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Reparation – political and psychological considerations

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The unconscious and the will

What justifies my being here tonight is not my political biography, but an episode in my life that began after a long spell in solitary confinement. It was 1963-64, and I came out of detention with puzzles that I had not taken in with me.

Why was it so difficult to be courageous? Why did I want to co-operate so much with the guards? Why was it so hard to resist? It was a great problem for me because I had always thought that if you were clear about what you stood for and if you knew what you wanted, then you just behaved accordingly and that was that. But as it happened, that was just not that. There was another thing baffling me. It was behaving in a contradictory way and was fighting with the familiar self-directed part of me.

On my release I managed to get hold of a copy of J.A.C. Brown's biography of Freud. I was hoping to find out what Freud was on about, and especially to comprehend this thing inside me that was warring against the rest of me and causing me so much distress and confusion. I read the biography, but was dissatisfied. It told me much about Freud's life but it didn't go deeply enough into explaining his actual concepts. The passion of the book was in Freud's conflicts with his colleagues, while what I needed was the fervour of ideas clashing with other ideas.

Then, by good fortune, a friend of mine with whom I used to climb Table Mountain, turned out not only to be a psychiatrist but a psycho-analyst, and there up on his shelves were the full collected works of Freud from the Institute of

Psycho-analysis, in their light blue jackets that I got to know so well. I just worked my way through them – Volume One, Two, Three, Four – I forget the number, to about Five or Six. There was no intellectual order, I simply followed the sequence of the pages, and I devoured them.

It was partly the quality of the writing. The articulation of the ideas was so clear and so interesting, with the cadences and imaginative logic of a well-written novel. It gave me pleasure just to see the complicated material handled with such beautiful style. That was important. But, more significant was being in another realm, in a different world, a pressurised, intense and wondrous universe, more real and yet more hallucinated than the one I had formerly inhabited.

I started on the *Letters* and the *Correspondence*, and then... I was detained a second time. I am probably the only person who took a set of Freud's letters into prison, hoping I would be allowed to read them. But the experience was so intense and the solitary confinement so harsh that even when I was permitted reading matter, I couldn't read these books. In circumstances of total sensory and social deprivation, I couldn't touch my unconscious. I just left the books completely alone and, as it happened, had powerful and surprising dreams, which seemed to self-fulfill and to validate the theories that I had been reading about.

It took me years to fight my way out of psycho-analysis. You are professionals. You handle psycho-analysis for your living, and in an instrumental, yet human way, you engage with it. But, to be submerged in this submarine universe and not be able to get out of it, and somehow to be barred from relating myself to the surface world of taken-for-granted reality, was just too much. One starts explaining, interpreting and analysing everything. The little bit of one's rational being that is left up top, is continuously attributing everything in the world and in oneself, one's relationships and one's behaviour, and every accident that befalls, and every sparrow that falls – everything that happens in the whole universe – to the unconscious. You just can't work robustly, function naturally or live vivaciously. You undermine and debilitate yourself, super-explain why your left foot goes in front of your right one, and so on.

Strangely enough, what got me out of my over-fascination with depth psychology was the discovery of the most boring, banal and pedestrian of sociologists, Talcott Parsons. He was much in the air at that stage and he extruded and banished all volition, all passion, all the drama of the unconscious and of the perverse will. In psycho-analysis hidden reality is more important than appearance. Nothing is as it seems. In Parson's world everything is really as it seems. Reality groups and re-groups itself, in replication of what has happened before. It gets constructed and reconstructed from generation to generation. We are modelled by our received roles; life is over-determined, not by the invisible, but by the visible.

To this day I hate the concept of role models, of trying to achieve self-esteem through making oneself over like someone else, when one should really be seeking to discover pride in oneself as one is. Yet, the shallow and lightweight structures of

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descriptive and contradiction-less American sociology served as the intellectual ladder that enabled me to climb out of the gloomy depths of my psycho-analytical well.

I suppose that the fundamental puzzle that one lives with is the whole question of the role of the will, the place in life of volition and choice. Having been involved in a revolutionary movement and at times having proudly called myself a revolutionary, I knew what it was like to will a just world, and to feel that with enough intelligence, courage, charity, and with sufficient love, if you like, one could achieve something that would bring good to everybody.

The will enters into the ages. Volition takes charge of history and tries to move it in a particular way. Well, that particular attempt at a volitional direction of human affairs in many ways turned out to be quite unsustainable, even catastrophic and cruel.

