Whereof we can speak, thereof we must not be silent: trauma, political solipsism and war

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Abstract. In cases such as World War I grief or trauma were nearly universal in the European context and a direct consequence of a political experience of war. This article asks whether widespread social suffering may have a social and political expression that is larger than the sum of traumatised or bereaved individuals. Section 1 explores Martha Nussbaum's theory of emotion, particularly as it relates to grief and compassion and uses this to build two contrasting typologies of grief and trauma. Central to this contrast is the idea that grief, as an emotion, is embedded in a community, while trauma and emotional numbing correspond with a breakdown of community and an isolation, which may give rise to solipsism. The latter would appear to make any notion of social trauma a contradiction in terms. Section 2 draws on the philosopher Wittgenstein's critique in the *Philosophical Investigations* of his early work in the *Tractatus*, to argue that even the solipsist exists in a particular kind of social world. This provides a foundation for arguing, in Section 3, that social trauma can find expression in a political solipsism, which has dangerous consequences. Section 4 theorises the relationship between trauma, identity and agency at the international level.

During the First World War more than nine million died as a result of the fighting, and were killed at an average rate of more than 6,000 a day for more than four and a quarter years.[1] Bereavement was universal across Europe, affecting almost every family. According to Jay Winter, this bereavement found expression in two forms.[2] First, there was an appeal to classical, romantic or religious images and ideas, given their power to mediate bereavement. Alongside this traditional language of mourning a second and opposite trend emerged at 'the cutting edge of "modern memory". Its multi-faceted sense of dislocation, paradox, and the ironic, could express anger and despair, and did so in enduring ways; … but it could not heal'.[3] By the time of the Second World War the traditional language of mourning was in demise. Both the changing nature of warfare and the horrific consequences of the war were a source of the rupture. More than half of the fifty million people who died in the Second World War were civilians, and many perished in a new way.[4] The nuclear

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[1] Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), p. 32.
[2] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[3] Winter, *Sites of Mourning*, p. 5.
[4] Ibid., p. 9.

bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was new, as was the extermination of Jews in Europe. In both catastrophes, the limits of language had been reached. There seemed no way to adequately express the hideousness and scale of the cruelties. As Julia Kristeva observed, the Second World War undermined the very symbols through which meaning – any meaning – could be attached to the cataclysm of war.[5]

Winter points to two qualitatively different responses to massive loss. In referring to catastrophes of this magnitude, the words grief and trauma are often used interchangeably. Both words suggest a loss of control and vulnerability imposed by the surrounding world. Yet the two connote different experiences insofar as grief is an emotion related to a process of mourning, and, as suggested above, a rich and symbolic cultural language. Trauma, by contrast, is more of a 'dislocation' accompanied by an inability to mourn or speak of the trauma. They are also distinguished by the reference to a larger community and a shared language as opposed to isolation, meaninglessness and silence.

Grief and trauma belong to a vocabulary of individual psychology or psychoanalysis. Yet, in these cases, grief or trauma were nearly universal, at least in the European context, and a direct consequence of a political experience of war. This raises a question that has been largely ignored in the literature of international relations.[6] Do widespread grief and trauma have a social and political expression that is larger than the sum of traumatised or bereaved individuals? If so, do the political consequences of the two differ?

In the first section I examine Martha Nussbaum's theory of emotion, particularly as it relates to grief and compassion. I use this to build two contrasting typologies of grief and trauma. Central to this contrast is the idea that grief, as an emotion, is embedded in a community, while trauma and emotional numbing correspond with a breakdown of community and an isolation, which may give rise to solipsism. In regard to the larger question, this distinction presents a puzzle. If trauma is distinguished from grief by the collapse of community[7] or a loss of trust in one's social world,[8] in the form of betrayal or humiliation,[9] it would seem impossible for the latter to have any political expression. Social trauma would appear to be a contradiction in terms. However, there is reason to believe such a contradiction is possible, particularly in light of the portrayal of 11 September 2001 as a trauma not only to individuals but to American identity as a whole. In Section 2 I draw on the philosopher Wittgenstein's critique in *Philosophical Investigations* of his early work in *Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus*, to argue that even the solipsist exists in a particular kind of social world. This provides a foundation for arguing, in Section 3,

[5] Julie Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. L.S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 223.
[6] Indeed, there has been little attention to the role of emotion. One excellent exception, which explores this absence as well as formulating positive propositions, is Neta C. Crawford, 'The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships', *International Security*, 24: 4 (2000).
[7] Patrick Bracken and Celia Petty, *Rethinking the Trauma of War* (London: Free Association Press, 1998).
[8] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma Time and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[9] Bessel Van der Kolk and Alexander McFarlane, 'The Black Hole of Trauma', ch. 1 in van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (eds.), *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society* (London: The Guildford Press, 1996).

that social trauma can find expression in a political solipsism, which has dangerous consequences. In Section 4 I theorise the relationship between trauma, identity and agency at the international level.

Community *vs.* isolation

Helplessness and loss of control are manifestations of trauma. But loss of control is also an element of normal emotion. Trauma and emotion both represent vulnerability in relation to others. This raises a question about how grief and trauma stand in relation to one another. In this section, I argue that the relationship between individual and community is vital to a distinction between the two. While emotions of grief and compassion are expressions of mutual vulnerability between self and other, emotional numbing is characteristic of trauma.[10] This corresponds with a hardening of the boundaries between self and others, in an attempt to reduce vulnerability.

Martha Nussbaum argues that emotions are 'appraisals or value judgements which ascribe to things and persons outside the person's own control great importance for that person's own flourishing'.[11] In this respect, emotions are an expression of our vulnerability to events that we don't control. Rather than contrary to rationality, as often conceived, emotions involve a form of evaluative judgement, which she refers to as *eudaimonistic judgement* (EJ). EJ involves thought of an object combined with thought of the object's salience or importance to one's own survival and flourishing. For instance, the object of Nussbaum's grief, that is, her mother, is invested with great value and importance. The sight of the dead body is intolerable because this serves as a reminder that value is also the basis for irretrievable loss. The emotion also has a history. The grief includes traces of a whole range of other emotions lurking in the background that give it specific content and cognitive specificity.

Grief is an emotion experienced by a person who suffers loss. Nussbaum further explores the related emotion of compassion or the pain one experiences in observing another suffer. Compassion rests on three cognitive elements. First, it rests on a judgement of size, for example, that the bad event that has befallen someone is serious in nature. Second, that the person is not to blame for the suffering that has befallen them. Third, it rests on an EJ that the person is significant in the observer's scheme of goals and projects. Aristotle, who had a similar schema, added a fourth condition of compassion: the observer must be able to imagine that they would find themselves in similar circumstances to the aggrieved, as an aid in forming the EJ. While Nussbaum sees this element as important, she does not see it as necessary.[12]

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[10] This is recognised in the diagnostic categories codified by the American Psychological Association.

