

Provocative Memory:
The Fine Line between Healing and Humiliation in Performative Memory

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Abstract

In the transitional justice and peacebuilding literature the presentation of individual traumatic memory is said to generate both individual and collective psychological healing. Such processes are thought to be predictably socially generative. However, the truth-telling performances embedded within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone were predominantly experienced by local people as a provocation, not as catharsis. Truth-telling in this case was socially generative, but not predictably so. To explain these results this paper argues that the societies within which the individuals who plan and administer such hearings are socialized support the cathartic effects of truth-telling, while the societies within which such processes are administered do not. The ritually performative nature of such processes, reliant on the transmutation of individual into collective experience, leads to a focus here on theories of performativity and the variable nature of both selves and societies produced, and reproduced, through culturally variable memory practices.

Keywords: Transitional Justice, Reconciliation, Peacebuilding, Trauma, Memory, Performativity

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Introduction

This paper explores the local experience of a particular practice of memory, the public performance of truth-telling within the context of a Truth Commission. However, it begins with a memory of my own from a warm late summer night in Makeni, the town in rural northern Sierra Leone where I had recently started my field research in August of 2008. In this memory I sit on a clammy mattress in a darkening room and attempt to explain my research project while finishing a pasta dinner inexpertly cooked by the two Canadian journalists for Human Rights who are my hosts. As the stucco-walls dance with the light of candles wedged tightly into empty beer bottles I describe how I'm going to investigate local people's experience of the truth commission by interviewing audience members of the public hearings. I'm not going to interview those who participated, those who told their stories or the staff of the commission, I tell them, because I want to evaluate the impact of the hearings on the broader audience, on the population of the town in general. I want to know, I say, if truth-telling produced healing, catharsis, or reconciliation.

From behind me on the bed, forgotten in the dark where he had decided to lie down and close his eyes, comes the voice of Moses, a local journalist working for a radio station. He begins to tell us of a Pa, an old man, who was amputated during the war. This man had no interest in attending the hearings, says Moses, as it had been so long since his injury. The man's injuries had healed over, he was with his family, he was, as you hear so often in Sierra Leone, 'coping'. But the radio was on, and the man was listening to the hearings as they were broadcast, and as he listened he heard the voice of the man who had amputated his hand. In that moment, explained Moses, the memories of the war came back to him, hot and painful. The old Pa recalled how that man had hurt him, maimed him, and he hated that man. Whereas he had been living for many

years, had rebuilt some form of life, had learned to live with his disability, and never thought of this man, now he was filled with a new anger, a new hatred. According to Moses, he wanted to kill that man anew.

I have not, before now, used this story in a scholarly publication, although I have often cited directly interviewees who described the truth-telling process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for Sierra Leone as a provocation. I have often cited Hanna, a 29 year old housewife who poignantly described the TRC as coming “*to add pepper in my wound,*” and I have cited a man who often ate lunch on the steps of the NGO with which I volunteered, who described the truth-telling process as “*pouring hot water over your head,*” but I have never described Moses’ story. I wanted to use it here, however, because it captures so much of what this paper will discuss. It captures the effects of the time passed between the occurrence of a traumatic event and the return to that event within a ritual truth-telling process. It captures the manner in which trauma can become dulled by time and overcome by fresh events and positive experiences. It captures what Sierra Leoneans appear to have experienced as the inadequacy of truth-telling as a source of healing for those harmed in warfare. But most importantly, I think it captures what I think is best described as the fine line between healing and humiliation in performative memory.

