

## **The specificity of torture as trauma.**

### **The human wilderness when words fail<sup>1</sup>**

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*The author attempts to situate the specificity of torture—understood as the product of political violence and of totalitarian states—within the historical framework of the concept of trauma in psychoanalysis. When the mind and social ties are simultaneously affected, the intrapsychic and transpersonal aspects of the suffered damage intertwine in a complex and unique web. The author aims to dismantle the notion of victim, considering it both stigmatizing and inaccurate. The goal is not just to identify the aftereffects and the disabilities suffered by those affected by torture, but also to integrate their experiences and their narratives into a life project. Rather than individual psychopathology, this essay reflects upon those phenomena of suggestion and hypnosis that are at work in human groups under ordinary conditions and that are exacerbated under social crises, following the Freudian axis developed in Group psychology and the analysis of the ego.*

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As I write, highly civilized beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me. They do not feel any enmity to me as an individual, nor I against them. They are only 'doing their duty', as the saying goes. Most of them, I have no doubt, are kind-hearted law-abiding men who would never dream of committing murder in private life. On the other hand, if one of them succeeds in blowing me to pieces with a well-placed bomb, he will never sleep the worse for it. He is serving his country, which has the power to absolve him from evil.

George Orwell, *England, your England* (1941), quoted in Bauman, 1989, p. ii

The simple and rather frightening truth is that under circumstances of legal and social permissiveness people will engage in the most outrageous criminal behaviour who under normal circumstances perhaps dreamed of such crimes but never considered actually committing them.

Hannah Arendt. *Crises in the republic* (1973), p. 57

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### **Torture in the world today**

In *Humanism and terror*, a work originally published in 1949, Merleau-Ponty (1969) remarked that medicine and torture both hold a topographical affinity for each other in the sense that both reside and “colonize” the private space of the sentient body of a human being: one to save a life and the other to destroy it. This may cause astonishment when two incongruous notions such as medicine and torture are juxtaposed, but the virtue of this incongruity is to focus and to throw light on this intimate place where ancestral fears, such as the terror of infinite pain, have always resided, both virtually and potentially. This fear is not just about dying, but relates to something far worse: interminable agony, this being the universal feature and eternal temporality of myths, including religious myths, and also of phobias which appear in literature and in children’s stories. It is a universal which is with us from birth until death. Illness and torture trade this virtuality for something real and tangible which we have always known about and which has been ever present, menacing us, silently laying siege to us, underpinning the human condition which is itself encapsulated in the sentient body together with the Word which serves to express it.

Although with both torture and illness the threatening and the ominous destroy the integrity of the positive feeling of being alive, the fear of the imminent approach of the Parcae in both cases is very different. The onset of an illness unleashes a battle with the unknown forces of destiny, summoning the help of evil demons who overturn reason as ordinary causality. Nevertheless, under these circumstances, the sustaining quality of the human environment, our basic foundation, not only becomes more evident but it also typically becomes more sympathetic and supportive, making us still more human.

At the other extreme, institutionalized torture destroys the fabric of the social network of which we humans form an integral part. Its cause is clearly identifiable: it is our fellow-beings who transform us into frightened, caged animals, and it is their will, suffused with triumphal arrogance, that leads us to this interminable suffering. “You will have to die or suffer interminable torture, because you are of a different race, religion or political creed. You, and everything which is yours, which you were and which you believed, will become dust. The suffering which results from this affirmation of prevailing power, its irrefutable logic and the madness of its unquestionable certainty, produces anguish which is specific, incomparable and indescribable, and which will stay with the majority of the survivors for the rest of their lives. It will become the source of bitterness which will be engraved on the psyche and will last generations.”

Faced with this mass barbarism and the use of horror in the media as a form of entertainment, it is useful to rescue and restore the central importance of privacy. It is necessary to preserve the individuality of suffering, and to examine how each individual either succumbs to suffering or defends themselves. Within the immense totality of statistical data, each case must be counted one by one. Ignominiously, a single human being stands for the whole of humanity and is at once unique and special, being the representative and the voice of his or her fellow human beings.

It is this dark, secret place, which is the heart of what is most personal and intimate within ourselves, which is besieged and invaded in the process of torture, is something which borders on insanity: “I won’t be the same person now ... I will be someone different ... a stranger ... Will I recognize myself?” This phantasm of the metamorphosis of the psyche, of mental decomposition and collapse, is overwhelming. The main character in Orwell’s *1984* and his surrender to Big Brother is a paradigmatic representation of the effect of

political terror. This definition of the effect of torture seems to me to be more truthful and articulate than its instrumental definition (the instruments of physical and moral torture) and defines accurately and pertinently the subject with which I wish to deal.

The recurrence of the original state of helplessness, our basic foundation in extreme dependency, is only surmountable with the loving care of those who surround us (sustenance and the look, refuge and the Word). In this recurrence of the defencelessness of our fragile beginnings, when we experience pain, those individuals who are doctors offers their services as life-savers while those who are torturers are evil destroyers, laughing triumphantly as we groan in agony.

**In an unforgettable passage, Primo Levi describes the moment when he entered the concentration camp. The briefest exchange of glances with Doktor Pannwitz, who was processing his admission, was enough for him to interpret the message in this doctor's eyes: You are sub-human. (1959)**

From this perspective I would like to start by mentioning the common misconception which relates to the defining of an individual as a victim and the process of medicalization both of which, with pious zeal, altruistically segregate and alienate the tortured individual from the status of a citizen, from the position of his or her fellow human beings and alter-ego. Torture is not an illness of the tortured: it is an evil endemic to civilization, an evil which grows and spreads with progress like any other technology or any industry, an evil which can be improved, perfected and mechanized. Michel De Certeau states that modern torture is not a primitive form of barbarism from earlier times, it is rather the need for power in modern society. It reflects the reverse side of this need, which is abject yet necessary (1987). David Rousset, on coming out of the concentration camp, proclaimed that he was not sick, but rather an expression of the era in which he was living (1947). There exists a huge gulf between this perspective and descriptions of post-traumatic stress disorder where, like a surgeon considering his patient before an operation, the individual is reduced to little more than a constellation of symptoms.