[11] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 4.

[12] The idea of mutual vulnerability explains why those who wish to discourage compassion portray victims as totally dissimilar in kind. As Hilberg argued, the Nazi portrayal of Jews as non-human insects or vermin, or inanimate cargo to be transported, aided the project of distancing the sufferers from their tormentors.

Her conclusion about the two emotions, grief and compassion, is similar. She says:

In order for grief to be present, the dead person must be seen and valued as a part of the mourner's own life, her scheme of goals and projects. Similarly, in order for compassion to be present, the person must consider the suffering of another as a significant part of his or her own scheme of goal and ends. In effect, she must make herself vulnerable in the person of the other. It is the EJ, not the judgement of similar possibilities, that seems to be a necessary constituent of compassion.[13]

Both grief and compassion require the ability to value others as a part of one's own goals and projects. Thus, a connection and relationship to others is key to her theory of emotion.[14]

An example helps to demonstrate the dynamics of this relationship and sets the stage for a later contrast involving trauma. Both are based on episodes of the British television series, *Eastenders*, which has been frequently praised for its sensitive handling of social and moral issues. In the one case, Sharon's partner, Tom, has died in a fire after rescuing a child and while returning to the burning house for the child's abusive father. After Tom's heroic death, Sharon's friends and neighbours insist that she not be alone and make repeated efforts, against her resistance, to care for her. Tom is valorised as a hero, the local pub cancels a party and loses profit out of respect for Sharon's grief. In this example Sharon's loss of Tom is made easier by her embeddedness in a community of people who care about her and recognise the relationship between her EJ and their own.

Compassion requires the experience of pain at the thought of a separate person's suffering. In Nussbaum's argument, empathy, while requiring an identification and understanding of what the other is experiencing, involves an awareness that one is separate and not in that place. In so far as the empathetic person reconstructs the experience of another, it may pave the way to compassion, but is not sufficient for compassion. One can have empathy with a joyful as well as a bad experience, while compassion assumes the object to be in the latter category. One can, however, have empathy with someone in a bad state without compassion. The torturer can be aware of his victim's suffering, and even enjoy imagining it, without the least bit of compassion for her pain.

Loss and the compassion of others are the ingredients of a normal grieving process. The emotions attached to loss find expression within a community. By contrast, grief may become trauma if accompanied by a breakdown in relations with others, for example due to an experience of betrayal or humiliation. Consider another storyline from *Eastenders*. Melanie has just lost her husband, Steve, in a car

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[13] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, p. 318.

[14] Nussbaum asks why these cognitive elements would necessarily be linked to the emotions themselves. Could one have all of the judgements without the painful emotion? She offers several examples. We may find it difficult to have compassion for a stranger or may be too busy and distracted to notice. This example doesn't contain all of the ingredients in so far as it lacks an EJ or any sense of the stranger as a part of one's own scheme of goals and projects. The observer also may not see the seriousness from their point of view. A torturer knows that his victim suffers badly but from his own point of view this is a good thing. Nussbaum concludes that it is only possible to have all three elements and not to feel compassion in a case similar to that of delayed mourning, where the observer simply hasn't taken in what has happened and it has not become a sufficient part of her cognitive repertoire to influence the pattern of her own beliefs and actions.

explosion. She values him as part of her own EJ. The people in her environment respond by bringing flowers or attending the funeral to support Melanie. There is thus a sense of empathy, based on a number of social rules. These rules define the death of a husband as serious (size) and as an act that has befallen Melanie through no fault of her own. Their acts correspond with how one normally responds to events of this kind, that is, with public displays of sympathy.

However, despite these public displays, there is an absence of the third category, that is, the person as significant in the observer's goals and projects, and thus the emotion of compassion. The funeral is followed by a series of interactions in which friends and acquaintances act on the basis of their own EJ, one of which leads to Melanie's conviction for a crime she knew nothing about. In addition, her best friend, Lisa, fails to tell Melanie that it was she, rather than Steve, who, in an earlier episode, had tried to murder Phil. Because she does not know this, her grief is distorted by an inaccurate belief that her husband was a cold-blooded murderer. When she discovers the lie, she loses all faith in her surroundings and leaves the Square to start a new life, left to mourn in strange surroundings on her own. The normal grief that accompanies the death of a husband will have become trauma. If grief rests on a positive valuation of the other, trauma, its opposite, is a response to the absence of value.

Loss vs. *betrayal*

The psychological literature focuses on the individual element of trauma, that is, what is happening inside the individual body or mind. This argument draws out the social and political dimension of the relationship to others. According to Zinner and Williams, traumas arising from human interactions, as distinct from natural disasters, are more difficult to come to terms with because the pain is a byproduct of intentional action.[15] It may further result from the neglect of others. In this respect, while positive emotions reach out to others, negative emotions of humiliation, fear, betrayal and loss of trust may contribute to isolation. Hobbes emphasised that positive emotion cannot find expression in war, precisely because of the constant fear of death.[16] Social disasters may be characterised by different degrees of intentionality,[17] but its presence is key to the psychological dimension of trauma.

Jenny Edkins argues that trauma involves a betrayal of trust. 'What we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger'.[18] The 'external' shock most often identified with

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[15] Ellen S. Zinner and Mary Beth Williams, *When a Community Weeps: Case Studies in Group Survivorship* (London: Brunner/Mazel, 1999).
[16] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980 [1651]).
[17] The distinction between natural and social trauma cannot be finely drawn, since many disasters, which may on first sight appear to be natural, such as famine, are embedded in complex social constructions related to the distribution of power, and in this case food.
[18] Edkins, *Trauma Time*, p. 4.

trauma comes in the form of an absence, a loss of trust, a lack of acknowledgement or value. Child abuse is a form of intentional act, which results in a breakdown of trust and security.

Genocide, and particularly the experience of Jews in the German concentration camps, is another example of intentional action that resulted in a collapse of meaning and safety.[19] The state, whose role is to protect its citizens, betrayed this trust *vis-à-vis* a portion of its own population. As Clendinnen notes, those who were flung into the work camps found themselves abruptly reduced from a unique 'someone', comfortably located within a web of work, place, family, friends and associates, to a shorn and naked biped marked by a tattooed number.[20] The individual was forcefully removed from their social context and dropped in a place where every symbol of individual identity, from clothes to hair to family members, and even their name, was taken from them. The victims were robbed of those symbols and relationships by which life is given meaning and stripped of their identity and agency. Worse than the negative empathy of the torturer, genocide denies the humanity of the other.[21]

Grief and trauma are two distinct experiences, although in practice the two comprise a spectrum rather than representing absolute types. Grief that coexists with compassion is situated within a social world where the painful experience has meaning within a community such that the bereaved receives the necessary support over time to redefine her place in everyday life in the absence of the loved person. The positive emotions attached to Tom and his heroism, as well as the loving support of those around her, allowed Sharon to find positive meaning in Tom's death. Over time he moves out of the centre of Sharon's emotional world, which is increasingly filled by others as she resumes some kind of normal life. In this respect, normal grief can be said to have 'sense'. Although painful, the process of integrating the experience into a meaningful social world is facilitated by the compassion of others.