In my case, the process of losing/loosening the will was a gradual one and not too disastrous. For others, it was calamitous. Whether slowly or rapidly, we all suffered the loss of a powerful set of beliefs that had sustained us in circumstances of extreme deprivation. It had had a concrete, lived meaning for us. It had not been just a fantasy, a mere ideology giving satisfying coherence to the head, and emotional stability to the heart. It had had real force, enabling us to resist and survive the most extreme trials and temptations. It had suffused every area of our existence, affected our choice of lovers and partners, where we lived, our work, everything. When such a deep and central idea is – I wouldn't say destroyed – but when it goes into a form of collapse and it can no longer sustain itself, the result is very, very severe.

I detected certain elements of that sense of loss in Ilana Edelstein & Kerry Gibson's lovely and sensitive paper. It is the wrenching away and disappearance of the Ideal Hero. It is the deprivation of the vision of a good society accomplishable through effort, conviction, solidarity and determination. It is the humbling of the will, the separation of innocence from goodness, the ending of prophetic action, the termination of the possibility of achieving envisaged triumph.

In any event, the whole psycho-analytical perspective obviously continued to be within me as part of a number of layered visions and world views I had. It is still down there, part of the mix of my modes of understanding the world. I retain the objective of being in touch with the unconscious, of relating emotion, passion and the chaos of certain aspects of existence, to rationality, clarity and understanding. That objective does not go away, however many – (I never read volumes of Talcott Parsons) – but however many role models I may have tried to follow, or however many pragmatic or opportunistic accommodations I may have made.

Similarly, the objective that impelled us into the revolutionary project also hasn't changed. I have not separated myself from the knowledge and acknowledgement of immense and unnecessary human suffering all around. We remain involved with it, and we are unwilling to accept that it is inevitable. Pain might be unavoidable, but

not injustice. We have a sense that our own identity and personal freedom are involved with the identity and personal freedom of others. As far as many of us are concerned, that project is not lost. The poverty, the injustices, the humiliations, the oppression that impelled us to commit ourselves to political and moral combat are still there, as is the impulse that our engagement can make a difference.

We just have to find a new vocabulary, a new way of understanding, a new manner of achieving and doing things. We have to learn the negative lessons of everything that turned out to be false, sometimes cruelly so, while retaining what was always at the core, namely, our sense of self-worth and our recognition of the worth of all people.

After murder, in the cathedral

I am not a professional healer. I am speaking to professional healers. I chose to be here tonight. I am anxious to be in touch with people like yourselves. Forgive me if I speak in an eager and exhortatory tone. I sense that the need for persons like yourselves in our country is going to increase.

In part, you will have to deal with all the immediate trauma and casualties of our recent history. Our wider goal, however, is to open up health to everybody, and so secure the right to mental health as part of a global view of health. Hence, the growing need for persons like yourselves, ten times over, in conditions of peace as well as of conflict.

Your science, as I understand it, is based on the universalism of human personality and the particularity of individual experience. The right to health is universal, as is the right to heal. Let me say something directly to you in this room. It grieves me that you all look the same. I don't see South Africa in front of me, just a fraction of it. All South Africans should be able to heal all South Africans.

I was in the Cathedral today in Cape Town to attend the memorial service for Chris Hani, and Archbishop Tutu said, "You know, how wonderful South Africa could be." He extended his arms and said, "Just look at us: we are the rainbow people of God".

This was a lovely saying, whether we are believers or non-believers. One knew it was right, and for the future of psychotherapy and the whole psycho-analytic vision it has obviously got to be so. If psycho-analysis has universal application, and I believe it does, it has got to reach out in a universal way. We have to find the appropriate means of enabling it to be picked up by all communities for the benefit of all, just as we must open ourselves to understanding the ways of healing of the *sangoma* (traditional healer).

About forty years ago as a young student moving into a phase where, having joined the freedom struggle, I suddenly felt I was in touch with all past human history, with all people everywhere in the world, I stood on a platform in Cape Town and we sang this song:

I regret now, that in spite of it all, I didn't find a more gracious way of accepting what was really a touching and deeply felt gesture on his part.

