums, conversations and symposia to explore what it means for victims, perpetrators and bystanders of past historical trauma to live together in the same country and sometimes as neighbours. Various aspects of the conference and the subsequent research meetings were supported through funding from the University of the Free State, the National Research Foundation, and the Ministerial Special Project on the Future of the Humanities and Social Sciences, which was provided for the Reconstruction and Reconciliation Catalytic Project, and the Fetzer Institute. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support from these organisations.

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Most of all, I would like to thank the contributors to this volume for their time and effort in making their contributions and for being available throughout the stages of production in this project. Special thanks to Donna Orange for writing the Foreword for the book, and to Jonathan Jansen for the Epilogue. Finally, I would like to thank the editors for our project at Barbara Budrich. David Newmarch of Grammarline Editing Services provided much needed help in the final stages of the project.

Foreword

Reconciliation without Magic:

Preface Honouring Nelson Mandela

Donna Orange

Faculty and Supervising Analyst

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and at the Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity, New York*

The purpose of freedom is to create it for others
(N. Mandela, Kani, & James, 2010), p. 270.

Nelson Mandela learned Afrikaans. Neither by chance nor by brilliance, nor in the end by force, did he mitigate the fears of the ruling white minority in apartheid South Africa. He studied their language, their history, their culture and habits, even their sports. He practiced his language skills on his prison warders for many years. When he needed to negotiate in secret the freedom and full equality for his comrades and for all his people, he already spoke fluently¹. Former New York Times Johannesburg bureau chief John F. Burns reported an act of “particular kindness” from his press conference at Desmond Tutu’s residence the day after Mandela came out of prison in 1990:

... a white reporter stepped forward and identified himself as Clarence Keyter, the chief political correspondent of the Afrikaans-language service of the state-run broadcasting monopoly, SABC. Sensing Mr. Keyter’s unease, Mr. Mandela shook the reporter’s hand and thanked him, saying that in his last years in prison, when he had been given a radio, he had relied on Mr. Keyter’s reports to learn “what was going on in my country.” Mr. Keyter, stunned had tears welling in his eyes (Burns, 2013), p. A14.

Such an act of kindness became possible, of course, only because Mandela had devoted years to learning Afrikaans, and then possessed the sensitivity to respond in the moment. Few have noticed, in celebrating the life of “the great reconciliator,” his disciplined attention to the specific proficiencies needed

¹ Mac Maharaj: “When we went to prison most of us were not speaking Afrikaans. I argued with Mandela about whether we should study the language. He’d say: “Let’s do it together.” I’d say I’m not interested in this language, first of all it’s not even an international language, and second it’s the language of the oppressor. He’d reply: “Look, man, we’re in for a long struggle, a protracted struggle. It’s going to be a war of attrition.” He’d say: “How are we going to lead the enemy forces into an ambush? To do that we look at the enemy’s commander and try to understand him. To do that, we’ve got to read his literature, read his poetry. So shall we study Afrikaans?” (various, 2013)

for such peacemaking. To make war skilfully, as he had learned as a young man from Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, demanded planning and preparation and a cool head. To stop war, to overcome hatred and fear, to build a functioning nation—these demanded different skills, and no less unrelenting effort.

I begin with this concrete example—chosen not at random but because language itself both murders and welcomes—to introduce a book full of initiatives for justice and peace from South Africa and all across the world. This moment of Mandela’s recent “transition”—I am told that in the world of his origins, dying means he has transitioned into a state from which he can now speak to us more directly than before—gives those he has taught the chance to listen again to what he would be telling us now. In this foreword, I will emphasize several messages I hear coming through his life and words. Without directly summarizing the chapters in this book, I will try to make it clear how these authors’ work seems to me to channel Nelson Mandela.

My own voice speaks, of necessity, from a humble place in this foreword. This book’s writers describe hard reconciliation—none of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Bonhoeffer & Fuller, 1949) called “cheap grace”—after extensive human rights abuses and explosive conflicts, and answer to the insistent demands of transitional justice (Huysse & Salter, 2008). Not only has my indirect contact with this giant of history whom South Africans affectionately call “Madiba”, his clan name, or “Tata” (dad)² been limited to my three-day visit to Cape Town, including my visit to his cell at Robben Island, and to the District Six museum in Cape Town. Much more, I write from the United States, where the work of confronting our legacy of human rights violations—destruction of indigenous peoples, and hundreds of years of slavery—has scarcely begun. White Americans—who barely realize that we are white because we assume we are simply normal—almost never speak directly of our own crimes.

May the courageous authors in this book find readers in my country, though their focus lies elsewhere. Each of them works with one or several situations of egregious historical violence, and helps us imagine what may be needed to make early steps toward reconciliation and healing. Some authors are theoreticians and teachers, some artists, some organize close to the ground, that is, to the wounded people. Some are themselves the wounded people, or their children, embodying the ghosts of the unconscious (Loewald,

² For me a point of contact comes in his original name, Rolihlahla, tree-shaker or troublemaker, so appropriate in his early life, an epithet also applied disparagingly to me by my psychoanalytic teachers. One could only wish to have transformed one’s troublemaking as he did.

