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# Re-establishing the Internal »Thou« in Testimony of Trauma

## Introduction

The following paper highlights the therapeutic aspects of the testimonial intervention – an intervention that is also used in oral history and in the judicial context. Specifically, we are dealing here with the video testimonies of severely traumatized Holocaust Survivors.

In one out of the two interviews excerpts cited in this paper, I served as the interviewer-listener. I was trying to promote a dialogic process between the survivor and myself and between the survivor and herself, in which her most severe traumatic experiences, perhaps for the first time in her life, were put into words. This paper will repeatedly return to the special attributes of the dialogic process of trauma testimony.

## The Nature of the Traumatic Experience

Philosophers, psychologists, psychiatrists, neuroscientists, and writers have tried to convey the essence of massive psychic trauma. According to psychoanalyst Boulanger, »[trauma] collapses« the distinction between the external world and internal experience »when the external world becomes a direct reflection of our most terrifying thoughts, feelings, fantasies and nightmares, reality testing is irrelevant«.<sup>1</sup> Cognitive functions such as the reflective registration of external events and observing one's own responses to them, cease to operate under the conditions of severe trauma. Tarantelli likens catastrophic psychic trauma to

»an explosion that disintegrates whatever is in its epicenter. It cannot be perceived or experienced or thought for there is nothing left to do so. Another way of saying this is that there is an utter absence, an utter break in being an instant in which nothing exists.«<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Ghislaine Boulanger, »From Voyeur to Witness: Recapturing Symbolic Function after Massive Psychic Trauma«, in: *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 22 (2005), S. 21–31.
- 2 Carole Beebe Tarantelli, »Life Within Death: Towards a Metapsychology of Catastrophic Psychic Trauma«, in: *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*

Jean Améry, himself a survivor of the Gestapo torture chambers and of Auschwitz, writes,

»but only in torture does the transformation of the person into flesh become complete ... the tortured person is only a body and nothing else besides that ... the pain was what it was, beyond that there is nothing to say ... they mark the limit of language to communicate.«<sup>3</sup>

All three writers indicate that it is an *absence* of mental experience, which categorizes massive psychic trauma because the mind is unable to register, cognitively emotionally, the traumatic events. The self as the interpreter of the experience and the creator of meaning, thus, ceases to function.

## On the Nature of Traumatic Memories

According to Golden, »The traumatic wound ... excludes linguistic representation«. <sup>4</sup> »[It] outstrips discursive and representational resources«. <sup>5</sup> Yet, traumatized people report so-called traumatic memories. These memories are indelible, sensory-affective imprinted fragments that lack narrative cohesion and agency. These imprints of visual, auditory, olfactory, kinesthetic and physical sensations and strong affect remain outside a narrative structure, outside a story, even outside experience as it is remembered.

They are not subject to assimilation or to evolutionary change through integration in the associative network. They remain discrete, retaining their magnetic power in their contradictory, detailed, and persistent clarity and also in the concomitant dense, yet absorbing opaqueness that enshrouds them. They are qualitatively different from ordinary memories because they can continue to exert an influence on unconscious cognitive and emotional processes many years after the original traumatic event.

84 (4) (2003), S. 915–928, hier S. 916.

3 Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, Bloomington, Indiana 1980, S. 33.

4 Kristen Brown Golden, »Trauma and speech as an adaptation in Merleau-Ponty«, in: dies./Bergo, Bettina G. (Hg.) *The Trauma Controversy. Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Dialogues*, Albany NY 2009, S. 82.

5 Brown Golden, (2009), »Trauma and Speech«, S. 5.

## Memories of Extreme Traumatization: Theoretical Considerations

I would like now to propose a phenomenological formulation of traumatic memory emanating from what is called in psychoanalysis »object-relation theory«. Holocaust trauma – and genocide trauma for that matter – refuses knowledge because at its very core lies the complete failure of the empathic human dyad. The executioner does not heed the victim's plea for life. Instead, he relentlessly proceeds with the execution. Human responsiveness came to be nonexistent in the death camps. A responsive »Thou« to one's basic needs no longer existed. Faith in the possibility of communication died; intra-psychically there was no longer a matrix of two people; a self and a resonating other. This despair of communicating with others diminished the victims' ability to be in contact and in tune with themselves, to be able to register or reflect, to themselves, about their own experience.