The second story is a more recent one. About ten days ago we held an unusual and extremely intense disciplinary hearing of the regional executive committee of the ANC in Cape Town. A member of the committee, involved in a demonstration outside the Israeli Embassy in connection with the treatment of expelled Palestinians, had shouted, "It's a pity Hitler didn't kill all the Jews", or words to that effect. Now we fellow Capetonians, and fellow comrades were judging what he had said. Although there was widespread sympathy for the deported Palestinians, there was a sense of shock and disbelief over his words.

He was there in front of us, a kind of freaky guy, bizarre, impulsive, emotional, all over the place. When I am active in public life I don't normally see myself specifically as a Jew. If there is anti-Semitism around, however, then I'm very much a Jew. On that occasion I was a Jew and I responded as a Jew because the attack had been on Jews. I felt it directly, and I wanted him to feel the issue personally. I wished to confront him not merely with an accusation of violation of our statutes and morality, but with myself, his comrade, as a Jew. I wished him to know that when he was making a statement of that kind he was not just speaking about an abstraction, in the way that Ilana mentioned: about some kind of idealised-in-a-negative-sense enemy, he was speaking about actual people. Yet as I started saying that I had lost large portions of my family because of Hitler, I found myself choking, and could hardly continue. Slowly, I stumbled through my tears. "You mean that I should have been killed?" I expect our enemies to try and kill us – they tried to in my case – but I don't expect to hear it from the mouth of a comrade."

Then he started crying. He was emotional and stuttered and kept saying, "Albie, I don't mean you. You remember how I used to work with Sam Kahn. I am not against Jews. I apologise. I am terribly sorry." It was awkward because he too was overwrought and because he did not have the sensibility and serenity of emotions to be able to handle the episode. All of us at the meeting were feeling raw. That, however, is not the reason I am telling you this story.

I was tense. I had never encountered anti-Semitism in the ANC – never – directly or indirectly, but if I were to discover that any of the comrades sitting round the table were not deeply concerned about anti-Semitism, that would have hurt me very much. We are in a country full of every kind of racism, but we are fighting racism, not turning a blind eye to it. The question was what punishment to impose. Some of us wanted the severest penalty that our code of conduct permitted, others argued for a less drastic approach.

Then one of the young African guys sitting close to me, looked at me and said, "We have also suffered." He continued – and this is the point of the tale – "You lost your family. But I saw my mother being beaten and taken away by the police. I have seen people shot dead in front of my eyes." And he mentioned a few other things like that. It had nothing directly to do with the penalty, but something in

my emotion had reached this young comrade's emotion, and what he was saying to me indirectly was, "Comrade Albie, your grief is acknowledged, by us and by the whole world. But, what about our grief? Who acknowledges that?" He was reminding me that there have been many little Hitlers in this country, who have been doing these sorts of things over many years. Yet no-one took them as seriously as we were now taking some words uttered about terrible events of fifty years ago in another part of the world. He was also saying that with so much pain and grief around, we cannot punish everybody all the time, and that by destroying this young man we would not in any event be destroying anti-Semitism.

It was for me a striking example of how grief can reach grief, of how emotion can find emotion. This is something that I feel is fundamental for healing in this country. It is the honesty of true emotion that is not aggressive or cruel or destructive, but direct. It can be painful, and awkward, and yet, somehow also liberating and freeing for people because it reconciles them to the truth of their lives.

An old but unfinished debate

I am not sure, Ilana, about two things in your presentation. The one is the extrapolating from the life history of individuals to the life of a society. It is an old debate. There are clearly points of correspondence. One can speak of a 'collective unconscious'. Fantasies play an enormous role both in public life and in individual consciousness. There are phases, there is evolution, in both. Ambiguity and contradiction play a big part in each case. Acknowledgement of uncomfortable reality is fundamental in both areas, acknowledgement of pain, and of its authorship. You have to take the person seriously if you are a healer, and take society seriously if you want it to improve. The subject, in the end, if I understand it correctly, has to have insight. Society too has to have insight and understanding. Both have to be in touch with the obscured realm of the unconscious. These are all important points of correspondence.

Yet the differences are profound. A person is finite – has a beginning, a middle and an end, has a birth. Society doesn't have a birth, and birth and early nurturing is fundamental, as I understand it, to the Kleinian philosophy. When was our society born? If it is being born all the time, you can't really have those clear developmental categories or existential moments and phases where something gets disturbed or lost or is chaotic or is threatened, and has to be recaptured or dealt with at a later stage. Also, each individual is an entire person with a complete life history, while society is made up of a multiplicity, not only of other individuals, but of cultures and life experiences that are different, and often quite contradictory. Frequently, social groups are involved in a relationship at opposite ends in terms of loss and pain: of the inflicting of loss and pain, and of the bearing of loss and pain. So, I tend to be wary of forcing the analogy. I feel there is danger in the seductive process of easing the categories of social life and collective fantasies into the moulds

Senzenina
Senzenina
Senzenina
Senzenina

What have we done to deserve this?
What have we done to deserve this?

