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Restoration of a Moral Universe

Children's Perspectives on Forgiveness and Justice

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Introduction

Just as adults, policy makers, and caregivers have systematically underestimated the suffering experienced by children in situations of illness, death, or war, so also they have neglected children's moral understanding of, and response to, social and political events (Miljevic-Ridjicki & Lugomer-Armano, 1994). In the context of political violence, children experience not only disruption of their physical, relational, and social worlds but also a shattering of their moral universe.

Forgiveness has been considered as a way of restoring relational breaches, but it can also be viewed as a way of restoring moral breaches. I argue, however, for a perspective on forgiveness that does not see it as opposed to justice (as is sometimes the case in the truth and reconciliation commissions) but rather as intricately intertwined with it (Biggar, 2001; Shriver, 1995). In this chapter, I focus on the moral domain and argue that, when dealing with these breeches, forgiveness must be situated in the context of moral repair (Walker, 2006).

I hope to demonstrate that not only adults but also children and adolescents see forgiveness as intimately intertwined with creating and sustaining a moral universe, a universe in which both forgiver and forgiven have a stake and to which they wish to belong. I present clinical and developmental findings that support such a framework and show how such a perspective can clarify controversies in the field. For example, it has been argued that efforts aimed at individual recovery

following political violence are opposed to measures designed to foster social healing. However, viewing forgiveness as a mode of re-entry into a moral universe serves to counteract this dichotomy. Placing or understanding forgiveness within its historical, philosophical, and ethical setting can enrich models of treatment for children trauma-tized by social and political violence and betrayal.

Children's Moral Experience in Contexts of War and Political Violence

In contexts of war and political violence, children typically experience or witness moral violations such as torture, mutilation, disappear-ances, and sexual exploitation. Killing has become intentional and acceptable. The politically organized and socially sanctioned nature of war often makes it difficult to name aggressors or to attribute blame. The perpetrators, whose identities are frequently ambiguous and uncertain, often operate during and after war with impunity, making forgiveness particularly problematic. Often the line between political and criminal violence is not clear (Straker, Mendelsohn, Moosa, & Tudin, 1996): Ideology, ambiguity, meaning, and intention interact to affect the subjective interpretation of a political event or of political violence, and this interpretation often has a more powerful impact than the extent or degree of exposure to violence (Bachar, Canetti, Bonne, Denour, & Shalev, 1997; Kuterovac-Jagodic, 2000; Punamäki, 1996; Slone, Kaminer, & Durrheim, 2002; Wiene et al., 1995).

Additional developmental challenges confront children because they are often the intended or unintended witnesses to violence and injustice. The child is often witness to attacks on a parent and, like Hamlet, feels simultaneously an intense pressure to avenge the parent and a powerlessness to do so. Beside the failure to avenge the loved one, forgiving the perpetrator may feel like another betrayal of the victim, and forgiveness as another injury (Moosa, Straker, & Eagle, 2004).

Children often encounter complex situations that present moral dilemmas (Goenjian et al., 1999) where they may be obliged to engage in acts they view as immoral, such as stealing for food or even killing. In many contemporary armed conflicts, children are conscripted as soldiers and forced to commit atrocities against their own families,

placing them in moral dilemmas where relational, moral, and survival imperatives conflict and permit no resolution. After war, they are typically viewed with greater suspicion and distrust than adults who have committed similar acts (Boyden, 2003).

Moral Dilemmas in Children's Play Narratives

In our own research, moral dilemmas were found to underlie the content of play narratives of war-orphaned Central American children of differing clinical status (Rafman, Canfield, Barbas, & Kaczorowski, 1996, 1997). The play narratives of those children, not referred for treatment (from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador) who had lost parents through death or disappearance in the context of political violence were compared to war-orphaned children who had been referred to a clinic for various psychological disturbances.

The nonreferred children who had lost parents nonetheless re-created how their parents died or how their parents' bodies were discovered. In play, the children undid or modified the intentionality, the cruelty, and the finality of their parents' deaths, but not the event itself. Murderous attacks became accidents; bodies found bloodied and mutilated were discovered unbloodied. The children's ability to acknowledge their parents' deaths was made difficult by their inability to comprehend how their mother or father could have died by a willful, violent, human act.