Given that survivors of extreme traumatization experienced a profound state of inner lonesomeness, it is thus necessary to explore next the link between this traumatic state of loneliness, of objectlessness and the absence of communicable thought. For traumatic sensation to be experienced as thought, it must undergo the process of symbolization. According to Melanie Klein, it is »not only [that] symbolism [comes] to be the foundation of all fantasy and sublimation, but more than that, it is the basis of the subject's relation to the outside world and to reality, in general«. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, to perceive, recognize, or participate in the reality, the process of symbolization needs to be in place. »Symbol formation,« according to Hanna Segal, »governs the capacity to communicate, since all communication is made by means of symbols«. She proceeds, »symbols are needed in not only communication with the external world, but also in internal communication,« that is, with oneself. <sup>7</sup> »The capacity to communicate with oneself by using symbols is, I think, the basis of verbal thinking, which is the capacity to communicate with oneself by means of words«. <sup>8</sup> When the empathic other has totally failed in the external world of the death camps, the internal, empathic, »Thou,« as a means for self-dialogue ceases to exist. The ongoing internal dialogue, the internal »I« speaking to the internal »Thou«, which allows for historicity narrative and meaning to unfold, falls silent. Sensory impressions,

6 Melanie Klein, »The Importance of Symbolic Formation in the Development of the Ego«, in: *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 11 (1930), S. 24–39, hier S. 221.

7 Hanna Segal, *Dream, Phantasy, and Art*, London 1991, S. 395.

8 Segal, *Dream, Phantasy, and Art*, S. 396.

no matter, how powerful remain fragments that do not coalesce. Thus, the two-part sequence which consists of first: the destruction of the internal »other« object, and the second: the failure of the process of symbolization through internal dialogue leads to the absence of conscious experience and also to the absence of repressed memory. It is as though memory in its wider form becomes non-existent, a state which very much fits Van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth's description of traumatic memories as the return »of emotional and sensory states with little capacity for verbal representation«.<sup>9</sup>

The above-described processes that promote the shutdown of the mental registering processes, the cessation of the dialogue with the internal »Thou,« (and, ultimately, of symbolization and of thought), led to a certain absence, or rather erasure of memory. Primo Levi poignantly described this state in his account of the *Muselmänner* state (Primo Levi quoted by Tarantelli) seen in the death camps. The absence of any »trace of thought<sup>10</sup> ... pointed to a destruction of all mental activity that had a full individuality, subjectivity, or personal being«. <sup>11</sup> Hence, the narration of this state from within has become impossible.

## Testimony as a Relibidinization of the Fragments

Testimony is a powerful libido driven process of putting fragments together, creating a whole – making it part of one's experiential landscape in a temporal, historical sequence, historicizing it, restoring the narrative flow, associatively linking it to other experiences and to the experiencing »I«. It is a process of symbolizing the concrete so it can become communicable to oneself and thus known and transmittable to an »other«, hence becoming an experience that can be known, remembered, transmitted and forgotten.

In the psychoanalytic sense, an object is passionately yearned for and desperately needed, to make this libidinally charged testimonial process possible – an addressee, an intimate companion for the journey into yet uncharted territory – a totally present listening »Thou.« Such listening »Thou« is the sine qua non, the indispensable condition, for the dialogic process between the internal »I« and the internal »Thou« to resume.

Let us turn now to the videotestimony itself. To begin, the witness identifies herself as to who she is by stating her name and the date and

9 Bessel A. von der Kolk/Alexander C. McFarlane/Lars Weisaeth (Hg.), *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society*, New York 1996, S. 296.

10 Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man; The Truce*, London 1987, S. 96.

11 Tarantelli, »Life within Death«, S. 917.

place of her birth. She, then, is invited to delve into early family and childhood memories. Personal experience and images are emphasized. The interviewer asks her to imagine sitting at a living room table and opening an album of old faded photos and describe what she sees. She is invited to view her own self-made movie that starts rolling in her mind and relates what she sees. What she relates is immediate, personal and visual. The interviewer herself allows her own imagination to flow as she takes in the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, all that is transmitted in the testimony. The fine nuances in the tone of voice, body movement and posture and facial expression are very important elements in what the interviewer receives. Her own flow of associations complements the multimodal transmittals in the testimony and informs the interviewer's interventions.

