

Radical Forgiveness:
The Dynamics of Forgiveness after
Culpable Wrongdoing of Intolerable Harm

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Abstract

This thesis explores the dynamics of radical forgiveness after culpable wrongdoing of intolerable harm. It begins by exploring forgiveness in general outlining many understandings of the term. It then pursues radical forgiveness to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Wartime rape is used as the context in which radical forgiveness is explored. In the final chapter, this thesis argues that there exists a disconnect between the trauma suffered by women worldwide and the recourses available to them in order to recover. Even an internal process, such as radical forgiveness, remains inadequate to address the suffering of women.

Introduction

Forgiveness as a Topography

This thesis will present the phenomenon of forgiveness as a topography. Throughout the first chapter I will draw the landscape that is forgiveness literature. Collections of literature, sometimes in the form of debates and dialogues, will be presented in thematic clusters. Each cluster or town on the map of forgiveness has its own complexities and connections if we look close enough. Those towns are linked by many different roads. Some roads and arguments are frequently travelled and some are largely unknown.

The vantage point from which we look also affects how we understand the topography of forgiveness. Our experiences and culture, as readers, shape how we conceptualize forgiveness in this academic setting. Experiences and culture also shape how

those researching forgiveness understand and present it. The same applies for those victims doing the forgiving. Their own life experiences and culture shape how victims understand forgiveness. For these reasons, reaching any concrete conclusions regarding forgiveness is very difficult.

Methodologically, it is also a difficult task to study, understand and write about such an internal process as I propose forgiveness is. The more one reads about forgiveness, the more complexities, uncertainties, and contradictions become apparent. It is also a challenge to write with clarity and precision about such fluid concepts that are experienced differently by each individual. For this thesis, I therefore develop my own differentiations in order to navigate this multi-disciplinary literature.

By drawing a topography of forgiveness, this thesis will illustrate the various facets of forgiveness and the connections made between them. Generalizations are used throughout the entire thesis, specifically in the first chapter. These generalizations are intentional and are designed to enable me to highlight all of the aspects, dynamics, complexities and inconsistencies of forgiveness. It is important to note though that the facets of forgiveness are not experienced as separate entities by victims as they will be presented in this thesis. Forgiveness is experienced on many different levels simultaneously.

As you will see in the first chapter, the landscape of forgiveness offers many interesting destinations. For the sake of space and clarity, I have chosen one to pursue. In the second chapter, I explore a phenomenon that I call radical forgiveness. Radical forgiveness is a rarely visited place on the map of forgiveness and the road to get there is unclear and uncertain.

Why Radical Forgiveness?

I have chosen to pursue radical forgiveness largely because it is a neglected and underexplored place. I first came across a reference to it when researching religious notions of forgiveness. How I conceptualize radical forgiveness in this thesis, however, is not in religious terms. Andrew Fiala (2012) defined radical forgiveness as “forgiveness that is offered even when the forgiven party remains unrepentant” (p. 494). By including the word *even*, Fiala gives the reader the impression that radical forgiveness is somehow more than, or perhaps simply different from, forgiveness in general. He makes it seem that forgiveness is usually given to those who are repentant. It makes sense that a wrong is done, a hurt is suffered, repentance is witnessed and forgiveness is granted. A repentant offender would seem to complete this process of forgiveness. Radical forgiveness then would be quite unique.

Reading on, I found that Fiala conceptualized radical forgiveness with notions of Christianity. In the Bible, while Jesus was hanging on the cross he called out to God to “forgive them for they know not what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). He requested forgiveness from God for those men and women who had crucified him because they did not know the extent of the evil of their actions. When I read this passage, I thought of the systematic horrors perpetrated by men and women over the course of our global history. What about those who knew exactly what they were doing? What would forgiveness look like for those who had full understanding of their wrongdoing and still remain unrepentant? Chapter Two explores this and proposes one understanding of radical forgiveness.

Setting a Context

In the third chapter of this thesis, I prepare to answer the above question by setting the context of wrongdoing. I choose the example of wartime rape because it has been used in such a systematic and organized fashion that there is no doubt that perpetrators of wartime rape know exactly what they are doing. In order to explain the tolerance of wartime rape, I include prominent theories and modes of understanding from academics and ethicists. This chapter also outlines the aims and impacts of wartime rape in order to more fully understand the trauma suffered.

Intersection of Radical Forgiveness and Wartime Rape

The final chapter explores the intersection of radical forgiveness as conceptualized in Chapter Two and wartime rape as explored in Chapter Three. It begins by answering the question of whether radical forgiveness can occur after wartime rape. Next, it follows a largely feminist inquiry into the consequences of radical forgiveness after wartime rape both for the individual and for the larger female community. In this section, I also include a brief analysis of feminist responses to radical forgiveness and our role as a collective group of women.

My final argument, also found in this final chapter, is that there is a disconnect between the magnitude of trauma suffered by women worldwide and the recourses available to them afterwards. In essence, I argue that despite the many paths women might take after wartime rape, each is inadequate in responding to the depth and level of trauma caused by sexual violence. Overall, this thesis is an exploration of what forgiveness means and of what

radical forgiveness can be defined as. Wartime rape is used to provide a context for such exploration.

My Contribution to Forgiveness Studies

Firstly, this analysis highlights the terrain of forgiveness. It illustrates many different facets of forgiveness along with common debates and cautionary notes from forgiveness scholars. It shows nuances and subtleties that are routinely missed in mainstream discussions regarding forgiveness. Secondly, it explores a type or level of forgiveness that is rarely taken into consideration in academic literature and in popular media. It does so by engaging with the most common debates surrounding forgiveness of atrocities. Thirdly, this thesis reiterates concern for the victims of gender-based violence around the world. It outlines the atrocities suffered by women worldwide by sharing testimonies and stories of survival. Finally, this thesis highlights the lack of recourse for most victims after abuse such as wartime rape. It demonstrates that even radical forgiveness, an internal process chosen by the victim, is insufficient to address the systemic violence suffered by women worldwide.

Language

I wish to briefly note that I have chosen to use certain terms purposefully. For example, regarding the distinction between ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’, I agree with Claudia Card. She writes, “[m]any survivors avoid the term ‘victim’ because of its suggestion of passivity and embrace the term ‘survivor’ instead. From respect for victims who do not survive, however, I prefer to emphasize that victims are also, often, capable of agency” (Card, 2002, p. 11). Therefore, I use the term victim unless quoting a scholar who uses another term.

Throughout the thesis, I use the terms perpetrator, offender, and wrongdoer interchangeably to refer to the individual and individuals who commit the crimes. The term wartime rape is used to describe the atrocity of the systematic use of rape in war rather than the single event of a soldier raping a civilian woman.

I wish also to note that the words trauma, suffering, pain and harm fail to truly capture the impact that such atrocities can have on certain victims and their families. Language, all languages, in this sense fails us. There are no words, in any language, that capture the depth of such atrocities. However, language is one of the only modes of communication that we possess, therefore the above terms will have to suffice.

Finally, forgiveness is a word used to convey a process, a result, an outcome, a goal, an internal shift and a phenomenon depending on the situation. Forgiveness is not a static term as understandings change. Nor is it irreversible as people's decisions also change. Forgiveness is experienced and understood differently for each individual. It is a phenomenon that still holds some wonder and awe despite all of the research provided on it. It is for this reason that no final definition will be provided.

Chapter One: Forgiveness

1 Introduction

Forgiveness has been a part of our experiences for centuries. It is taught, learned, and witnessed all over the world. For some individuals, forgiveness may be a goal to be reached after a wrong has been done. For groups and communities, forgiveness may be a process or journey to embark upon together in order to heal. For nations, forgiveness may be a promoted ideal to strive towards as a collective. It is a concept that is deeply embedded in cultures and most major religions.

There are many different ways to study and understand forgiveness. It can be conceptualized as a moral issue, as seen in the work of ethicists, philosophers and religious leaders. It can be conceptualized as a therapeutic response as seen in the work of therapists, scientists and individual victims. It can also be conceptualized as a way to let go of the past

or move forward towards survival, as seen in the work of researchers, psychologists and victims. All of these understandings will be considered.

In academia, scholars, survivors, victims, therapists, psychologists, philosophers, ethicists and scientists focus on different facets of forgiveness. The background of each informs their own understanding of the phenomenon. For example, a psychologist writing about the victim-perpetrator interaction after the offense defines forgiveness as “a response that is evoked by a truly human moment when two people recognize each other’s pain; the perpetrator as author of the pain suffered by the victim, and the victim’s acknowledging the perpetrator’s ‘suffering’ as a result” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 22-23). In a recent study on victim’s conceptualization of forgiveness, researchers found that

...[s]ome individuals may think of forgiveness as something that occurs purely within oneself (e.g., making up one’s mind to release negative emotions toward the offender), whereas others may think that forgiveness must involve treating the offender kindly and repairing trust in the relationship. The former represents forgiveness as an intrapersonal process whereas the latter represents forgiveness as an interpersonal process. (Hook et al., 2012, p. 687)

In another example, academics who focus on punishment and reparation define forgiveness as “a cognitive, emotional, and behavioural process in which an individual ceases to experience anger and no longer accuses, holds a grudge against or desires to punish the person who has hurt him or her” (Hantman, 2010, p. 510). Ultimately, the scope and focus of each researcher enables them to focus on different meanings in the phenomenon of forgiveness.

This chapter offers a basic compilation of the most prevalent components in forgiveness literature. The first section focuses on the various facets of forgiveness that inform its many understandings. The second section compiles many definitions and presents

them categorically as levels of forgiveness. The third and final section outlines the debate surrounding synonyms of forgiveness and the resulting definitional and practical confusion that they create.

2 Facets of Forgiveness

Depending on the focus of the researcher, particular aspects of forgiveness are of more interest. These interests result in many unique understandings. This section is a brief compilation of those different ideas and opinions. Though they are numerous, this section will highlight only those facets most commonly explored by forgiveness scholars. The facets explored below are: the victim's environment, a victim-perpetrator encounter, transformation, internal dynamics, and punishment.

2.1 The Victim's Environment

A few scholars write that the environment that the victim finds him or herself in after an offense plays a role in the possibility of forgiveness. By 'environment', I mean the physical space that the victim lives in, such as a war-torn or a safe city, as well as the social atmosphere. The social atmosphere can be volatile and dangerous or fair and safe. Some researchers write that a safe and supportive environment allows the victim the security to consider forgiveness; whereas, a hostile environment decreases the possibility of forgiveness. There are other academics who point out that forgiveness has occurred in physically unsafe and socially unsupportive environments before.

2.1.1 A Safe Environment

In the paradigm of forgiveness that feminist scholar Claudia Card (2004) develops, she claims that there must be a "renunciation of hostilities" in the conflict prior to

forgiveness (p. 211). The reason is that many victims “fear the recurrence of the event and may be in a constant state of tension, anxiety, and emotional turmoil” (Hantman, 2010, p. 508). This state of anxiety may be worsened by flashbacks which replay the trauma in the victim’s mind. With such deep and potentially destructive emotions still present, the possibility of forgiveness remains quite low. An example of this is Holocaust survivor turned writer Jean Améry. He explains his lingering perception of an unsafe environment and his resulting fear when he writes, “[i]n a very short time I was forced to recognize that little had changed [after liberation], that I was still a man condemned to be murdered in due time” (Améry, 1980, p. 22). For Améry, the possibility of the Holocaust recurring left him feeling unsafe. Therefore he could not forgive the Nazis, the Germans or the bystanders he held responsible.

In contrast, many of the participants of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) felt safe enough under their new democratically election government to consider forgiveness and reconciliation in the 1990s. The new government did not seek violent revenge on their white oppressors. Therefore, after the national election passed, so did much of the concern over an outbreak of black on white violence. The public TRC hearings were held after the election in a relatively safe environment. Some authors say that forgiveness could not happen otherwise.