The relational imperative required remembering and mourning the lost parent, but the moral reality of intentional evil left the child too horrified to admit the cause of loss. It was the transgression of a moral edict and the conflict between a relational and moral imperative, rather than the parental loss that froze the child at the moment of the killing. Such conflicts underlie what is termed traumatic grief or complicated mourning, where characteristics of the traumatic event interfere with children's ability to mourn the loss of a loved one adequately, where the need to remember powerfully meets the pressure to deny or forget (Brown & Goodman, 2005; Dunn & Herrera, 1997).

The play of orphaned children referred for psychological consultation was characterized by more disjointed, fragmented, and ambiguous scenes than those of their community-based, nonclinical counterparts.

Whereas community-based, nonreferred children re-enacted the killing of their parent, the referred children re-enacted the destruction of their moral universe. The remembered and fantasized scenes were not so much about terrible brutality, but about anguished moral choices that permitted no resolution. The theme of good and evil linked seemingly disparate episodes together. Roles of perpetrator and victim, aggressor, betrayer, and protector shifted rapidly as moral ambiguities permeated their fragmented play scenes. Children often confused the rage of the aggressor with their own rage, further complicating the identification of perpetrator and victim, making forgiveness more complex.*

AU: pls add Dizeger (2005) and Bar-on (1997) to ref list

Children's Moral Development

The research literature supports the view that children form moral judgments and experience moral dilemmas early in development. I will consider literature documenting that children are capable of moral judgment early in development, and see how this affects their granting or withholding of forgiveness. Indeed, forgiveness plays such a central role in the child's and adult's life, in part, because moral dilemmas and conflicts are integral to the social and moral reality of individuals, even in societies not mired by armed conflict and political violence (Turiel & Wainryb, 2000). In fact, by the age of 3 years, children are able to invent alternative outcomes to resolve a moral dilemma within a play narrative (Buchsbaum & Emde, 1990). In the right context, conflict may be an important facilitator of children's socio-emotional development. For example, how mothers justify, resolve, and mitigate conflict between themselves, their 2½-year-old children, and their siblings predicts levels of socioemotional development later in childhood (Dunn & Herrera, 1997; Laible & Thompson, 2002).

As forgiveness is often discussed in the context of deep injustice, not mere annoyances, it is critical to recognize that breaches in the moral domain differ from breaches in the social-conventional domain. Smetana, Daddis, et al. (1999) have shown that, across social

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* Situating oneself with regard to evil has become recognized as a predominant theme in political forgiveness (Digeser, 2004). Bar-on (1990) found that the distinction between themselves and evil was a predominant theme in both the children of Holocaust survivors and the children of the Nazi perpetrators.

contexts, children judge moral transgressions far more severely than they evaluate violations of social-conventional rules. From age 4 and onwards, children of varying backgrounds and characteristics (such as violent or nonviolent, perpetrator or victim, maltreated or not; Smetana, Toth, et al., 1999) evaluate moral transgressions resulting in unfairness, physical harm, or psychological harm (Helwig, Zelazo, & Wilson, 2001) as very serious and deserving of punishment. Although violent and nonviolent children differ in their explanations as to why unprovoked violence is worse than provoked violence, both use moral reasoning as explanations (Astor, 1994).

Although social and cultural frameworks may shape the expression of moral judgments, children's sociological frame alone does not determine their moral judgment (Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001; Helwig & Turiel, 2002). Turiel and Wainryb (2000) emphasize that, across cultures and sex of child, children make complex moral judgments involving rights, justice, tradition, and authority that cannot be explained by appeal to the cultural framework alone.