### Finding the »Thou« in the Testimonial Relationship

Both, witnesses and listeners have a common goal – to jointly visit a lived experience of extremity, to step into the place in which neither of them had been before. Literally speaking, the witness had been there, but experientially she had been absent to it. Cathy Caruth's concept of the »unclaimed experience« is very helpful to draw upon.<sup>12</sup> At the moment the trauma occurred, the person who was affected was not there to experience it. She is quite aware of her absence, of having missed it, and feels both drawn and compelled to return to it, while at the same time terrified to come near it. As pointed out earlier, it is a place of utter aloneness; therefore, the promise of a companion-listener who will join her, makes such venture thinkable, perhaps even inviting; the hope is that she will experience a henceforth foreclosed moment of intense intimacy.

The companion listener echoes such feelings of anticipation, being aware at the same time of the responsibility she is taking on, not to flinch at whatever she hears or experiences, to let nothing detract from her total presence in and to the moment. Her goal is to facilitate what the witness anticipates, which is an encounter with herself, a homecoming to a most profound personal truth, a foray into a territory she had either fearfully and carefully avoided or allowed herself to experience on a separate, parallel track, as through it belonged to someone else.

In order to integrate the traumatic fragments and turn them into real knowledge, the survivor needs to locate the fervently yearned for dialogic »Thou« within herself, and can do so by finding a trustworthy, passionate and totally present companion-listener in whom she can

12 Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Baltimore MD 1996.

temporarily anchor that internal »Thou.« That listener has to not only be totally present, but also ahead of the survivor in the place of trauma, patiently waiting for her there. She has to actively assist her by providing a holding frame of time, space and sequence, and actively intervene when she is overwhelmed by her feelings, at a loss for words and faltering, because she cannot sustain the effort, or wants to flee the terror, grief and pain.

It is this form of passionately involved, active listening that the interviewer offers to the survivor through the process of the video-testimony. It is this listening that sets in motion the »coming together« of the disjointed traumatic fragments, into a hitherto unknown cohesive narrative, at which the survivor herself is often surprised. By hearing herself she realizes, that she had to begin with, not known all that she knew. Undoubtedly, other – past, present and future audiences, and not only the listening companion, are implicitly, though most likely unconsciously, addressed in the video-testimony, whereby it becomes a historical event in itself. It is through the restoration of her internal »Thou« that the survivor is able to tell the story of her experience, both to herself and to society at large.

## Testimony and Psychoanalysis

Testimony is a meeting place for the mutual witnessing and repair of trauma induced fragmented memories and psychic disruption. The testimonial intervention is responsive to and addresses what has been left deeply wounded, that which has not found an opportunity to heal, in the trauma survivor. A psychoanalytic understanding of the interviewer and interviewee relationship during the testimonial intervention can not only vastly contribute to our understanding of the traumatic damage, but also informs us as to the healing processes that need to be set in motion to repair it.

The uniqueness of the testimonial intervention lies in the fact there is always an event, an experience, even if it covers a lifetime that is known to be there, even if it had hitherto not been consciously formulated. It is thus information that has yet to be recorded, brought to an addressee, to a party interested in receiving it. Testimony is therefore a transmittal of information and there is an internal unrelenting pressure to convey as well as an external readiness and eagerness to receive it.

When such transmittal has been accomplished, the survivor no longer is or feels alone with the inexpressible extreme experience. She is less helplessly prey to its devastating impact. The internal cauldron of sensations and affects has been put into the frame of a sequential narrative. They are now remembered, transmitted and forgotten. Such narrative

is however never complete and highly charged blank spots of the inexpressible (almost unimaginable) experience persist, exerting their magnetic power on the survivor, who feels compelled to endlessly revisit them while at the same time she constantly flees their proximity.