To speak of torture, therefore, is not to speak of victims and those affected, of their stigmas and the aftereffects of their trauma, it is to use their testimony and humanity to denounce a way of co-existing with our fellow human beings and a social order, a social order which bases its very existence and survival on the destruction of these fellow human beings. The only way that one can understand someone who has been tortured and gain any slight insight into that person is by daring to look at the oppressive regime which destroyed him or her. It is not enough to for their wounds to be healed, it is necessary to restore them to the human order and to the status of their fellow human beings. **Viñar (1989)**

### **Torture from a psychoanalytical perspective**

I have a hazy recollection of listening to Jorge Semprún being interviewed on the radio 10 years ago, 50 years after the closing of the concentration camps. He described an incident in which a Polish man who was a member of the Resistance had visited the Warsaw ghetto on the eve of the Final Solution to get a vivid picture of the atrocities which were occurring there. Commissioned by the Resistance, his duty was to communicate his findings to the Allies. The scenario takes place in Washington and takes the form of a dialogue with a Supreme Court judge. Semprún's account can be summarized as follows: "Your Honour, maybe you don't believe me?" The enigmatic reply: "I am sure that you are telling the truth. It is I who cannot and must not believe you."

As we know, within the confines of what is human and when faced with the excesses of horror, the problem of credulity–incredulity comes into sharp focus. To leave space for the tricks and meanderings of the memory, I have not transcribed the quote exactly, rather my impression of it and what it evoked in me. I remember that I was struck by what I heard and because of this I have chosen it to begin this account.

What value can we give to the incredulity of the judge as a psychic action? Why, instead of a simple, straight reply: “I don’t believe you”, said with whatever nuance of politeness or authority, did he chose this ambiguous variation which can be separated into 2 segments: “You told the truth, I—and here I force myself—not to believe you.” Often I wonder if this laconic reply was saying something obvious, on the one hand about the dissociation between the spontaneous human response and, on the other, the response expected from his public position and role. Or is there something which goes deeper? Could there be a paradox where both empathy and disbelief are operating simultaneously, something inherent in the distance between normal mental functioning and the conceiving of such horror. Can we, at this very moment, in Latin America, begin to conceive of the killings in Rwanda, the terror in Gaza and Israel, in Iraq or in Chechnya, or even in those places which remain voiceless, and are in the throes of silent and inaccessible political terror? This play on distances, in space and time, what effect does it produce to clarify this phenomenon? Spatiotemporal distance, both in factual and objective geography, and in one’s inner self: Jankélévitch (1953) calls this “pathetic geography”.

The parable of the judge allows me to sustain the suspense, the distance between the truth and its counterpart, credulity–incredulity. This is never an easy subject to deal with and what can be seen outlined are two levels of acquiring knowledge: firstly, the normal way in which information circulates by way of the news, and secondly, by means of human contact which is intimate and personal, which only love and the analyst’s sessions can provide. In Primo Levi’s recurring nightmare, he dreams that he is relating his experiences of the concentration camp to his loved ones and they move away from him, distant and indifferent, leaving the dreamer, crushed and dispirited, in a state of utmost desolation. Or the toxic delirium of Robert Antelme who, suffering from the fever of dysentery, did not want to stop talking on leaving the concentration camp. He felt his duty was to document what he had witnessed as he was afraid that when he recovered he would lose the freshness of his experience, which he felt urgently compelled to write down. **Mascolo (1987)**

How do we think of the interval (or distance) between the experience of trauma—this avalanche of fear and horror, the paralysis of the Subject—and its configuration as a personal account of an experience which can be represented as a narrative to a third person? How can we activate this place in the psyche—this area of madness—which combines (articulates) the registers of perception and hallucination, and wakefulness with the oneiric? Even though the analogy may seem grotesque, similar difficulties occur, albeit briefly, to translate into words the experience of the orgasm or the nightmare. Only the skill of a poet or a patient in transference can go some way to achieving this by using metaphor as best he or she can to express the emotional intensity and the incandescence of the experience where words so often fail.

In a world of pretence and simulation, where terror is reduced to a trivialized, everyday spectacle, distinguishing between the simulation of cathartic abreaction and the true word of an eye-witness account, requires a long, arduous process which only psychoanalysis can provide (see Bauman, 1989, preface). The triumph of the executioner is to create this psychic space

where only terror resides and where the invocation and the activation of this place becomes impossible, the resulting representation of this anguish making this process unbearable. Does this rupture between experience and its representation, between real-life experience and the relating of that same experience not constitute a traumatic experience in the Freudian sense of the term? The temporal and spatial distance between experience and its narrative realization creates psychoanalytical problems which are difficult to resolve. These problems are connected to the subject of representability related to anxiety and specifically concern what can be represented and what cannot. The worst anxiety is not connected to the loss of the object, but to the absence of its representation.

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Rousset, when documenting the horrors of the world of concentration camps, said that normal men do not know that everything is possible (1947). Michel De Certeau stated that nobody wants to neither know anything nor believe anything about the horrors of torture, which, as a consequence, are actively ignored—a reaction which extreme horror provokes (1987). As regards fear, Maurice Blanchot adds that no optimum distance is possible, only avoidance or fascination. The person who watches is either too close—involved and captivated—or too far—an outsider and maybe cannot feel anything. This is not just a problem between the protagonist and the witness, or the individual who is affected (the victim) and the therapist (maybe a psychoanalyst), it is an essential problem of the subject themselves and their inner self (1986). At the age of 70, Steinberg (2002) opens as follows the story of his experiences as an adolescent in the Nazi concentration camps half a century before:

To understand, to help people understand. Everyone tries to understand, both the one who writes and the one who reads. How to make people understand that world by reconstructing it on paper—this is the problem that faces us all, Primo Levi, Robert Frances, Jorge Semprun and others ... And first of all, or after all, does that world even exist, even for us? Could we have lived for half a century, the rest of our lives, with that world still present in us as it was then? Surely it would have killed us. It did kill some of us. Those who survive, like me, have found a way of dealing with it. Preventive treatment. Mental prophylaxis. (p. 13–4)

Memory is kind to us, beneficent. It muddles certain areas, erases things here and there... (p. 14)

The only thing I am sure of is that writing this will knock me off balance, deprive me of a fragile equilibrium achieved with the utmost care. This imbalance will in turn affect my writing, pushing it either toward greater bluntness or into affectation. (p. 15)

The work concludes:

### **Paragraph DELETED**

I have carried these pages inside myself for half a century. I knew I would have to live with my past every hour of the day and night, for two or three months. To do so, I waited for my retirement.... Surely it's time to deliver the verdict. And the answer is yes: writing has helped me. (p. 163)

This extensive quote from Steinberg (2002) allows me to position the time interval between the experience of trauma—the experience of fear and disorganization—and the subsequent relating of this experience, in other words of the eventual process of working through. When I speak about the relating of

the experience, I am referring to the narrative account of conscious processes. The process of working through can be inferred from the change in the psyche and is a valid process despite not having the validity or precision of the empirical natural sciences.