By contrast, grief accompanied by betrayal and isolation is constitutive of Melanie's trauma. In this case, her grief or her world cease to have 'sense', and are transported outside of normal experience. She exists alone in relation to the world and in this aloneness the world becomes synonymous with her trauma. As an isolated individual outside community, the world is not mediated in a dialogue with

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[19] Genocide is by definition related to intentionality.

[20] Inga Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 35.

[21] Worse than empathy of the latter sort is the total lack of empathy which dehumanises the other. As Kohut states, the dreadful experiences of prolonged stays in concentration camps during the Nazi era in Germany represented a total disregard for the humanity of the victims. Heinz Kohut, 'On Empathy', in P.H. Orstein (ed.), *Search for the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut: 1978–1981* (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1981), p. 530. The treatment of a victim, whether Jew, woman or other, as a mere object whose experience doesn't matter arguably involves a more profound evil than to be tortured by an empathetic villain who recognises them as human. The ability to empathise is an essential ingredient of humanity. Compassion goes a step further. It includes the possibility that action to address the suffering of another is of great importance to one's own flourishing. At the point that a suffering other has become a part of one's own ends and goals, this establishes a motive to help that person, that is, to take action. Scientific experiments have revealed that subjects who were urged to relax and use their imaginations when hearing a story of distress reported both greater emotion and greater willingness to help the victim than did subjects who were urged to remain detached and 'objective'. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, pp. 334, 340.

others. Instead, the individual, fixed on the experience of the past, brings this past to each present interaction. Traumatic memory or time is not the same as everyday memory or time. The linearity of the latter is disrupted. The traumatised person continues to live and re-live, remember and re-remember the trauma alongside ordinary life.[22] The trauma is at one and same time outside normal life, that is, it has no 'sense' within a meaningful community, yet becomes constitutive of a reality in which the traumatised is continually fearful of others and vigilant for the threat to recur.

Trauma and solipsism

Grief/compassion and trauma/isolation rest on the difference between the individual embedded in a community *vs.* the individual suffering alone. This distinction makes any notion of social or political trauma a contradiction in terms. The purpose of this section is to construct a stepping stone between an understanding of trauma as constituted in isolation, with the collapse of community, and a concept of 'political solipsism'. As a framework for this analysis, I examine Wittgenstein's use of solipsism in his earlier work, *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus (TLP)*,[23] through the lens of his later work, *Philosophical Investigations (PI)*,[24] where he examines the bewitching element of the former.

Neither emotion nor trauma has an explicit place in Wittgenstein's thought. It would be wrong to suggest that Wittgenstein *intended* to give an account of the relationship of the traumatised individual to the world. Despite this, the connection made in what follows is justified for two reasons. First, in the later work, *PI*, Wittgenstein shows the flaw in the solipsism of the earlier work by demonstrating the embeddedness of all forms of human life in cultural and social customs, institutions and uses, grounded in language. The detached individual of the *TLP* is replaced by human dependence on social and historical context. This move is central to the line of argument pursued here.

Second, if one looks at Wittgenstein's own context while he was completing the *TLP*, the potential role of trauma, either observed or experienced, is not far to see.[25] The first draft of the *Tractatus*, which focused exclusively on logic, was conceived behind the lines of World War I. The content was transformed in the second draft, which was written after Wittgenstein's transfer to the front lines. His concern with the 'unspeakable' emerged at a time when he was grappling with questions of life and death on the battlefield, of isolation and despair, coupled with glimmers of transcendence.

As Ray Monk, his biographer notes, once Wittgenstein went to the front lines he asked to be assigned to the most dangerous of places, the observation post, where he

[22] Edkins, *Trauma Time*, p. 56; Rena Moses-Hrushovski, *Grief and Grievance: The Assassination of Yitzak Rabin* (Minerva Press, 2000), p. xv; Allen Young, *Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 7.

[23] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge, 1961 [1922]).

[24] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958).

[25] A similar claim might be made of Hobbes who wrote in the context of the English Civil War.

would be a target of enemy fire. After enduring night duty, during which the shelling was heaviest, he reported that he had been in constant danger of his life.[26] It is thus very likely that Wittgenstein would have observed, or experienced himself, some form of shell-shock.[27] Further, the final version of the book was written in Vienna, immediately following word that 'his first and only friend' had been killed in an airplane accident.[28] Wittgenstein was suicidal after hearing the news, and dedicated the completed book to his lost friend.[29] The context of the *TLP* combined the experience of war on the Front Line with a sudden and tragic personal loss.

While the *TLP* was an original piece of work, which broke new ground in philosophy, his theme of the coincidence of solipsism with realism also resonated with Wittgenstein's historical context. Solipsism is derived from an idealist transcendental tradition, which in Wittgenstein's case drew on Schopenhauer. Solipsism at one and the same time takes the individual out of the world, and collapses the external world into the individual's experience of it. Given a background of war it can be seen as resulting from a morbid sensitivity to suffering which takes flight from reality into 'a merely "inner" world, a "real" world, an "eternal" world'.[30] According to Monk, when this state of mind is made the basis of a philosophy it becomes solipsism or the view that *the* world and *my* world are one and the same thing.

This solipsism, Wittgenstein argued, coincided with an ontological realism, which assumes that logic exists in the world, outside the individual. On this convergence he said:

This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at least I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so on the one side *nothing* is left over, and on the other side, as unique, *the world*. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out.[31]

Language is conceived by a spectator who stands outside the world, not by an agent embedded within it.[32] Words are applied as labels, strung together in propositions, which picture the logic of the world. The world is frozen in a series of abstract propositions. There exists a realm of individual experience, beyond sense, and thus beyond words. The 'unspeakable', like the divine, transcends the language of normal everyday experience. One can imagine the philosopher standing at an observation post with shells raining down around him, frozen speechless with fear, the world outside utterly beyond control. The connection between trauma and the inability to speak is now conventional wisdom.[33] In the *TLP*, Wittgenstein presents a picture of