2.1.2 A Supportive Environment

A supportive environment does not necessarily have to be a safe environment. Some scholars such as Amy Finnegan and Trudy Govier suggest that it is a supportive environment, created by society, that allows for forgiveness. For example, “forgiveness flourishes largely because of the cultural and religious institutions that facilitate it. As these

institutions preach forgiveness, thereby creating norms and infrastructure, a collective opportunity to actually opt for forgiveness is created” (Finnegan, 2010, p. 438). Finnegan’s case study on forgiveness in northern Uganda found “that Acholi leaders are partly able to accentuate forgiveness as an integral aspect of Acholi collective identity through social norms and infrastructure that legitimate the practice of forgiveness” (Finnegan, 2010, p. 438). Govier writes that “[w]hether forgiving its enemies is a real option for a group will depend on its culture, teachings, and public deliberations, and on the individuals who come to occupy leadership roles within it” (as cited in Finnegan, 2010, p. 438).

A supportive environment can also occur within the family structure. Especially with private offenses, or offenses that generate negative social stigma, the family of the victim may be his/her support system. The extent to which one can consider forgiveness may be determined by how one’s family reacts to the offence. For example, if the family of a rape victim blames her for the rape, she may not consider forgiveness because she feels guilt and responsibility herself. On the contrary, if her family is supportive during her recovery, she may be able to consider forgiving her offender because she understands the fault is not her own.

Active encouragement and teaching about forgiveness through therapy can also create a socially supportive environment. In their studies of forgiveness, authors such as Everett L. Worthington Jr. et al. and Deborah Kaminer et al., highlight the recent phenomenon of therapists and psychologists who suggest a process of forgiveness to their clients. For example, many medical professionals are using what has become known as “forgiveness therapy” (Lamb, 2005, p. 61). Reports from these medical and psychological

professionals indicate they advocate forgiveness because there may be positive health benefits in forgiving.

2.1.3 A Lack of Safety or Support

In contrast to the above, there are also scholars who point out that a victim may forgive in an environment where there is a lack of safety and a lack of support. Forgiveness in unsafe or unsupportive environments can be difficult and divisive for those victims involved. For example, in the documentary *Forgiveness: Stories for Our Time*, Anne Marie Hagan testifies that she forgave her father's murderer despite the opposite attitude of her family and friends (Lunn et al., 2007). Although she was concerned with her family's reaction to her decision, she found herself ready to forgive after a facilitated encounter with the perpetrator after his trial. Each family member met him but only Anne Marie was ready to forgive.

In summary, the literature suggests that the physical and/or social environment of the victim influences the possibility of forgiveness. As can be seen from the sections above, however, the impact of that environment on forgiveness remains uncertain. Scholars show that, for some victims like Améry, if a perceived physical threat and psychological fear persists, the desire to forgive can be disabled. Others note that for some victims forgiveness is encouraged by support from community leaders, family members and/or therapists. And still other academics show that for certain victims forgiveness is possible in an environment with no safety or support at all.

2.2 Victim-Perpetrator Encounter

An encounter between the perpetrator and the victim is one of the most explored facets of forgiveness. There are many potential dimensions of this interaction. Such dimensions often include uncovering a truth¹ of the offense, an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, a display of genuine repentance, a remorseful apology, and an empathetic connection. Each component can have differing effects on the possibility of forgiveness and not all are necessary for forgiveness.

2.2.1 Uncovering A Truth

For some victims, “forgiveness can only become meaningful when the truth of what has happened has been allowed to be told” explains Beth Crisp (2007, p. 308). In some cases, the truth being told would be the victim’s understood truth. The victim of abuse is looking for the perpetrator to confirm his/her understanding of the offense. According to some academics, that confirmation allows for the possibility of forgiveness.

In other cases, the victims’ family is looking for the perpetrator to confirm their understanding of the offense committed against their loved one. South African TRC Commissioner and psychologist, Pulma Gobodo-Madikizela (2002), writes, “[i]f victims do not feel the perpetrators have told the truth [or their perceived truth] about what happened to their loved ones, their doubts about perpetrators’ truthfulness may give them good reason *not* to forgive” (p. 15). While researching in South Africa, Audrey Chapman (2007) observed

¹ I use the term ‘a truth’ here rather than “the truth’ to highlight the difficulty and impossibility in some cases to establish one version of history to which all parties consent. Many people “hold different beliefs about a sequence of events and that agreement about the ‘truth’ may never occur” (Halpern and Weinstein, 2004, p. 580). In any case, it is the memory and belief of their truth that affects people’s actions and reactions rather than the accurate facts.

that “discovering the ‘truth’ about the specific violation was a particularly important consideration” for the victims’ families during the TRC” (p. 59). For example, “one of the widows of victims killed in South Africa in an incident that came to be known as the Cradock Four² expressed disappointment at the lack of truth in the testimony of the men responsible for her husband’s killing. ‘I can’t forgive and forget’, said Nyameka Goniwe, ‘or go on with my life until I know the actual killers’” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 15-16).

2.2.2 Acknowledgement of Wrongdoing

Once the truth of an offense is established, the perpetrator can come to acknowledge the wrong in his/her actions. Though it is nearly impossible for the perpetrator to fully understand the suffering of the victim without the same suffering being inflicted upon them, “many theorists agree that interpersonal forgiveness, at least, may be more warranted when the person who committed the violation has come to recognize the wrongness of his or her actions” (Alford, 2012, p. 234; Chapman, 2007, p. 64). They write that the victim needs to know that the perpetrator acknowledges what he/she did was wrongdoing despite not personally suffering him/herself. Abuse therapist Margaret Arms offers the following example of the need for acknowledgment:

...a client’s father, despite repeated requests to do so, refused to acknowledge responsibility for failing to keep his daughter safe from his sexually abusive brother ... He acknowledged that he knew his brother “liked” and was very “affectionate” with little girls, and admitted feeling uncomfortable around his alcoholic brother. Ignoring implications of this knowledge, the father continued to invite his brother to babysit my client after his brother lost his job over an “incident” with a co-worker’s daughter. Despite acknowledging his knowledge about his brother’s suspicious behavior, my client’s father denied any responsibility for failing to

² The Cradock Four were four black activists who were murdered by white policemen during apartheid. Three black policemen subsequently were killed to prevent them from exposing the identities of the white policemen involved in killing the Cradock Four (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 16).

keep her safe... In such contexts, forgiveness holds integrity for neither the harmed nor the ones who did the harm. (Arms, 2002, p. 114-115)

Without acknowledgement from her father, the daughter is unlikely to forgive him for his part in her abuse.

2.2.3 Apology and Repentance

An apology is another facet commonly explored by academics and survivors alike. “A full apology is one that consists of an admission of responsibility for causing the harm, an expression of regret, and action to remedy the harm and to prevent future occurrences of similar incidents” (Allen and McKillop, 2010, p. 129). The term apology is often used interchangeably with repentance by forgiveness scholars. Writing about forgiveness and the intrinsic value of persons, Margaret R. Holmgren (1993) writes that “[s]everal authors have argued that to forgive a wrongdoer who does not repent is to condone wrongdoing. Until the offender repents, she implicitly endorses her wrongdoing ... However when the wrongdoer repents she withdraws her endorsement of the wrong and instead condemns it. At this point we can join her in condemning the wrong and forgiveness [becomes] appropriate” (p. 347).

The literature on forgiveness includes scholars, such as Chapman (2007), who caution against believing ‘superficial remorse’ or crocodile tears. Some perpetrators will express superficial remorse in order to lessen their judicial sentence or to receive amnesty during their public hearings (p. 65). Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) adds that “[a]sking forgiveness without an attempt to appreciate the other’s pain, without making a *human* connection with the other person, has an empty ring to it” (p. 13).

Another note of caution is voiced by Yehudith Auerbach (2005) when examining national apologies given by the head of state. He remarks that “[t]he collective apology

differs from the individual apology in its tone and style. It is not as spontaneous and emotional as the bid for forgiveness addressed by one person to another. Being ‘a diplomatic accomplishment’, it tends to be ‘couched in abstract, remote, measured and emotionally neutral terms’” (p. 476). These types of apologies, widely picked up by mass media, create the impression that apologizing and forgiving are international fads where forgiveness comes with ease (Auerbach, 2005, p. 470). Some examples include former South African President Frederik de Klerk apologizing for human rights violations during apartheid, former President Reagan apologizing to Japanese-Americans who were interned during World War II, and the governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand apologizing to their Indigenous populations (Auerbach, 2005, p. 470).

For many scholars, the connection between an apology and/or repentance and forgiveness is still unclear (Allan and McKillop, 2010, p. 128). “At minimum it appears some form of apology or public recognition of wrongdoing is needed for forgiveness even to be contemplated” and forgiveness is more likely with an apology (Hamber, 2007, p. 120; Worthington Jr. et al., 2005, p. 171). However, “an apology is neither a prerequisite nor a guarantee of forgiveness” (Allan and McKillop, 2010, p. 128).

2.2.4 Victim’s Empathy and Perpetrator’s Remorse

Empathy is a reciprocal emotional process where one identifies with and responds to the pain of the other (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 22). In her work, Gobodo-Madikizela develops the idea of a paradox of empathy that influences the possibility of forgiveness. She writes that “[t]he feelings of regret for the horrible deed of murder, the desperate and impossible wish to restore the loss suffered by the victim, and other self-reflective thoughts and emotions associated with remorse all become incorporated into the perpetrator’s self and

produce the paradoxical experience of the perpetrator as a wounded self” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 21). She explains that the victim perceives this ‘woundedness’ in the perpetrator and empathy is evoked within the victim. She offers the example of South African secret police officer Eugene de Kock, nicknamed Prime Evil for his crimes during apartheid. When being interviewed by the widows of two of his victims, he showed genuine remorse for what he had done and for the pain that he had caused them. After this interview, the two women forgave him.

Developing empathy for the perpetrator can be quite an unnerving process for the victim as described by Gobodo-Madikizela in her book *A Human Being Died That Night: Forgiving Apartheid’s Chief Killer* (2006). During one of their interviews to discuss his activities during apartheid, Gobodo-Madikizela reached out and touched de Kock’s trembling hand (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2006, p. 32). The simple gesture of empathy and understanding unnerved both Gobodo-Madikizela and de Kock. Later she recounts feeling guilty about such an expression of sympathy for someone so ‘evil’. She writes,

I felt guilty for having expressed even momentary sympathy and wondered if my heart had actually crossed the moral line from compassion, which allows one to maintain a measure of distance, to actually identifying with de Kock ... I started to feel a great sense of anxiety and despair ... I suddenly broke down in sobs ... My emotions were becoming increasingly confused. (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2006, p. 32-33)

Some scholars say that it is in moments like these where one finds the essence of forgiveness. “Forgiveness is a response that is evoked by a truly human moment when two people recognize each other’s pain; the perpetrator as author of the pain suffered by the victim, and the victim’s acknowledging the perpetrator’s ‘suffering’ as a result ... Forgiveness with empathy is reaching out to the other person and saying: I can feel the pain you feel for having caused me pain” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 22-23). Empathy with a

transgressor is said to “correlate strongly with the extent to which a person forgives that transgressor” (Hook et al., 2009, p. 831).

In summary, the literature suggests that an encounter between the perpetrator and the victim may impact the process of forgiveness. Uncovering a truth and receiving an acknowledgement of wrongdoing may propel the victim towards forgiveness. Denial of wrongdoing by the perpetrator could lower the likelihood of forgiveness. An apology and some form of repentance also raises the likelihood of forgiveness but not necessarily. A few scholars caution against false apologies and fake remorse. Forgiveness can be spawned out of an empathetic connection between the victim and the perpetrator. However, there is still no formula that will guarantee forgiveness.

2.3 Transformation

Some scholars highlight the internal transformation that can occur within the perpetrator as well as within the victim during forgiveness. Both the perpetrator and the victim can go through a change in attitudes and beliefs as well as a change in behaviours.

2.3.1 Perpetrator Transformation

A transformation of the perpetrator is a facet that is often explored in forgiveness literature (Chapman, 2007, p. 64). This transformation can take the form of a change in previously held beliefs and attitudes, as was the case for some perpetrators of apartheid in South Africa. Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) explains that “[w]hen perpetrators commit their horrible acts, they exclude victims from the moral obligations that define perpetrators’ relationships with others with whom they are socially and politically connected” (p. 23). Their victims become objectified and dehumanized. The transformation in the perpetrators

beliefs moves the victim from an object to a human. In essence, the perpetrator changes his/her belief system regarding the victim.