1960). Each horror seems uniquely atrocious and unsurmountable: Germany's "final solution", Burundi, Cambodia, Haiti, Belfast, the stolen children of the indigenous people of Australia, Israel/Palestine. Each effort can learn from the others.

The book starts and ends in South Africa, with its visionary Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), envisioned by Mandela, led by Desmond Tutu—Mandela's prophetic and passionate counterpart (Krog, 1999)—and in which the editor of this book, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, played a significant part. The TRC contributed and disappointed, in the view of most who write in this book, and forms a standard against which other similar approaches measure and challenge themselves. As my colleague Melanie Suchet writes, "I do believe that assuming individual responsibility, as a white South African, for the acts of apartheid committed while I lived under the system, even if not directly committed by me, is a necessary act of collective moral responsibility and part of what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hoped to achieve in broadcasting the horrors on national television" (Suchet, 2010, p 194). It framed the discussion of alternative attempts at transitional justice in other contexts besides South Africa, and leaves the tremendous open questions that intrigue, even torment, the writers of this book.

What constitutes a "sorry" that truly makes a difference to the people offended, and to their descendants? Is there any kind of apology that actually changes the perpetrator (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003)? Does it help the victims to know, really know, the sadistic enjoyment of the perpetrator? Is it true, as my colleague Robert Stolorow often says, that "trauma recovery" is an oxymoron, or can people heal enough to interrupt some of the cycles of violence in the next generation, as some of our authors suggest? At the same time, can the achievement of crucial political objectives require so much official forgetting that time bombs sit ticking away, as for example our chapter on Belfast warns? In this question intersect the stories of South Africa, Germany, the United States, and possibly more.

Mandela delegated the problems of human rights abuses to the TRC. He understood his own responsibility as the first president of all South Africans in a specific way, and believed it must fall to others to detail the injustices he had spent his life to overturn. But as several contributors to this book note, South Africa after apartheid has inherited overwhelming economic injustice and continuing mental apartheid, so that the silent rage of so many years has begun to explode. Without faulting Mandela's trade-off—his clarity placed political equality before everything—South Africans now find themselves faced with his unfinished work even as we and they mourn his departure.

In another instance of official forgetting, British and American victors colluded to silence those who would have faced ordinary Germans with their responsibility for the massacre called holocaust or shoah³. In April 1945, British filmmakers accompanied the British and American soldiers who liberated Bergen Belsen and eight other concentration camps. They assembled 55 minutes of indescribably gruesome film in which well-fed SS guards were made to bury thousands of horribly emaciated bodies, while similarly very well-fed townspeople from no more than two or three kilometers away were made to watch. From other camps, also right next to towns, the film showed gas chambers and crematoria. In some camps there were survivors to be nursed back to life, survivors too ill to eat or drink, and in others evidence that survivors had been shot on the approach of the Allies. Alfred Hitchcock assembled all this extremely difficult film footage, prepared its narration by Trevor Howard, but then it was buried as too difficult for the German people to see. Someone made the decision that Germany's post-war reconstruction was more important. Only now, in January 2014, has this film become available for anyone who wants to google "Memory of the Camps." As in South Africa, we buried stories of atrocity in the service of important political objectives, but this decision has borne costs.

A third instance: American slavery. Perhaps if we do not say these words, we can all just get along as if we all just fell out of the sky onto the North American continent, intended by a provident god to have the social and economic privileges that we have. Puzzling, then, why people seem resentful about their lower class status. If they would just work harder, stay out of prison, stay in school, they could do as well as my children do. All these bemused reactions make sense when history remains invisible: the atrocities of apartheid, memories of the camps, the daily indignities and violence of slavery.

The contributors to the book, each in his or her own voice, demonstrate that transitional justice requires deliberate hard work, specific skills, and creativity. It belongs to no one approach alone, and has nothing magically transformational about it. Massive evils leave invisible and invasive scars that require the determination and faith that each voice brings. Both the writers and the protagonists in the humbling stories they tell us demonstrate courage that outstrips the traumatic strictures of the horrors they recount. But

³ I hesitate in naming this disaster, knowing that some object to either choice: holocaust (sacrifice by fire) or shoah (catastrophe). The choice of lower-case indicates its belonging with other historical massacres treated in this book; upper case would have recognized the uniqueness of this deliberate extermination.

let us pause, in this dedication, to consider a few more of the elements that Nelson Mandela brought.

Madiba—here I use his South African name deliberately—accomplished something extraordinary that few have noticed: he articulated in English and acted out in Afrikaans the African communitarian philosophy of *ubuntu*—in the context of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Misunderstood, even by philosophers as prominent as Derrida (Derrida, Mandela & Tlili, 1987), to be writing a new version of Rousseau’s social contract theory (a radical western individualism), Mandela instead assumed a fundamental human solidarity with egoistic behavior as a deviation (Bernasconi, 1993). When, in all his early writings, he contrasted law with conscience, he meant that laws like apartheid were unjust because conscience called everyone to struggle for basic human solidarity and equality. Born into the African assumptions, he could learn and love western culture and law without ever accepting its foundational ethics. Like his friend Desmond Tutu—poet Antjie Krog speaks of “the politician and his prophet”—Mandela could speak Western justice ethics while working from their own native communitarian *ubuntu* (we are what we are together).