There are many ideas in the literature about how truth-telling works within a Truth Commission. There are those who focus on the process of acknowledgement, or the “affirmation of atrocity” (Minow, 1998, p. 4), which is thought to be a form of justice for those long denied recognition (Asmal, 1992, p. 501; Roht-Arriaza, 2006, p. 2; van Zyl, 2005, p. 211), and others who focus on the psychosocial processes of apology and forgiveness thought to be initiated by this acknowledgement (Fisher, 2001; Nadler and Schnabel, 2008). Still others believe that the

benefit of truth-telling lies in the creation of a “collective memory” (Chapman & Ball, 2001, p. 15; Sooka, 2006, p. 319) that is shared by the whole population and provides a means to minimize “the number of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse” (Ignatieff, 1996, p. 113). From these different theories Mendeloff (2004) compiled a list of 17 common assumptions about the affects of truth-telling (p. 364), but argues, along with a number of other scholars, that there is far too little empirical evidence upon which to ground these assumptions (Mendeloff, 2004, 2009; Brahm, 2007; Thoms, Ron, & Parus, 2008).

I have investigated many of these issues in previous work and argued for more long-term and locally rooted ethnographic evaluations of the effects of truth-telling (Millar, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b). In this paper, however, I turn to investigating the nature of truth-telling itself as the public performance of memory. After describing a little further the conflict in Sierra Leone and the provocative experience of the truth-telling process among local people, I turn to Jeffrey C. Alexander’s theory of cultural pragmatics (2004) to describe the necessary elements of successful social performance and argue that the Truth Commission in Sierra Leone largely failed to meet these requirements. However, understanding why this was the case demands a deeper investigation of social performance in general, and a discussion of more profound issues of performativity. In the latter half of the paper I will argue, therefore, that autobiographical and collective memories are themselves psychologically and socially generative, and that the selves created within particular traditions of memory practice, such as Sierra Leoneans, are unable to perform within and incorporate projects emerging from alternative memory practice traditions, such as the West. The paper concludes with reflections on the complicated and complicating nature of the relationship between autobiographical and collective memory within truth commission processes.

War and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leonean conflict began in the southeast of the country when a small force of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) fighters infiltrated over the border from Liberia. Although initially comprising perhaps a hundred fighters, this small group able to tap into local disaffection with years of elite corruption and general dissatisfaction with the state of government and they quickly built their small band into a legitimate fighting force (Shearer, 1997, p. 849). Within just a single year the RUF had succeeded in their initial goal and unseated the All People's Congress (APC) government which had ruled the one party state for a full 24 years (Shaw, 2002, p. 249). However, as the group then refused to lay down their arms and enter peaceful politics, the war degraded into a series of coups and failed governments in which some 50,000 people were killed (Bellows & Miguel, 2006, p. 394), and 1.7 million displaced, either internally or overseas (Amowitz et. al., 2002, p. 214).

Perhaps more significant than the length of the war, was its particularly gruesome violence. There is little debate among scholars regarding the brutality and devastation of Sierra Leonean's 11 year civil war. As Shaw (2007) articulates "Sierra Leoneans experienced displacement, looting, burning, rape, torture, amputation and the killing and abduction of family members" (p. 185). In addition, there was widespread violent abduction and indoctrination of child soldiers by the RUF (Fanthorpe, 2001, p. 364). Such atrocities were not committed only by the rebels however. Indeed Dougherty (2004) reports that "[l]ocals used the term 'sobel' – soldier by day, rebel by night - to describe the looting and unlawful behaviour of some elements of the Sierra Leonean army" (p. 315). In addition, and highlighting the predatory nature of much of this violence, rural women experienced the brunt of these atrocities, not members of the fighting forces (Zack-Williams, 1999, p. 156). Although the violence was not sustained everywhere

throughout the war, it was targeted often at non-combatants and has resulted in innumerable postwar hardships.

It was within this postwar environment that the TRC attempted to implement its specific form of reconciliation practice, the collection of victim, witness and perpetrator stories in one-on-one statement taking sessions, and the presentation of a select number of these stories in front of live audiences in town halls and community centers throughout the country and over the radio. These hearings, carried out between the 14th of April and the 5th of August 2003, were a major component of the TRC's work and included a "series of thematic, institutional and event-specific hearings in Freetown" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2004, p. 181) and 4 days of public hearings and one day of closed hearings in each of the 12 district headquarter towns. As has been the case in most Truth Commissions since the famous South African case (Freeman, 2006, p. 26), these public hearings were supposed to "cater to the needs of the victims" and promote "social harmony and reconciliation" (TRC, 2004, p. 231). However, in direct contradiction to this goal, local non-elite audiences in Sierra Leone seem to have had a distinctly negative experience of the process.