This transformation in beliefs can effect a change in actions. For example, “[w]hen people forgive, there is an expectation that the deeds for which forgiveness was granted will not occur again, a ‘promise’, this is, that the forgiven person has reflected on his or her actions, ‘turned the corner’ and will not engage in similar acts in the future” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008, p. 335). To use the example of South Africans again, the perpetrators might stop using racial slurs and stop excluding black and coloured people from public places. Veltman and Norlock (2009), writing about political violence and forgiveness, note that after this type of moral transformation the perpetrator can be called “righteously contrite” (p. 118). Forgiveness may occur after the victim observes these changes in the perpetrator over a sustained period of time and is confident that the offense will not happen again.

There are also scholars, such as Oliver Hallich and Govier, who point out that, in some cases, the moral transformation or “moral rebirth” of the perpetrator does not have any impact at all on the victim’s decision to forgive (Hallich, 2013, p. 1007). Govier (1999) offers the perspective that the process of forgiveness cannot rely on the assumption that the perpetrator will undergo such a profound transformation, nor should a victim ever have to wait for that to occur (p. 62). It leaves too much power with the perpetrator who already stole so much from the victim. Forgiveness without any exchange with or transformation in the perpetrator will be explored further in the next chapter on radical forgiveness.

2.3.2 Victim Transformation

Although a different process from that of the perpetrator, a transformation may be found in victims as well. Gobodo-Madikizela, Ari Kohen and Holmgren write that victims experience a transformation of thoughts, emotion and beliefs. Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) notes that forgiveness “becomes a turning point, the embrace of a new way of thinking about one’s trauma and about the emotions it evokes” (p. 15). Kohen (2009) states that “[t]he trauma story is transformed as testimony from a telling about shame and humiliation to a portrayal of dignity and virtue” (p. 402). In essence, the victim reclaims her self-esteem and self-respect by reframing the trauma. Holmgren (1993) argues that this must occur prior to forgiveness. The victim “recognize[s] that she is just as valuable as every other person and that her needs and feelings matter very much” (Holmgren, 1993, p. 343).

Digeser (1998) writes that “forgiveness [also] entails a particular kind of conduct” on behalf of the victim afterwards (p. 704). Govier highlights this concept with the following quote:

What happens when one person forgives another? Is it enough to say ‘I forgive you’? Does saying amount to doing? A technical way of asking this question is to ask whether the verb ‘to forgive’ is *performative*, like the verb ‘to promise’. When a person says, in a suitable context and a serious tone of voice, ‘I promise’, the very fact of saying mean that she does promise. ... But forgiveness is not performative in this way³. Simply to say ‘I forgive you’ is not to forgive-not even if it said in just the right setting and with just the right tone of voice. (Govier, 2002, p. 43)

Instead, the transformation can be a change in the victim’s conduct that supports saying ‘I forgive you’. A new relationship is not necessary between the victim and the perpetrator but, at minimum, the victim cannot recall the offence in the future in order to induce guilt or to

³ For an alternative opinion on the performative function of saying ‘I forgive you’, see Norlock, K. (2009). *Forgiveness From A Feminist Perspective*. Lexington Books, page 99.

use it as a threat. Govier (2002) gives the example of a wife who says she forgives her husband for being unfaithful. If “she continues to raise the issue of the affair and use it as a point against him in arguments” she has evidently not forgiven (Govier, 2002, p. 43).

In summary, some scholars explore the transformation of both the victim and the perpetrator in the process of forgiveness. This transformation can present itself as a change in attitudes and beliefs as well as a change in behaviours. The perpetrator can change his/her thoughts and attitudes as well as never commit the offense again. The victim can change his/her actions towards the perpetrator as well. He/she can also change his/her own thoughts and attitudes regarding the trauma itself.

2.4 Internal Dynamics of Forgiveness

The process of releasing negative thoughts and emotions in order to heal and move forward in life is often explored in research on forgiveness. While some scholars, psychotherapists and survivors highlight that forgiving, as in releasing negative emotions, helps the healing process, others argue that holding onto those emotions and not forgiving can be empowering.

2.4.1 Forgiving and Therapeutic Healing

Worthington Jr. et al. (2005) “posit that forgiveness can benefit people in two ways: (1) it works against the pernicious effects of stress and negative emotion. (2) It broadens people’s cognitive and behavioral framework and builds new adaptive strategies” (p. 169). Kaminer et al. (2001) note similar studies that show that “depression, PTSD⁴ and other anxiety disorders were all significantly higher among participants with lower forgiveness

⁴ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

scores⁵” (p. 375). In essence, “[f]orgiveness is theorized to involve the emotional replacement of negative emotions with ‘positive emotions such as unselfish love, empathy, compassion, or even romantic love’” (Orcutt et al., 2008, p. 73). This process can be therapeutic for many victims.

Researchers, such as Hallich, Hannah Arendt, Alfred Allan, Dianne McKillop and psychotherapist Mary Baures, also link healing to the process of releasing self-destructive emotions, such as “annoyance, disappointment, resentment, anger, loathing, contempt, indignation and hatred” (Hallich, 2013, p. 1000; Baures, 1996, p. 89). Baures (1996) notes that “[a]lthough the victim imagines that revenge will bring relief, the opposite is true. Repetitive revenge fantasies actually increase the victim’s torment and the violent, intrusive images can be as frightening as the trauma itself” (p. 76). Allan and McKillop (2010) add that “[m]ost people try to eliminate or reduce those feelings by forgiving those they blame for the event” (p. 127).

In addition, Finnegan, Kohen and Martha Minow highlight that for some victims forgiveness can restore a sense of control previously lost in their decision making (Finnegan, 2010, p. 441). For Arendt, “forgiveness allows for the possibility of beginning again, creating something new, and moving forward into a future pregnant with possibility” (as cited in Fiala, 2012, p. 499). For these victims, forgiving means “letting go of the power the offence and the offender have over a person” (Kohen, 2009, p. 403). This can “afford victims

⁵ Based on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) “which is a self-rating scale of the affective, cognitive and behavioural components of forgiveness that has been used in numerous empirical studies internationally” (Kaminer et al., 2001, p. 374).

the position of relative power represented by the capacity to forgive” (Minow, 1998, p. 970). Regaining this power can also be therapeutic.

It is important to note briefly that some authors caution against encouraging forgiveness as therapy. Sharon Lamb (2005) critiques forgiveness therapy for advertising a quick fix for emotional “pain and misery” (p. 65). She argues that “[f]orgiveness therapy does not address the social causes of wrongdoing” (Lamb, 2005, p. 65). For example, “[f]orgiveness therapy suggests what kind of victim *ought* you to be ... that forgiveness is a supererogatory virtue, - that means you are morally ok if you forgive or don’t – but that you have gone beyond the call of duty, and done something extra wonderful from the moral point of view” if you forgive (Lamb, 2005, p. 72). In essence, no moral ranking should be attached to giving or withholding forgiveness. You are not morally superior if you forgive and you are not morally inferior if you do not. She suggests alternative infrastructure that promotes other options such as working through anger, living with grief, letting go without forgiving and embracing ambivalence (Lamb, 2005, p. 76).

2.4.2 *Not Forgiving and Empowerment*

In contrast to the above section, some academics explore empowerment from not forgiving. “[I]t has been argued that resentment is a legitimate and healthy way of expressing self-respect” and is therefore beneficial for victims (Auerbach, 2005, p. 476). For example, Améry’s “inability to let go of a traumatic past is actually an ethical stance on behalf of history’s victims” and himself (Alford, 2012, p. 229). By not forgiving, Améry sent a message to all perpetrators of the Holocaust indicating where he considers the line of acceptable behaviour to be. Jeffrie Murphy (2003) notes that there are certain values upheld by non-forgiving emotions such as resentment and vengeance and there are important values

threatened by the possibility of forgiveness (p. 19). These values include self-respect, self-defence and respect for the greater moral order (Murphy, 2003, p. 19). In essence, revenge can be motivating and can allow the victim to reassert their self-respect.

In addition, Auerbach (2005) writes that some victims “may feel that ‘to forgive is to relinquish the victim role and the rewards that go with it’ such as ‘the power to induce guilt, to demand apologies and reparations or to seek punishment of the perpetrator’” (p. 447). In this case, not forgiving is the victim’s way of retaining control in a situation where control was taken away (Crisp, 2007, p. 309). Similar to this idea, Friedrich Nietzsche famously wrote that “forgiving is a matter of the weak making a virtue out of necessity” (as cited in Digeser, 1998, p. 705). He once described forgiveness as “an economy of resentment: because the weak cannot avenge themselves, they call their weakness forgiveness” (as cited in Digeser, 1998, p. 705).

Ultimately, forgiveness can have varying results. For some victims, forgiving may promote positive outcomes such as healing and moving forward in life. By releasing negative emotions, they create space for positive emotions internally. For others, forgiving can be a risk and a detriment. For example, forgiveness may be more of a risk to battered women trying to flee abusive relationships. And still for other victims, withholding forgiveness demonstrates their empowerment and self-respect. It is a moral stance on behalf of all victims to show where the line of acceptable behaviour is for all human beings.

2.5 Punishment

Discussions of justice and punishment are quite prevalent in forgiveness studies. It remains unclear whether or not forgiveness necessarily means that the victim chooses to

forgo the pursuit of punishment and/or potential reparations. Scholars offer varying perspectives on the topic of forgiveness and punishment.

Some scholars, such as Hantman (2010), write that forgiveness is “a cognitive, emotional, and behavioural process in which an individual ceases to experience anger and no longer accuses, holds a grudge against or *desires to punish* the person who has hurt him or her” (my emphasis p. 510). For such scholars, forgiveness necessarily means letting go of all possibilities of seeking punishment and/or reparations.

Others, such as Card, Minow and Hallich, write that forgiveness need not replace or eliminate the desire for punishment. Rather, some form of punishment for the offense is necessary for social justice and to recalibrate the power dynamics between the victim and offender (Card, 2003, p. 180). The desire for the offender to be legally punished “does not mean that forgiveness in such a case would reveal a lack of attachment to the moral order” (Hallich, 2013, p. 1012). For example, “[a]n individual may testify against a defendant and support punishment while independently offering forgiveness” (Minow, 1998, p. 979).

Many scholars explore the dynamics between forgiveness and punishment. Some highlight the possibility of forgiving instead of pursuing punishment and/ or reparations while others explore the possibility of forgiving whilst seeking punishment. Few, however, explore the reality that punishment and/or reparations are simply not an option for many victims to pursue. The lack of punishment and reparations available to the victim can be as a result of a lack of resources, a lack of state infrastructure or a lack of knowledge of who the perpetrator was. This option will be explored in the final chapter.

3 Forgiveness: Who is involved?

Literature on forgiveness is ripe with tensions, uncertainties and paradoxes. After exploring various facets of forgiveness, it is evident that researchers, survivors, and therapists conceptualize forgiveness differently. Though they are not always labeled as such, the most common types of forgiveness include: intrapersonal, interpersonal, collective, mutual, conditional, radical and self-forgiveness. Intrapersonal forgiveness is an internal process for the victim to forgive the perpetrator. Interpersonal forgiveness is a process between the victim and the perpetrator. Collective forgiveness is on a national or communal scale. Mutual forgiveness is when both groups take responsibility for the suffering caused and must forgive each other. Unconditional forgiveness is given with no conditions fulfilled by the perpetrator. Conditional forgiveness depends on certain conditions being fulfilled by the perpetrator. Radical forgiveness is given to an unrepentant offender. Self-forgiveness is the process of forgiving oneself for a wrongdoing. Each of these will be discussed in more depth below.

3.1 Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Collective and Mutual

Forgiveness can be conceptualized as internal or external from the victim. In a study exploring conceptualizations of forgiveness, Joshua Hook et al. (2012) noted that “[s]ome individuals may think of forgiveness as something that occurs purely within oneself (e.g., making up one’s mind to release negative emotions toward the offender), whereas others may think that forgiveness must involve treating the offender kindly and repairing trust in the relationship. The former represents forgiveness as an intrapersonal process whereas the latter represents forgiveness as an interpersonal process” (p. 687).