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The preceding pages can be read as an introductory statement to this subject. I understand that with this type of trauma we are at the very heart of a specific problem which psychoanalysis has to deal with. Is it impossible to span this gulf, as Sternberg says, or is it inherent in the function of psychoanalysis to be able to embrace this Trauma?

This Trauma, as previously mentioned, is defined as the horror which one human being inflicts on another; where the etiology is definable as a calculated, methodical and intentional action which one part of humanity does to another part of humanity. The other individual is perceived not as a fellow human being but as an enemy to be eradicated like an infectious disease or the plague, where the objective is total extermination. How does the human mind react when faced with this splitting off from the unity of the species, which provides the basis for the standard against which we identify ourselves as human beings as conceived by both anthropology and psychoanalysis? How can we represent symbolically the genesis of the closed mentality of the xenophobe, from the perspective of the mentality open to diversity (Gómez Mango, 1998; Gil, 1998), ready to take risks with the complications and changes resulting from pluralism? The epidemic of genocide has appeared erratically over the planet throughout the 20th century. There is academic consensus that Naziism and Stalinism are the culminating and paradigmatic points during this period, and are exemplary models, although not unique. Torture is still very much a problem in the world today and its deadly force is not weakening. We see it in Iraq, Rwanda or Israel and Palestine, in Guatemala or in Colombia. A central argument of Bauman (1989) is that the conditions which triggered off the Shoah did not come about by chance, but are inherent in our rationality and therefore could recur.

What can psychoanalysis contribute towards the eradication of this phenomenon which is endemic to so many countries?

What can we contribute as citizens and with the theoretical tools of our trade?

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Television, the most powerful of the mass media, wants to show us that we can find out about reality and learn what is happening in the world by consumption of its output. It wants to show us that the atrocities that are committed everyday can be condensed and summarized in the news in both visual and written forms in order to fit into the time and space available and have the power simultaneously to reach hundreds of thousands of viewers who are chewing gum and eating and drinking while they see cities which have been decimated and mutilated bodies. It is true that viewers are sensitive and well-informed citizens who are concerned about the hardships which people suffer in the world. They are involved in causes and movements which are epic and for peace, for peace or for a cause which is usually connected to war. With this in mind, what class of knowledge can we acquire? I am not contemptuous of either the efforts of many war correspondents nor the media business which, by informing viewers or even financially profiting by transforming these horrors into TV programmes, provides one of the most effective ways of denouncing the aggressive advance

of crimes against humanity. Without television, the reporting of the crimes and appalling atrocities of Pinochet, Milošević or Guantánamo would continue to be nothing more than a left-wing conspiracy, and the Stalinist purges a conspiracy of left-wing propaganda. For sure the killers of today are nostalgic and envious of the discretion and secrecy of the criminals of former times. A psychoanalytical reflection on this matter may not be able to compete with the world of the media, but this does not take away the responsibility of offering a more specific point of view from our discipline. This was captured in a talk by Winograd (2004) who gave a psychoanalytical perspective on *Literature or life*:

Throughout historic memory, there have been smoking chimneys.  
(Semprún, 1997, [AU: CONFIRM]p. 10)

*Krematorium ausmachen!* [Crematorium, shut down!] (Semprún, 1997,  
[AU: CONFIRM]p. 11)

This concentration camp–incarceration reality cannot be processed as a memory: it is an unbearable pain which is ever present. **Winograd (2004)** mentions the work of **Kijac and Funtowicz (1982)** who describe the syndrome of the survivors of extreme situations. They postulate that, after being freed, a profound modification of the psyche takes place. This results in the simultaneous coexistence of two aspects of the ego: one part which continues to live in the camp, and the other, which has adapted to a new reality, which functions “as if” it were able to carry on loving, hating, walking, making plans for the future and becoming ill.

These two consciousnesses alternate and many times become confused and as, Semprún says, the evocation of the camp is as if “I had never left, in spite of all appearances, and which I would never leave, despite the masquerades and make-believe or life” (1997, p. 153). Semprún continues,

...I don’t want to do a plain eyewitness account. Right from the start I mean to avoid, to spare myself, any recital of suffering and horror. Anyway, others will try that approach...

So I need a narrative “I” that draws on my experience but goes beyond it, capable of opening the narrative up to fiction, to imagination... Fiction that would be as illuminating as the truth to seem convincing. (1997, p. 165)

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The belief in the nature of this experience which can neither be described nor shared, and the unbridgeable gulf between the sufferer and the listener is something which has always preyed on my mind, as what Steinberg, like many others, reveals about the inaudible nature of his suffering is a challenge to the psychoanalytic profession.

My return was in no way different from that of others who have already described what it was like. The family and friends I came home to stopped up their ears. Those who could avoid me fled. I could not bridge the chasm between us. Drawing the obvious conclusions, I held my tongue. (2002, p. 158)

I understand that it is necessary (and difficult) to discriminate between two levels of understanding which mutually interfere with one another. One level is to discern if the information received is true or false, that is, a legitimate suspicion in the truthfulness of the source of information. Is this about events which have happened or “hysterical reminiscences”? The second level is the intolerable nature of the information received, capable of provoking an anguish which is unprocessable and which causes the listener to distance themselves.

This brings to mind the Freudian schema of para-excitation: when the stimulus overloads the psychic apparatus, it is blocked and not registered. Any excess cannot enter and is rejected. The daily news bulletin plays on this process, condensing and “informing” us in 10 minutes about the hardships and horrors of the world so that we are torn between indifference (translating the perception into something which did not happen) and being emotionally outraged at such injustice.

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If the privacy of the sentient body is the most secret and intimate thing which each of us possesses (or an oxymoron in that it is something which belongs to us most and yet is alien to us) to speak publicly about torture and the victims of torture is an operation which is neither simple nor innocent, since the boundaries between the private and the public are subverted. The emotional restraint of public testimony cannot be distorted and this always lends itself to slips and embarrassing errors. Because of this, Imre Kertesz finishes his book *Fateless* with the moving figure of a Jewish adolescent leaving the concentration camp, with scenes which show the impossibility of communication between this boy who was returning home and those welcoming him, ranging from his contempt for old friends and acquaintances to his fury in the meeting with the liberal, sympathetic journalist (1992). This lack of understanding between those that have lived through these horrors and those who have not is something which was immensely disturbing for all those returning from the concentration camps including Primo Levi, Robert Antelme, Steinberg, Zygmunt Bauman and Carlos **Liscano** (2000). This distinction between the public word (of public testimony) and the private word (of love and of transference) is as crucial in this matter, if not more so, as it is in the remit of sexual life.