[26] Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Vintage, 1991), p. 138.
[27] World War I and the massive experience of shell-shock by soldiers in all countries, contributed to redefinitions of trauma as well as a considerable expansion of psychiatric services to treat soldiers. See Ben Shepard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists, 1914–1994* (London: Pimlico, 2002); Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
[28] The friend was David Pinsent.
[29] Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, p. 154.
[30] Ibid., p. 144.
[31] As cited in Monk, *The Duty of Genius*, p. 144. In the *Tractatus*,Wittgenstein states: 'Solipsism, when it is unravelled, coincides with pure realism'. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus*, 5.64.
[32] James C. Edwards, *Ethics without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life* (Tampa, FA: University Presses of Florida, 1982), p. 79.
[33] See, for instance, Kristeva, *Black Sun;* Edkins, *Trauma Time*; Patrick Bracken, *Trauma: Culture, Meaning and Philosophy* (London: Whurr Publishers, 2002); Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

a world existing outside the self, and a self outside the world, its observer. In the combination of realism and idealism, the individual is constituted as profoundly alone, the inner life radically incommunicable and incapable of being shared with others.[34]

As Pears argues, solipsism stands at the intersection of many lines of thought in Wittgenstein's mind. Some of these, in and of themselves, would be difficult to follow if singled out and developed separately.[35] The difficulty is only increased when they are woven together in a single text. However, several themes do emerge from his argument about solipsism.[36] One theme is the detachment of the subject from the world. Idealism, like solipsism, is introduced as a theory that allows the subject to float free of physical attachments or constraints. This solipsism coincides with a realism. The realist element is concerned with how much the individual mind contributes to the thinker's picture of the world and how much exists independent of his thought.

The coincidence of realism and a transcendent idealism during the Great War and after were not exclusive to Wittgenstein. Arguably, as suggested earlier, in the midst of overwhelming suffering and loss, 'inner' escape would be a normal response to abnormal events. This tension pervaded a context marked by bloody trench warfare, involving widespread shell-shock and mass bereavement. It was expressed in the rise of spiritualism, a consolidation of a 'science of mind', focused on trauma and hypnosis, and the important role of a transcendent religious imagery in making sense of loss. [37]

The social construction of solipsism

Wittgenstein's picture of solipsism in the *TLP* is compatible with a picture of the traumatised individual, detached from a world of non-related objects, and outside time. The experience of trauma is one 'whereof we cannot speak'.[38] The abstract logic of this world, absent any emotion, is pictured in a set of labels, linked in propositions. The picture in the *TLP* is, however, one of the isolated *individual*. It is contrary to any notion of solipsism as a social phenomenon characterising a community or state. Wittgenstein's later work, *PI*, which represented a critique of his earlier work in *TLP*, provides a bridge to a concept of 'political solipsism'.

In this later work, *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein demonstrated that the earlier conception of the solipsist individual was a 'house of cards'. He dissolved

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[34] Fergus Kerr, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 138.

[35] David Pears, *The False Prison: A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 187.

[36] Pears, *The False Prison*, pp. 188–9.

[37] See Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy;* Winter, *Sites of Mourning.* One of the seminal works of international relations, written in the aftermath of World War I, E.H. Carr's *Twenty Year's Crisis*, was also an exploration of the tension between a realist world and the power of ideas to transcend it. Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, *1919–1939* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964 [1939]).

[38] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus*, para. 7.

the dialectical relationship between idealism and realism, and situated the self squarely in a common world of language, where expressions of pain or joy, or other expressions of our inner life are radically dependent on customs, uses and institutions.[39] Language is not merely a medium of communication but a social property that is the prior condition for individual thought as well as meaningful interaction with others. Emotion, like any other human experience, belongs to a social world. Those experiences that we assume to exist independent of language, such as pain, are fundamentally dependent on language for their meaning. The idea of giving a name to pain presupposes the existence of a grammar including the word pain that shows the place of this word in relation to others.[40] In this respect, the expression of pain is part of a language game, where the one who experiences it reaches out to others, seeking acknowledgement.[41] However, the individual nature of pain also contrasts the certainty of the one who suffers with the doubt of the observer.[42] Denial of another's pain is thus a possible and contrary move to that of acknowledgement. Further, emotions such as compassion, shame or humiliation presume a relationship to others. One feels compassion toward others, or feels shame or humiliation before them.

Social constructivists, building on this tradition, have argued that emotion only finds expression in a language and a culture which is associated with a moral order and moral appraisal.[43] Emotion has a social function and a narrative form, based on a system of rules by which actions and actors are 'maintained, changed, critically accounted and taught'.[44] The experience of emotion may be individual, but if expressed, it is expressed in relation to others, and in a language understandable to them. In this respect, the appraisal or value judgements discussed by Nussbaum are not purely cognitive.[45] Individuals within a culture make appraisals and value judgements, which draw on cultural knowledge within a moral order. It is only within a culture and a society that the boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate emotion are defined. It is in relation to others that pain is acknowledged or denied, or the intention to cause pain, that is, blame, is attributed or denied. The acknowledgement or denial of other's pain may be linked to a range of questions. Was a

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[39] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 199.

[40] Ibid., para. 257.

[41] For a more indepth discussion of this idea, see Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, paras. 293, 295, 296, 300, 302, 384, 448–9; Veena Das, 'Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain', and Stanley Cavell, 'Comments on Venna Das's Essay'. In Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das and Margaret Lock (eds.), *Social Suffering* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

[42] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[43] J.R. Averill, 'A Constructivist View of Emotions', in R. Plutchik and H Kellerman (eds.), *Emotion: Theory, Research, and Experience*, vol. 1: *Theories of Emotion* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); J.R. Averill, *Anger and Aggression: An Essay on Emotion* (New York: Springer, 1982); R.S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation (*New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Michelle Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); R. Schweder and R. A. LeVine (eds.), *Culture and Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Rom Harre (ed.), *The Social Construction of Emotions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); C. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[44] Harre, *The Social Construction of Emotions*, p. 13.

[45] While employing a cognitive model, Nussbaum admits that emotion is a product of learning and points to the potential for education to the end of greater compassion.

particular case of suffering sufficient in size to warrant compassion (for example, was Jenin a massacre or merely a battle)? Was an other to blame for their suffering (are they or do they identify with terrorists)? Is the other connected to our own goals and schemes (they are Muslims, not Christians)? In this respect, the acknowledgement or denial of pain by the observer is a political act. It establishes the identity of the other and the legitimacy of their pain.

From the perspective of Wittgenstein's later work, the distinction between grief/community and trauma/isolation is bewitching.[46] It suggests that the victim of trauma, as distinct from the normal bereaved, exists as an isolated entity outside of history. It emphasises the inability to speak of the traumatic event. However, solipsism itself, from this perspective, is constructed within a social world. An example demonstrates how this would be possible. In a study titled *Constructing Panic*, Capps and Ochs provide an in-depth analysis of the world of a woman suffering from agrophobia, another condition defined by isolation, and reveal the extent to which her solitude and anxiety were constructed in relation to others.[47] While the woman did not have a name for her condition, she did have a consistent pattern of narrating her 'self' representation, which the analysts uncovered. These narratives relied on a grammar of abnormality, helplessness and panic, which she had developed as protective tools in the mediation of her relationships to others. The woman would frequently portray herself as in the grip of forces larger than herself, which impelled her to carry out some action, in which her action was 'caused' rather than willed. The 'disorder' was not physiological in origin, but rather evolved as a way of dealing with her inability to state her needs directly, and the inability of others to hear her when she tried.[48]

Language is not a medium that represents thought, as if the latter existed as an entity independent of language. Rather, even the agrophobic's internal rumination is dependent on linguistic forms and rules, acquired not in isolation, but as part of socialisation into a particular world in which thick boundaries isolate self from other and communication is distorted by an inability to speak directly of one's emotions and be heard. The possibility of giving one set of meanings as opposed to another to her experience is dependent on a language and a history of communication with others.