3.1.1 Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal forgiveness is the type of forgiveness where the process is solely within the individual. It is “something that happens within the individual” with no regard for the perpetrator, social pressures or social structures (Worthington Jr. et al., 2005, p. 169). This type of forgiveness does not mean that there were not widespread offenses. It means that the process of forgiveness itself is victim oriented and may vary for each individual. Gobodo-Madikizela (2008) writes that intrapersonal forgiveness tends to be more emotionally driven, more subjective and more deeply felt (p. 340). Psychotherapist Mary Baures (1996), who works with clients suffering from trauma, adds that forgiveness is often “not meant for the abuser but for the survivor” (p. 89). It is an internal healing process for the victim that is not dependent upon the perpetrator.

3.1.1.1 Sub-Types of Intrapersonal Forgiveness

There are levels of forgiveness within the intrapersonal process itself. Two such sub-types of intrapersonal forgiveness are decisional and emotional forgiveness.

Decisional forgiveness is a decision to change one’s behavioural intentions to eliminate revenge and avoidance (unless it is unsafe to continue to interact) and (if possible) restore interaction given that safeguards can be enacted to minimize threat of future harm. However, one may sincerely decide to forgive and persist in those forgiving behavioural intentions yet still be emotionally unforgiving (i.e., resentful, angry, and hate filled). *Emotional forgiveness* is an internal experience of replacing negative, unforgiving emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions. (Hook et al., 2009, p. 824)

Decisional forgiveness is therefore a choice to make behavioural changes whereas emotional forgiveness is more of a transformation. In her book entitled *Forgiveness From A Feminist Perspective* (2009), Kathryn Norlock engages with an academic dialogue highlighting the risk of decisional forgiveness. She writes that “[t]o center forgiveness in a courageous act of giving [thereby simply changing one’s behaviour] is not yet to free it from the danger of

being slavish ... In other words, the power relation between the forgiving person and the object of her forgiveness is critical to evaluating whether or not courageous forgiveness is the wise thing to do” (Norlock, 2009, p. 56). Decisional forgiveness can be genuine and well-meant but still detrimental to the victim because of possible lingering negative emotions.

3.1.2 Interpersonal Forgiveness

Interpersonal forgiveness occurs when there is an encounter between the victim and the perpetrator. Worthington Jr. et al. (2005) note that “[t]he individuals involved might discuss the transgressions and respond in ways that might ... promote forgiving” (p. 170). This process may have the following components: a meeting in a safe place such as victim-offender mediation, mediator-assisted dialogue, a remorseful apology, an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, the development and expression of empathy by the victim, and a declaration of forgiveness (Armour and Umbriet, 2006, p. 128; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 13, 17).

3.1.3 Collective Forgiveness

Collective forgiveness focuses on a group or national process, where the victim and perhaps the perpetrator is a group of people rather than an individual. However, “forgiveness in a political context is more complicated than just transposing individual acts of interpersonal forgiveness into the political sphere” (Chapman, 2007, p. 62). This type of forgiveness focuses on the collective transformation and is typically predicated on objective reasons rather than subjective emotions (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008, p. 340). It typically entails a public acknowledgement of wrongdoing and an apology by the leader of the perpetrating party. It can also include some form of reparation or compensation for the victims (Digeser, 1998, p. 707). An example of collective forgiveness would be after a

military leader apologizes for the rape and torture of civilian women by himself and his platoon.

3.1.4 Mutual Forgiveness

Mutual forgiveness occurs when both parties are in the wrong and both parties forgive each other. Govier (2002) says that “[t]he idea that forgiveness should be mutual transcends what is often a simplistic dichotomy between the victim and the offender. In most conflicts there is considerable moral complexity so that ‘victims’ are not wholly innocent and ‘offenders’ not entirely guilty” (p. 49). It is composed of similar components as collective forgiveness but given on both sides of the conflict. An example of mutual forgiveness would be in South Africa if both the National Party (NP) and the African National Congress (ANC) were to forgive each other for the violence perpetrated by the other side during apartheid. Mutual forgiveness can occur between two individuals or between two groups.

As seen above, forgiveness can be conceptualized as being on a scale. Starting on one end are types of forgiveness that are comprised of a change within the victim with no regard for the perpetrator. They involve profound emotional and cognitive changes. Moving along the scale, there are types of forgiveness that entail an exchange between just the victim and the perpetrator. They involve some emotional changes and some decisional components. At the other end of the scale, there are political types of forgiveness that involve nations and/or groups of people. They entail mainly decisions to move forward as a community.

3.2 Conditional versus Unconditional Forgiveness

Many scholars who research forgiveness write about conditions under which forgiveness can occur. Similar to a formula, if certain conditions are not fulfilled forgiveness

is not possible or recommended. Others write that it is in the absence of those conditions that the true essence of forgiveness is found.

3.2.1 Conditional Forgiveness

For some researchers, forgiveness depends upon certain conditions that must be fulfilled by an external actor, such as the perpetrator or the justice system, in order for forgiveness to occur. For example, in the case of interpersonal forgiveness, the victim cannot forgive without a remorseful apology and a public acknowledgement of wrongdoing from the perpetrator. In other cases, it depends on reparations or compensation from the justice system. Professor Alex Thomson (2006) quotes philosopher Jacques Derrida to argue that this type of “forgiveness is an everyday exchange of apology or confession for pardon, a familiar social ritual which may be a matter of mere politeness or of a more complex or even juridical resolution of a fault” (p. 300). Authors exploring this interpretation hold that without the fulfillment of certain conditions, forgiveness cannot occur.

Similar conditions, such as an apology, can apply to collective forgiveness. For example, this type of forgiveness may occur “when heads of state forgive past crimes so that the state can enter into a process of normalization, or face new threats” (Kaposy, 2005, p. 206). The state forgives so that they may enter into new agreements and relations with other states. For example, when the South African President de Klerk apologized for the crimes of apartheid, sanctions worldwide were lifted and trade resumed. Derrida explains that this “[c]onditional forgiveness is an ‘economic’ form of forgiveness because its occurrence is contingent upon drawing some kind of advantage from a situation” (Kaposy, 2005, p. 207).

3.2.2 *Unconditional Forgiveness*

Other theorists explore what is called unconditional forgiveness. In this case, there is no incentive of reward or benefit in return for forgiveness. A famous advocate for this type of forgiveness is Derrida who defines it as “gracious, infinite, aneconomic forgiveness granted to the guilty as guilty, without counterpart” (Derrida, 1997 (2001), p. 34). In his work on forgiveness, he writes that forgiveness is taken far too lightly when spoken of in terms of an economic or beneficial exchange. Rather “the essence of forgiveness is when it is in its purest, and therefore unconditional, form” (as cited in Kaposy, 2005, 207). Forgiveness as such will be further explored in later chapters.

3.2.3 *Radical Forgiveness*

The term radical forgiveness is referred to once by Andrew Fiala (2012) who writes that it is the type of forgiveness given when the perpetrator remains unrepentant (p. 494). Other than this reference, the term radical forgiveness is rarely used. Though they do not use the term radical forgiveness, other scholars refer to the type of forgiveness that occurs in this context as a “unilateral release of resentment” by the victim or unilateral forgiveness (Finnegan, 2010, p. 427; Lamb, 2005, p. 63). It is a phenomenon rarely explored in academic literature. “Perhaps the most recognizable contemporary example of unilateral [and radical] forgiveness is Nelson Mandela, who seems to harbor no resentment toward those who imprisoned him on Robben Island for 27 years” (Kohen, 2009, p. 405) . Govier (2002) argues that:

When Mandela reached out to his former enemies and did whatever he could to assure them that they would suffer no evil at his hands, he did not do this in response to acknowledgement and expressions of remorse on the part of white leaders. Nor was he responding to a community that had apologized for the wrongs of the past and indicated a commitment to deep and widespread moral transformation. (p. 71)

In this case, Mandela offered forgiveness at a time when his perpetrators had not offered an apology or shown any remorse. This phenomenon will be explored in more depth in the next chapter as it is the focus of my thesis.

3.3 Self-Forgiveness

The above types of forgiveness involve forgiving another person for a wrongdoing. Scholars also explore the concept of self-forgiveness. Self-forgiveness is an internal process that can occur for both perpetrators and victims alike.

3.3.1 Self-forgiveness for the Perpetrator

Forgiveness is described as the release of negative emotions and resentment that one holds towards the perpetrator. It seems a bit strange then to speak of releasing resentful thoughts about oneself (Murphy, 2003, p. 58). Can one resent oneself? Murphy uses the term moral hatred to explore the phenomenon of self-forgiveness. He writes that “the best way to understand moral hatred of self is as a kind of shame placed on top of guilt ... guilt over what one has done ... shame that one has fallen so far below one’s idea of self-hood that life ... is now less bearable” (Murphy, 2003, p. 60). Forgiveness for this type of self-hatred is therefore called self-forgiveness.

3.3.2 Self-forgiveness for the Victim

Self-forgiveness can also occur within the victim. Social norms and stigma can make victims of certain offenses, such as rape, feel responsible for their own suffering. For example, some societies believe that if women dress or act a certain way, they are putting themselves at risk of attack. In essence, they are ‘asking for it’. It is up to them to dress and act modestly if they do not wish to be attacked. If these norms are internalized by the victim, she may blame herself for the rape (Barstow, 2000, p. 84). It is in such a context that self-

forgiveness occurs. The victim must come to realize that what happened to her was not her fault.

In conclusion, there are many different types or levels of forgiveness. Each has a different number of people involved. Each also has its own process and particularities. However, the above differentiations are of my own design and are not necessarily experienced in such distinct ways. Forgiveness can be experienced on many levels simultaneously.

4 Clarifications

This section will briefly clarify a few points that are often confused in literature on forgiveness. Firstly, there are certain terms that are commonly used as synonyms of forgiveness. Many academics distinguish between them but some do not. Secondly, the verb which accompanies the term forgiveness significantly changes its meaning. To show this, I will note the different ways forgiveness is used in a sentence.

4.1 Confusion Regarding Synonyms

Reconciliation, forgetting and condoning are often used in forgiveness literature. Sometimes, as is especially the case with reconciliation, they are taken to mean the same thing as forgiveness. Scholars writing about forgiveness take care to explain the differences between reconciliation, forgetting and condoning.

4.1.1 Reconciliation

Chapman (2007) writes that reconciliation is often equated with interpersonal forgiveness (p. 60). For example, the fact that “it involves psychological processes, both cognitive (e.g., shared political narratives) and emotional (e.g., healing, empathy)” makes it appear very much like forgiveness (Auerbach, 2005, p. 474). It can also be defined as a

series of steps which are similar to those of forgiveness. For example, “the four steps that former rivals take on the way to reconciliation [are]: ‘they acknowledge the reality of the terrible acts that were perpetrated; accept with compassion those who committed injurious conduct, as well as acknowledging each other’s sufferings; believe that their injustices are redressed and anticipate mutual security and well-being” (Auerbach, 2005, p. 474).

There are some fundamental differences however. Whereas forgiveness is possible without the perpetrator present, reconciliation necessarily requires an encounter between both parties involved in the offense. Whereas forgiveness can occur without a change in the perpetrators behavior, reconciliation assumes a change in behavior on behalf of the perpetrator and the victim. Reconciliation is more about living together as a community after the conflict.

The relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation remains unclear. Some authors write that “reconciliation brings upon and facilitates forgiveness and healing. Others hold that forgiveness is a step toward reconciliation” (Auerbach, 2005, p. 474). Some scholars also recognize that “one may forgive and not reconcile, but one never truly reconciles without some form of forgiving taking place” (Hamber, 2007, p. 119). Ultimately, forgiveness is a more emotional and internal process whereas reconciliation requires the perpetrators and victims both to be engaged and to continue a relationship afterwards (Hamber, 2007, p. 119).

4.1.2 Forgetting

Many victims dislike the idea of forgiveness, especially after atrocities, because they equate it with forgetting. They believe that by forgiving the perpetrator, the offense itself and their suffering may then be forgotten. However,

... [t]here are two features of forgiving that distinguish it from forgetting. First, insofar as forgiving involves ‘the forswearing of negative emotions’, it, in contrast to forgetting, is something we do, not something that merely happens to us ... it is done for a reason ... Second, forgiving, unlike forgetting, is a response to considerations that lead us to think that we ought to forgive a wrongdoer. (Hallich, 2013, p. 1000)

We do not have such decision-making power with our own memory. We cannot simply decide to forget and our memory will disappear⁶.