This metaphor of two worlds which remain immiscible and unable to communicate with each other, and the stark difference between these two worlds which heightens the “deafness” between those affected and those supposedly unharmed, led Michel de Certeau to exclaim with simple eloquence that, as regards torture, nobody wants to neither know anything nor believe anything (1987). This confirms the force of Ferenczi’s affirmation that the most traumatic thing is not the actual trauma itself but the “disavowal” (*Verleugnung*) of the traumatic event (1949). An active deafness exists which, on the one hand, is dangerous because it isolates the sufferer in a ghetto, but on the other hand is essential because nobody can live alone with melancholy, suffocated by the most abject human actions.

When the psychoanalyst receives a subject marked by these extreme situations (tortured, survivor of a concentration camp or a massacre) what is his or her positioning as a therapist and an investigator?

We are in the nucleus of the Freudian *Einfühlung* (empathy), an experience diametrically opposite to normal sentimentalism or the myth of the analyst as being a mirror, which some psychoanalytical schools legitimized at one time. The specificity of this trauma and the calculated intentions originating from another human who wants our destruction is a challenge for psychoanalysis. Previously Freud had warned us that a natural catastrophe promotes solidarity and that a political catastrophe originated by another human induces interminable hatred and bitterness. Similarly, I believe that the theorizing of Donald Winnicott (1971) and Jacques Lacan (1949) regarding the mirror provide the symbolic matrix from which grows a pillar of humanization. The identification with that which is human by means of the kindly, protective face of the parent sustains the fragility of our original defencelessness. It is this



central pillar which collapses in the experience of torture and the concentration camp, where another human being ceases to have the status of a fellow man or woman and is transformed into a smiling monster that delights in the annihilation of the victim. The phrase which immortalizes Primo Levi (1959) in *If this is a man* relates to an incident where, after being denied an icicle to assuage his thirst, a prisoner imploringly asks an SS officer in broken German, “*Warum?* [Why?]” The officer’s reply, the voice of total authority, was: “*Hier ist kein Warum* [Here there is no ‘why’].” The lack of any reason or explanation for torture, the infinite and inescapable bodily pain combined with the arbitrariness and cruelty as central motives of psychic causality configure a traumatic nucleus of horrifying specificity.

### **What we cannot know**

What “material” can the sufferers of such atrocities and their environment bring to analysis to be worked on?

There is always a degree of difficulty in being able to establish reality within the midst of such horror, even if one wishes to preserve the objectivity which the judge or the historian strives for. However, this is even more important if a privileged place is given to internal subjectivity, which I presume is the psychoanalyst’s goal in his or her quest to gain knowledge about the sufferer. Once political violence has abated, is it not often the case in superficial discourse that we justify the fact that we were willing to permit such abuses because we did not know what was happening and that if we had known, our opposition would have been greater, we would have been less silent and our complicity in these abuses, less active?

With the indigenous genocide in America, which according to Todorov (1984) was the biggest in history, new cities and towns sprang up as a result of the melting pot of races and the predilection for open spaces and abundant resources. After this genocide, the ethnic wars which caused devastation in Europe and the Orient were ignored in the Americas in the name of fundamentalist beliefs related to faith and race. In Latin America, when those who now are old spoke in their infancy of the horrors of World War II and the Nazi extermination of the Jews, we responded simply and ingenuously, “Here no, the horrors are taking place over there”, that is, in Europe. While drawing on the current situation, we vigorously denied the previously mentioned pogrom which occurred less than two centuries ago, in our origins as a nation. New Yorkers believed the same thing until September 11th, 2001. This *state of pretraumatic innocence* exists (or is configured) *a posteriori*, and serves as a starting point to think about the enormity of the traumatic experience, a *tabula rasa* in which fear can be engraved ... or incredulity, both being extremes which cause disavowal and prevent the accumulation of historic memory.

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The organizing committee of the 44th IPA Congress asked us to angle the perspective of trauma from the experience of torture and those that disappeared during the military dictatorships of Latin America. There is no doubt that between this experience and that of the Holocaust there is an order of magnitude difference between thousands and millions; the Holocaust culminating in a death industry, with the killings in Latin America being on a lesser scale. (Nevertheless with the bombardment of Panama, with the civil war in Guatemala and the hardships suffered by the indigenous population and with the current situation in Colombia, the scorched earth policy acquires the magnitude

of genocide and extermination.) The legacy, the hallmark of extreme terror of political violence, has some characteristics which distinguish its specificity from other forms of traumatic experience. To reduce it to a category common to trauma is conceptually erroneous as well as being ethically indefensible. The labeling of individuals as victims and the economic reparation of these victims trades the symbolic debt for a financial transaction which cheapens and corrupts that debt. I am not saying that this should not take place, but that this act is insufficient and does not necessitate psychoanalysis.

### **The perspective of clinical psychoanalysis**

How can one define the trajectory between the extreme situation of torture and its subsequent working through (*Durcharbeiten*) in the work of psychoanalysis?

The sketch that I have tried to outline relates to the unattainable quality of the ordinary representation to express horror. It serves to destroy the common illusion that the solution to this trauma is accessible via cathartic abreaction (linking the problem of trauma to the metapsychological model of hysteria), and superimposing the notion of “healing” on the symptomatic silence. The therapeutic aim is not resilience. Trying to restore the individual to apparent normality seems to me ridiculous. The therapeutic aim is the search for psychic temporality, with a future and a reappropriation of the inner self which will allow the individual to differentiate the past from the present. This will enable them to access their current state with a fresh perspective so that they do not remain fossilized, anchored to trauma as if this were an irresistible attraction which saturates every aspect of psychic experience with meaning, contaminating the present and the future in a determinism both lineal and fatalistic with the past. When the therapeutic work is favorable and productive, one can perceive the two sides of the scale: on the one side, psychic time is anchored in the past or weighed down by it, and on the other side, there is a possible future, where the dimension of here and now and a future-oriented perspective is possible. In the latter dimension palpates something of the uncertainty of the future rather than the oppressive burden of the permanent threat of a catastrophe which will repeat itself internally and interminably.