Trauma, like agrophobia, is not a condition outside 'sense' or 'meaning'; rather meaning becomes transfixed on the traumatic event. The traumatised individual may

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[46] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 109; Edwards, *Ethics without Philosophy*, p. 152

[47] As Capps and Ochs state: 'A hallmark of agoraphobia is the way in which sufferers sit at home mulling over anxious experiences, communicating to themselves or to themselves and others at once. This ongoing rumination organizes how sufferers see past, present, future and imagined events in their lives. We cannot penetrate the mind of the ruminator to examine the form of silent self-communication, but we can look at the form of their linguistic expression in social interactions with others. Identifying the linguistic forms that speakers habitually use in building and maintaining portraits of themselves and others allows us to see identities, relationships, and world views in the making. In this sense, attending to grammatical form is central to understanding how people make meaning through language.' Lisa Capps and Elinor Ochs, *Constructing Panic: The Discourse of Agoraphobia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995)

[48] For example, rather than telling her partner she did not wish to travel to a particular destination *via* the highway, she would wait until the trip was underway and then experience a panic attack, which would require that others take care of her, and included reversing plans. Capps and Ochs, *Constructing Panic*, p. 54.

find it impossible to communicate directly the meaning of their experience; nonetheless, their linguistic world is organised around it. The boundaries of meaning are circumscribed by a frozen picture of the past, which continues to structure interactions with others. Held captive by this picture, the self engages with the world as if past and present were inseparable, and as if the world were her world of trauma.

Political solipsism

It is a small step from an argument that individual solipsism and negative emotions are constituted in language and in relation to others, to an argument that an experience of social trauma can set the stage for the constitution of political solipsism. It is tempting to think about political trauma as a metaphor for the individual experience. However, psychological trauma itself was originally a metaphor for a physical wound to the human body, often arising from battle.[49] It was only psychologised in the nineteenth century.[50] In this respect, political trauma would be a metaphor for a metaphor. I argue that it is more useful to develop political trauma as a separate level of analysis in which the traumatic 'shock' is directed at a political and social category and where this shock has implications for the identity and agency of the group. While war involves physical, psychological and political trauma, these are all byproducts of a political context. The three experiences may intermingle as part of a 'politics of trauma', while remaining separate levels of experience or treatment. Political trauma is larger than the sum of traumatised individuals in a context. While the psychological and political are related, they are not equivalent.

Claiming political trauma as a separate level of analysis makes it possible to go beyond the application of psychoanalytic categories to the group, that is, treating groups as if they were individuals, to an exploration of the role of a language of emotion in constituting political solipsism. In his pathbreaking work, Vamik Volkan developed a psychoanalytic theory of unresolved group mourning based on the concept of a 'chosen trauma'.[51] He distinguishes normal group mourning from unresolved mourning. Normal group mourning is fairly uncomplicated. For instance, after the initial shock of the crash of the US space shuttle *Challenger*, American society became involved in a variety of religious and cultural rituals and, over time, the collective mourning faded away. However, some collective tragedies are more complicated and involve long-lasting damage. These include more monumental calamities, often related to war, where the group is left dazed, helpless, and too afraid, humiliated or angry to even initiate the mourning process.[52] The sociologist

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[49] This is true of the larger class of metaphors referring to illnesses of the mind. These metaphoric applications also had significance for the classification of unwanted behaviour as illness as distinct from criminal. See Theodore Sarbin, 'Metaphors of Unwanted Conduct: A Historical Sketch'. In David E. Leary (ed.), *Metaphors in the History of Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[50] Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul.*

[51] Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terror* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

[52] Volkan, *Bloodlines*, p. 40.

Kai T. Erikson has referred to this type of loss as a breakdown of the 'tissue of community'.[53]

In Volkan's theory, those aspects of the self that are unacceptable, such as humiliation, are enveloped and externalised to others who fit the perception of the traumatised self.[54] He refers to 'mental representations' of the humiliation that become consolidated in shared feelings, perceptions, fantasies and interpretations. Transgenerational transmission of trauma relies on a concept of 'psychological DNA' which only re-emerges under certain conditions.[55] The Israeli psychoanalyst, Rena Moses-Hrushovski, uses the concept of deployment to describe a process, at either the individual or the collective level, of dissociation from painful emotions of shame.[56] Deployment involves the creation of a rigid structure of roles and organisation for the purpose of protection, which closes down the possibility of direct communication with the other, and results in a life-long battle against 'enemies', which have been a source of repression, harm or humiliation. Deployment, like Volkan's 'enveloping', is a response to trauma and the inability to mourn loss.

Both concepts suggest that the collective deals with trauma in much the same way as the individual, enveloping or deploying unacknowledged emotions, but do not specify the relationship between the individual and the political experience. The sociologists Scheff and Rezinger locate these processes more directly in a social world of discourse.[57] They construct an argument about the relationship between shame and aggression. Shame does not always lead to aggression. It does so when it is treated stigmatically, that is, in such a way that cuts the humiliated off from others, when it remains unacknowledged and when it is communicated disrespectfully. When shame is acknowledged rather than denied, it is of brief duration and serves as a signal, allowing for the repair of damaged bonds. When shame is denied it becomes recursive and self-perpetuating, building a wall between persons and groups, and giving rise to a chain reaction, in which shame builds on shame.

Scheff and Rezinger argue that shame is one of the most disguised emotions and one that may lie behind more overt expressions of anger or fear. Denial occurs when one is ashamed of being ashamed.[58] Thus it first and foremost relates to a dialogue with the self, in which the emotion of shame is denied, and transformed into a different negative emotion, such as anger. While shame focuses on the self, anger is directed to the other. The emotion may be related to an act of humiliation (causing shame in another). In this respect, expressions of anger may be part of a language game. The self, unable to acknowledge painful emotions inside, articulates the problem outward, as betrayal or humiliation by another. An Other may reinforce the boundaries separating the isolated self through a further denial.

This raises questions about how a disguised emotion becomes bound up in a social world and translated into something else. While all of the authors recognise a

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[53] K.T. Erickson, 'The Loss of Communality at Buffalo Creek', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 133 (1976), pp. 302–25.

[54] Volkan, *Bloodlines*, p. 42.

[55] Ibid., p. 46.