A key figure who distinguishes forgiving and forgetting is Archbishop Desmond Tutu. While chairing the TRC in South Africa, he famously wrote that “[i]n forgiving people are not asked to forget. On the contrary it is important to remember, so that we should not let such atrocities happen again” (as cited in Auerbach, 2005, p. 447). He publically separated forgiving and forgetting to encourage South Africans along the path towards healing. By separating forgiving and forgetting, he gave victims the securing of knowing that their suffering would not be forgotten even if they decided to release negative emotions towards or forgive the apartheid regime.

4.1.3 *Condoning*

Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) explains that “[t]o maintain some sort of moral compass, to hold on to some sort of clear distinction between what is humanly depraved but conceivable and what is simply off the scale of human acceptability, there is a desire-an inward emotional and mental pressure-*not* to forgive, as if forgiveness somehow signals acceptability, and acceptability signals some amount, however small, of condoning” (p. 29). In some forgiveness literature and in empirical practice, condoning is quite often confused

⁶ I acknowledge that memory has a large role to play in healing and moving on from trauma. Collective memory as well as personal memory shapes how victims and their communities perceive the offence. It also affects how the victim and the community react for generations afterwards. For more information see Margalit, A. (2002). *The Ethics of Memory*. London, England: Harvard University Press.

with forgiveness. Those writing about forgiveness take care to explain that the two are very distinct. Archbishop Tutu, along with other scholars, argues that forgiveness does not mean condoning evil behavior. Rather “it acknowledges evil without denying a person’s potential humanity” (as cited in Baures, 1996, p. 88). Additionally, Govier (2002) argues that “[f]orgiveness presupposes that the act for which a person is forgiven is wrong. Given this presupposition, to forgive an offense is not to imply that it was somehow permissible or justified; for clear logical reasons, to forgive is not to condone” (p. 55). One would not be forgiving if there was no wrong done in the first place. Therefore to forgive cannot be to condone.

4.2 Forgiveness as an Action

In scholarly exploration of forgiveness, there is significant inconsistency in the verb used when explaining the phenomenon of forgiveness. Forgiveness can be, among many other things, given, taken, offered, rejected, and accepted. Each verb chosen gives different agency and a different timeline to forgiveness. For example, if forgiveness is offered, does it have to be accepted in order to count as forgiveness? Or if forgiveness is given, is it given forever? Kathryn Norlock (2009) points out that our emotions can change over the course of our life, therefore forgiveness cannot be understood to be one complete and eternal act (p. 100). We could quite conceivably forgive in our twenties and have negative emotions that resurface in our forties. These emotions do not mean that the forgiveness was incomplete or insincere at the time. Rather it could imply that forgiveness is a continuous commitment and a long process or that it occurs in the moment and cannot be transferred to another point in time (Norlock, 2009, p. 101). I am careful throughout this thesis to use the appropriate verb with forgiveness in order to convey the correct meaning. In general I wish to stay away from ascribing any unintended meanings regarding how I conceptualize forgiveness.

5 Conclusion

This chapter was a brief exploration of the complexities and paradoxes that forgiveness entails, not simply in definition, but also in theoretical research, empirical contemplation and everyday practice. Each person's journey entails some or none of the many facets explored above. Forgiveness also happens on various levels. It can be intrapersonal for some victims, interpersonal for others, and collective as well. These complexities allow for confusion when discussing forgiveness. Terms that are sometimes taken to be synonyms of forgiveness include reconciliation, forgetting and condoning. The relationship between reconciliation, forgetting and condoning and forgiveness remains unclear.

It is important to explore the grey areas in the meanings ascribed to forgiveness. It is a profoundly personal process that does not lend itself to certainties and formulas. This is the reason for the generalizations in this chapter. As Walker notes, no one conceptualization is the "best or truest case of it. I have come to find it odd to think of there being a single correct idea of forgiveness" (as cited in Norlock, 2009, p. 18). As seen above, some scholars and philosophers have developed sophisticated analyses of forgiveness in the abstract to demonstrate these grey areas of forgiveness. It is not my intent to explore forgiveness in the abstract or strictly moral realm but rather to explore forgiveness in a very specific empirical context. This choice is based on the argument that the type of trauma affects the process of forgiveness directly (as explored in Orcutt et al., 2008, p. 82). I am specifically interested in the context in which the perpetrator remains unengaged and unrepentant. The following chapter will therefore move from broad generalizations to explore radical forgiveness more specifically.

Chapter Two: Radical Forgiveness

1 Introduction

Developing a clear understanding of the phenomenon of forgiveness is difficult. Many scholars try to define forgiveness theoretically by using abstract examples to explore the main themes. Though defining forgiveness in the abstract is informative, concrete examples are more fruitful. I have therefore chosen to set my exploration of forgiveness in the context of armed conflict. Forgiveness, in this context, occurs at the intrapersonal level, the interpersonal level, and the collective level.

After hostilities have ended, the media and academia usually focus on large-scale public events involving forgiveness between former disputing parties. For example, forgiveness was a major component of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). During the TRC, the victims were largely identifiable, engaged and

empowered in their journey towards forgiveness as it was a national process. Forgiveness happens on other levels too though.

I am interested in victims who do not have such support. I am interested in the phenomenon of forgiveness for those victims who are silent and hidden. For this reason, I have chosen to explore forgiveness specifically in the context of wartime rape. Wartime rape is the term used to indicate distinct patterns of rape by soldiers in war and is not an individual incident where a soldier rapes a civilian woman (Gottschall, 2004, p. 129). Individual victims of wartime rape are typically stigmatized, silenced and unsupported throughout their recovery. With wartime rape, the victim is unlikely to get an apology or repentance from the perpetrator himself, therefore, there are only certain types of forgiveness available to such victims (Card, 2004, p. 212). For this reason I have chosen to explore the process of radical forgiveness in the context of wartime rape. Recall that radical forgiveness is an internal process that occurs when the perpetrator remains unrepentant.

This chapter explores common debates and key theorists in forgiveness literature in order to create a substantial understanding of radical forgiveness. I propose the following way to conceptualize it.

Radical forgiveness is the type of forgiveness that occurs

- (1) when it is given by the primary victim for their own suffering;
- (2) when it is given to an unrepentant offender;
- (3) who is culpably responsible;
- (4) for acts so atrocious we are inclined to call them unforgivable; and

(5) is based possibly on considerations of the victim but most certainly not on conditions that must be fulfilled by the perpetrator.

By exploring definitions, questions and debates in the literature, the facets of radical forgiveness are illuminated. These considerations will inform my definition of radical forgiveness. The first section of this chapter will briefly outline some of the existing literature which refers to radical forgiveness. The term is rarely used but the concept of forgiving an unrepentant offender is prevalent and often discussed. The second section summarizes the discussion regarding who can forgive a wrongdoing. The major debate here is whether secondary victims (people close to the original victim) can forgive for the suffering of the primary victim (who the offence was perpetrated against). The third section will outline important components of Claudia Card's *The Atrocity Paradigm* (2002). She develops the concepts of culpable wrongdoing and intolerable harm. The fourth section will analyze the debate about the unforgivable. The final section explores potential considerations for the victim prior to forgiveness.

2 Radical Forgiveness: Aspects

The term radical forgiveness is rarely used in forgiveness literature. As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, it is used by only one scholar. Andrew Fiala writes that radical forgiveness is the type of “forgiveness that is offered even when the forgiven party remains unrepentant” (Fiala, 2012, p. 494). His understanding of radical forgiveness is grounded in a religious worldview. According to Fiala (2012), radical forgiveness “does at least some of the following: establishes a duty of forgiveness that is grounded in divine command, discounts the goods of the present world, does not view harms suffered in this world as significant losses, and hopes that in the long run justice and mercy are preserved within the

mystery of the divine omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence” (p. 494). For this thesis, I do not propose radical forgiveness be understood in religious terms. Instead I simply borrow the idea of an unrepentant offender and the empirical parameters that accompany such a condition.

Despite this being the only reference to the term radical forgiveness, the process of radical forgiveness is frequently referred to by other scholars under different labels. For example, Sharon Lamb uses the term unilateral forgiveness and describes it as a process where “[f]orgiving an individual who is not repentant reconciles something within the forgiver” (Lamb, 2005, p. 62). Lamb focuses more on the internal dynamics of the victim though the perpetrator also remains unrepentant.

Also present in this debate are philosophers who argue that forgiveness cannot be given to a repentant offender. The below quote, from Jacques Derrida, explains that there can be no forgiveness for a repentant perpetrator because after the process of repentance there is no guilty person left to forgive. Since the perpetrator is morally transformed by their repentance, they are no longer the guilty person who committed the offense. In essence, the perpetrator is transformed into a morally contrite individual who is in no need of forgiveness. Derrida argues:

[O]n the one side, the idea which is also a demand for the *unconditional*, gracious, infinite, aneconomic, forgiveness granted to the *guilty as guilty*, without counterpart, even to those who do not repent or ask forgiveness, and *on the other side*, as a great number of texts testify through many semantic refinements and difficulties, a conditional forgiveness proportionate to the recognition of the fault, to repentance, to the transformation of the sinner who when explicitly asks forgiveness. And who from that point is no longer guilty through and through, but already another, and better than the guilty one. To this extent, and on this condition, it is no longer the *guilty as such* who is forgiven. (Derrida, 1997 (2001), p. 34-35)

The first section of this quote demonstrates his ideal of forgiveness which is given to a guilty perpetrator with no possibility of an exchange between him and the victim. The victim forgives the same perpetrator who committed the offense, not a morally transformed individual. It is forgiveness that occurs in such a context that I call radical forgiveness.

This process of forgiveness is radical in that it is a deeply profound and transformative internal process. With no emotional exchange with the perpetrator, the victim goes through an emotional transformation on their own. There is no perpetrator present to help him/her release deep negative thoughts and emotions (such as anger, hatred, and vengeance) by accepting responsibility or offering an apology. The victim is alone in overcoming the trauma caused by the wrongdoing and alone in the journey towards a new life with meaning.

3 Who Can Forgive? Primary and Secondary Victims

A central question in forgiveness literature is, who can forgive? The tension lies between primary and secondary victims. Can a secondary victim forgive on behalf of the primary victim? For example, can a family member forgive a perpetrator for the torture of their loved one? Who can forgive when there are multiple victims and multiple perpetrators? By engaging this discussion, I am able to establish parameters to who can offer radical forgiveness.

The most cited example is Simon Wiesenthal's experience in a Nazi concentration camp that he later recorded in his book *The Sunflower* (1997). *The Sunflower* is a non-fiction account Wiesenthal's time spent as a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War, which includes a response section where other academics and survivors

reflect on his experiences. Wiesenthal was a Jewish concentration camp prisoner during the Holocaust and one day during his labour he was smuggled into a dark room where Karl, an Schutzstaffel (SS) Nazi soldier, lay dying. Haunted by a particularly horrific incident where he shot Jewish victims, young and old, attempting to escape through the windows of a burning building, Karl begins to tell Wiesenthal his life story (Wiesenthal, 1997, p. 41-43). In an uncomfortable and rare scene, Karl asks Wiesenthal for forgiveness. Wiesenthal leaves without saying a word.

There is general consensus among ethicists and survivors that Wiesenthal leaving without offering forgiveness was the right choice (Wiesenthal, 1997, p. 102). Though most of their considerations do not make reference to radical forgiveness specifically, they are important in establishing who can forgive the perpetrators of atrocious offenses. Some support Wiesenthal's decision not to offer forgiveness because they perceive the Holocaust to be utterly unforgiveable. Vladimir Jankélévitch famously argues that "forgiveness died in the death camps" (as cited in Derrida, 1997 (2001), p. 37). Another survivor turned writer, Primo Levi, adds that "[t]he act of 'having a Jew brought to him [shows] once again, the Nazi was using the Jews as a tool, unaware [and evidently unconcerned] of the danger and the shock his request must have constituted for the prisoner" (as cited in Wiesenthal, 1997, p. 192). Even in the act of repenting, Karl was misusing and disrespecting his prisoner by not identifying with him as a unique individual but rather seeing him as just 'a Jew'. Though both of these opinions are legitimate, they refer to conditional, not radical, forgiveness. In this case, Karl acknowledges his wrongdoing, accepts responsibility and shows genuine remorse.