Forty years later, today in the cathedral, *Senzenina* was the main song that was sung. It gave a wonderful sense of continuity and a terrible sense of no progress. And yet, through everyone joining in, through the upbeat effect of the exquisitely sonorous African harmonising, the participation and human solidarity, through the singing and the sadness, there was a sense of strong healing today. The improvised choirs were in many ways more powerful than the considered speeches and the solemn appeals for peace. We were doing it all together. We felt very South African. Tutu, the imams, the rabbi and the others all helped with their knowledge, skills and intuitions, their capacity to strike the right chords and touch on the right emotions and say the right words. Assassins may come in many forms, so do healers.

We emerged with a warm feeling and a sense that we could contain the anger and the rage occasioned by the terrible loss brought about by the killing of Chris Hani, and convert it into something useful. Yet going to the Grand Parade afterwards was dismal. Smoke was rising, cars were burning and young people were attacking the fruit-stalls of people from whom throughout the years we had always bought bananas and lettuce in support of the struggle.

The worst pain of all was seeing people from our own camp doing something that undermines and destroys all that we are trying to achieve. The blows from our side hurt much more than those that are struck by our opponents. Yet the murders of today, wherever they come from, are not unrelated to the murders of the past. How do we make reparation without new exorcisms of blood?

Two Parables

I will speak to you in parables. The whole Kleinian presentation, if I may say so, is a parable. You do not measure psyches and personalities in millimetres and grammes. Yours is a story that is persuasive, logical and backed by empirical observation. It functions, it operates. Yet in the end it relies not on the science of measurement but on the persuasiveness of parable. So I feel that I am not betraying the spirit of the evening by trying to present some truths, or at least some convincing guesses, through narrative rather than through concept. I know enough not to play around pseudo-speculatively with the unconscious. The logic of chaos is tricky, even for professionals, and I am not going to pretend to a scientific rigour that I neither have nor seek (having escaped from it once).

The first tale is set in a club on the Waterfront in Cape Town, called Rosies's and

All That Jazz. I was there not long after my return. It is a rough, comfortable, easy place, the musicians tuning up, meeting, greeting, waving and saying "Hi!", feeling very good. Someone comes up and stands right in front of me, saying "*Verskoon my*" ("Forgive me"). I do not hear very well because the saxophone is being tuned up, but he repeats: "*Verskoon my*, you are Albie Sachs, aren't you?" as if he didn't know, and I said, "Yes". He explained he was part-owner of the Club, and slowly I began to understand what he was getting at. "*Verskoon my*", "forgive me". He wanted to confess directly to me his share of responsibility for those who had bombed me and blasted away my arm.

I was thrown. I wished to reply to him in Afrikaans, but I had come back from twenty-three years in exile and I had forgotten most of my Afrikaans, and so I produced a mixture of English, Afrikaans and Portuguese: "*Hierdie bonito klub is my verskoning.*" ("This lovely club is my forgiveness.") And that's what I really felt. People were enjoying themselves. Capetonians were being Capetonians, and it was part of a new spirit, of that new South Africa we had heard so much about. He went and sat down, and so did I. We both felt uneasy, he because he had exposed himself to me without receiving direct forgiveness, and I because I had failed to reach him emotionally.

When someone offers you clean feeling, you should respond in kind. Yet I had said what I felt. I genuinely felt he had nothing to apologise to me for. The mere fact that he was white, and Afrikaans-speaking, didn't make him more responsible for the bomb that the South African Government (which he had possibly voted for) had put in my car. Even if he personally had been the one to place it there, I don't know how I would have reacted. How can someone say, "I am sorry I blew your arm off"? As far as I am concerned, what really matters is how people behave, not what they say.

A stronger feeling I had was that if he wanted to apologise, he should do so not to me, but to those millions of people who had really suffered in a way that I hadn't done. I had chosen my role. I knew I was confronting the state. I knew there was a risk. I don't feel that fate has been malevolent to me. I don't sense that there has been some terrible disturbance of nature, that something horrible in the world has happened to strike gratuitously and unfairly at me.