[56] Moses-Hrushovski, *Grief and Grievance*.

[57] Thomas J. Scheff and Suzanne M. Retzinger, *Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991).

[58] Sheff and Rezinger, *Emotions and Violence*, p. 30.

role for political leadership in mobilising these emotions, they fail to sufficiently delineate the relationship between the two levels. The reason for an emotion is different for the individual and the community, although not unrelated. Individuals in a context of war experience loss of specific loved ones or the devastation of their social world. This is unavoidably linked to the political world in so far as the larger context of war is the source of the individual loss. Making sense of individual loss is thus in part a function of the meaning of the political event. The loss of individual value is cushioned by the attachment of positive value, just as it may be exacerbated by the absence of clear meaning or negative value. Accusations that Tony Blair led British soldiers into war on false grounds are serious precisely because the willingness to risk one's life or lose a child is tied to the positive value of protecting the community.

If the loss of life is widespread, as in World Wars I or II, and the meaning is tied to intentional acts of betrayal or humiliation by others, or an experience of defeat, the individual loss is doubled. If emotion by definition has meaning in a community and in relation to others, then the meaning given by a community to its common experience of war, reverberates back on the individual. Even when no direct loss is incurred, individual identity and emotion are bound up in the political unit. The emotions may remain disguised in individuals, but, to be translated into political agency and identity, they must be put into words by leaders, who give meaning to the individual experience by situating it in a larger context of group identity. This may involve an alienation of individual emotion to the state. The following example illustrates how widespread loss, given meaning in negative emotion, was translated into a political solipsism.

Hitler and the trauma of World War I

Post-World War I Germany may seem an unusual place to explore this dynamic, given it has been blamed for the outbreak of war and became the perpetrator of an unprecedented level of violence in World War II. Yet, several authors, and not least Scheff and Rezinger, have pointed to Germany's humiliation after World War I as the crucial building block of its later aggression.[59] The larger context provides an interesting background for asking why the populations of Britain and France, no less affected by the massive loss of life in World War I, would develop an antipathy for war, while in Germany the experience gave rise to aggressive action. The difference cannot be said to be a function of widespread neurological trauma, resulting from war neurosis or 'shell-shock' in the trenches. This condition was widespread among soldiers in all three countries.

Omer Bartov argues that following World War I the interplay between various actors, state policies and individual mourning served to create different attitudes toward war in Germany and France.[60] Paradoxically, a defeated Germany came to

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[59] Scheff and Rezinger, 'Hitler's Appeal', *Emotions and Violence*, pp. 141–64.
[60] Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War*, *Genocide and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 1.

celebrate war as an occasion for individual and collective glory. The result was an increased willingness to sacrifice for the state. By contrast, the victorious French intensified the perception of war as a site of individual and national suffering. Veterans insisted they had a right and duty to fight against war, 'having seen its true face and realized its inhumanity'.[61] The aftermath of the war produced two kinds of (imagined) communities, whose common experience was articulated very differently:

The French *community of suffering* was unified by common pain and sorrow, bound together by horror, determined to prevent such wars from ever happening again. The German *battle community* was united through sacrifice and devotion to a common cause, the comradeship of warriors, and the quest to extend its newly found values to postwar civilian society. Both creatures of war, the community of suffering envisions a future without international conflict, whereas the battle community perceives the front as a model for posterity. For both the present is a battleground between past trauma and future hopes, but they pull in opposite directions. Imbued with a missionary zeal, the one fights for prevention, the other for reenactment.[62]

From Bartov's perspective, both the French and the Germans were responding to an experience of trauma. In this respect, both looked to an idealised vision of future community, against the backdrop of widespread loss and fragmentation. Both were motivated by an idealist mission, the one to prevent any further war and the other to re-enact it, in order to do it differently this time. However, the French acknowledged the 'common pain and sorrow'. In the German case it was denied. Negative emotions constructed walls between self and other in the posture of ongoing battle.

It was also the meaning of the war's conclusion, and the relationship to a larger world, that distinguished Germany from the others. The populations of Britain and France, the victors, said 'never again', while in Germany the seeds of Nazi ideology were planted in the widespread unwillingness to accept defeat. The defeat of 1918 was experienced as 'utterly traumatic'.[63] A myth developed after the war that Germany hadn't been defeated but 'betrayed', stabbed in the back by traitors, pacificists, Jews, and, in particular, the politicians of the Weimar government. When Germany went to the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, the Germans still didn't believe they had lost. The feelings of betrayal were further exacerbated by the humiliating conditions imposed at Versailles. As Michael Burleigh states:

At Versailles in May 1919, the German delegation to the peace negotiations was shocked to discover that President Wilson's principles of self-determination excluded their country. Under the first terms offered, which were bolstered with Allied ultimatum, Germany lost all her overseas colonies and the territories claimed by her neighbors; union between Germany and Austria was forbidden; limitations were imposed on the size and nature of her armed forces, and officer cadet academies, the General Staff, tanks and the incipient air force were abolished. There were to be reparations, as yet unspecified, by way of atonement for allegedly causing the war, as reflected in Article 231 ascribing sole 'war guilt' to Germany. Military manpower shrank from 800,000 in April 1919 to 100,000 in January 1921, while 30,000 of the 34,000 officer's corps were discharged. If the military restrictions struck at a primary symbol of national prowess, and at the caste personifying it, the 'war guilt' clause and demands that Germany surrender her alleged war criminals seemed unjust and vindictive.[64]

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[61] Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction*, p. 18.
[62] Ibid., p. 18.
[63] British Channel 4 documentary, 'The War that Made the Nazis', 14 December 2002.
[64] Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, p. 46.

The shaming of Germany by the international community stigmatised Germany rather than reintegrating it. As Braithwaite has argued in a study of crime, stigmatisation, which is analogous to pathological shaming, leads to high crime rates.[65] Stigmatisation damages the bond between the punisher and the punished, leading to the formation of criminal subgroups. The contrast is interesting in light of the alternative approach to shaming Germany after World War II, which, following a war crimes trial of leaders, emphasised reintegrating Germany into a community of states, in order to prevent a recurrence of the earlier pattern.

There were at least three constitutive elements of a politics of trauma in this context. They together consolidated the political solipsism of Germany. The first was the widespread physical and psychological trauma experienced by individual soldiers, which was a consequence of trench warfare throughout Europe – and therefore not specific to Germany – as well as the widespread experience of loss among the population (the loss of valued others). The second, and more decisive for this argument, was the experience of the defeat as a betrayal by the German government, among others, of its people (denial of the shame of defeat). The third was the humiliating terms imposed by the international community after the war, including the isolation of Germany (denial of acknowledgement from the other). The latter two were explicitly political in that the traumatised 'body' was defined at the intersection between internal betrayal and external humiliation. The three together were constitutive of a politics of trauma.