Despite the moral chaos of war, children are able to exhibit moral judgment and competence distinct from the societal context. For example, in Sri Lanka, a country ravaged by a particularly brutal and vicious civil war, little difference was found between Sinhalese and Tamil youth in their views about the legitimacy of violence. Those in the areas most affected by the violence held similar views to those in areas less affected (Thangarajah, 2002). Although idiosyncratic features exist in such moral judgments, certain universal themes nonetheless emerge, including condemnation of unprovoked violence and the need for remorse on the part of the wrongdoer, as well as the need for social and moral community in the understanding of forgiveness.[*]

Forgiveness, Justice, and Mental Health

Research on the psychological concomitants of forgiveness has direct implications for policy with war-affected or abused children. Because of the devastating effects of trauma on children (Dyregrov, Gjestad,

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[*] Further elaboration of children's moral development in times of political violence and times of peace can be found in Rafman, 2004.

& Raundalen, 2002; Goldin, Levin, Ake Persson, & Hägglof, 2003; Onyango, 1998), findings that forgiveness has been linked with well-being have led to the active promotion of reconciliation following abuse or political violence. Whether responses to war, however, should be corrected or modified has encountered strong challenges from those who insist that truth-telling and justice must precede forgiveness; otherwise, pressure to forgive may undermine or preclude social and political recovery (e.g., Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006; Le Touze, Silove, & Zivi, 2005; Lustig, Weine, Saxe, & Beardslee, 2004; Moosa et al., 2004).

Some findings *do* point to an association between unforgiveness and psychological problems in the context of political injustice. For victims of the apartheid era in South Africa, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression were significantly more common in those testifying to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who were unforgiving than those who were forgiving of the perpetrators (Kaminer, Stein, Mbanga, & Zungu-Dirwayi, 2001). However, findings of the association between forgiveness and mental health are contradictory. Interpersonal forgiveness in children 12–14 years of age is a strong predictor of self-reported victimization (Coleman & Byrd, 2003).

One could, however, legitimately ask whether ensuring that perpetrators be brought to justice would not bring about better mental health than teaching forgiveness to the victims. Forgiveness need not be seen as opposed to justice. Indeed, highlighting justice as a value serves to promote forgiveness rather than obstruct it (Karremans & Van Lange, 2005). Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, and Kluwer (2003) have shown that the relationship between psychological well-being and forgiveness depends on the nature of the transgression that is being forgiven and the relationship with the forgiver. The relationship between forgiveness and well-being may hold for those to whom we are attached but not necessarily for perpetrators of injustice in other contexts. The relationship is strongest with respect to those toward whom we have mixed or ambivalent feelings. This is particularly relevant for children for whom the relationship with a loved one is critical. As forgiveness involves acknowledging that we are flawed and yet of value (Biggar, 2001), it requires the ability to accept and

integrate the good and bad both within ourselves and within the other, an important developmental step (Horwitz, 2005).

Given the intimate link between justice and forgiveness, forgiveness may require moral repair for social healing to occur. Adolescents or youth did not experience a sense of healing following participation in truth and reconciliation commissions in South Africa, East Timor, and Bosnia because they saw that justice was not served, with perpetrators of atrocities enjoying ongoing impunity (Opotow, 2001). Youth in Bosnia referred to war criminals openly walking the streets (Jones, 2002) and in East Timor, they found forgiveness difficult because war criminals had escaped safely to Indonesia, a country intimately linked with the atrocities, but conveniently lacking an extradition treaty with its former colony (LeTouze et al., 2005). By not pursuing justice and by accepting forgiveness as a substitute for social punishment, not only are the innocent retraumatized, but they are also punished once again. Children testify with all the attendant emotional distress and, if the guilty go free, they experience yet another breach in their moral universe.

Forgiveness and Models of Recovery Following Trauma

In addressing the relation between forgiveness and well-being in war-affected children, I will consider two models. One emphasizes narratives of transformation following traumatic events and the other involves concepts of stress, coping, and adaptation. I will illustrate how introducing a moral dimension can enrich the research and the application of either model.