**In the Lyon Congress I heard René Roussillon (2004) lucidly state that nothing about the human reveals itself in a monocausal way: it is always hypercomplex.** The extreme situation underlines the relevance of this axiom. This, however, does not prevent us from identifying and highlighting some relevant factors. As this author has been trying to point out, it is not about focusing so much on trauma (as a causal trigger) but on how every subject registers it, records it and ascribes meaning to it: the individuality of each person’s response. It is about how the new and the unexpected of the extreme situation can be interwoven into the course of life, in strategies and ways for carrying on living. **There are those who have been tortured, who have given in to death**, but not all of them are like this. **(DELETED)** The trademark of the extreme situation is not always the aftereffects, that is, the damage and deterioration, nor the return to the original conditions prior to the extreme experience. It is not just the carving of terror and pain on the psyche, of a black hole which is unrepresentable and unthinkable, it is about considering a sublimatory destiny and opening up new creative pathways.

How can we analytically accompany this extreme experience? The analyst must be open and available to deal with the double-edged problem of firstly, that which is indecipherable and secondly, the scar of something dead and destroyed in a nucleus of psychic life. This feeling of having crossed the limit of what is human, of breaking a narcissistic contract which binds us to humanity,

of a psychic space which goes beyond fear and great joy, necessitates the reconfiguration of human pathways which reintegrate the experience of living into psychic life. The sign of irreparable melancholy, of a timeframe where the present is linked to the past, the lack of hope and deep desires, is usually the starting point. Re-establish temporality; unite the past with the future; reposition historically experiential time; live one's personal history but in a way in which fear, like a black hole, does not absorb all mental life, condensing it into a fear which is ever-present and always experienced in the present: these are some ways of working which I have gleaned from my experience. If this reintegration is not feasible, the only way possible to achieve the restoration of the subject appear to be a splitting, a detaching or dis-identification and distancing of this insuperable horror in the past, so that the part which has been destroyed does not contaminate and invade everything, as well as embarking on life projects. **As Roussillon calls it: rescuing your first name (2004).** It is about repersonalization: when one is outside oneself, it is necessary to reoccupy one's own space.

One type of failure is when the analysand stays irreversibly in the position of the victim and hopes that the world will repair and compensate for the evils that he or she has suffered. The Freudian astuteness of the secondary benefit of the symptom becomes a monstrous caricature here, to the detriment of the subject and his environment, which he or she perceives is eternally guilty of that which is irreparable. This is a resentment suffered in the psychic sphere or which is acted out in the social arena. The world is full of these types of cases, which at times saturate demand in rehabilitation clinics, institutions where the standard practice, which their staff draw inspiration from, is to treat the individual as a victim.

What has been said so far places us outside the consensual diagnostic categories, outside of their uses and abuses (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder, resilience, etc). To tie ourselves to these categories leads us to a woefully inadequate concept and a distortion of the social perception of the problem, which is one of its essential dimensions. It is necessary not to give way to the social demand to "psychiatrize" this problem, but instead to preserve it as a human problem and a political problem of an enormous scale rather than reducing it to a health problem, this being a perverse trick which makes the establishment feel comfortable.

### **The psychological perspective of the masses**

Throughout the 20th century, Freudian discoveries about infantile sexuality did not only have an effect on those cases being treated, they also had an enormous impact on diverse facets of the culture of the time. A mammoth task of similar magnitude awaits us with regard to acts of cruelty performed collectively, and psychoanalysts can make their contribution studying in depth the socio-anthropological perspective introduced in *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego* (Freud, 1921). It goes without saying that the treatment of cases, the context of the clinic and reflecting upon these cases and clinical practices, still continue to be the backbone of our trade. But our accumulated experience allows us to assert that the experience of terror marks, not only those who have suffered, but also their group and subsequent generations, leaving its mark on the future of the species. We can denounce the fallacy of the dichotomy between those who are unharmed and those who are affected and show that, as regards the denunciation and comprehension of the problem, the place of the witness is as crucial as that of the sufferer. The social recognition of genocide and of war crimes, and what this implies for abreaction, has a beneficial effect which is

crucial for those affected by bringing about the restitution of historical truth. The contrary situation, resulting from the disavowal of this truth, brands those effected with the label of being different (like the people of Verona who feared Dante because he had visited hell), leading to the “solutions” of auto and heteroaggression, later catalogued as an aftereffect of trauma and as sociopathy.

The inclusion of the problem of torture and political terror in a dialectic between reason and madness has to do with the whole of humanity and not just with the sufferers and those affected by human wickedness. It has to do with all human beings and not only victims. The giving of meaning to operations has to do with humanity in its entirety and not the sufferers, in whom there is a conflict between normality and insanity. The ideal of health is also political, and the traumatic event is essential but insufficient to distinguish the cause and the effects in a given subject, be they a Vietnam war veteran or a peasant from Rwanda or Guatemala. It is this type of logic that Bauman adopts in sociology. The boundary line between madness and symbolization is not about individuals or those labeled as victims, it is a problem which belongs to the whole of society. The significant operator which defines normality is concomitantly the community and the individual. **Ulriksen de Viñar and Viñar (1995)**

### **The tearing apart and rupturing of the psyche; limits in the use of metaphor**

#### **Identification with the species. The presence of the other, the coming into force of an erotic and empowered body. Credulity and trust**

According to the notional schema which Freudian psychoanalysts have inherited (**SENTENCE DELETED**) the drive is violence or the push which comes from inside (from the endopsychic) whereas trauma comes from outside, from the other (*Nebensmench*), which is private (domestic) or social. Today this dichotomy is insufficient. I prefer to reject the simple clarity of the truth of this internal–external world dichotomy as the organizer of our comprehension. I also reject the lineal development which mechanically subordinates current experiences to infantile neurosis. Extreme experiences, as in the case of those relating to war and to torture, are able to shake up and reconfigure the existing organization of the psyche.

Some of the characteristics of systematic and sophisticated torture, as a pernicious or etiological agent of psychic damage, require specification. From mediaeval times, but especially throughout the 20th century, torture techniques and procedures have been progressively perfected in the same way as other technological advances. The Gestapo and British secret service, the war of independence in Algeria, and the Panamanian training school of the US Southern Command have produced frighteningly skilled technicians and experts. Thus, it is necessary to reject the idea of a primitive, savage form of barbarity from former times and recognize that the **TERMINATORS** are not just fictional, fun characters whose purpose is to provide infantile entertainment, but that they are part of efficient organizations which occupy a privileged place in the institutions of the modern world. In the same way that we cannot have a representation of the world without schools, hospitals, churches, sports stadia, in this constellation of ordinary representations of institutions, there is also a secret police force with their retinue comprising of the reality and the fiction of extreme horror (George Orwell's *1984* is the fictionalized representation most universally known.)