“This isn’t right.”⁴ Injustice bothered Mandela all his life. As a young man faced with the blatant injustice of more and more rigid apartheid laws, he channelled his rage into physical training and legal education, becoming South Africa’s first black attorney, and preparing himself to represent his people in the great trials and in the first truly representative government. For a time he willingly lived in hiding because his country regarded him as a terrorist. In prison, he calmly confronted the small injustices: the differences in food and clothing and privileges. Why should black political prisoners have to wear short pants when Indian and colored prisoners get the dignity of long pants? This isn’t right. He served nearly 20 years on Robben Island⁵, where his eyesight suffered from working in the limestone quarry without sunglasses, from 1982 to 1988 in Pollsmoor near Cape Town, and two more years at Victor Verster, where he was moved when he contracted tuberculosis from the dank conditions at Pollsmoor. Only once did he erupt in rage, over

⁴ According to Richard Stengel (Stengel, 2010), who assisted Mandela in the preparation of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela would often listen quietly to a long conversation, and then insert these words.

⁵ On my 2009 visit to Cape Town, my day free from teaching took me to Mandela’s Robben Island cell, seven by eight feet, barely large enough for him to lie down. Our guide, also a former prisoner, explained clearly the differences in diet among the groups of prisoners, and described the daily routine and living conditions. The Africans who took me there asked about our elections and were amazed to meet a white person who had voted for a black man. Some remembered with pride Obama’s visit to Robben Island.

an insult to his wife Winnie. “I have mellowed,” he told Richard Stengel, who helped him to write his autobiography, “I was very radical as a young man, fighting everybody, using high-flown language” (Stengel, 2010, p. 51). By the time he emerged from prison twenty-seven years later (November, 1962 to February, 1990), he had become the quietly dignified leader of his people.

How did this happen? In prison Mandela learned to value self-control over self-expression. The “man without bitterness” whose measured style reassured white leaders and whose response prevented civil war when Chris Hani was assassinated in 1993, also hid his pain and anger. Just as he considered courage a choice to act in the face of real fear, he chose his calm and measured public style at a personal cost he rarely acknowledged. In prison, besides the “university” formed by his comrades there to study history and political science—particularly his mentor Walter Sisulu and his close friend Ahmed Kathrada—he developed his spiritual resources.

Who belonged to Mandela’s internal chorus⁶? An intense sense of justice and human equality seems to have preceded all the voices—for him other elements (non-violence, socialism, etc.) served only as “tactics.” He had attended Methodist schools as a child, attended church with family, but kept any religious beliefs very much to himself. African tribal leaders remained important inspirations, but thinkers like Marx and Gandhi, so crucial for others, he refused to consider authoritative. Two voices clearly ring out as influences for him: Shakespeare, and Abraham Lincoln.

When someone brought the works of Shakespeare to Robben Island in 1980 (Stengel, 2010), and asked the prisoners each to choose a favorite passage, Mandela did not hesitate but turned to *Julius Caesar*:

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
 The valiant never taste of death but once.
 Of all the wonders that I yet have heard
 It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
 Seeing that death, a necessary end,
 Will come when it will come. (Act 2, scene 2).

⁶ Sandra Buechler borrows this idea from the chorus of Greek drama: “The internal chorus we bring into our offices every day must be of comfort, and must be sufficiently stimulating, to encourage the creative use of aloneness. The feeling the chorus must give us is that whatever may go on today, with this particular patient, does not define us as analysts...We are not personally and professionally at stake with each new interaction with a patient...An aloneness that doesn’t cost us a good connection with ourselves, with our chorus, or with the patient can be used creatively. A creatively used aloneness is not loneliness.” (Buechler, 1998, p. 111)

Not only was Shakespeare a resource for him, but he had obviously engaged in the ancient philosophers' meditation on death, the spiritual practice intended to help us to live in the present moment. Mandela often used this exercise to reduce fear, as we can also hear in his closing words at the Rivonia Trial of 1963-64, facing probable hanging:

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

So the meditation on death had begun before the Robben Island years. Shakespeare accompanied him too.

Abraham Lincoln appears in Mandela's image-conscious style of leadership, in his keeping rivals close (Stengel, 2010) and learning their Afrikaans language, and even in his speeches. In the 1993 crucial address to the nation on the death of Chris Hani, even before the first elections that brought him to the presidency, we can hear Lincoln:

This is a watershed moment for all of us. Our decisions and actions will determine whether we use our pain, our grief, and our outrage to move forward to what is the only lasting solution for our country—an elected government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

We could wish to know more of Mandela's inner life and its inhabitants, but what we do glimpse provides continuity with his public life. His example of deliberate personal growth based on reflection on the example of others offers a way to reflect on the extraordinary work toward justice recounted in this book.

Unexpectedly, Mandela developed his character by the examination of conscience. This spiritual exercise, taught to every monastic novice, one does not expect of a South African political prisoner. He described it, however, in detail in a letter from prison to Winnie, herself imprisoned in 1975. First he set out the values to be sought:

In judging our progress as individuals we tend to concentrate on external factors such as one's social position, influence and popularity, wealth and standard of education. These are, of course, important in measuring one's success in matters and it is perfectly understandable if many people exert themselves mainly to achieve all these. But internal factors may be even more crucial in assessing one's development as a human being. Honesty, sincerity, simplicity, humility, pure generosity, absence of vanity, readiness to serve others—are the foundation of one's spiritual life. (N. Mandela et al., 2010 p. 271).