Other scholars support Wiesel's decision not to forgive because he, not personally being one of Karl's victims, was not in a position to forgive. Despite him being Jewish and Karl being an SS soldier, Wiesel had nothing to do with Karl and was therefore not a primary victim of his. Many scholars argue that it is only the primary victim that can forgive their specific perpetrator (Govier, 1999, p. 61; Chapman, 2007, p. 63; Holmgren, 1993, p. 341). This also fits my understanding of radical forgiveness as an internal process within the primary victim.

The logistical trouble with this understanding is when the victim has been killed. How can a murdered victim offer radical forgiveness to their murderer? Due to this conundrum, a few scholars refer to murder as the ultimate unforgivable crime. In response, Govier (2002) argues that since groups can be agents of wrongdoing and groups, because of their identity as a group, can suffer harm, they can also be both subjects and objects of forgiveness (p. 87). In Wiesel's case, on the other hand, many scholars conclude that he could only forgive for his own suffering and he would have been wrong to forgive on behalf of those who had perished (Wiesel, 1997, p. 102). I argue that family members of a murdered victim can forgive the perpetrator for the grief they have suffered in losing their loved one but they cannot forgive for the murder itself. I do this in order to preserve the integrity of the internal and transformative nature of forgiveness.

In summary, anyone can forgive for the pain they themselves have suffered. It may not be the pain of the primary offense but it is forgiveness for pain nonetheless. To say otherwise would limit the internal and emotional change that may occur in each individual during radical forgiveness. For my understanding of radical forgiveness, I will borrow the idea that it is only the primary victim can forgive for the original offense.

4 Culpable Wrongdoing of Intolerable Harm

So far this thesis has focused exclusively on exploring and defining forgiveness. Though this is very important, any understanding without first exploring the offense that is to be forgiven and the trauma endured by the victim would result in an incomplete and insufficient understanding of forgiveness itself. The type of harm and its effect on the victim has a significant impact on the possibility of forgiveness as well as the context in which forgiveness occurs (Orcutt et al., 2008, p. 82).

I have chosen to use Card's *Atrocity Paradigm* to explore wrongdoing and subsequent harm because of her focus on the suffering of the victim. In order to understand the complexity of radical forgiveness, we must understand the depth of a victim's suffering and the severity of the offense for which they are forgiving. This is not to say that focusing on understanding the perpetrator is not important or informative for forgiveness. That type of exploration is simply not within the scope of this thesis. Rather, since radical forgiveness is an internal and personal process it follows that a model focusing on the victim's suffering would serve this thesis best.

The Atrocity Paradigm (2002) is a book by Card in which she conceptualizes harms, evils, atrocities as well as the culpability that can be ascribed to each. She explores topics such as radical evil, prioritizing evils, the moral power of victims, and the moral burdens and obligations of perpetrators. She uses examples such as wartime rape and terrorism in the home in order to navigate the moral landscape of evil and suffering.

4.1 *Evil and Suffering*

The Atrocity Paradigm (2002) explores both the concepts of evil and the suffering that evils inflict. The subsection on evil and atrocity will outline how Card distinguishes between them. The subsection on suffering intolerable harm will focus more on explaining the victim's experience. Both the depth of trauma suffered and the intolerability of the harm are considerations in determining what can be forgiven under the scope of radical forgiveness.

4.1.1 *Evil and Atrocity*

According to most scholars there are different levels of wrongdoing. Harm, evil and atrocity are three such examples. Harm, for now, is simply a wrongdoing that does not necessarily have to be culpably inflicted upon another and may involve minimal suffering. It is when moral agency - ill will - is attached to an act that it transforms from a simple harm to an evil and/or an atrocity.

Evils are worse than harms. Card (2002) writes that “evils are foreseeable intolerable harms produced by culpable wrongdoing” (p. 3). It “tends to ruin lives, or significant parts of lives. It is not surprising if victims never recover or are never quite able to move on, although sometimes people do recover and move on” (Card, 2002, p. 3-4). She explains further below:

[A]n evil is harm that is (1) reasonably foreseeable (or appreciable) and (2) culpably inflicted (or tolerated, aggravated, or maintained), and that (3) deprives, or seriously risks depriving, others of the basics that are necessary to make life possible and tolerable or decent (or to make a death decent). Such basics include uncontaminated food, water, and air; sleep; freedom from severe and prolonged pain and from debilitating fear; affective ties with other human beings; the ability to make choices and act on them; and a sense of one's own worth as a person. Severe and unrelenting pain or humiliation, debilitating and disfiguring diseases, starvation, extreme impotence, and severe enforced isolation are evils when they are brought about or supported by culpable wrongdoing. (Card, 2002, p. 16)

The first part of her definition outlines that she holds evils to be harms that could have been foreseen. In essence, “harm is not evil unless aggravated, supported, or produced by culpable wrongdoing” (Card, 2002, p. 5). For example, “[n]atural events—earthquakes, fires, floods—not brought about by or preventable by moral agency are not evils” (Card, 2002, p. 5). She acknowledges that “it is not reasonable to expect even perpetrators to foresee freak accidents” but where harm is foreseeable and even appreciable, evil may be done (Card, 2002, p. 20). The second part of her definition includes the specific impact on the victim. The key phrases here are a tolerable and/or decent life.

If harms become evil when moral agency is involved, when do evils become atrocities? According to Card, “[a]trocities shock, at least when we first learn of them. They seem monstrous. We recoil from visual images and details. Many think no one should have to suffer them, not even evildoers” (Card, 2002, p. 9). Examples of atrocities include: “genocide, slavery, torture, rape as a weapon of war, the saturation bombing of cities, biological and chemical warfare unleashing lethal viruses and gases, and the domestic terrorism of prolonged battery, stalking and child abuse” (Card, 2002, p. 8). Atrocities “are both perpetrated and suffered” and “[h]arm is what is most salient” about them (Card, 2002, p. 9). Rather than involving simple harms, I propose that radical forgiveness involves evils and atrocities. I do this in order to track the process of the victim after some of the most terrible suffering that can be experienced.

4.1.2 Suffering Intolerable Harm

Card (2002) writes that “tolerable” is “a normative concept, not entirely subjective, although some subjective elements may be inevitable. A ‘tolerable’ life is at least minimally worth living for its own sake and from the standpoint of the being whose life it is, not just as

a mean to an end of others” (p. 16). Out of respect for the victims of atrocities, Card avoids ranking atrocities in terms of tolerability. She does acknowledge that there are some evils worse than others but chooses not to come to an overall judgement on the levels of atrocity (Card, 2002, p. 13-14).

Despite her choice not to judge levels of atrocity, Card does explore the levels of harm in general. She writes,

... [s]everity of harm is a function of such factors as (1) intensity of suffering, (2) effects on one’s ability to function (to work, for example) and (3) on the quality of one’s relationships with others, (4) how containable the harm is ... (5) how reversible, (6) possibilities of compensation, and also (7) duration and (8) the number of victims. (Card, 2002, p. 14)

Similar to the above section, I propose that radical forgiveness involves such instances of intense suffering.

4.2 The Culpable Wrongdoing Debate

Card has a broad definition of culpability for the above evils and atrocities. Not all ethicists and philosophers agree as it implicates the largest number of perpetrators possible. The first subsection below outlines Card’s definition of culpability and the next subsection outlines divergent opinions. I highlight both opinions below but will use the broad definition of Card to inform my understanding of radical forgiveness.

4.2.1 Card’s Culpable Wrongdoing

Culpability is used frequently in legal proceedings to establish guilt and responsibility. It is also used when contemplating forgiveness. For many scholars, intent to cause harm is the deciding factor in establishing culpability of wrongdoing. On the topic of intent, Card (2002) writes “[c]ulpability in an evil intention can take many forms, such as (1) the aim to bring about intolerable harm, (2) the willingness to do so in the course of pursuing

an otherwise acceptable aim or in adhering to some other value or principle, or (3) the failure to attend to risk or take them seriously” (p. 20). She also touches upon motive. “An agent’s *motive* is evil if it is no accident that, when the motive is efficacious, evil results—that is, the agent would bring about harm that makes or threatens to make someone’s life intolerable” (Card, 2002, p. 21).

Though Card comments on intent, her purpose is to prove that culpability is more complex than simply establishing intent to do harm. In her paradigm, Card expands the notion of culpability to reflect the reality of suffering of the victim more than the intent of the perpetrator. Victims suffer whether perpetrators intended suffering specifically or not. Card’s reasons for doing so reside in her belief that “[e]vildoers ... are not necessarily malicious. Oftener they are inexcusably reckless, callously indifferent, amazingly unscrupulous” (Card, 2002, p. 4). For Card, all of these examples indicate culpability. Whether the perpetrator had intentions to cause suffering or if a bystander failed to intervene, both can be held culpable.

In defining culpability, Card even outlines degrees of voluntariness, which yield degrees of ignorance and degrees of duress. There are also degrees of inattentiveness. For example, recklessness is grosser than neglect or carelessness (Card, 2002, p. 14). She also argues that “[b]ystanders become doers [of evil], in the relevant sense, if they choose to do nothing when they could have done something that might have made a constructive difference” (Card, 2002, p. 19-20). Whereas some ethicists stop attributing guilt to an individual if they did not intend suffering, Card continues to ascribe culpability whether there was intent or not. Culpability for her is based simply on the fact that foreseeable suffering occurred. In this sense, it is actually the victim’s suffering, and therefore the victim him/herself, that determines the perpetrator’s culpability rather than the perpetrator.

4.2.2 Alternatives of Culpability

As mentioned above, not all those who write about culpability agree with Card's broad and encompassing definition. In *Evil, Political Violence and Forgiveness* (2009), Todd Calder disagrees with Card on two main points. He writes that that a degree of separation from the harm impacts the degree of culpability and the nature of the institution determines whether or not it is evil.

Whereas Card argues that harm suffered necessarily means evil culpably done, Calder argues that there may be some instances where there is evil suffered but not necessarily evil done (as cited in Veltman and Norlock, 2009, p. 16). He argues that it is not about physical distance, numbers of agents involved, or even about knowing the victim, but rather about the *intent* to use someone or to do harm to another for their gain (as cited in Veltman and Norlock, 2009, p. 18). His example is a sweatshop owner and a shoe buyer who do not intend suffering on the worker but the worker suffers nonetheless. The individual buying the shoes has good intentions of getting a pair of shoe for the lowest cost. However the worker in the shoe sweatshop suffers from the individual's choice to buy the shoes because that choice continues the cycle of exploitation. Similarly, the sweatshop owner may simply intend to generate a profit by keeping costs low, not to cause harm and suffering to his employees. Calder argues that both the shop owner and the shoe buyer do wrong but are not culpable of evil. What is truly evil, for Calder, are the policies and institutions that allow the chain of exploitation to function continuously (as cited in Veltman and Norlock, 2009, p. 21).

Card also takes up this issue. For her, a practice or institution is "evil if it is reasonably foreseeable that intolerable harm will result from its normal and correct

operation” (as cited in Veltman and Norlock, 2009, p. 27). Card uses the example of marriage. She argues that the norms of marriage provide cover for and license to the evils of spousal abuse. She recognises that it is not the purpose of marriage to abuse spouses but neither is it incidental that women are terrorized in their homes when married. Marriage licenses give potentially abusive partners unlimited and unchecked access to the victim, and restricts potential interveners from helping the victim. The laws surrounding marriage also encourage abused women to stay in the marriage, despite the abuse, because of the legal and financial difficulty of acquiring a divorce. “The consequence is that married victims of partner battering and rape have less protection than anyone except children, the very elderly, and the severely dependant” (Card, 2002, p. 140-159).

In opposition to Card, who holds that the evil must only be ‘reasonably foreseeable’, Calder holds that “a practice or institution is evil only if intolerable harm is an essential component of the institution or practice, either as a goal or as a means to an end” (as cited in Veltman and Norlock, 2009, p. 28). Calder writes that spousal abuse, battering and rape are not essential components of marriage, and therefore marriage itself cannot be considered an evil institution. Evil institutions are those of slavery, torture and genocide where intolerable harm is an essential, if not the essential, component (Card, 2002, p. 30).