It is these intense affect laden voids of memory, which to begin with, can obliterate the traumatic experience in its entirety, that constitute the power source that drives testimony and exerts the pressure for its deliverance. This holds true for a broad range of experiences of extreme trauma. In more recent observations, cancer survivors, when feeling safe in the company of other survivors, are also driven to »tell their story« of their encounters with death. A group of chronically hospitalized »psychotic« Holocaust survivors, interviewed in Israel in recent years, experienced the same internal pressure to bear witness. Unfortunately their capacity to symbolize, free associate, reflect and verbalize has been so profoundly damaged by the chronicity of their condition (lasting for decades), their social isolation and their somatic treatments (insulin shock, ECT, and psychotropic medication), that all they were able to create was a constricted, static and fragmented narrative.

The goal of traditional psychoanalysis, on the other hand, is to allow for the emergence of the unconscious through the method of free association and the elucidation of the transference experience. There is no particular force, no inner compulsion that drives it, no story that reaches for words. It is rather a surrender to the wanderings of the mind, while feeling protected by the analyst's nonjudgemental presence and neutrality. It has a rhythm set by the frequency of the sessions and it lacks an endpoint in time. Dreams, parapraxes and transference experiences and enactments, and last but not least, remembrances, provide the scaffolding along which the analytic narrative unfolds. Although there is no explicit addressee in traditional analysis, the analyst's emotional presence implicitly fulfills that function, thus becoming the equivalent of the testimonial »thou«.

Psychoanalytic literature is indeed replete with reference to the internal good object, usually highlighting the infant's relationship with the mother. Beginning with Freud's (1932) concept of the oceanic feeling – being one with the universe – that arises from the oneness with the mother, and continuing with the Margaret Mahler's (1963) developmental phase of symbiosis<sup>13</sup>, Winnicott's (1953) »transitional space«<sup>14</sup>,

13 Margaret S. Mahler, »On Human Symbiosis and the Vicissitudes of Individuation«, in: *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 15 (1967), S. 740–763.

14 Donald Woods Winnicott, »Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena«, in: *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (1953), S. 89–97.

Henry Parn's (1970) »inner sustainment«<sup>15</sup>, Mahler's (1975) »object constancy«<sup>16</sup>, and Kohut's (1971) »self object«<sup>17</sup> – all the above deal with processes that are essential for internal representation and symbolization to occur. The latter constitutes core components of the testimonial intervention.

Within the spectrum of psychoanalytically informed therapeutic interventions, the testimonial process possesses three unique elements: the internal pressure to transmit and tell, the real story that is »there«, and the yearning for and the presence of a listener who receives it.

On closer scrutiny these three elements do not place testimony in a category that is separate from psychoanalysis. Both processes – testimony and psychoanalysis are in essence dialogic. The analysand does not speak to a void, even if he speaks to himself. It is his own internal good object, projected onto the analyst that he addresses in such case. In both processes, the narrative deepens and branches out, taking turns that may come as a surprise to the narrator. Freud's dictum »where id was, there the ego shall be« applies to both, although in the lengthier psychoanalysis this can go much further than in the single session testimony.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, a process is set in motion in both, which can continue on its own, far beyond the time frame of the psychoanalytic or the testimonial event. This process includes, but is not limited to, symbolization, self-reflection and remembering. While it is not a particular event that serves as an organizing principle like in testimony, psychoanalysis too leads to the recovery of memories that may emerge as organizing principles and thus become building blocks of the psychoanalytic narrative. What may remain, the basic difference between testimony and traditional psychoanalysis, may be limited to the inner intense pressure to transmit and the experience of transmittal itself, which are at the center of the testimonial intervention. The latter can, therefore, be seen as a piece of psychoanalytic work that is limited in scope and that does not include parapraxes, transference or dream work.

The testimonial momentum may be also operative, in traditional psychoanalysis, when traumatic experience is involved. At such a juncture it becomes the process that fuels the therapeutic action and provides the impetus for clinical movement and flow. It would be methodologically very difficult to isolate and study it in the context of such traditional

15 Henry Parns, »Inner Sustainment: Metapsychological Considerations«, in: *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 39 (1970), S. 223–239.

16 Margaret S. Mahler/Fred Pine/Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation*, New York 1975.

17 Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, New York 1971.

18 Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, London 1927, S. 30.

psychoanalyses; therefore, the nontraditional modality of the testimonial intervention is needed in order to provide the most suitable research setting that can capture the testimonial momentum for its in depth investigation.