Echoing the words of Hannah presented above, Saidu, the 61 year old headmaster of a primary school, felt that the TRC was "trying to create some problems" because "when I forgive somebody, even if I remember it in my mind, you don't say it out loud," and Alpha, a 32 year old farmer, believed the process to be "only provocation to those that they seized advantage on during the war." Similarly, Boubakar, a 48 year old teacher, argued that the TRC "was just talk that they came and talked. What they talk, they didn't even do it. So I do not feel that they even came to help Salone," and Yamboi, a 30 year old salesman, believed that "what they said they would do for people, they were not able to do those things. So I feel that they are not able to

make it successful.” Brima, a 25 year old farmer, felt that the TRC “will not just come and talk, talk, talk, talk, and I will forget about it,” and Adama, a 39 year old trader, argued quite cogently that “when you see that person who has killed your relative or friend, when you see him, *your heart will still run back.*”

Clearly Adama’s opinion reflects the experience described in Moses’ story; a victim hearing again the story of their own victimhood and returning to the emotional state of that moment, perhaps years ago, when they had been tortured, amputated, raped, or forced to witness atrocities committed on others. As she says, “*your heart will still run back.*” But why is it that Sierra Leoneans had this experience of the truth-telling performances of the TRC, as opposed to the socioemotional reconciliation, healing, and justice predicted by so many truth-telling advocates? Shaw (2005, 2007) and Kelsall (2005) have previously noted the cultural miss-fit between the truth-telling process and locally accepted memory practice in Sierra Leone, and I have supplemented their findings with additional reflections on the particular cultural dynamics in the local milieu which disrupt the local acceptability of such practiced (Millar, 2011b). However, what I move to now is a discussion of what I would consider the more profound disjunction between the Western and the local traditions of memory practice.

Cultural Pragmatics and the Performance of Memory

It has been argued elsewhere that within processes of interpersonal reconciliation the individual process of forgiveness is given collective political meanings. The “individual and political realms mov[e] inevitably closer” and individual reconciliation and forgiveness are considered to have collective or national affects (Hamber, 2007, p. 118). Within such conceptions truth-telling is widely seen to be the first step in this cycle, this collective process (Antkowiak, 2002, p. 996). In short, although truth-telling is initially the process by which

reconciliation occurs between two individuals, its successful performance, the completion of the acknowledgement, apology, forgiveness, assurance cycle (Tavuchis, 1991; Fisher, 2001), is thought to produce reconciliation on a collective level.

This transmutation of individual into collective experience hinges not only on the experience of the truth-teller, nor on that of their counterpart in the victim/perpetrator relationship, but on the success of their performance of truth-telling in reaching out, connecting with, and affecting the intended audience. Cultural pragmatics, Alexander's (2004) theory of social performance, views such performances as either succeeding or failing depending on the extent to which one can "convince others that one's performance is true" (p. 530). In turn, the extent to which this is possible is reliant on the successful inclusion of a number of required "elements" of social performance. Alexander describes these elements as signifiers, or symbols, scripts, actors, audience, means of symbolic production, *mise-en-scène*, and social power. When each of these elements is consistent, or "fused," with each of the others, and "ritual performances reflect the social structures and cultures of their historically situated societies," then performative success, or *the generation of new social realities*, will be achieved (2004, p. 534).

Central to Alexander's theory is the interaction between the actors – the truth-tellers – and the audience. The reason for the performance of any script is to communicate with an audience. Hence, according to Alexander, the audience, whether witnessing the performance directly or through the media, must be able to engage with and be engaged by, the performance. This engagement is accomplished through "*cultural extension*" and "*psychological identification*." Cultural extension means that the script, and the actor's performance of it, must be culturally salient to the audience. Thus allowing the acts performed to reach out to the audience. And in return, the audience must be able to psychologically identify with the

characters and the script they see performed onstage, to identify something of themselves and their experience in those of the performers. If they cannot, he argues, they will fail to become emotionally invested in the performance, and the performance will fail (2004, p. 531).