To refocus on these matters, however, would require discipline, and he had found himself a method:

...you may find that the cell is an ideal place to learn to know yourself, to search realistically and regularly the process of your own mind and feelings... Development in matters of this nature is inconceivable without serious introspection, without knowing yourself, your weaknesses and mistakes. At least, if for nothing else, the cell gives you the opportunity to look daily into your entire conduct, to overcome the bad and develop whatever is good in you. Regular meditation, say about 15 minutes a day before you turn in, can be very fruitful in this regard. You may find it difficult at first to pinpoint the negative features in your life, but the 10th attempt may yield rich rewards. Never forget that a saint is a sinner who keeps on trying (pp. 271-272).

His method reminds me that injustice thrives on prejudice and, as Gillian Straker writes, “stereotyped interchanges, which, at the level of their subtly choreographed prosody, interpellate us again and again as the homophobic and racist subjects we would wish not to be” (Straker, 2006, p. 750). She recommends relentless mindfulness as a corrective, much as he did.

He developed a personal style that alternated between understatement and irony. In the face of injustice, he often spoke quietly only three words: that’s not right.

Mandela emerged from prison a peacemaker, focused on one goal only, full equality for all South Africans, without retribution toward anyone: the white oppressors, or his African rivals. At his death, John Dramani Mahama, the president of Ghana, wrote of him:

His utilization of peace as a vehicle of liberation showed Africa that if we were to move beyond the divisiveness caused by colonization, and the pain of our self-inflicted wounds, compassion and forgiveness must play a role in governance. Countries, like people, must acknowledge the trauma they have experienced, and find a way to reconcile, to make what was broken whole again (Mahama, 2013).

Mahami remembers his childhood, imagining that Mandela would never come out of prison. When he did, “we waited for an indescribable rage.” Had Mandela wanted retribution, who would not have understood?

Twenty-seven years of his life, gone. Day after day of hard labor in a limestone quarry, chipping away at white rock under a merciless sun—without benefit of protective eyewear—had virtually destroyed his tear ducts, and for years, robbed Mandela even of his ability to cry (Mahama, 2013).

In contrast with the letter to Winnie quoted above, here is another, reflecting the cost of his sacrifices for justice:

Yet there have been moments when that love and happiness, that trust and hope, have turned into pure agony, when conscience and a sense of guilt have ravaged every part of my being, when I have wondered whether any kind of commitment can ever be sufficient excuse for abandoning a young and inexperienced woman [Winnie] in a pitiless desert, literally throwing her into the hands of highwaymen. (Letter of 4 February 1985, pp 148-49, cited in W. Mandela, Benjamin, & Benson, 1985).

But because his suffering, and enormous personal losses, had been for justice, Mandela saw no need for resentment. “To go to prison because of your convictions and be prepared to suffer for what you believe in, is something worthwhile. It is an achievement for a man to do his duty on earth irrespective of the consequences” (Mahama, 2013).

In the face of blatant dishonesty, he tended to say, well, people act in their own self-interest. In his last years he sadly noted that “we have now learned that even those that fought beside us in the struggle for freedom can be corrupted” (Abuya, 2013). Whatever his private suffering, he refused to demonize those who had subjugated his people⁷, and as many have noted, invited some of his prison guards to his inauguration as the first president of all South Africans. Oppressors had never crushed his spirit. His critics may argue that government exists to protect people from those who disregard the common good, and that he ought to have done more to structure such protection from gross inequality. His private notes from 1993 show that he knew exactly where the crucial agenda lay:

Priority is commitment to oppressed.

Will fall or rise depending on our success or failure to address their needs, to accommodate their aspirations. Specifically we must get them houses and put an end to informal settlements; end unemployment, school crisis, lack of medical facilities (N. Mandela et al., 2010, p. 339).

These responsibilities belong to us who remain, and have been ably and eloquently taken up by the authors of this book. Many of them have, like Mandela, learned languages so that they can reach and be reached by the suffering or oppressing other. These authors’ vulnerability, their creativity, their courage, their questions, their humility, their audacity, render them Nelson Mandela’s legitimate heirs in the spirit and work of *ubuntu*.

⁷ His “people” came to include for him, all who fought injustice. He wrote in 1976 from prison: “The first condition for victory is black unity. Every effort to divide the blacks, to woo and pit one black group against another, must be vigorously repulsed. Our people—African, Colored, Indian and democratic whites—must be united into a single massive and solid wall of resistance, of united mass action” (SL, 191).

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Introduction

Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

How do societies characterised by a history of mass violence work through their traumatic past? In the aftermath of gross violations of human rights and genocide, when people have suffered collective trauma, how does the trauma play out in subsequent generations? How might we map out the arc of historical trauma as a nexus for the interweaving of individual and collective traumatic memories? These are not just rhetorical questions; answers to them are far from obvious. This presents salient challenges for a project that seeks to engage in scholarly reflection on historical trauma and memory as an area of exploration across disciplinary and national boundaries.