Narrative models of transformation. As we have seen, the re-enactment and narratives of the disruptive events in the lives of traumatized children are often ambiguous, partial, and fragmented. The (re)construction of a life narrative following disruptive events is increasingly considered a preferred way of addressing loss and trauma (Omer & Strenger, 1992). The discourse of coping is thus replaced by one of transformation, of which forgiveness can be considered a form. Children's perceptions and narratives of the traumatic events, however, must be seen as embedded within (although not identical with) the perceptions and narratives of the event by the cultures of which

the child is a member. Notions of healing, reparation, and justice in the aftermath of war *do* vary between cultures and over time.

But just as political violence devastates the child's assumptive world, it also devastates the assumptive world of his or her culture. Trust in a moral order is shattered for the relevant community or nation as well. Both child and culture may re-create his or her narratives as means to understanding or overcoming the break in the moral universe and as a way of coming to terms with evil and suffering, trauma and loss. Just as children and adults need to mourn emotional losses, so too they must mourn cultural loss and losses of their assumptive worlds. Although children's understanding occurs within the context of the surrounding society's beliefs and perspectives, this relationship is precisely in flux and at risk in the context of war.

Moreover, narratives are not morally or politically neutral. The ability to create a continuous narrative is viewed as therapeutic, but the question may be posed as to whether all narratives are equal, who controls the content of the narrative, and whose agenda it serves. An examination of the relationship between power and culture may reveal that cultural narratives of trauma and survival can be liberating or repressive (Crossley, 1999). Children and their reference groups often find themselves in the midst of two or more conflicting narratives, as it is for Bosnian, Israeli, Palestinian, Singhalese, and Tamil children, to cite just a few examples. The day of independence in the Israeli narrative is the day of catastrophe in the Palestinian narrative.

In addition, societies and cultures may have "chosen traumata" (Volkan, 2001). They may integrate the mental representation of the trauma into their very identity and relentlessly convey the consequences to the next generation. These social narratives, which can become myths, are created out of a nation's traumatic experiences and may become the national narrative. Some national myths or narratives may prevent mourning from occurring and potentially entitle the victim group to vengeance (Pick, 2001). Palgi and Durban (1995) demonstrate how cultural symbols intertwine with personal themes to impact the mourning process.

Such narratives may address or suppress the immediate pain of suffering and loss, but they also fuel political violence and constrain forgiveness. As each generation feels pressured to transmit the experience

of its own trauma to the next generation, the ability to forgive is thereby affected. Both children's developmental age and family narratives have been found to be critical to their understandings of conflict (Apfel & Simon, 2000). Biggar (2001) asks how, when a culture is so bereft of agreement on the moral basis of human life, humans locked in any degree of antagonism can presume to make moral judgments of each other. The laborious construction of a narrative on which opposing parties can agree has been chosen as one such path.

If forgiveness, as Paul Ricoeur (2000) writes, gives memory a future, forgiveness can serve as a way of breaking out of the "frozen in time" nature of trauma. Forgiveness then refers not only to a different relation with oneself or the other, but also to a different relation to the past and to the future. For that, the past must be presented; it must be incorporated in the narrative. Bosnian youth, for example, felt that it was important to "put memory before wounds, truth telling before healing. Survivors have a story to tell because they were part of an event, a crime and they want to tell about that experience" (Weine, 1999, p. 360). Consistent with this, participants in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who were able to forgive the perpetrators, were more likely to have been asked by the Commission panel members to provide details of the violation. In contrast, participants who were unforgiving were typically not given the opportunity to tell their story (Kaminer, 2006).

Recognition that both the social and moral universes have been disrupted when injustice occurs could counteract the trend to view recovery programs that focus on mental health as being opposed to those that emphasize the need to restore social structures (Summerfield, 2002). Children recognize that the processes of their own recovery are bound up with recovery of their social and political communities (Jones, 2002, p. 1367). Lustig et al. (2004) suggest a testimonial psychotherapy for youth whereby the young person focuses on transcribing personal, traumatic events, situating them in their historical, cultural, and political context. When presented as having the altruistic purpose of education and advocacy, this became an acceptable way for therapists to engage traumatized Sudanese adolescents known as the "Lost Boys."