I never felt, "Why me?". When I was waking up in the hospital in London in the early hours of the morning and feeling all my aches and pains in the pre-dawn loneliness... just to comfort myself, I used to sing, "It's me, it's me, Oh Lord." But I never thought, "Why me?". I knew why it was me, because I had embarked upon a certain road, out of proud and conscious choice. But what about the millions of people who had not had a choice? They were South Africans, they were black, they were oppressed, they were denied from the moment they were born to the moment they died. If he had to apologise, the should apology go to them. But because he could identify with me - I am white, I am from a similar social background - the apology was to me.

handle the exaggerations of our land. A little substance of truth is magnified and multiplied by one group and comes into contradiction with a pocket of truth over-enlarged by another, and the world does not come to an end.

Fourthly, we have to discover the value of shared tasks and of people working together. Samora Machel used to say in Mozambique that the way to create national unity was not by flying the flag and appealing to national unity, but by working together in the fields. I am not suggesting that we must all go out and grow tomatoes, but there are a multiplicity of things we can do together. Literacy programmes would be one example. Housebuilding could be another. In South Africa work intimacy has been even more forbidden than sexual intimacy. Everything has been complicated by master/mistress-servant relationships, by attitudes of superiority and inferiority. Hopefully, all that can be overcome, and a new style of work developed.

I don't know why I use this phrase so often, but we have to start looking into each other's eyes. We just don't do it enough in South Africa. It is almost as though we are afraid to look into one another's eyes. We are scared to expose ourselves. We are frightened in terms of what we will discover there. But, what will we find? We will discover another person like ourselves, who enjoys a good joke, who likes music, who appreciates a nice story, who can be alarmed, who can get angry. In many different ways we are starting eye-to-eye contact in South Africa, even if sometimes at a rather formalistic level, about the economy, about housing, about electrification. At the level of negotiations we are also doing it. It's not unimportant. In fact, it's very important. But, we need more of that.

If we are going to have real affirmative action in our society, the only way it can work is if it is based on real participation, if we look into each other's eyes and try to find common solutions.

Far from this being a painful process, my experience has been the opposite, it is liberating. I don't say we must all start jumping and clapping, or be born again and shout hallelujah or viva, but we should reward ourselves with the discoveries waiting to be made. It is a pleasure which most South Africans have as yet to encounter. I have personally received it through comradeship in the organisation, in the underground, in exile, and from the love and solidarity I got when I was in hospital.

I think we all need reward. It is not simply relief from distress and it is not merely doing something because it is morally right, important though that is in terms of our sense of ourselves. We need to open up to the pleasure and joy of working with people who are standing up for themselves as free persons after generations of oppression, and who have retained the capacity to display more fun, human grace and musicality than we have tended to.

Victimisers and victims

To conclude, I said there was one other point where I felt that I would like to carry Ilana's argument along a little further, and that related to equalisation. The

Afrikaans-speaking guy wanted to receive my forgiveness. The African guy wanted to enjoy the right to forgive. Please note, not the right to punish, but the right to forgive.

The right to forgive depends on a shared acknowledgement of the situation by all, and of the African comrade's power or prerogative to be the forgiving one. I cannot stress enough how important this is in South Africa. The right to be magnanimous cannot be exercised if all the wrongs are excused or justified or blamed on history. It is tiring to listen to non-stop justifications, to be told that the whites are really rather poor, to have to hear that responsibility for crime, injustice and the violation of rights is the same, or that as sinners we are all equal.

The process wasn't equal. It was unequal. This is not to say that anyone was totally free of responsibility or guilt. We, in the movement which I love so much, yes, we committed crimes. But it wasn't on an equal basis.

In a way all human beings are equal. From a deep philosophical point of view, from a purely medical or psycho-analytical standpoint, all human beings are just human beings. Even Hitler was equal.

It pains me, by the way, that I have to use the example of Hitler or of concentration camp guards and camp victims to make a point about South Africa. It should be enough to simply say things about South Africa, but our cultural imaginations are so geared to the European experience that often the only way we can make a point about home is by drawing on analogy from abroad.