I want to begin this introduction with a scene that I witnessed of the re-enactment of violent events that took place in South Africa in the mid-1980s. The re-enactment, which I witnessed in Mlungisi Township in the Eastern Cape, was a game by a group of young girls who were not yet born when the events they were enacting took place. Mlungisi was one of many black residential areas affected by a wave of “necklace” murders committed against those who were suspected of collaborating with the apartheid government security. The “mob justice” meted out against victims involved burning a petrol-soaked tyre that was put around a victim’s neck. Victims of this gruesome crime rarely, if ever, had a chance to defend themselves, and soon after being identified as police informers, they were beaten and driven to a spot where these murders took place. There the tyre was thrown around the victim’s neck, doused with petrol and set alight. The accusing crowd and bystanders would then circle around the burning body, performing a macabre dance to some singing until the victim died. Here is what I witnessed in 1996 during a visit to Mlungisi to organise the launch of the public hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the township:

"Let's play a game." It was strange, almost surreal, to see a group of young girls seven to ten years old laughing and cavorting in the streets of Mlungisi, the same township that between 1986 and 1988 had become the scene of so much misery, a tinderbox of inflamed emotion against the inhumanities of apartheid. But that was before these children were even born. Their squeals and cries were the very embodiment of joy. They looked like little tender shoots of foliage—little blades of life—poking out from under the cooled lava of the township once utterly devastated by apartheid's volcano.

"What game?" the others shouted back, skipping back and forth.

"Let me show you," the first one said. She was about eight and looked as if she might be the informal leader of the group. She began to demonstrate. The other girls did not seem too enthusiastic about this new game. What was wrong with just playing skip? But slowly, they became intrigued.

"It is called the 'necklace' game," the leader said. "This is just going to be pretend 'necklace,' not the real thing," she said. She pushed the other girls aside as if to open up the stage. Rotating through the role of victim, then killers, then bystander, she seemed to my amazement to recall virtually everything that actually happened in a real necklace murder, even though she had not been born when the last necklace killing occurred in Mlungisi Township.

She flailed her arms, screaming in mock anguish as if being pushed around and beaten by an imaginary crowd, swaying back and forth, turning her head from left to right, and begging for mercy with eyes wide open to show mock fright. Then she switched roles and playacted someone going off to find petrol, then another person offering matches, then someone running to demand a car tyre from an imaginary passing motorist.

"Give me your tyre," she ordered with mock hostility. She narrated the part of the motorist dutifully obeying, then the petrol man, then the matches man. Finally, she returned to her victim role, struggling against the make-believe tyre placed around her neck. Nervously, she made a gesture simulating the striking of a match, as if her friends—now a crowd of executioners—had forced her to set herself alight.

As make-believe flames engulfed her, she threw her arms wildly into the air. "Now sing and clap your hands and dance. I'm dying," she said. Her friends started clapping and singing in a discordant rhythm, moving in circles around her "body." Gradually, the high-pitched screams of the girl with the imaginary tyre around her neck faded into a whimper as her life ebbed away. Consumed by the flames, she slowly lowered herself to the ground and "died." It was all make-believe.

None of the girls I saw re-enacting the necklace game that morning had actually witnessed a necklace murder. The unspoken events of the past, however—the silence of Mlungisi's lambs—had become imprinted on their minds. It was not just the outward form of the game, but its inner meaning, and the sense of trauma to communal life that it carried with it. Re-enacting the death dance of the necklace victim may well have been a way of transforming the unspoken memory of it into something more accessible and less fearful for the girls.

This theatrically narrated scene provides an illuminating metaphor for the way in which trauma is passed on intergenerationally in subtle ways through stories or silences, through unarticulated fears and the psychological scars that are often left unacknowledged. It is a dramatic illustration of Prager's notion (in this volume) of how unwittingly subsequent generations "can inhabit a past that preceded them." The symbolic re-enactment may also represent a transformation of traumatic experience into ritual, perhaps a cathartic way of putting into action the struggle to find language that expresses not only the unspoken pain of the past. It is also a response to the crisis of the present, the frustrations, the helplessness, and the disempowerment of people whose lives still cry out for the fruits of transformation that have eluded them and their communities.

Few topics stake a more compelling claim to Humanities research than the legacies of historical trauma – the impact of mass atrocity not only on individuals and groups that experienced the violence directly, but also across multiple generations of the descendants of survivors. Yet the most urgent question of the 21st century is how responses to historical trauma and their intergenerational transmission might be interrupted in post-conflict societies. In this book, scholars respond to, and explore responses to, historical traumas experienced in different cultural contexts, engaging with the question of what transformation and breaking cycles of repetition might mean in a post-conflict environment.

Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition is a product of an international conference that brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars, researchers, practitioners and survivors at the University of the Free State (UFS) in December 2012. The conference drew nearly 350 participants from more than twenty-two countries, including survivors from ten post-conflict and post-genocide regions. Papers presented at the conference explored the various ways in which societies and individuals have engaged in processes of "working through" historical traumas, from truth commissions, to using dialogue, cultural practices and the arts.

The reference point for the canons of knowledge on historical trauma and memory has been either the Holocaust or other perspectives inspired by Euro-American case studies. The authors in this volume are uniquely placed as socially engaged scholars in a changing global context who are interested in shifting the lenses to focus on other historical traumas in order to explore new intellectual frontiers in this field.