The interpretation of defeat as betrayal and humiliation preceded Hitler. The Nazis were made possible by the trauma of World War I, but they were also quite skillful in manipulating public emotions.[66] Hitler gave voice to emotional states that were unexpressed by the public. As Bromberg and Small state:

The abundant, almost unheard of expression of hate and rageful anger … fired [Hitler's] successful orations…[He spoke] the unspeakable for them. His practice of touching off hostile emotions rather than conveying mere critical ideas was wildly successful.[67]

Rather than a community attuned to its suffering in war, the emotions were turned inward to betrayal and outward to humiliation by others. In Mein Kampf, Hitler refers to the Versailles treaty as 'this instrument of boundless extortion and abject humiliation'. He goes on to speak of the 'common sense of shame and a common hatred' among sixty million people that would 'become a single fiery sea of flame'.[68]

World War I was presented as a past trauma to be avenged. This message was reinforced by Hitler's visit to the former battlefields of World War I, after which he was greeted by millions of adoring Germans as he returned to Berlin. In avenging the past, and promising to do it differently, he provided an alternative picture of an idealised future community. This message was captured in a literal picture of the past. The Nazis made masterful use of a photograph taken in a German beer garden

[65] As cited in Scheff and Rezinger, *Emotion and Violence*.
[66] In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler argues that the key to war-time propaganda is simplifying an emotional message, appealing to the masses, rather than the intelligensia, and pounding this home again and again. For him, propaganda was a means to an end, which was the struggle for the unity of the German nation (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 164–9).
[67] As cited in Scheff and Rezinger, *Emotion and Violence*.
[68] Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Pimlico, 2001 [translation 1969]), p. 577.

at the time World War I broke out. The photograph, already a symbol of August 1914, showed Germans joyful and celebrating. As it happens, Hitler was in the beer garden and was among the people depicted in the photograph. His picture was blown up and reproduced as part of an effort to make Hitler a symbol of the unified and strong Germany of August 1914. This was accompanied by a message that he was ready to revenge Germany's humiliation and the loss of the fallen soldiers of World War I.

The readiness of public opinion for further sacrifice in the German context was the seedbed within which Hitler and the Nazis constructed a cohesive national identity. The Nazis strategically manipulated existing sentiments to their own ends. The two were mutually constituted. The context provided the material for weaving together the *meaning* of Germany's losses in negative emotions of betrayal and humiliation, projected on to others, which constituted a rupture with them, and the isolation of the German people. These were transformed by Hitler and the Nazis into a solipsist Germany, ever vigilant in its relations to a dangerous external world and equally dangerous internal enemies.

Hitler mobilised Germany in the aftermath of World War I on the basis of the trauma of that war. In a context where Germany was isolated from the international community, and bled dry financially by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, Hitler gave meaning to German feelings of humiliation, thereby setting the stage for the construction of the 'Thousand Year Reich', and a replay of war. A sergeant, in 1933, set out the reasons for becoming a National Socialist in terms of the religion 'born out of the German national awakening of 1 August 1914 and our people's great struggle between 1914 and 1918'.[69] The war was not over, but had to be replayed to a different outcome. Germany, once humiliated and betrayed, became perpetrator.

Identity and agency

Grief is a measure of the significance of the lost person, and compassion a recognition of others as a part of the bystander's goals and projects. It thus rests on a positive relationship and evaluative judgement. Trauma relates to the obverse. The shock of trauma resides not only in physical disaster, but in loss of control and powerlessness *vis-à-vis* others. In a case of genocide, the loss is clearly related to the intentional acts of an Other. The relationship is somewhat less straightforward in the case of war. War is a practice of mutual injury.[70] It is a contest over some good that has value for both parties. While both sides experience massive loss of life, at least historically, only one side, with defeat, experiences a further more immaterial loss of control over self-definition and the future.[71] This outcome may be more or less

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[69] As cited in Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, p. 116. The events of 9 November 1918 and 1923 became central to the evolving 'liturgy' of National Socialism. The first signified the 'blackest day in German history', and the second the moment of rebirth. By 1926, the National Socialists had declared 9 November the Reich Day of Mourning.

[70] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[71] Ibid.

absolute, and may involve more or less negotiation of entitlements, but by definition the outcome of war is that the victors gain in identity and agency while the defeated lose in this area. The tendency for history to be written by the victors, and to attribute blame for the conflict to the defeated, represents a further loss of agency by the defeated.[72] In this respect, Germany's defeat in war rested on a triple loss of the multiple connections that make an individual or a collective entity into a social being. It involved the loss of persons (loss of valued others). It involved the loss of trust due to a perception of betrayal and humiliation (the assumption of harmful intent). It involved a loss of identity and agency (loss of self value, that is, shame, and value in the eyes of others).

An experience of social trauma creates the conditions for leaders to mobilise the solipsism of the group. This may involve a triple move. One move is the denial of one's own loss, for example, the denial of defeat. Another move is denial by the other. When X acts toward Y as if they are of no value, that is, as if they are disposable or non-entities, the identity and agency of X is taken away (for example, the humiliating conditions of Versailles). In this respect, they cease to exist as identities who have a place in a connected community with others. A third move involves the reconstitution of identity and agency. Y may cease to exist as a distinct identity, and become absorbed in the identity of X. Alternatively, in order to survive, Y must reconstitute itself as a separate identity, unconnected to others. While originating with an experience of being victim, and, subsequently, a loss of agency, agency is reconstituted in the determination to reattribute value to the self in order to restore dignity and identity. This requires replaying the past in order to do it differently (for example, the determination to make Germany great again). It rests on a vision of future self, since identity and dignity have yet to be established. As a separate and isolated identity, Y must expand the boundaries of the self in order to assure it will not occupy the position of victim in the future. Instead, Y steps into the position of perpetrator.

In the case of post-World War I Germany, Hitler set out to re-enact World War I in order to make Germany great again. In the process, one supposed source of betrayal, the Jews, became the objects of genocide. Other peoples in Europe, and particularly the Slavs, also became enemies to be eliminated. About 85,000 people of all nationalities lost their lives at the most notorious concentration camp at Jasenovac in the former Yugoslavia, primarily through beatings or starvation. The Croat *Ustasa* brutally massacred entire Serb villages.

Hitler's legacy is to have passed the trauma on to new victims. The genocide of the Jews gave legitimacy to the Israeli state. The Holocaust and its potential recurrence has been a driving force behind Israeli aggression against the Palestinians.[73] In cases marked by humiliation and helplessness, a version of the trauma may remain in the minds of the victims long after the overwhelming physical danger disappears. For instance, testimonial work in Bosnia revealed that survivors were not merely

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[72] The question of whether Germany was solely to blame for World War I, as distinct from World War II, has been a matter of historical debate.