You might say then, that the survivors coming out of the concentration camps had to relieve themselves of destructiveness – auto-destructiveness and outgoing destructiveness – just as did the camp guards. Yet, it was not the same process, and it is important to note this qualitative difference. Choice in life should matter. Responsibility counts. We aren't all just victims of our early childhood and of our current fantasies. Yes, we have to acknowledge the bad in us, in all of us, and I was struck by some of the phrases you used, that I too have employed in dealing with culture in a paper I wrote some years ago: "We must find the good in the bad and bad in the good." And "We need to spend less time worrying about the cops, and more time exploring ourselves and our own contradictions, our own tragedies, joys, surprises and terrors."

But, we have not only to acknowledge the bad in us, we have also to recognise the good. I am not going to let go of that. Even if we fully accept the need to distinguish between ourselves and the Ideal Hero, a tiny little bit of the latter will still remain. There is goodness in the world, healing does matter, your profession is meaningful, and what we did was basically right and we need acknowledgement for that.

It is at times distressing for me to see the kind of knocks that we get in our movement, as though this is all just part and parcel of the hurly-burly of the political game. I look at Mandela – twenty-eight years in jail – and he is so nice and so decent. He makes mistakes and sometimes serious errors, and he has lots of frailties

of Kleinian or other currents of psycho-analytic thinking.

At the same time, I recognise and respond to much in what you say. What moved me in particular was that a great deal of what you dealt with was being addressed to us, to ourselves. Too often we spend our time and attention dealing with the cops, the torturers, the killers and the other people and their minds, behaviour and transgressions, and very little on ourselves. We lose our own dignity, become victims of the volition of others rather than the bearers of our own destinies. We don't honestly and openly examine ourselves.

(I will comment later about what I see as my second divergence from your approach, namely the problem of equalisation in your analysis between victimiser and victim.)

So, if I step back from the tempting process of linking up psycho-analytical theory with progressive social development beginning in South Africa today, it doesn't mean that I don't acknowledge the scope and significance of the psycho-analytic vision. This vision is fundamental to tolerance and sensitivity. It helps us to be beware of stereotypes and pre-judgements. It introduces us to the importance of history, process, and inner contradiction. It enables us to handle ambivalence, and encourages us to look for reserves of strength inside ourselves. It focuses on repair rather than castigation.

Yet in itself it cannot give us the solutions we need. We have to work at the levels of intervention that are manageable. We are not going to solve the problem of the trauma in this country simply by having more psychotherapists, with half the population in psychotherapy and half the population giving psychotherapy. We can't also look to better child-rearing and wait another generation for results. In any event, I am yet to be convinced that the children of psychotherapists grow up healthier, wealthier or even wiser, than anybody else. Obviously, we want more psychotherapists, and we need better child-raising. But, we have to have other mechanisms as well to deal with the psychic traumas of our nation.

Mechanisms for social repair

The first observation I make is as follows: one of the basic elements in the emerging context for healing, which has both an instrumental function and a powerful symbolic dimension, is the Constitution.

If one sees the function of psychotherapy as that of helping to put the patient to rights, of seeking to establish a sense of rightness and points of secure reference, so we can envisage a Constitution as putting the country to rights. It helps to make a country out of our country. It enables us to relate to it as an integrated, living whole. It provides a common focus and shared points of reference for everybody. The greatest reparation that can be given to the most traumatised of our people is to guarantee them full, equal citizenship, and assure them the dignity of being

acknowledged as human beings, as counting as persons who matter, who signify and who have rights.

Personal self-determination and a sense of worth lie at the heart of the constitutional vision. The question of rights to me is a powerful and profound one, the meaning of which goes well beyond the dimensions of law. Rights relate to how we see ourselves and how we connect up with others.

It may be that sometimes we load too much onto the political system and believe facilely that if we have a good document prescribing constitutional rights, everything else falls into place. Yet it's not, as some people feel, as if the Constitution plays no role at all, and that the only thing that matters is attitudes. The Constitution, its mechanisms and values, and the sense of all of us being part of the same South Africa on a plane of equality, provides a context in which it is possible for people to heal themselves and to help others with their own self-repair. When it comes to healing there are not simply over-privileged and under-privileged. We are all in need.

Secondly, we are going to require social and institutional stability. The levels of violence, not just political violence, but the chaotic violence, the fear in the streets, and in people's homes – much worse in black areas than in white – create not just an intolerable (one can tolerate an enormous amount) but a hard-to-bear level of stress and pressure that is extremely damaging to all our psyches. So we need not only a new community-based police force, but we have to establish a whole new integrated concept of security that goes beyond instrumentally providing for defence and punishment. Security must be seen holistically, in terms of food security, housing security, social security and human security as well as police security. All these elements then interrelate in terms of community security.