In Chapter 1, Jeffrey Prager reminds us that trauma "is a memory illness," and thus healing "can only be done in the present." He considers the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa as a process

that created a moment in which the traumatic past could be “clearly and sharply demarcated from a new future.” Prager is careful not to suggest that the TRC has solved all the challenges of a post-apartheid South Africa. Apartheid’s “generational ripples” mean that the task of disrupting the intergenerational transmission of trauma is a formidable one. For Prager, a break with the past means instating “a full-blown humanity for all humans.” Elsewhere, he has argued that such a goal requires moving beyond memory in order to enable “a hopeful world of possibility for everyone” (Prager, 2008, p. 418).

There are echoes between Jeffery Prager’s views in Chapter 1 about the TRC, and the idea of empathy that develops in encounters between victims and perpetrators in the context of what Shults and Sandage (2008) refer to as “a broader horizon of humanness” (p. 61). Victim-perpetrator encounters at public hearings of the TRC are the subject of Chapter 2 by Juliet Brough Rogers. Brough Rogers focuses her attention on perpetrators’ expressions of remorse. One might expect discussion of remorse to follow a predictable line of argument: remorse as an expression of empathy that simultaneously presents the brokenness of the perpetrator and his recognition of the pain of the victim. Remorse, in other words, that is “other”-directed. Brough Rogers, however, wants to disrupt this “clean” view of remorse. Using a psychoanalytic lens, she examines the nature of the “full disclosure” of crimes committed by two of the most notorious torturers in the apartheid government’s security forces, Jeffrey Benzien and Eric Taylor. An acknowledgement of enjoyment of the scene of violence, Brough Rogers argues, is an important aspect of giving “full disclosure,” and may indicate a form of genuine remorse, albeit an “ugly remorse.”

In Chapter 3, Jaco Barnard Naudé reminds us that remorseful apologies by perpetrators of apartheid atrocities and statements of acknowledgement and reconciliation by beneficiaries of apartheid are not enough to assuage the continuing pain of the *still* “dispossessed, the poor and the disenfranchised.” He calls attention not so much to past historical trauma, or responses to this trauma and its repercussions in contemporary South Africa, but is concerned, rather, with the crisis of the present – the traumas of the everyday faced by millions of South Africans who, still without the reparations that they were promised, continue to live at the margins of society.

The past of the apartheid era was the most complex moment in the history of South Africa, characterised by spectacular forms of violence. It was a time when black people were relegated to second-class, or even third-class citizenship in their own country, their lives rendered invisible. Blackness was a marker of inferiority, and racial identity a framework that determined not

the plurality of human life, but the otherness of the “foreigner” – the one who does not belong – “the discarded,” in Jessica Benjamin’s (2014) turn of phrase. Despite the change of guard from a white repressive government to a “people’s government” of the African National Congress (ANC), for the majority of black people the dream of freedom has not yet been realised. The cruellest of all features of the current era of government leadership in South Africa is the continuing injustice of the failure of service delivery, the collapse of health institutions and the dire state of many schools. It is a paradox, Barnard Naudé observes in Chapter 3, that the ANC “as an agent of reparation, has as yet failed dismally to bring about large scale reparation through structural interventions in the economy.” The broken promises of politicians, is a traumatic pain that cuts deep and explodes the sense of hope and optimism that ushered in an imagined South Africa of opportunity. Barnard Naudé says it is time to shed “the cloak of denialism” with which the ANC government has covered up “post-apartheid disasters as if to render them invisible.”

Yet when it comes to the question of who ultimately is responsible for reparations, for repairing the irreparable brokenness of the past, and “the ‘now’ of the irreparable,” all South African are responsible. This sense of responsibility, Barnard Naudé argues, involves “a reparative approach to the irreparable” and “a process of becoming-human (again).” This involves “a conception of politics as creative potentiality ... as reparative citizenship [which] is necessarily an inter-generational concept ... that requires us to imagine a future generation to which we will stand accountable not simply for the Apartheid past that lies behind us, but also for the post-apartheid as it becomes a past in the ‘now’ of the irreparable.”

Becoming human, or recognition of the other as a human being, are forms of reparation. These terms often emerge in the context of dialogue between individuals and groups from different “sides” of historical trauma. In Chapter 4, Jessica Benjamin applies a psychoanalytic lens to explore the dialogue captured in the film *Beyond Violence* between a Palestinian man called Bassam, who was imprisoned for resisting the Occupation, and Itamar, a former soldier in the Israeli Army who grew up in a Zionist military home. Benjamin draws from the concepts she developed, including the ideas of recognition and of the “moral third” to explore the men’s journey of dialogue that led to their establishing the movement “Combatants for Peace.” Benjamin offers the psychoanalytic paradigm of recognition to “conceptualize what it means to transform one’s view of a previously repudiated other and step into the space of dialogue – a space where both subjects are equally dignified and ethically obligated to respect the other.” The power of the

transformation of their relationship “beyond violence” is illustrated by the story of the shooting death of Bassam’s daughter by an Israeli soldier. Benjamin informs us that despite this incident, Bassam refuses to retaliate with vengeance and instead identifies “with the suffering of those who feel responsible for injury and want to repair it.”