## Testimonial Examples

I shall present two brief excerpts of video-testimonies of different survivors, in which I believe that internal »Thou« is absent or present to different degrees. I shall discuss each excerpt in detail in terms of the absence or presence of that internal addressee.

### Interview with Helen K. (1985)

**Survivor:** My mother was taken a few days before and then they took us all to Majdanek.

**Interviewer:** Your husband too?

**Survivor:** My husband too, myself. But, so...when *we went to Majdanek it was just the most terrible*. As much as I experienced bad things after, but this was... *they put us in cattle cars. They pushed in I don't know how many people, but they really wanted us to die*. And, we were on those wagons, uh... I don't know how many people were there, *but my brother died in my arms*. My younger brother was (pause) hahh, and *my husband's two sisters*. There was not enough oxygen for all those people and they kept us in those wagons for days. *They wanted us to die in the wagons*. You know the cattle cars with very little windows (pause), hhhaa.

**Interviewer:** How old was your brother?

**Survivor:** Maybe thirteen, he wasn't even Bar Mitzvad. You know when my brother died in my arms, I said to myself I'm going to live, I must be the only survivor from my family. I'm going to live. I made up my mind that I'm going to defy Hitler. I'm not going to give in, because he wants me to die, so I'm going to live. I am just going to be very very strong.

### Comments on Helen K.

It is as though this woman, Helen K., who had lived in the Warsaw Ghetto, in Mila 18, the very building from which the Jewish uprising was staged, and had herself witnessed the uprising, its defeat and the brutal

reprisal that followed, only now, when her brother asphyxiates in her arms, became fully cognizant of the Nazi murderous intent against her. It is as though a paradigm shift had occurred, the internal »Thou« is represented and she finally becomes aware of the intended destruction that awaits her.

Helen K. rises to the challenge and refuses to submit. Her inner dialogue, »I said to myself I'm going to live. I must be the only survivor from my family. I am going to live. I made up my mind that I am going to defy Hitler« is Helen K.'s confrontation with the Thou. It is possible that the immensity of the pain of having so abruptly lost her brother, resuscitated this internal image of her internal »Thou« with whom she could regain significance, have a dialogue, an intent, and a strategy to defy Hitler. The acute grief and the rage at the shocking death of her younger brother, do not lead her to identify with the victim, but crystallize in her a sense of identity, significance and agency, and the recognition of the mortal enemy she wants to defeat.

### Interview with Bessie K. (1985)

**Survivor:** They took us with the bus to an airfield and nearby were trains, the cattle trains. And um, as I look back... I think for a while I was in a daze. I didn't know what was happening actually. I saw them taking away the men separate, the children separate, and the women separate. So I had a baby. I took the coats that I had, the bundles and I wrapped them around the baby. And I put it, I put it on the left side. Because I saw that the Germans were saying left to right. And I went through with the baby, but the baby was short of breath, so it started to choke and it started to cry. So the German called me back and he says what do you have there, in German.

**Survivor:** Now, I didn't know what to do, everything was so fast, happened so suddenly. I wasn't prepared for it. *To look back, the experience... I think I was numb or something happened to me. I don't know. I wasn't there even.* And um, he stretched out his arms, I should hand him over the bundle. I hand him over the bundle and this was the last time I had the bundle.

**Survivor:** *When I look back, I don't think I had anybody with me. I was alone. I was within myself. Since that time, I think all my life I've been alone, even when I met Jack. I didn't tell Jack my past.* Jack just found out recently. I think to me, I was dead. I died and I didn't want to hear nothing, I didn't want to know nothing, and I didn't want to talk about it and I didn't want to admit to myself that this happened to me.

**Survivor:** In Stutthof I found the doctor who operated on me, in the Ghetto. And they brought us in there and when she saw me there, she was so happy to see me. Right away she said to me where's the baby? What happened to the baby? And right there I said, what baby? I said to the doctor, what baby? I didn't have a baby. I don't know of any baby. That is what it did to me.

## Comments on Bessie K.

What is striking are Bessie K.'s own observations on her state of utter, stark »aloneness« during her experience of losing her baby and throughout her life since. She remarks on several occasions that she didn't have anyone and she was alone. There is no »Thou,« no internal or external »other« in whom she can experience a resonance, an echo, to what she goes through.