With this submission to an absolute power, Winnicott's primitive agonies or nameless anguishes seem not to be just relics from our beginnings, but to have a nearness in the here and now which is disturbing and form part of the

representations that we make of the world. With the pretext of obtaining military intelligence about the enemy, the torture machine, primed and ready for action, is capable of reducing the human being to subhuman status, to being nothing more than a piece of suffering flesh. The sentient human body disintegrates in this process of destruction and the other human being, the product of the same humanity, disappears in the same way. The individual is dispossessed of his or her own sentient body and the Word which provides its foundation. Elaine Scarry (1985) talks about the breaking of that which is the most elemental and fundamental and which provides the basic foundation of the human condition: the conjunction of the sentient body and the Word which sustains it.

The terrible maxim of Primo Levi is that the real witnesses are those who did not return. **Decades later, a survivor of the Gulag, Varlam Chalamov, wrote that the risk of testifying about extreme situations is that one is speaking the language of the dead, whom we have to betray if we make this language audible for the living, who do not understand it.(1993).** Terror is the destruction of the metaphorical value of a narrative. It is the destruction of the psychic organ. **(Deleted)** The victory of the executioner is to transform this memory into something which is unbearable. For this reason, the raw testimony appears obscene, psychically unprocessable, and propels us in one direction to fear and alienation. In these extremes, analytic thought, which requires a representation embedded in feelings and emotion, has no place.

As evidence of this, it would appear that in this Congress, New developments on trauma, in Rio de Janeiro, a city full of sun, colour and happiness—a symbol of joyful exuberance—a paradox is configured, a conflict which is difficult to resolve, between the content of the text being communicated and the place where it is being presented. How can I do this without feeling a traitor and a desecrator of memories? How can I contaminate this meeting, which one hopes will be intellectually and experientially productive, with terror? This guilt, the guilt of the survivor, of being alive, is reinforced in the evidence that there is a peak of suicides and accidents at the moment of crossing the boundary line from incarceration to liberation.

Maybe the title of Jorge Semprún's book *Literature or life* (1997) which documents his experiences in the concentration camp, and which he had to incubate for 4 decades in order to be able to write, eloquently highlights the radical difference between the thing (unnamable) and its representation as a narrative. The purpose of naming the unnamable<sup>2</sup> and providing some milestones for the journey of reflection about this subject is not to illustrate or *know more* about this inaccessible nucleus of terror. The only justification of my task of writing here, an undertaking which is already doomed to failure, is to emerge from this silence, or from the neglect of this subject, something which is even more deserving of condemnation.

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The terms "torture" and "disappearance" which define the military dictators of South America, sustained technically and materially by Pentagon advisors, are not the exclusive subject of investigation for this Congress, and nor is the semiology of the victims and the physical and psychic aftereffects of torture which are to a greater or lesser extent horrific. I understand that the challenge of this Congress is to conceive trauma not as a descriptive, clinical or epidemiological compendium of the aftereffects of trauma with the aim of

<sup>24</sup>...I dare to assert that torture is the most horrible event a human being can retain within himself" (p. 22). "Whoever has succumbed to torture can no longer feel at home in the world. The shame and destruction cannot be erased. Trust in the world, which already collapsed in part at the first blow, but in the end, under torture, fully, will not be regained" (p. 40). See also Améry (1986).

paving the way for the setting up of a discipline of victimology. **Viñar, Ulriksen de Viñar, and Bleger(1989)**. Its aim is to study terror as a phenomenon conceived by men to destroy other men, a phenomenon which takes hold in sociopolitical and historical conditions from a time and place *where terror exists in everyday life*, in a way which is latent or in existence, modifying all the conditions of psychic functioning. When political terror sweeps over the city and impregnates everyday life, the minds of people are slowly weakened and worn down so that they become divided into two groups (this is schematic): those for whom the new order is desirable because it eliminates disorder and uncertainty, and others who struggle between rebelling against and submitting to the tyranny of absolute power. This atmosphere in the *agora* establishes the division of those citizens who are acceptable and those who are suspect and subversive. This leads to the weaving of a strange, social weft which reorders social ties, even those in a pluralistic democracy which seems distant from the political orbit, because even in the field of education and the family unit, the division of being pro- or anti-regime marks all bonds.

In terror, one does not think, one just survives or succumbs. However, the ordinary notion of thinking does not take place *during* the trauma, which can last from one minute to many years, but takes place afterwards, in the subsequent stage which arises from the working through of the affect-effects of trauma.

The testimony from the **International Court of Justice of The Hague** and the signing of the declaration of the International Convention against Torture; Amnesty **International**; American Watch; and the more modest Latin American **Servicio Paz y Justicia**, designates and establishes a public level of communication, both crucial and essential, this being the movement for human rights which is valued so ambivalently and denigrated. But in order that subjectivity and the subject of analysis enter the field of reflection, difficult steps need to be taken which are both supplementary and necessary. Public testimony, like a news item, says some things and hides others. It establishes a nucleus of informative knowledge which menacingly encircles the horror, labelling it in a certain stereotypical way, eluding the impact of its aftereffects. For public testimony, a conventional subject is sufficient (here the operative notions are those of victim and indemnification). When the same subject must be handled intimately and privately, the simple extrapolation from the ordinary word is not sufficient. The conveying and sharing (*le partage*) of experiences with a spouse, children or a friend, on a basis of trust, exchanges the public arena for another more intimate one whose texture is to be explored. Without doubt, it is a challenge for the psychoanalyst to have access to this intimate space which while being accessed is being simultaneously constructed. The aim of the psychoanalyst is not to remain with an exterior semiology which endeavours to make everything objective and which talks about the consequences of trauma. The aim is to provide the foundation of a relational semiology where, by drawing from intimate experience, the subject transforms the aftereffects of trauma into a creative trademark which defines his or her return to the status of the individual human being.