Björn Krondorfer continues on this theme of dialogue in Chapter 5. The chapter draws on his work as facilitator of intergroup dialogue in wide-ranging contexts including between Israelis and Palestinians, Israelis and Germans, and third-generation American Jews and non-Jewish Germans. He proposes the term “unsettling empathy” as an ethical “*posture*” of “shared responsiveness ... that leads to transformation.

The discussion of dialogue as a response to historical trauma is also the subject of Chapter 6. Using a psychoanalytic framework, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela explores the relationship between remorse and forgiveness based on examples of encounters between victims and perpetrators drawn from the TRC. She argues that remorse, as in forgiving or mourning, involves a reparatory process in which there is an integration of self and other on both internal and external levels. This opens up the possibility of connection between victim and perpetrator and the transformation of the relationship between them. Exploring the empathy-remorse-forgiveness cycle in the context of the TRC, Gobodo-Madikizela argues, “might broaden our understanding of the construction of meaning, and strengthen and enliven psychoanalytic debates about the conditions that facilitate positive change after violence.”

Building connections and reconciliation between former enemies after historical trauma is also the subject of Chapter 7. Graham Dawson takes us to the Northern Ireland “Troubles” and strategies aimed at “historical reconciliation” in Belfast, the “post-conflict city” as he refers to it. Dawson goes to the heart of the issues at the forefront of contemporary debates about historical trauma, its aftermath, and its expression in memory and other symbolic forms of expression in places that became the sites of violence – “the cultural landscapes and memoryscapes that construct the meaning of places and their pasts.” He engages with questions that are seldom explored in post-conflict contexts, shifting the lens from responses to historical trauma that focus on interpersonal dialogues, to addressing the central question of the complex interplay of the historical, political and traumatic dimensions of memory when former enemies live in the same city as neighbours, and how these memories are transmitted to the next generation.

In Chapter 8, André Wessels brings us back to South Africa and discusses a historical trauma that predated apartheid-era violence, namely the Anglo-

Boer War, or the “South African War” as it is now referred to in recognition of the countless black people, women, men and children, who were also killed in that war; a war waged by the British Empire in colonial times, which, according to Wessels, is “the most extensive and destructive war that has been fought in southern Africa.” Wessels’ chapter examines the shadow that this war cast on the future, and explores its multigenerational repercussions, including the yearning for re-enactment of the past in violent ways, the yearning to “refight the battles of the past.” Why is it, Wessels asks, that despite the important work of the South African TRC, “reconciliation is still a problem in South Africa? Why? Why all the bitterness, the hostility, the unresolved trauma?”

Chapter 9, by Angeliki Kanavo, Kosal Path and Kathleen Doll, is a study based in post-genocide Cambodia in Anlong Veng, a community known to be the last stronghold of the Khmer Rouge. The authors explore the transmission not only of trauma, but also of patterns of unquestioning obedience among former cadres of the Khmer Rouge, and how these patterns have been transmitted to the younger generation within this Khmer stronghold community. Their findings suggest that young people in Anlong Veng have not been critical of the past and of their parents’ role in it, and that far from engaging in efforts to break the cycles of the repetition of the violent past, always strong in Anlong Veng, an environment in which cycles of destructiveness have thrived has been nurtured.

The novel as a response to historical trauma is the focus of the next three chapters in the book. Chapter 10, by Rosanne Kennedy, takes a critical look at the public apologies and the discourse of reconciliation in Australia. She calls for new avenues of inquiry, new genres that will allow shifts “from a discourse of reconciliation to one of crisis ... and from a poetics of reparation to a poetics of survival.” In Chapter 11, Sarah Cordova shows how two female novelists confront the silences around the traumatic period of the Duvalier years in Haiti. In Chapter 12, Ewald Mengel returns us to the South African context, and focuses on trauma novels written by Jewish authors after apartheid. Cordova and Mengel are interested in how the trauma novel is used by the authors symbolically to break the silence and to reclaim a sense of agency and wholeness.

Chapter 13 is by Beata Hammerich, Johannes Pfäfflin, Peter Pogany-Wnendt, Erda Siebert, and Bernd Sonntag, all members of the Psychotherapeutic Study Group for People Affected by the Holocaust (PAKH) who are descendants of Nazi perpetrators and children of Holocaust survivors. The chapter is a reflection on the authors’ on-going dialogue about the impact of the Holocaust on their lives, how the themes of trauma, shame and guilt have

played out in their lives, and the challenges they faced over the years during their dialogue process.

Chapter 14 is by Jeff Kelly Lowenstein, Dunreith Kelly Lowenstein and Edward Lowenstein. As a four-year-old in Essen, Germany in 1939, Edward Lowenstein was put on the Kindertransport to England to escape the imminent destruction of Jews in Nazi Germany. The chapter is about his journey of return to Essen for the first time in 2012 with two of his sons and his grandson, and how he and the community in the neighbourhood of his former home in Germany have found healing through confronting the Holocaust past and its transgenerational repercussions among both survivors' children and the descendants of perpetrators and bystanders. Both Chapter 13 and 14 are written with a rare honesty that will deepen readers' understanding of what it means for children of survivors and of perpetrators to experience the "memory" of the past, and of the complex journeys of dialogue and the imperative for the inheritors of the past to confront it in order to transcend it and break its cycles of repetition.