In conclusion, how we ascribe culpability to those involved in the offense may determine who we can forgive. Also, how we conceptualize evil and suffering, as well as how we ascribe culpability, directly affects how we understand radical forgiveness. It is Card’s broad conceptualization of culpability that I will borrow to inform my understanding of radical forgiveness. I do this to highlight the breadth of people who can be involved in the

suffering of others. A victim may grapple with forgiving one single perpetrator or all those who could have helped alleviate the suffering.

5 The Unforgivable

The term unforgivable is commonly used when speaking about horrific acts of violence and torture. It is most used with reference to the Holocaust. The debate highlighted in this section is whether or not an act can truly be unforgivable. The section below also draws the distinction between unforgivable acts and unforgivable actors.

5.1 *Unforgivable Acts*

A common debate in the literature on forgiveness is if there are acts so terrible that they are deemed unforgivable. My specific question is whether there is an intolerable harm that radical forgiveness cannot be an option for due to the nature or magnitude of the suffering caused. Though many philosophers explore this issue, the below sections will highlight two key ideas regarding unforgivable acts.

5.1.1 *The Impossibility Paradox*

One perspective used to answer this question regarding unforgivable acts, is called the ‘impossibility paradox’. It focuses on the very essence of ‘true’ forgiveness⁷ as conceptualized by Derrida. This paradox argues that it is in fact unforgivable acts, those we hold most horrific that ‘true’ forgiveness involves. Derrida writes:

[Y]es, there is the unforgivable. Is this not, in truth, the only thing to forgive? The only thing that calls for forgiveness? If one is only prepared to forgive what appears forgivable ... then the very idea of forgiveness would disappear. If there is something to forgive, it would be

⁷ I am not proposing a definition or confirming the existence of a definition of “true” forgiveness. I am simply using the terms Derrida uses to distinguish between forgiveness for simple transgression and forgiveness for atrocities.

what in religious language is called mortal sin, the worst, the unforgivable crime or harm ... forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable ... That is to say the forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself. (Derrida, 1977(2001), p. 32-33)

In this sense, forgiving simple transgressions, such as a lie or a missed lunch date, actually renders forgiveness meaningless. It is only in forgiving the unforgivable acts, such as the Holocaust, that allows forgiveness itself to retain any profound meaning (Derrida, 1997 (2001), p. 45). Derrida writes, “in order for evil to emerge, ‘radical evil’⁸, and perhaps worse again, the unforgivable evil, the only one which would make the question of forgiveness emerge, it is necessary that at the most intimate of that intimacy an absolute hatred would come to interrupt the peace” (Derrida, 1997 (2001), p. 47). Ultimately, only ‘true’ evil could ever call upon ‘true’ forgiveness. ‘True’ forgiveness responds to these intolerable harms that we are inclined to call unforgivable.

Derrida cautions against an ‘economic transaction’ of forgiveness (forgiveness in return for reparations for example) as it would undermine the profundity of the phenomenon of forgiveness (Derrida, 1997 (2001), p. 34). The concept of forgiveness would be tainted if it was simply given upon request or after repentance by the perpetrator for simple transgressions (Derrida, 1997 (2001), 34). It is the type of forgiveness for seemingly unforgivable crimes that I incorporate into my understanding of radical forgiveness.

5.1.2 *The Agency Factor*

Another perspective used to answer the question of unforgivable acts is given by Trudy Govier. She makes a very important distinction on the issue of unforgivable acts in her

⁸ Immanuel Kant coined the term radical evil. “Radical evil, for Kant, consists in making self-interest (which he identifies with prudence) one’s supreme practical principle, subordinating the moral law to it ... Radical evil consists in the preparedness, because of the principle one has made supreme for one’s conduct, to violate the moral law when its requirements conflict with pursuing one’s interest” (as cited in Card, 2002, p. 76).

book *Forgiveness and Revenge* (2002). She reminds readers that despite all of the discussion regarding unforgivable deeds, such as murder and genocide, “[w]e do not forgive deeds; we forgive people who have committed deeds ... We forgive, or do not forgive, persons, the moral agents who have committed those deeds ... No deeds ever had to decide whether to take part in collaboration with a former enemy, or engage in a criminal process” (Govier, 2002, p. 109). For example, one would forgive the Nazis who were the actors, not the Holocaust which was the act. Deeds do not have choice and agency. These belong solely to human beings. In this regard, no act itself is inherently unforgivable because it lacks choice and agency.

In her argument, Govier separates the act from the actor. The religious conceptualization of this separation is to “love the sinner, hate the sin”⁹ (Govier, 1999, p. 65). A more secular approach is to understand that “persons are distinguished from their actions and are capable of choice, originality, deliberation, autonomy, and moral reform” (Govier, 1999, p. 66). By acknowledging that it is only people who may be agents, and therefore forgiven or not forgiven, the debate over unforgivable acts is moot.

5.2 Unforgivable Actors

If, according to Govier, it is not the act that is unforgivable, there must exist truly evil and unforgivable actors. The empirical evidence of horrific acts such as these must be indicative of truly evil actors who are therefore unforgivable. Only truly evil actors could imagine and commit atrocities such as the Holocaust or the Rwandan genocide.

⁹ This quote was first written by St. Augustine in his Letter 211 as *Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum*.

Arendt provides a fascinating insight into the evil nature of individuals who are responsible for atrocities. In her famous and controversial book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), Arendt offers a close examination of one of the men responsible for the Final Solution of the Jews during the Holocaust: Adolf Eichmann. Society tends to view evildoers as rotten to the core. It is easier for victims and witnesses of atrocities to view the men and women responsible as non-human, as pure evil (Arendt, 1963 (2006), xiv). This understanding of self as different from the other creates a safety net in which we are able to say to ourselves: no human who was not completely evil could ever do such a thing.

Arendt covered the 1961 criminal trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi in the Third Reich responsible for developing deportation plans of millions of Jews who were subsequently slaughtered (Arendt, 1963 (2006), xi-xiii). Her conclusion was that his utter banality was what actually predisposed him towards and allowed him to commit evil (Arendt, 1963 (2006), xii-xiii). His inability to think past his own desk job allowed him to send millions of people to their deaths, not his inherently evil character. In summary, Arendt observed that not all evil acts stem from evil personalities or intentions. Therefore we cannot say with absolute certainty that there exist evil actors simply because there is empirical evil in our world.

5.2.1 *The Genetic Disposition*

The above argument that because evil exists in our world evil actors must also exist, still has a substantial amount of support in philosophical literature however. In his book *Facing Evil* (1990), John Kekes explains that the existence of evil actors are as a result of genetic dispositions. Kekes's argument, in essence, is that the actions and choices of a

perpetrator are a very small part of why he/she commits horrible crimes. It is rather “the vast mass of genetics, environment, psychological and social forces that form our characters and are thus responsible for both our chosen and unchosen vices and actions” (Kekes, 1990, p. 69). Ultimately, he concludes that genetics and socialization allows for atrocities to be committed.

Kekes “contends that the agent who characteristically acts in evil ways is an evil agent and will always be such. Evil arises from tendencies and dispositions that form our character but are not chosen and are not alterable” (as cited in Govier, 2002, p. 120). For example, Kekes would argue that Nazi officers were biologically evil and inherently unchangeable. Due to these unchangeable factors, someone whose character has developed to be evil is incapable of change because evil is fundamentally and unchangeably part of them. Kekes’s solution is to treat evil people as evil and take a hard stance against evil by punishing them harshly.

The trouble with this argument is the inability to establish any culpability. If evil people are necessarily bound by forces beyond their control, such as genetics and environmental factors, are they really culpable? Govier writes, “[i]f the pathology is violent, such a person may have to be locked away, separated from society for its own protection, regarded as a menace to society. But this person is more to be pitied than punished and should be understood not as morally rotten or an unforgivable monster but as a human being unable to control actions and, in this respect, outside the domain of responsible moral agency” (Govier, 2002, p. 125).

If this is the case, what happens to the process of forgiveness if culpability is never established? How would victims know whether to forgive or who to forgive if culpability

could not be determined? In certain cases, those victims who require an acknowledgement of wrongdoing from their perpetrator in order to heal and move forward would forever be suspended in their grief. Even those who require no interaction from their perpetrator would still be left with no one culpable to forgive.

With regards to the perpetrator, similar complications arise if culpability cannot be established. Arendt writes that “[w]ithout being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever” (Arendt, 1958 (1998), p. 237). No possibility for moral transformation would ever exist for perpetrators. In essence, both the process of forgiveness for the victim and the process of acting anew for perpetrators would be rendered impossible. Since forgiveness does exist, it does not seem likely that Kekes’s genetic disposition theory is correct. It follows then that there are no truly unforgivable actors.

5.2.2 The Sustained Evil Identity

The above argument of genetic disposition can be altered to the argument that “a moral person is defined by his acts over so much of his lifetime ... [therefore] ultimately we cannot draw a moral distinction between these terrible things to which he committed so much of his life and the person that he is” (Govier, 1999, p. 68). In this case it is not so much that the perpetrator has no control over his horrific acts, but rather he has been committing them for so long that the evil is a fundamental part of him. Govier (1999) uses the example of Pol Pot of the Khmer Rouge who continued to “defend his genocidal regime (1975-79) during eighteen subsequent years” after he committed atrocities in Cambodia (p. 68). In the case “of a person who over a sustained period of time, voluntarily, intentionally and

deliberately, involved himself in atrocities without showing the least bit of compassion, one may argue that such horrors are not external from him ... they are horrors that have become inseparable from his personal and moral identity and in a sense define who he is” (Govier, 1999, p. 69). If these evils acts are so much a part of him that he cannot separate himself from them, the original question remains. Is he absolutely evil, and therefore absolutely unforgivable?

In answer to the above question, Govier offers that it is a moral transformation, or even the possibility of a moral transformation, that proves that there are no completely evil people. Some individuals responsible for atrocious acts have gone through a moral transformation. If a man nicknamed Prime Evil for his sadistic murders of black South Africans, who was responsible for plotting and carrying out numerous tortures and murders, can feel and show remorse, apologize and ask for forgiveness, donate his autobiography’s sales revenue to his victim’s families, and promise to never again commit such acts, there is empirical evidence that a moral transformation can occur (Govier, 1999, p. 69).

Eugene de Kock was a secret police officer for the apartheid regime in South Africa whose Vlakplaas unit was responsible for ‘investigating’ (rather capturing, torturing and murdering) resistance figures in the freedom struggle. As mentioned previously, during a private meeting with the widows of his victims, he showed genuine remorse for his actions and came to realize the wrong in his beliefs and behaviour (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 17). After his own hearing at the TRC, he was applauded by a room full of victims who were, just moments before, vengeful and enraged at hearing his gruesome testimony (Govier, 1999, p. 69). They accepted his remorse and repentance. This event is evidence shows that some people, who we consider to be pure evil, can change. For Govier, this possibility of a

moral transformation contradicts the conclusion that certain people are inherently evil and unforgivable.

In conclusion, one cannot state with empirical proof that there are unforgivable acts or unforgivable actors. It is the idea of unforgivable evil, and our urge to call certain acts unforgivable, that I will incorporate into my understanding of radical forgiveness. Our urge to call an act or an actor unforgivable is indicative of the severity of the transgression. It is in the context of these types of transgressions that I seek to define radical forgiveness. I do this in order to understand forgiveness in the context of the worst forms of evil and suffering.

6 Considerations before Forgiveness

Some authors have proposed a set considerations that the victim should take in order to ensure that forgiveness is appropriate in their specific situation. The ultimate goal of these considerations is to ensure the self-respect of the victim and to ensure that forgiveness will actually benefit him/her. These considerations could be considered conditions for the victim prior to forgiveness.

One such consideration is power and another is safety. Often what is appropriate for the individual situation will depend on the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim (Norlock, 2009, p. 14-15). The dynamics of power have a large impact on the appropriateness of forgiveness. For example, a victim of spousal abuse will not necessarily benefit from forgiving her abusive partner. She may very well be putting herself at further risk. Forgiveness may not be appropriate until she removes herself from the abusive environment for a time thereby altering the power dynamics of the relationship.