Models of stress, coping, and adaptation. Stress, coping, and adaptation constitute key notions within a second model of recovery in which a

moral dimension is not intrinsically present. Worthington and Scherer (2004) view forgiveness as an emotion-focused coping strategy and unforgiveness as a stress reaction. On the one hand, the concept of post-traumatic stress as a disorder or syndrome does capture many of the psychological "symptoms" following terrifying, uncontrollable, and unpredictable events (Kuterovac-Jagodic, 2003).* Post-traumatic stress refers to both the effort of the child to exclude the traumatic event from awareness and memory and the tendency of the events and emotions to intrude into awareness.

This model fails, however, to acknowledge fully the embeddedness of forgiveness within a social, cultural, and political context. This is particularly striking given that Worthington and Scherer's (2004) review of methods of reducing unforgiveness includes the intrapsychic (denying the hurt, cognitive reframing), interpersonal (successful revenge), legal (redress), ethical (seeing legal justice done, forgiveness), and cultural and political (receiving fair restitution) dimensions.

The inclusion of the moral dimension would be particularly pertinent to understanding an oft-noted feature of post-traumatic stress symptoms—their persistence over time (Dyregrov et al., 2002; Lopes Cardozo, Kaiser, Gotway, & Agani, 2003; Sabian, Lopes Cardozo, Nackerud, Kaiser, & Varese, 2003).† When the terrors, nightmares, re-enactments, and intrusive memories do not abate on their own, and when traumatic grief perseveres, examination of the child's feelings and thoughts around the trauma often reveals unresolved moral dilemmas (Brown & Goodman, 2005; Lopes Cardozo et al., 2003; Rafman et al., 1996). The sense of injustice that often maintains feelings of chronic anger following human-engendered trauma further shows the interdependence of the emotional and the moral.

The psychological and moral impact of events may differ. In some contexts, the immediate psychological benefit of some "coping mechanisms" may have long-term, negative consequences on moral, not to

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* Symptoms that are often noted include hyperarousal or vigilance, nightmares, sleep and eating disturbances, intrusive images, repetitive behaviors, loss of interest, restlessness, and increased irritability (Ajdukovic & Ajdukovic 1998; Dyregrov et al., 2002).

† Over a 1-year period it was found that Kosovo Albanians' feelings of hatred toward Serbs and desire for revenge decreased, while social functioning improved among those aged 15 years or older, but post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms increased.

mention political, development. Children in Kabul, interviewed by Berry et al. (2003), were able to distinguish between the short- and long-term effects of different modes of adapting to difficult circumstances. They acknowledged that such strategies used by them and their parents, such as not telling the truth, overprotection, the use of physical punishment and violence, and taking revenge, helped and comforted them in their immediate circumstances. Nonetheless, they identified these methods as having negative repercussions for them in the long term. When Jones (2002) interviewed young teenagers who had lived through the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina on opposite sides of the conflict, those adolescents who were not struggling to make sense of the conflict were more likely to be well adjusted by some psychological measures. However, such disengaged adolescents are not likely to engage in attempts to promote reconciliation.

Both the failure to forgive and traumatic responses are strikingly similar with respect to the child's lived relationship to the past. In both unforgiveness and post-traumatic stress disorder, the child is either trapped within the past or is investing all of his or her energy to escape it. Similarly, forgiveness and trauma recovery change the child's relationship to the past and to the future. Both are linked to the alleviation of anxiety, hopelessness, depression, and low self-esteem, as discussed by Peddle (this volume). Her discussions with youth who had experienced political violence revealed that they were often struggling with moral issues related to forgiveness, such as how to view the perpetrators and whether there were unforgivable people or crimes.