Marianne Hirsch (2001; 2012) refers to the emergence of traumatic memory at the level of the second generation as "post memory." She describes "postmemory" as the relationship that descendants of survivors of collective trauma have with their parents' traumatic experiences. "Postmemory" experiences are those that the younger generation "remember" from the images and stories with which they grew up, "but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch, 2001, p. 16). The importance of Hirsch's analysis, based as it is in the context of exploration of transgenerational trauma within families, is that it opens up the possibility of broadening research in this field beyond individual experience, and provides theoretical insights on what is at play when children "inherit" their parents' traumatic memories. What is still rare in the literature on transgenerational trauma and the Holocaust is research on societal strategies of "social repair" (Prager, 2011) or on dialogue processes as a way of interrupting the transmission of intergenerational cycles of trauma, shame and guilt associated with "memory" of the Holocaust. Chapters 13 and 14 are illustrative examples of what happens when individuals and groups confront this unspeakable past and forge links with people from opposite sides of history in order to transcend its debilitating repercussions.

The chapters in this book represent perspectives from a wide range of disciplinary fields. Historical traumas are discussed that were experienced in different cultural contexts. Thus, we have moved away from what Michael Rothberg (2008) refers to as the "homogenization" of historical trauma (p.

230), and from marginalising traumatic events that have occurred in other part of the globe (Stef Craps & Bret Buelens, 2008). The diversity of voices we have maintained in the book – interdisciplinary voices and transnational voices – finds expression in Chapters 15 and 16. The authors’ contributions reflect a consciousness about the importance of using methodologies of healing responses to historical trauma, which are drawn from cultural contexts relevant to the groups in question. In Chapter 15, Wendy Lambourne and David Niyonzima show how integrating cultural practices of healing and reconciliation dialogue in Burundi with Euro-American approaches can facilitate meaningful transformation. In Chapter 16, Shanee Stepakoff discusses a counselling programme developed for different post-conflict regions and refugee centres by combining indigenous approaches with traditional psychological counselling methods.

The last chapter in the book, Chapter 17, by Polly Walker, discusses the use of performance arts in peacebuilding strategies after mass trauma and violence. The link between the arts and trauma was recognised in ancient Greece, where theatre was used as a way of reintegrating returning traumatised soldiers back into society. Jonathan Shay (1995), in his book *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, discusses this sophisticated use of the arts in ancient Greece, and how the arts were brought into dialogue with trauma to help traumatised soldiers to reclaim their sense of humanity and to reconnect in a social world. Connecting with humanity – the humanity of the audience and the humanity of the other – is where the power of the performance arts lies. Used in the context of dealing with historical trauma and responses to it, performance theatre becomes a communicative tool that inspires public conversations not only about trauma and its repercussions in individuals and society, but also about its role as a tool that can be used to draw attention to the manifestation of destructive cycles of repetition of historical trauma in social context. Thus, performance as public narrative can become a “visual conscience of society” (Dorfman, 2006). As Polly Walker observes in her chapter, performance “engages more than verbal, rational analysis: it engages people’s bodies, emotions, and sense of spirituality” and opens up the possibility for conversations about the past on multiple levels, including with self and with others.

Consider, for example, South African composer Philip Miller’s musical composition, *Rewind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*. *Rewind* is based on recordings of testimonies of victims and survivors who appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Miller’s musical, we encounter the interweaving of stories of victims, perpetrators and bystanders,

narrating the different roles they played. One of the stories in Miller's performance is based on the testimony of Nomonde Calata, whose husband was murdered by Eric Taylor, one of the security police who is the subject of Juliet Brough Rogers' discussion in Chapter 2. At the TRC hearing, Nomonde's voice, replayed in Miller's musical production, carried the original intensity of her emotions when she found out about the vicious murder of her husband. At one point during her testimony, she let out a piercing cry that shattered the stillness of the theatre where the hearing was held.

Miller resurrects this wailing voice from the archives of TRC. A soloist then takes up Nomonde's cry and re-presents it through her magnificent and electrifying soprano voice. Several other voices in the choir, with different levels of intensity, male and female voices, sing this wailing cry. The effect is a seamless repetition of this voice-cry that reverberates like a re-enactment of a wound that refuses to be silenced. Miller seems to be telling the audience: This is not yet past. Indeed, at the end of Miller's show at one of the main theatres in Cape Town, the Baxter, a still and dead silence hangs in the hall after the curtain call. The audience, clearly moved by Miller's unsettling stories, leaves the hall in reflective mood.

And here is the power of the creative arts: people did not leave after the performance of *Rewind*. Instead, they gathered around one another – around friends and strangers alike – weeping, talking, being silent and sharing the most tragic, shameful or confusing aspects of this collective past. Through these brief dialogue encounters, members of post-conflict communities can take some first steps into the light of hopefulness – hope, not as an abstract concept, but as a moment imbued with the possibility of deepening reflection that may lead to the kind of acknowledgement that gestures towards action, that inspires a wisp of a fresh breeze that awakens a sense of responsibility for the “‘now’ of the irreparable.” Performance theatre can transform public spaces into sites for ethical engagement, sites for forging human links across time and space with the Other – even an Other responsible for the irreparable.

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