Giesen (2006) has described cultural pragmatics as embracing “a postmodern ‘receptionist’ perspective on performance” because it centers “the audience as the arena where the meaning of the performance is created,” thus taking account of the role of the audience as the interpreter of the performed “social drama” (p. 326). In this way Giesen recognizes what so many reconciliation theorists fail to take note of. It is not sufficient to plan and administer projects that Western theorists believe will produce an *experience* of reconciliation or cathartic memory. Quite to the contrary in fact, Alexander’s theory of social performance makes it quite clear that imported modes of performance can fail to be predictably socially generative if the actors spliced into the necessary roles – the truth-tellers – and the audiences experiencing that performance, are both products of alternative traditions of memory practice. In such a situation such processes can, in fact, have an effect opposite to that which is expected. They can be provocative.

We can understand this more clearly by considering the nature and power of ritual within such performances. Turner defines ritual very simply as “prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine” (p. 19). Symbols, understood by Turner to be “the basic building-blocks, the molecules of ritual,” are understood within *specific social and cultural contexts*, that is, entire cosmologies (p. 14). As such, they are “evocative devices for rousing, channeling, and domesticating powerful emotions” within such cultural contexts (pp. 42-43). It is the symbols within ritual performances that communicate complex messages between the actors and the audience. This is true also for Bourdieu (1977), who notes that

symbols are recognized only by those “conditioned to perceive them” (p. 76), and that having not internalized the “fluid, “fuzzy abstraction” of ritual, the “analogical sense inculcated in the earliest years of life” (p. 112), leaves one simply without the “set of schemes which are at work in the production” of ritual meaning (p. 114). Of course, if one does not have such an internalized understanding of these abstractions one can hardly create meaningful ritual for an audience that does.

We can further recognize the importance of a deep and naturalized understanding of these schemas when we take into account what Turner (1967) calls the *polysemy* or *multivocality* of ritual symbols, whereby “each dominant symbol has a ‘fan’ or ‘spectrum’ of referents” (p. 50), which are, in turn, interlinked with other symbols and referents so that “the positional meaning of a symbol derives from its relationship to other symbols in a totality” (p. 51), in an entire cosmology. In this way, it becomes evident, not just that understanding the context helps, but that it is imperative. Ritual symbolism and performance are not random, they are inherently interlaced and interconnected to, generative of and generated by, the conceptions and practices of self, society, and life within which people exist. Having not internalized a particular cosmology, that complicated and multivocal language of local symbolization, leaves one unable to act either as Alexander’s actor, or as his audience. Specific to peacebuilding rituals, Schirch (2005) argues that in order to communicate and connect with an audience, such rituals must be “rooted in the unique ways individuals view and experience the world” (p. 163). Without the requisite contextual understanding, ritual actions are indecipherable and both cultural extension and psychological identification, in Alexander’s language, become impossible.

These are the claims I am making, but they run counter to much of the literature regarding memory, healing, truth and reconciliation in post-conflict or post-trauma societies.

Following the lessons we believe we learned in response to past individual and collective traumas, primarily the Holocaust and Apartheid, we have developed normative and practical approaches to individual and social recovery linked inexorably to individual and collective memory practices delimited by the particularities of distinct cultures and times. We have proceeded to present these practices as normal, as human, as universal, when in reality we have little empirical evidence to suggest that this is indeed the case. The problem, however, is not that we bound our theory within the confines of our own culture, but that we then project that theory in practice throughout many other cultures; cultures quite distinct from our own where the very selves experiencing that practice are socialized to recognize, understand, and identify with alternate modes of *performative memory*.