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The memory of terror is as old as humanity. What is new is that the globalization of recent years, which has fostered the concentration of wealth and the increase of injustice, has also enabled us to gather together to reflect on the arguments against war, torture, genocide and to envisage the utopia of a planet without these plagues, a utopia never to be renounced. Half a century after Stalinism and the Nazi regime, time has allowed contemporary history to

accumulate numerous and exhaustive studies by historians, sociologists and political scientists about the ascent, the functioning and the fall of these regimes. The psychoanalytical perspective of this subject cannot limit itself to a victimological focus which relates just to the victims and their aftereffects, rather it must integrate the contributions of the social sciences and must restart the journey initiated by Freud, from *Totem and taboo* (1913) to *Moses and monotheism* (1939)—paying special attention to *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego* (1921)—to be able to understand and tirelessly explore the interface between the subject of privacy and intimacy, and the subject of the masses. This is even more the case when all the studies I know of which relate to this theme Arendt (1973), Bauman (1989), Todorov (1991), Browning (1993 ??see reference)) constantly draw attention to the importance of subjective factors and to the phenomena of suggestion and hypnosis, factors which the psychoanalyst has explored and then later left to one side and which are important in helping or hindering the ascent of totalitarianism. The study of unconscious processes can accept or betray the challenge of opening a new window of understanding into this abject aspect of humanity, we being the only species in which one of the distinctive characteristics is that we set out to systematically destroy the fellow members of our own species.

Is the knowledge of the psychoanalyst as regards the mind of the tortured person and the torturer complementary to or different from the multiple bodies of knowledge which deal with this subject? How does one define its specificity without diluting it as a result of the necessary, praiseworthy and altruistic goal of rehabilitating the victims, and by struggling as citizens for the continuation of the rights established in a universal, sacred charter which is betrayed each time? I find it trivializing to attach the label of post-traumatic stress disorder, this being a definition of a syndrome which is a weight on the shoulders of those affected and is a damning legacy and fate for the species. It amounts to segregating and alienating from others that which belongs to everyone, an operation of disavowal which Lacan (1993) captures in his well-known formula when he states that what is expelled from the symbolic universe reappears in the real.

Thinking back to the time of Charcot with his hysterical patients in La Salpêtrière, one can consider the victim as part of a “hysteria show”, something which may seem ridiculous today, but which is nevertheless historically valuable. Or alternatively one can take the absurdity of this major crisis with the seriousness that this founding father dedicated to his patients, accepting the histrionics of catharsis as a rite of revelation, despite them being secondary to a process whose scope and reach include and go beyond the individual case. Why, with such constancy and tenacity, at both the individual and the collective level, does the man become the wolf, the killer of another man? Investigating torture and the origins of cruelty, not just within the restricted framework of infantile sexuality, has become an essential chapter of psychoanalytical investigation.

### **A sickness of civilization**

So, as Michel De Certeau maintains, thinking and speaking about torture and genocide means a new status of the Word in its relation to cruelty and this opens up a new dimension in the political function of the Word (1987). There is no one to one relationship between discursive material, its function, and the business of extermination. The declaration that this subject is forgettable and without consequence (and is, in fact, difficult to even define as a subject), is a challenge for the political and scientific facets of historical understanding which lie on the boundary of different spheres of knowledge.

We allow ourselves to be blinded by the scandal of negation, by a falsification which is not just a profaning of memories but which threatens our present and our future as a human community. Let us think of the effects and the consequences of this negation. The affirmation of the inexistence of horror—through negation or transforming it into something banal—is not just a falsehood, it is a nonsensical affirmation as the existence of these events is known about and is hidden. What we are talking about, therefore, is the affirmation of concealment. It is not about silence, it is about an active carving out of a hole, the annulment of an incident that really happened, which results in the removal of its argumentation and of the possibility of inscribing its signification. **[If you consider it necessary DELETE both sentences: One of Joyce's characters says that history is a nightmare from which he is trying to wake up. I have made the phrase mine as a springboard for reflection. [DELETE ].** It is difficult to think about the subject other than from the vantage point of either catastrophic pessimism, or the illusions and innocence of a just and harmonious world.

We know that good and evil spring from the same source. Freud tells us in many texts (especially *Why war?* (1933)) that Eros and Thanatos are external forces of human nature which, by explaining everything, explain nothing. The fatalism of this conclusion is not naive because it leads us to a paralysing pessimism. It is the same men who construct culture and democracy who build dictatorships and totalitarianism. Why did someone say that the horrors were only those of Naziism and Stalinism? Who will reassure us that they will not reoccur? Can't we see that they occur with the same wearisome and macabre insistence? Yesterday it was apartheid and the Balkans, the military dictators of South American, and today it is Baghdad, Fallujah, Rwanda, Gaza, Jerusalem and Colombia. Freudian concepts about ideals and power cannot ignore history. If they do, they become no more than rhetorical concepts or stylistic devices, supposedly saying something "essential" about "human nature", when the challenge is not to discover "essences" but concrete, historical "processes" which construct progress or horror. The discovery of the factors underlying this genesis and its dynamic is the real challenge. Michel De Certeau says that one must not use a Freudian concept to shamefacedly cover up that which we do not understand (1987). Concepts do not explain, rather they help to circumscribe that which is not explained and the inexplicable, preserving that which is individual and integrating experience by means of distinction and contrast.

Logos, the emblem of modernity, the goal of the Enlightenment and rationalism, bearer of the essence of things by means of its scientific reach and the value it gives to true and prescriptive discourse, loses sway in the face of war and the concentration camps. Enigma or scandal? Nietzsche proclaims that the death of God is not just the renunciation of theocentrism, but questions rationality as a basic structuring principle. Since the French revolution, it is clear that our mental faculty of judgement is not divine, it is an "order" from the powers that be at a given time, and is the product of the relationships which are interwoven between men. It is a historical construct which human reason must be responsible for. How can we answer for concentration camps (Auschwitz, Siberia, Guantánamo, military barracks of the dictatorship) which are an expression of an extreme form of power which menacingly encircles us when the negotiation of hostility is no longer possible? **Primo Levi(1959) and R. Antelme(1992) discuss whether the executioners and tyranny, along with the victims which are the product of this horror, are human or inhuman acts.** On the border between the abjectness of power and ideals, the Word ceases to have its ordinary function to express the imperfect completeness of a subject



and becomes an imposture of fanaticism, transforming that which it names into the sole, absolute truth and leaving no place for uncertainty. **(DELETED)**

Walter Benjamin, in his essay *The storyteller* (1936), wrote about the soldiers who came back from the trenches of Verdun:

With the [First] World War a process began to become apparent which was not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent—not richer, but poorer in communicable experience? (p. 84)

Narrative realization, the human capacity to share and interchange experiences by means of language was nullified. In this regard one must be radical: there is no humanity without this faculty to share experience through language. Horror generates fear, it does not generate communicable experience. Men live together. Their characteristics— what we call identity- only take shape in the context of co-belonging to the species.<sup>3,4</sup> Because of this, the inalienable faculty to exchange and share experiences via narration applies to and forms the basis of the process of humanization.