Many children are observed to cope well following traumatic events, as measured by the absence of symptoms and by behavioral functioning. For this reason, focus has shifted to studying children's resilience in the face of adversity as researchers and clinicians search for risk and protective factors underlying such resilience. For example, former child soldiers and orphaned adolescents in Sierra Leone experienced complex physical and psychological injuries caused by exposure to terrible violence and loss. They coped well, despite living under highly stressful environmental conditions with severely damaged or nonexistent community resources. Adolescents who could maintain an intact sense of purpose, structured exercise and rituals, effective control of traumatic memories, and successful protection against destructive

social isolation through social contact with peers and responsive adults did better psychologically (Kline & Mone, 2003). Maternal mental health, prior traumatic experience, support systems, and the possibility for active participation, among other variables, have also been found to mediate the child's psychological response to the traumatic events of war (e.g., Ajdukovic & Ajdukovic, 1998; McCloskey, Southwick, Fernández-Esquer, & Locke, 1995). The relation of these variables to forgiveness would be important to explore in future research.

As conceptualizations move from perceiving children not only as passive victims, but also as resilient youth and co-constructors of their social world, the associated logic is that they are also constructors of their moral world. By their moral choices and by their offering or withholding acts of reconciliation or forgiveness, children also participate in the construction of their social universe. For example, in an attempt to come to terms with their traumatic experiences, adolescents in Sierra Leone formed a performance troupe and enacted plays that often centered on a specific catastrophic event. In one play, a teenager who had been made to watch as combatants tortured and murdered his family returns to his village. He finds the murderers and has the opportunity to take his revenge. Through the play the actors/adolescents work through their experienced moral dilemmas and conclude with a shouting chorus of "Forgive, yes, but never forget" (Kline & Mone, 2003).

Apologies, Remorse, and Forgiveness: Developmental Considerations

That true regret in the perpetrator is critical to forgiveness supports a perspective on forgiveness as a pathway to moral repair and to re-entry into a social community. Across religion, level of education, sex, and age, the intentionality and consequences of an offense, as well as the victim's relationship with the offender, are important factors. Nonetheless, remorse consistently emerges as the most important determinant of the willingness to forgive a severe offense (Azar & Mullet, 2001; Mullet & Girard, 2000).* Youth and adult participants who forgave

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* Azar and Mullet (2001) found that the willingness to forgive a severe offense did not differ among Druze, Shiite, Sunni, Catholics, Maronites, and Orthodox Christian Lebanese as a function of age, sex, or religion.

perpetrators in the South African TRC commissions perceived the perpetrators to be truly sorry (Allan et al., 2006). Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) argues that genuine remorse humanizes perpetrators of gross human rights abuse and transforms their evil from the unforgivable into something that can be forgiven.

That apologies, remorse, and forgiveness can serve to return the transgressor to his or her social group and that punishment is typically applied by children in a rehabilitative fashion are supported by developmental research. Darby and Schlenker (1989) found that children see a remorseful child as less blameworthy, as having better motives, and as having done the damage unintentionally. In their study, the child described as very remorseful was punished least. Relevant to the truth and reconciliation postwar commissions, offending children's reputations determined how their actions were interpreted: Children judged to be "bad" were seen as more worried about punishment when they expressed remorse, and older children thought that "bad" children apologized merely to avoid punishment.

Moreover, apologies and reparative behaviors demonstrate a developmental trajectory (Nakagawa & Yamazaki, 2004). Children's reparative behaviors, after they cause distress, increase with age (Laible & Thompson, 2002). The power of an apology also increases with age. When an offender apologized, fifth graders perceived greater remorse, judged less harshly, and were more prone to forgive than were second graders (Ohbuchi & Sato, 1994). Mullet and Girard (2000) found that the propensity to forgive evolves over the life course, with elderly people more likely to forgive than middle-aged adults, who, in turn, are more likely to forgive than adolescents.

The Role of the Community

Forgiveness is not so much an emotion-focused coping mechanism as it is one part of a mode of re-entry into a moral, communal existence. The other part involves the wrongdoer, who must repent. Only when the wrongdoer repudiates his or her deeds through feelings of regret and makes a commitment not to repeat the offense is moral community with the victim restored (Biggar, 2001). This repentance can take many forms, as is seen in the cleansing rituals devised for re-entry into

communal life of child soldiers in Mozambique. Promoting verbalization of traumatic events is considered dangerous both for the person and for the community as it may attract the angry spirits killed during the event (Granjo, 2006). Instead, the community and the former soldier, aided by a healer, engage in a series of ritualized acts that provide for a "fresh start." The veteran assumes his or her past acts and begins a cathartic process, but this is done in a ritualized manner that has more to do with dramatic representation than with revival of the situation and emergence of guilt. In the context of intergroup conflict, forgiveness cannot be only a personal decision, as community leaders must deal with any failure to avenge the dead.