Performativity and Self

I move now to a discussion of performativity itself and its relationship to memory. As will become clear, I consider acculturation and the development of any and all social beings to be inherently interlinked with the creation of individual memories. It may accurately be said, I believe, that we are, individually, only that which we remember. And we are, socially, only that which we perform. The purpose of what will be presented below is, therefore, to articulate how and why this is so and to use the theories of prior thinkers to underpin the potentially divisive argument I made above regarding the inapplicability of our own practices of memory within diverse non-Western settings. First, to performativity.

As described by Hannah Arendt (1958), the idea of performative acts can be found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the term *energeia*, or "actuality" refers to acts that "exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself," where "the work is not what follows and

extinguishes the process but is embedded in it; the performance is the work;” is the “end in itself” (p. 206). Here, I am concerned with explaining two aspects of such performative acts, the manner in which performance is theorized to be generative, first, of individuals, and second, of social reality. This is important because the variability, not just of easily observed elements of culture such as religion, art and language, but of the very structure of selves and the manner in which such selves are formed within a social context, are central to understanding local receptions of imposed processes. The two authors central to my first claim, that selves are formed through performance, are Erving Goffman and Judith Butler. Both of these writers famously articulate not only the manner in which individuals present their selves, but also the manner in which, as per Foucault, this presentation is disciplined, or socially prescribed and generative of selves.

Goffman’s (1959) theory argues, not only that an individual’s “projection [performance or presentation] commits him to what he is proposing to be” (p. 10), who he wants to be seen to be, but also that performances are driven by “standards we unthinkingly apply” (p. 55), standards that are inscribed on performance through “social discipline” by which a “mask of manner can be held in place from within” (p. 57). In this theory he is inherently arguing that performances must be seen as both generative of a self performed, and generated by external social standards internalized and incorporated by the actor. Similarly, in her description of gender performativity, Butler (2006) describes performances as individual “styles of the flesh” (p. 190), inscriptions “on the body” (p. 184). She states that “these styles are never fully self styled, for styles have a history, and those histories condition and limit the possibilities” (p. 190). In this way, persons cannot be seen as inscribing their own bodies with styles, but as being inscribed upon by the

social world. Both authors recognize therefore that performances, as much as being performed, are also pre-formed, socially delimited.

It is important to realize that in performance, the self is itself inscribed. In this way, there is no self prior to inscription; selves are the performances and the performances are the selves. As such, each individual is created through socially prescribed performance. In performance “a soul inhabits him and brings him to existence” (Foucault, 1995, p. 30); that is, the performance is the self. As individuals become convinced of their own performances they are internalizing the standards, politeness, and decorum of the society in which they perform (Goffman, 1959, p. 107). Such performances both constitute a new self and, in turn, the performances of this self are socially generative. In this way the performance of self is a circular reification of norms of self and society; as both are generated and regenerated in tandem. Indeed, it is the very consistency of individual performances by gendered subjects, argues Butler (2006), that continually reifies gender norms in society; it is the “acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires [that] create the illusion of an interior and organized gender core” (p. 186).

I would argue, connecting back to the issue of memory, that such pre-formed performances are delimited by the very boundaries of collective memory – “the stored memory of the social group” (Coser, 1992, p. 24) – and that their incorporation by individual bodies can be seen as the integration of elements of this collective memory as individual memory – the “record of discrete experiences arising from a person’s participation in acts or situations which were to some degree localized in time and place” (Robinson, 1976, p. 578). In essence the socially bounded nature of experience gives rise to similarly bounded memories of such experience and, therefore, to individuals unconsciously operating as selves within the “universe of the undiscussed” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168).

Here, we see the combination of elements most important for the current argument, the dialectical relationship of the social and the self and the interiority and illusion of consistency that enables the self's own psychological stability and social valence. Much as the "distribution of sexuality" creates sexualized subjects and maintains its influence through its very ability to "mask a substantial part of itself" (Foucault, 1990, p. 86), and Bourdieu's (1977) doxa allows the political order to be perceived as the "self-evident and natural order which goes without saying" (p. 166), so the selves constituted by performance, are internalized, naturalized, taken as given. The performed selves become real selves. As Foucault (1996) stated:

It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of power (p. 29).