The third theme touches on opening up our culture, and understanding that concept in its broader sense. I have referred to the singing in the church, a participatory type of culture that is so strong in the African community and so weak in the white community. We whites relate to culture through professionalism and spectating. We are passive in a cultural sense, and I think it is damaging to us. This is an area where, living in Africa, we can gain so much, and quickly. Instead of our being partly frightened of Africa and projecting our fears onto Africa, it is Africa that is going to help us open up to ourselves. We can participate in the music, we can join in the body movements, we can loosen up, become more comfortable in ourselves, learn to share things in a less legalistic way, and develop a more human aesthetic.

Yet by cultural openness I mean more than that, more than simply getting out of the ghettos of our tight bodies, more than discovering a fuller South Africanness in ourselves. I envisage the culture of an open society. The criticism, the wit, the humour, the jokes, the slyness, the tears, the tragedy, the contradictions that come out when you have a vivacious open culture – in the media, in public life, in all the different areas of activity – are going to be important and supportive of what Ilana was saying. Seeing the different sides and various dimensions of phenomena enables us to bear contradictions and manage conflict. Openness permits us to

and faults. In real life he is by no means the Ideal Hero. We work with him and we criticise him, and it is fundamentally necessary that we have the right, the courage and the freedom to criticise him, which we often still do at meetings, and which, incidentally, he welcomes and even invites. He just stands for something lovely that we are privileged to have in this country. There are also Walter and Albertina Sisulu, and Ahmed Kathrada – I can go on and on with the list. Instead of this being seen as a precious asset for South Africa which we should nurture and show with pride to all our people and to the world, many South Africans undermine it and say, "They are all the same. They are all corrupt".

The difference between scepticism and cynicism is fundamental. Scepticism means you take nothing completely on trust. There is nothing that is automatically and self-perpetuatingly virtuous. You are on your guard all the time. That is good, and we need all the scepticism we can get. On the other hand, cynicism means the total denial of goodness. This tendency not to acknowledge any good in anybody or anything is common in South Africa. Its base is not realism but depression and an incapacity to take responsibility for change. We have got to nourish the goodness, of which there is plenty, in our society. I only wish it could be separated out from elections and running for office.

I detected that implicit in your presentation, Ilana, was a kind of equalisation between the victimiser and the victimised – each had good and bad, each was in need of reparation. True, but the scale and needs are not the same. The processes of repair are quite different.

I would like to see the victimisers themselves involved in the process of their *own* healing. People say to us: "What are you going to do with symbols of oppression and exclusiveness like the Voortrekker Monument?" They expect us to obliterate it and replace it with new symbols of power. Yet, if we destroy it, we are not destroying it. We destroy the building, but the Monument in people's minds will stay. But, if the people who put it up find their own way of transforming it, maybe by growing creepers or roses or doing something to soften it – but this must come from themselves as an acknowledgement of past arrogance and injustice and a token of present change, then the process is meaningful and enduring. Physician, oppressor, liberator, heal thyself, but oppressor more than most.

Those of us who have been victims must also be encouraged to take an active part in our own repair. If we wrap our trauma around ourselves we will never be free. If we monumentalise suffering or convert it into an instrument of gain, we cannot grow.

The humiliation and indignity of being forced to submit to the caprices, lusts and disregard of others, is not easily overcome. Self-confidence and a sense of rightness in the world is achieved only step by step.

We should not be mocked for our striving, nor should the reality of what we went through be denied. In appropriate cases, special forms of material care or symbolical appreciation should be given. We need to feel that basically we were

right, that we did not deserve what was inflicted on us. This gives a sense of rightness to the world, not just to us, but to the future.

Above all, we need the chance to feel and enjoy the goodness in ourselves. There are many emotions amongst the oppressed. Anger is one of them, but amongst the most important is that of generosity. I have no doubt that if we can establish a sense of truth and justice in our society, there is an immense magnanimity that will express itself. This requires that a truthful balance be found in the relationship of victimiser and victim.

Truth is the foundation of justice, of reconciliation and of healing. We must not be afraid of the truth, none of us. It is worth underlining: we can only reconcile ourselves to ourselves by acknowledging the truth of our lives.

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He makes this contribution to the Symposium in his private capacity.