The harm-doer is accountable to the community, which also carries the sense of injury when one of its members is injured or, for that matter, injures others. The child's choice, or scope to forgive, is mediated by his or her political group or community. It is for this reason that there is such value in cleansing rituals or truth and reconciliation commissions. The exposure of the perpetrator's fallibility and flaws in truth commissions is often consoling for children and youth. The perceived omnipotence of the perpetrator is reduced. Particularly for children, care must be taken that offers of forgiveness are not just given to get approval from an authority figure, to restore belief in idealized objects, or as a way to avoid the pain of loss and anger.

Maintaining the relationship with the loved one is of critical importance to the child. Acknowledging this reality underscores the value of considering forgiveness as a mode of re-entry into a moral community. In this way, forswearing resentment, restoring relationship, and fixing a wrong in the past may be involved but none need define forgiveness in every case. One or all may serve to bring about moral and social recovery.

Clinical and Research Implications

Promising areas of research include the examination of the precursors and correlates of forgiveness in children such as empathy and altruism (Scobie & Scobie, 2000), the development of forgiveness (Enright, 1994; Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989), and the study of the contexts and conditions under which forgiveness is developed, facilitated,

or constrained (e.g., Horwitz, 2005). A recognition and clarification of the moral, cultural, political, and cultural components or dimensions in these developmental studies could enrich the research. How forgiveness relates to pathological mourning, complicated grief, and trauma could be particularly instructive.

When doing research or providing an intervention focused on forgiveness with children, certain considerations are particularly relevant. First, it is not sufficient simply to define competing or parallel concepts, such as reconciliation, pardon, and condoning, as different. More attention must be paid to the moral impetus, moral community, and moral repair underlying forgiveness that may clarify its link with the emotional sequelae of political trauma and abuse. It is critical to remember that the foundations of forgiveness are not only (if at all) scientific, but are definitely ethical (Biggar, 2001; Kaminer, Stein, Mbanga, & Zungu-Dirwayi, 2000).

Second, developmental considerations, such as the salience of early attachment figures, the impact of early abandonment, the relative power discrepancy between victim and harm-doer, and the devastation of certain betrayals, are realities that should be incorporated into our research. These may play a larger role than acknowledged—in particular, the nature of the relationship prior to or during the offense. Third, bereavement and grief resolution may differ in children, the pain of losing a parent being so great. Overcoming anger and loss may not be identical for adults and children. Fourth, in war and abuse, moral taboos are broken and fundamental moral edicts transgressed. Fractured moral and political relations, rather than just ruptured social relations, become the repositories of a host of socio-moral-psychological dilemmas.

In their narratives and in their play, war-affected children continuously re-enact unresolved emotional and moral issues. The meanings of their narratives and play become clearer when we understand them as attempts to present and to resolve moral dilemmas occasioned by the destruction of moral continuity in their lives, and as struggles to construct a moral order they can once more affirm. Political violence and its associated travesties confront the child with the problem of evil.

Living in the context of a moral universe, where rules govern human relations, proves to be as human a need as living in a world

of social and emotional bonds. The loss of such a universe leads to a void as profound as a world bereft of loved ones. A moral order no longer believed in, a covenant betrayed, and a legal system despoiled leave the child as unprotected, as confounded, and as saddened as the loss of a protecting parent does. The restoration of trust and the resolve not to allow the memory of past injury to poison future relations with resentment requires that the impunity of perpetrators be addressed. The proverb that the law and repentance were given on the same day recognizes the individual's potential for evil and, alongside that, the desire for forgiveness; this is something the child understands.

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