And this is one of the key problems for truth-telling in non-Western societies, such as Sierra Leone. Individuals mature as social beings within particular culturally bounded traditions to be individuals capable of particular forms of practice. But in many settings where truth commissions are administered, those traditions run counter to those of truth-telling and the individuals in those settings are simply unprepared and unable to perform as Alexander's actors; are unable to commit to and perform truth-telling. Indeed, in Sierra Leone the local population was socialized to avoid truth-telling and rely instead on the control and management of information (Shaw, 2005; Millar, 2011b).

Performativity and Society

But it is not only in the formation of selves that performance is socially generative. Whereas performance of a socially prescribed role internalizes that role and creates selves, Goffman (1959) also clearly describes how entire social realities are generated and

maintained by performance, not simply the reality of selves. As he eloquently articulates, in this social generation, we all “carry within ourselves,” ... “something of the sweet guilt of conspirators” (p. 105). Each of our actions are, together, generating our lived reality. J.L. Austin’s (1975) speech act theory helps explain how this is so. According to Austin, much like Aristotle's notion of *energeia*, a speech act is “the doing of an action” through an utterance (p. 5). Speech acts are performative in that “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” in itself. The utterance is not a description of an action, or a description of the results of an action, but the action itself (p. 6). Austin provides examples with sentences such as “‘I do’ (sc. Take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)”, or “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth.” Both of these sentences are themselves acts, in that, with their utterance the speaker has performed, completely, successfully, and in whole, a social act (i.e., getting married, naming a ship) (p. 5).

However, Austin further refined the concept of the speech act and coined the term “illocutionary act,” to refer to acts consisting of “utterances which have a certain (conventional) force” (p. 109). These utterances, again, have a force in their own right, not by their effect, but only in the correct context. Austin uses the example of a warning or an order (p. 131) such as “be careful, there are sharks in the water.” Through this sentence the speaker is not convincing, or persuading the listener, or suggesting to the listener, he/she is actually performing the act of warning. However, the act is only completed and socially generative in a particular context (e.g. on a beach). It is completely meaningless in other contexts (e.g. in the middle of a shopping mall or at the top of a mountain).

Obviously such performatives are different from those described by Butler or the self presentations described by Goffman, in that with such performatives we see social

repercussions far beyond the constitution of a particular self. With these performative speech acts a social actor may be forming a lifelong union, naming a battleship, or, potentially, saving a life. In addition, such performatives are inherently communicative in nature; unlike the performance of identity described by Butler, they are more like the presentation of self described by Goffman, which assumes, not just a performer, but an *audience*. It is the addition of the audience that problematizes social performance and demands attention to the context, intent, and relationship of the actor to the audience. With this shift we also shift from concentrating on Alexander's actors, to concentrating on Giesen's audience.

We can see Austin's term "conventional," as synonymous with the terms "culturally appropriate" or "locally salient." By conventional, he means that the presentation meets social conventions, it is culturally appropriate and understood. It now becomes easier to see how performances that do not meet those criteria, that are not "conventional," will not have social force. To Austin (1975), there was a particular class of speech acts which, although they may be correctly expressed, were "hollow" (p. 18). These were acts where the speaker (actor) fails to "in fact, have those thoughts or feelings" for which the speech act is "designed" (p. 15). Hence, a disingenuous individual may say "I promise to be there" when in fact they have no such intention. In this case, the speech act was correctly formed and communicated but the act itself was "hollow" because the actor was disingenuous.