Earlier in the interview she talks of giving birth to a baby in Ghetto Kovno where pregnancies and the delivery of babies were strictly forbidden and punishable by death. She talks of finding food for the baby and building him a rocking chair. Even during the selection, the baby is still present to her; she goes through with the baby. But the baby was short of breath, started to choke and started to cry. And the German calls her back and asks her what she has there in German. From then onwards, there is no longer a baby, no longer a child.

At that moment in her testimony, the bundle takes the place of the »other« and the pantomime of the bundle begins. Its three steps are (a) He stretched out his arms. I should hand him over the bundle, (b) I hand him over the bundle, (c) This was the last time I had the bundle.

There is only Silence – no voice. No inner dialogue takes place. The inner »Thou« is no more. Her response to the doctor's inquiry about the baby is »What baby? ... I don't know of any baby«. The testimony, as it unfolds, shows the failure to symbolize, relate, represent, and remember – it is compellingly clear. It all ceases with the murder of one baby.

## The Therapeutic Action of Testimony

Testimony is the return to the personal experience of a severely traumatizing historical event (or any severely traumatizing external event) that opens the possibility for an alternative, differing psychological outcome. Historical fact cannot be changed. The dead cannot be brought back to life, the home that was lost cannot be refund, the injury that had been inflicted cannot be undone. What had been destroyed may remain in ruins, the boundaries that had been so violently breached may never be

intact again. The horror that was made real may last for good; yet, the process described by Jean Améry's (1980) statement »The expectation of help, the certainty of help, is indeed one of the fundamental experiences of human beings... But with the first blow... against which there can be no defense and which no helping hand will ward off... [one] can no longer feel at home in the world,« may be reversed through the process of testimony.<sup>19</sup>

Trauma, when relived and re-experienced in the context of dialogue with an empathic listener may restore to a degree the victim's sense of being at home in the world. There is no longer the utter aloneness and incommunicability that is part of the extreme traumatic experience. Once such dialogue (mostly with the internal Thou) is re-established, traumatic narrative can unfold and be transmitted. Once narrativized and transmitted, the indigestible fragments of traumatic sensations and affect occupy less space and exert less pressure on and in the emotional life of the survivor. Thus psychologically, history can be repaired and what is broken can be mended to a degree.

## Concluding Remarks

Extreme trauma is a psycho-physiological event. There is a wide spectrum of physiological and psychological theories that attempt to elucidate this mechanism. Recent neuroscience research data allows us to map the rough contours of the neuronal events; a stress hormone mediated short circuiting of the Hypocampus, which is instrumental in converting short into long term memory and integrating experience into symbolic thought, and of the Prefrontal Cortex. On the other end of the spectrum of research approaches, traditional psychoanalytic theory suggests that the breach of the stimulus barrier, caused by excessive traumatic excitation, leads to the disintegration of the self and of the registering psychic apparatus.

While both approaches offer a general understanding of the psychological phenomenology of the extreme traumatic experience, neither specifically examines this phenomenology in order to glean from it a more precise understanding of the unique experiential dimension of extreme traumatization. Both stop short from looking at it from »the inside.« From what we know about the processes of registration, retention and recall of extreme trauma, we attempt to infer such »inside story.« There is no question that it begins with massive annihilation anxiety. The abrupt cessation of internal mental representation leads us to believe that such annihilation anxiety is secondary to the trauma induced loss of

19 Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, S. 28–29, 40.

the sustained internal good object with whom the experiencing »I« is in constant dialogue, so as to symbolize and narrativize experience. Thus, traumatic perception does not become a narrativized experience and it remains fragmented, intense, and held in abeyance. It is only when the desperate search and yearning for such lost good object finds resonance in the passionate interest of a listening other, a witness to the witness in the process of testimony, that the mental representation of the good object, in the form of an internal »Thou« begins to reemerge and makes a resumption of dialogic narrative flow possible. The experiencing »I«, having re-found its internal counterpart, can narrativize and historicize the paralyzing trauma fragments, and create a more coherent trauma narrative. This has a therapeutic effect because it allows the survivor to do both: recover the memory of the past and live more fully in present.

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