[73] The role of the Holocaust in the collective memory of Israel is particularly evident in Avi Shlaim's, *The Iron War: Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin Books, 2000). For an argument that Israeli collective memory should not be explained in terms of psychological trauma, see Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory (*London: Bloomsbury, 1999).

preoccupied within their recent suffering in war, but had reservoirs of previously unspoken trauma related to World War II.[74] Reporters in the Balkan wars who listened to stories of atrocity noted a frequent uncertainty about whether the stories had occurred yesterday or in 1941, 1841 or 1441.[75]

In the former Yugoslavia, the trauma of the World War II remained buried throughout Tito's reign, but with his death and the end of the Cold War re-emerged. Serb leaders, and not least Milosevic, gave voice to and mobilised fears that the past would repeat itself, justifying the violence of Serbs toward others, and giving rise to a new bloodbath. As Julie Mertus argues, the emotions preceded Milosevic, and were forged out of a series of interactions over a longer period preceding his conversion from communist to nationalist in the late 1980s.[76] The Serbs, who had been victims of the Croatian *Ustasa* and earlier, of the Ottomans, became perpetrators in a new war. The suffering of World War II did not end with the war.[77]

Conclusion

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein showed that we are bewitched in thinking that the individual mind can be separated out from a larger social world. Language, the shared property of the social world, its glue, is central, whether it constitutes the self as embedded in community or divorced from it. Grief and trauma represent different boundaries, customs and institutions. Trauma is an expression of unresolved mourning, which may contribute to the constitution of the solipsist self, whether individual or collective, who must replay the past in order to do it differently, to reconstitute identity and agency or cease to exist.

The original distinction between 'grief' and 'trauma' is less one of the embedded *vs*. the isolated individual than the constitution of positive emotion and porous boundaries within a community, or a world – no less social – of solipsist selves, governed by fear, betrayal and humiliation. Trauma, in this view, is not merely a neurological phenomena experienced by individuals. It is an existential position constituted in relation to others. Arguably, the existential experience precedes any neurological change in individuals. The child who is abused by a parent is traumatised first and foremost by the betrayal and loss of any safety in the home. Fearfulness and hypervigilance come to occupy its place. A socially constructed view of emotions places *meaning* at the core of experience, and language as the place where boundaries are drawn, whether between individuals or between collective entities, such as states.

[74] Steven M. Weine, 'Doing Testimony Psychotherapy', *When History is a Nightmare: Lives and Memories of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), p. 161.

[75] Martha Minow, *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred: Memory, Law and Repair* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 28.

[76] Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

[77] Weine, 'Doing Testimony Psychotherapy'.

Winter and Kristeva make a distinction between meaningful symbols in the traditional language of mourning and a 'dislocation' and loss of meaning, more akin to trauma. This article has attempted to present a different contrast. While traditional language and symbols were important for mediating grief, the state, in the case of Nazi Germany, became the mediator of trauma, in a dialectic relationship between inside betrayal and outside isolation and humiliation. A coherent collective identity was constituted out of this tension, as individual isolation and fear were given meaning in the transcendent state which would avenge past humiliation. Out of the fragmentation, feelings of betrayal and humiliation were 'deployed' or 'enveloped' *vis-à-vis* the Jew, as the internal enemy, and a dangerous world of 'others' outside. Any transcendent, eternal meaning for the massive loss was displaced into the artificial construct of a state, embarked on a messianic mission.

The concept of trauma may seem problematic in so far as it suggests that perpetrators should be relieved of moral responsibility if they themselves have been victims. While this complicated subject cannot be explored here, the concepts of denial or acknowledgement open a space for greater reflexivity about past and future action. Within this framework, Nazi Germany is no less morally responsible for the Holocaust; what becomes clear is the moral responsibility of the international community for reinforcing the conditions in which Hitler rose to power. Arguably the international community took this point on board in its handling of Germany after World War II, although there was no attention to the emotional dynamics. Rather than isolating and humiliating Germany, a deliberate effort was made to integrate it into a community of states, in order to avoid a replay of the past. This involved a form of reintegrative shaming, in the prosecution of individual leaders during the Nuremberg trials, and the incorporation of Germany into a larger European community. The Nuremberg trials represented a shift at the international level away from collective responsibility to the individual responsibility of leaders.

To speak of trauma, the most individual of experiences, is to bring it into a political world. Speaking of pain or asking for acknowledgement are part of a language game, which is expressed in a relationship (who harmed who) and a moral order (an acknowledgement or denial of blame, innocence or complicity). The question is one of how this politics is expressed and the consequences. Acknowledgement of suffering reconstitutes a social bond. This bond involves a reconnection to the self. In speaking directly of, and no longer denying the experience, the victim re-enters a dialogue with the self, as well as a dialogue with others. In the act of denial, the self is cut off from the self and others. Emotions may then be alienated to another level of experience, that is, the political, where they become part of the mobilisation of group solipsism.

At the international level, the choice can be situated in Nussbaum's framework of evaluative judgement. If EJ (1), that is, that which we consider to increase our flourishing, is seen to extend to and overlap with EJ (2), a compassion toward the other, we will seek action that does not separate out our own interests from those of an other who suffers. By contrast, in a traditional realist formula, EJ (1), our flourishing, is decisive and cancels out EJ (2), compassion towards the other. If EJ (1) cancels out EJ (2), there is an increased probability that loss and grief will be transformed into trauma, given the conditions for successful mourning are absent.

For example, since 11 September 2001 the voices of Palestinians have been silenced, the rudimentary state structures they had created have been all but destroyed, and they have been further isolated within the international community. The outcome of prioritising EJ (1) over EJ (2) is, over the long-term, that the silenced or unresolved grief potentially contributes to the reproduction of trauma in some future case. When placed in this framework, the costs and benefits of the realist formula, based on a conflict between EJ (1) and EJ (2), change. One's own EJ (1), that is, what we now understand to contribute to our own flourishing, is broadened if we must now incorporate the increased probability that a failure of compassion, that is, *the failure to recognise the suffering of others as a part of our own goals and projects*, will increase the probability of future suffering, which may reverberate back on the self.[78] The failure of compassion today may contribute to the reproduction of violence in the future. Given this future is unknown, we do not know who the future victim may be. Thus there is a possibility that some loved one or value may become a victim.[79]

The events of September 11 can be placed in this framework. If the pilots who crashed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon were inspired by the lack of US compassion to the plight of Palestinian or Iraqi children, the trauma of the latter has been constitutive of the trauma experienced by Americans on September 11. Thus, the increased repression of Palestinians will only increase the likelihood of further acts that will reproduce the trauma experienced by Americans and Israelis. Against the background of globalisation, the spiral of trauma threatens to circle back on the very people the state claims to protect.

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[78] This logic was evident in British opposition to the invasion of Iraq. There were fears that an attack would increase rather than decrease the threat of terrorism.

[79] This line of reasoning is compatible with the idea of the veil of ignorance in John Rawls, *Theory of Justice*.