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Every civilizing act contains the potential for barbarity. How can one man become the enemy of another man whose extermination, after millennia of civilization, then becomes the supreme ideal? This question is a crossroads in this Congress ... in the world today? Browning (1993??), a contemporary North American historian, investigated the Reserve Police Battalion 101, an execution squad of the reserve police of the Third Reich, making a historical record based on first-hand accounts. Some 30 years after the events, he was able to interview extensively 125 of the 250 survivors of a battalion of 500 men whose job, over the course of a year, was to exterminate tens of thousands of Jews in Poland. This was done not in the gas chambers, on a grand scale, but individually, one by one, taking them from their houses, making them dig their own graves and then firing at them in the face or in the back of the neck, one by one: men, women and children. From this meticulous and tireless investigation (the descriptions are spine chilling), he arrived at a terrifying conclusion which is implicit in the title of his book *Ordinary men*. Before and after these mass killings, these normal men lead ordinary lives and were office workers or shop keepers. They had not been selected using the criteria of adherence to the Nazi regime, nor had they been submitted to any specific indoctrination. They were a sociological sample of normal men from a Hamburg neighbourhood. The question is how could these apparently normal men be transformed into vicious perpetrators of heinous crimes? In the concluding chapter, after a detailed argument of possible causal factors which include indoctrination by means of propaganda, specific sociopathic features, submission to and fear of authority, the common feature which arose from hundreds of hours of interviews and much

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**Corrected Version:In the analysis that Revault D'Allones makes on the work of Arendt, she points out that humanity of mankind is defined in relation to the belonging to the world of other men. This thesis allows escape from or overcoming of the self-referred identity sameness trap, which has held us fast for centuries. Identity-sameness which invents the solipsistic fiction of a root, a unique origin, transparent and sublime. (2002)**

<sup>3</sup>"There have been political theories based on the supposition that human nature is perverse or evil (*Homo homini lupos*). Nowadays we dispense with these essences and this issue concerns trying to establish a negotiation, and making a deal with enmity. As regards those who are different or the enemy, what exists is either a stance where there is an acceptance of the possibility of their existence, or a tendency towards their elimination. In the construction of the enemy, what is more problematic is the person who is incredulous rather than the heretic, and the person who breaks away from the group rather than the person who was always an outsider. Democracy (Lefort) removes the One who embodies power and who occupies this place, leaving a void of tension and conflict." Rico (2004).

protocol, what he underlines as the main factor which leads ordinary subjects to commit monstrous crimes, is the desire to be like everyone else, to be like the other members of the group to whom they belong. *The inability to say "no" because of the fear of ending up alone.* Some were able to carry out their macabre task day after day with triumphal arrogance, others turned to drink to be able to withstand the strain, and a small number coped by using the artifice of saving somebody, letting him or her escape without pulling the trigger. But what was the most essential thing was not to appear non-conformist or feeble-minded in front of one's peers; the difficult thing was to say "no" to the local rule of law which was in force and which, at that time, consisted of murdering thousands of Jews every day. The madness and the heinous nature of this crime was because of the need to form and be part of a group so as not pay the price and suffer the misery of individualization: "The capacity to be alone," says Winnicott (1958). **Bleger and Ulriksen de Viñar** tell us that wanting to be like everybody else constitutes part of the process of identification, a process which is necessary but at the same time ill-fated (1989). It is one of the means of joining the individual with the collective and it cannot be preordained that this process is either good or bad. It is simply a matter of human beings opening the doors to the demons of consent.

In this field, the findings of Browning's (1993??) investigation accord with the experiments of Milgram (1974) regarding submission to authority and coincide qualitatively and quantitatively. *Only 20%, one in five individuals, in the samples investigated is capable of resisting the persuasive power of suggestive of the local ruling authority in situations of extreme tension.* That is to say that only a fifth can resist this hypnosis, whereby the group imposes a set of beliefs and behaviors it deems to be correct. Only a fifth is capable of being discerning enough to adopt an alternative and different stance by refusing to succumb to this hypnosis. The other four-fifths immerse themselves in the lethargy of voluntary servitude, submit to the demons of consent and yield to the supreme powers that be and the arrogant certainty of their convictions. The ability to say "no" to the pressure and to the complicity of the group is something which is both astonishing and striking. This we feel when Hanna Arendt leads us unfalteringly to the central argument in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) where she says that the monster is not basically an evil or perverse personality but is primarily a public servant who is the product of manipulation and secondly, an individual who has been led astray by the advantages and perks which the position of authority in this cleverly constructed, trans-subjective alliance affords him.

I can be justifiably criticized for taking Nazis killers as a prototype from the human race. I share the view that they are repugnant and loathsome. I argue in my defense that Freud taught us that extreme pathologies can throw light on that which under normal conditions can not clearly be seen and hence is difficult to visualize. It is necessary for us to go to this extreme of abjectness if we want to modify the tenacity and recurrence of this facet of collective human behavior: the tendency of men to allow their thinking to be done by other men; the fear of thinking for oneself. The sad reality of the masses under tyranny and totalitarianism could maybe provide us with a key to revealing other imitative behaviors which would be useful to uncover. Being proud rational human beings, it is difficult to recognize introspectively when we become trapped in suggestion and hypnosis as a result of fear or prejudice.

At the beginning of his career, Freud abandoned hypnosis and suggestion, because of being a bad hypnotist and not achieving his therapeutic aims, and later because of an ethical imperative and his rationalist convictions where he

compared hypnosis with the cosmetic and brought into line his methodology—psychoanalysis—with surgery. At the culmination of the World War I, in *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, Freud (1921) highlights the fact that the rationality of the individual dissolves of its own accord and succumbs to the hypnosis of the masses. History offers us the exemplary cases of Galileo Galilei and Giordano Bruno, and an infinite number of anonymous cases where the “official truth” kills the nascent truth, shaking the foundations of the temple of our beliefs, where fear of authority and voluntary servitude determine thought, behavior and destiny and abominate the most relevant mental faculty of the species: the capacity to innovate and to create.

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