Hornsby, in a related but in some ways opposite vein, argues that there must be the "presence of reciprocity" for the success of a speech act, in that the audience must recognize the illocutionary effects of the speech act. This is only possible, he argues, within "certain socially defined conditions", i.e., genuineness and shared understandings. Such conditions are described by Hornsby (1994) as "the mind-sets and expectations of those with whom we speak" (pp. 198-

199), i.e. the audience. Therefore, while Austin is talking about the genuineness, understandings, mind-set, expectation, etc. of the speaker, Hornsby is concerned with those of the audience, just as Goffman (1959) is concerned with the “coherence among setting, appearance, and manner” which allows consistent presentation of self (p. 25), and Alexander (2004) is concerned with the “cultural extension” of and “psychological identification” between actors and audience (p. 531). Both together allow us to see how truth-telling relies on particular selves, and a particular tradition of memory practice, which, unfortunately, simply does not maintain in Sierra Leone.

Conclusions: Performativity, Memoreality, and Provocation

In many ways this paper has been written backwards. I did not present the theory within the literature, then my methods, and eventually, my findings. Instead I presented my findings only briefly, because have been presented more formally in other publications, and then attempted to articulate the underlying reasons for these findings through an investigation of theory, because doing so wasn't possible in those other publications. One reason for this is that the theory investigated is not that which is usually thought to be relevant for postwar healing, justice, reconciliation, or recovery. The goal here was to draw the reader's attention to the social dynamics of individual and social performativity which bound the universe of the undiscussed and the realm of the possible and, therefore, powerfully impinge on the spectrum of acceptable and predictably socially generative practices of memory.

I have argued, I hope convincingly, that individual selves are variably crafted within social environments, and autobiographical memories of social reality are limited by the collective memory of that society. The rules and norms passed down through the generations represent the collective social reality of a people, and individuals developing and maturing

within any given social context inherit and integrate those rules and norms within their own autobiographical storyline. As Moghaddam (2008) has said:

The psychological social contract evolves through active participation in collective life, and in the collaboratively constructed and collectively upheld versions of social reality that come to dominate society (p. 882).

But it is most important to recognize and to understand that such selves are not false or somehow fabricated. The rules of behavior, the norms and values of our societies, the expected and acceptable practices and procedures of life are everywhere and at all times substantiated in our collective memories. Our selves, and our social rules, are real because they are real in our memories; they form our memoreality, and this memoreality of self, once constituted, allows each memoreal self to impact the slow but ongoing development of collective memory. Like Bourdieu's habitus, collective memory is taken for granted, is powerful specifically because it is unconscious, invisible, unseen, and unthought (1977, p. 80). Similarly each individual, as it is conscious of its-self, is real (much like Foucault's soul), through memory. That is, memory constitutes and convinces self of its own reality.

However, and to reiterate, the problem emerges that in the modern world those who dominate in the global discourses about and in the planning and application of postwar projects of memory, memorialization, healing, and reconciliation, are individuals from a particular historically defined and constructed social reality. On the other hand, a great number of the societies within which such projects are administered have very different collective memory traditions, very differently socialized memoreal selves, and, therefore, alternative and often little understood forms of memory practice. In the move towards postwar projects which are designed specifically to be socially generative on a collective level through the public performance of

individual memory, we have unconsciously applied our own rules and norms, and administered projects with little relevance to diverse local postwar needs.

To link directly back to the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing in Makeni, I believe it is clear that the TRC's hearings were ritual performances of memory. However, this ritual was performed with many symbols and referents indigenous to Western culture and thought. The inability of local non-elites to experience Turner's "powerful emotions" through participation in this ritual had a largely negative effect on the ritual's ability to assist in either individual or collective healing, reconciliation, or the provision of justice. Ritual experiences, as described for example by Taussig in the Putumayo (1987), or by Shaw in Sierra Leone (2002), have great potential to assist individuals in understanding and transitioning out of traumatic experiences. Schirch's (2001, 2005) work on peacebuilding also clearly describes this process, and as Turner (1969) famously articulated, rituals are spaces of liminality, temporary positions of being "betwixt and between," where individuals are broken down to be "fashioned anew" (p. 95). However, in the ritual memory practice of truth-telling, and particularly in the experience of this process in the Makeni, this process seems to have largely failed; the ritual performance failed to be performative, it did not create a space of liminality, and few were fashioned anew.

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