Many feminist scholars argue that a condition of forgiveness is first to evaluate the risks and benefits that forgiveness may bring. For example, Margaret Holmgren offers more considerations for the victim to ensure forgiveness is appropriate. She writes that “[i]n many cases the injured person must work through a process of responding to the wrongdoing, and she fails to respect herself if she attempts to forgive her offender before this process is complete” (Holmgren, 1993, p. 342). The following is a comprehensive list created by Holmgren for victims to consider prior to forgiveness. First, the victim of wrongdoing must recover her self-esteem. Implicit in wrongdoing is the message that the victim does not matter as much as the perpetrator, therefore the victim must heal to a point where she feels like she matters equally to others. Second,

She must come to recognize that the perpetration against her was wrong, and she must also understand why it was wrong ... [Third,] the victim of wrongdoing faces the task of acknowledging her feelings ... She must also realize that it is psychologically destructive for her to deny herself these feelings ... [Fourth,] it may be important for the victim to express her beliefs and feelings to the wrongdoer. (Holmgren, 1993, p. 344)

She should do so, if she feels the need, unless this course of action would be dangerous or detrimental to herself or other. Fifth, the victim of wrongdoing must assess her situation regarding the perpetrator. This step refers to finding an appropriate place between forgiving and forgetting. It also is about reaching “a point where she no longer remembers the incident vindictively ... The final task for the victim of wrongdoing is to determine whether she wants to seek restitution from the offender” (Holmgren, 1993, p. 344). These steps are all taken by the victim and can be considered conditions for the victim in order to ensure forgiveness is appropriate.

The above are simply examples of the types of consideration that a victim may take prior to forgiveness. Since radical forgiveness is such an internal process, the victim must be

sure to have a well-rounded understanding of the implications of his/her decision. It is not the case that these considerations must be taken in order for radical forgiveness to occur. They are simply an option that may occur in radical forgiveness.

7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to develop an understanding of the particularities of radical forgiveness by exploring common debates in forgiveness literature.

Conceptualizations of terms such as harm, evil and atrocity as well as suffering and culpability, matter in setting parameters for radical forgiveness. After exploring issues such as who can forgive, unforgivable acts and unforgivable actors, more facets of radical forgiveness are also illuminated. Therefore, I again propose the following understanding of radical forgiveness:

... the type of forgiveness that occurs (1) when it is given by the primary victim for their own suffering; (2) when it is given to an unrepentant offender; (3) who is culpably responsible; (4) for acts so atrocious we are inclined to call them unforgivable; and (5) is based possibly on considerations of the victim but most certainly not on conditions that must be fulfilled by the perpetrator.

The above is the theoretical context in which radical forgiveness may occur. The next chapter provides an empirical context with which to examine radical forgiveness. I have chosen the context of wartime rape due to the depth and severity of the trauma suffered. I, along with many others, consider wartime rape to be an atrocity and an intolerable harm as conceptualized by Card. I, along with many others, also consider wartime rape to be

unforgivable as conceptualized by Derrida. It is therefore an ideal case for exploring radical forgiveness.

Chapter Three: Wartime Rape

1 Introduction

We are now closer to understanding radical forgiveness but we still need to understand the journey of the victim. Using the example of wartime rape, this chapter will provide the context of the trauma suffered by the victim in which radical forgiveness may or may not occur. My final chapter will explore radical forgiveness after wartime rape along with some additional considerations.

The first section of this chapter explains the continuum of violence in which wartime rape exists as a result of patriarchy. The second section reviews the history of rape in war and the silence that surrounded the issue for many years. The third section outlines two modes of understanding wartime rape and prevailing theories explaining the root causes. The

fourth section outlines some of the aims of rape during war and the fifth section describes the most common physical and psychological impacts of wartime rape. The final section outlines the devastating impacts wartime rape can have on secondary victims and communities.

Overall, this chapter will shed light on the trauma of wartime rape, which is imperative in order to understand the full process of radical forgiveness.

2 Continuum of Violence

The atrocity of wartime rape presents itself along a continuum of violence already part of society. Violence against women is embedded solidly in the global system of patriarchy. The broad reach of patriarchy causes boys worldwide to grow up with pride in their authority and girls worldwide to grow up with the belief that boys and men are above them (Trenholm, 2009, p. 145). These beliefs legitimize the domination of men over women in all aspects of life. They also lead to violence against women in the public and private spheres. Violence against women is simply amplified in the context of war. Wartime rape is a manifestation of the male domination over women.

2.1 Global System of Patriarchy

Patriarchy, a social system predicated on unequal power relations between men and women, is a global phenomenon. It is the root cause of violence against women and involves gender-based norms where men are dominant and at the head of both private and social structures (OHCHR, 2013, p. 36). Despite such universal discrimination against women, it is important to note that patriarchy displays itself differently in various regions throughout the world. In some places it is more covert, such as women getting less pay for doing the same job as men. In other contexts it is more overt, such as the lack of reproductive control a

woman has over her body. Though it is suffered by all women, patriarchy is also suffered differently by women with various backgrounds and experiences.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (2013) offers an intersectional approach to understanding the multiple systems of discrimination and hegemony. These systems result in three categories of discrimination:

- ‘targeted’, such as in armed conflict against women of the ‘other’ community;
- ‘compounded’, in which an amalgam of gender and minority/marginalized group membership bars women from opportunities that would otherwise be available to them; and
- ‘structural’, whereby state policies intersect with structural discrimination to increase the degree of marginalization of women based on gender, race, poverty or migrant status. (p. 42)

Patriarchy manifests itself on all three levels. Despite the focus of this chapter on overt physical violence and emotional abuse, structural violence is fundamental to understanding wartime rape in general.

2.2 Violence Against Women

Violence against women is only one way, albeit an extremely detrimental and harmful one, that patriarchy manifests itself in all societies. According to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) (1993), violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to:

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

The DEVAW (1993) recognizes

... [t]hat violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men. (48/104, pp. 6)

There also exist other forms of violence against women recognized more recently by the United Nations not specifically outlined in the DEVAW. These include systematic rape and forced pregnancy during armed conflict, sexual slavery, forced sterilization and forced abortion, female infanticide, and prenatal sex selection (OHCHR, 2013, p. 5). Such violations against women continue to be encouraged and tolerated by states and individuals worldwide. These actions make up part of the system of patriarchy.

2.3 In the Context of War

When it comes to war, social inequalities and violence against women are simply amplified. Feminist scholar Robin May Schott (2011), explains that the devastating impacts of war are actually “gender-multiplied” for women due to their lower position in society in

general (p. 6). It is for this reason that feminist scholars find it more fruitful to explore the militarization of society rather than exploring specific aspects of war in order to understand acts of wartime violence against women.

In such a case, “[a] militarizing society calls on patriarchal values and mechanisms of domination and control heightening hierarchal relations between men and women and equating constructions of masculinity with violence” (Farwell, 2004, p. 394). For example, politicians and military officials call upon notions of masculine duty for men to fight and protect the “motherland” (Farwell, 2004, p. 395). Similarly, there exist notions that ‘women and children’ must be protected as they are weaker and are defenceless from the enemies. In a militarizing society in general, disputes between citizens are often resolved through conflict and violence. This may also mean more violence for wives and girlfriends as men exert a militarized mindset in the household. Gender violence in war therefore relies on pre-existing gender relations and sociocultural dynamics of society.

A note is that both sexual violence and rape happens to boys and men as well as to women. This fact is no different in times of war. Sexual violence against men goes largely unnoticed and unaddressed. Some types of sexual violence perpetrated against boys and men include: anal rape, sexual mutilation, and castration (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 34). Other forms of sexual violence occur when soldiers force incest between father and daughter and/or brother and sister and force celibate men to have sexual intercourse with women (Barstow, 2000, p. 52). It is worth noting that even with male-rape, the perpetrators remain men and the victim is still feminized. The male victim is still put into the submissive role while the perpetrator is masculinized (Skjelsbaek, 2012, p. 88). Even when perpetrated against other men, the aim of rape is to dominate and emasculate. Despite the horrors men experience

related to sexual violence in war, women suffer disproportionately (Henry, 2011, p. 4). It is for this reason that I focus on the rape of women in war.

2.4 Wartime Rape: Sexualisation of War

Wartime rape is one of the manifestations of sexual violence in war. When it comes to rape in war, it is again more beneficial to examine the sexualisation of war before the details of the rapes themselves. Soldiers normalizing rape during times of war has roots in military culture and is also used to uphold a patriarchal view of masculinity (Trenholm, 2009, p. 148). In her book called *War's Dirt Secret: Rape, Prostitution, and Other Crimes Against Women* (2000), Anne Llewellyn Barstow explains the process of how war comes to be sexualized. In essence, militaries worldwide celebrate the manliness or hyper-masculinity of war (Barstow, 2000, p. 183). This sexualisation can be seen in the language used by commanding officers and soldiers alike throughout war preparation. For example, soldiers are called ladies, girls, pussies, and sissies when they underperform in training exercise (Barstow, 2000, p. 186). This language creates an understanding that superiority and strength are associated with men and inferiority and weakness are associated with women.

“Sex-role stereotyping generally - regarding occupation, familial, and social roles - also has been found to be associated with rape propensity” (Barstow, 2000, p. 182). An example is the use of “Suzie Rottencrotch”, a name used to refer to women other than close relations in the American military. One drill sergeant said “Privates, if you don’t have a little Suzie now, maybe you’re going to find one when you get home. You bet. You’ll find the first cheap slut you can get back home. What do you mean, ‘No’? You’re a Marine, you’re going to do it” (Barstow, 2000, p. 185). This language casts women as sexual targets for male soldiers. It also creates a sexual norm of preying on women for sex in the military.

Traditional stereotypes are taken, sexualized and then normalized by commander and soldiers alike in war.

Another example of the sexualisation of war is the link between pornography and military training. “When pornography is normal, a whole population of men is primed to dehumanize women and to enjoy inflicting assault sexually ... Pornography was the perfect preparation-motivator and instruction manual in one for the sexual atrocities in this [former Yugoslavian] genocide” (MacKinnon, 1994b, p. 77). With its use, some men in Serbia were conditioned to expect sexual pleasure from attacking and raping Muslim women.

Further, evidence of the sexualisation of war is found in sexual violence statistics. Though violent crime rates between military personnel and civilians during wartime are similar, rape rates for military personnel during war are significantly higher than civilian rates (Barstow, 2000, p. 167). The spike in wartime military rape rates is consistent with the training and indoctrination men receive as they become soldiers. Civilian rates stay lower because they do not receive the same messages about women as sexual prey. Also, rape rates are several times higher than any other crime committed by military personnel during war (Barstow, 2000, p. 167). Despite the violence of war, rape seems to be the crime most committed over other forms of violence. These statistics indicate that the sexualisation of war, as learned through military training, increases the risk of sexual violence and wartime rape against women.

In conclusion, wartime rape is one act on the continuum of sexual violence and discrimination against women. I offer the following way to conceptualize rape in war. “[T]he term wartime rape ... never indicates isolated examples of rape by individual fighters. Rather, the term is used interchangeably with mass wartime rape to indicate distinct patterns

of rape by soldiers at rates that are much increased over rates of rape that prevail in peacetime” (Gotschall, 2004, p. 129). One other key component to note is that wartime rape has little to do with sex or sexual desire. “[R]ape in war is about power, sadistic violence, and strategy” (Gotschall, 2004, p. 133).

3 Background

Rape in war is as old a phenomenon as warring itself (Skjelsbaek, 2012, p. 47). It has a long history of being encouraged in war as referred to in the examples of the Roman and Greek conquests, the Crusades, the Hundred Years War, the American Revolution and both World Wars (Davis, 2000, p. 1226). It is endorsed, organized and ignored in most modern conflicts as well (Davis, 2000, p. 1226). Claudia Card would say that it is the toleration of such a widespread harm that makes it an atrocity (Card, 2004, p. 217). Though silence has surrounded the issue for decades, the 1990s saw a wave of interest and concern over wartime sexual violence against women.

3.1 A Culture of Silence

Despite the millions of rape victims throughout the world, wartime rape has always been surrounded by a culture of silence (Henry, 2011, p. 28). For example, it was decades before the thousands of women who were raped by Japanese soldiers during the Second World War spoke publically about what had happened to them¹⁰ (Barstow, 2000, p. 17). This

¹⁰ In December 1937, the Japanese killed over 300,000 Chinese and raped between 20,000- 80,000 women and girls (Barstow, 2000, p. 46). It came to be known as The Rape of Nanking. “No matter how young or old, they all could not escape the fate of being raped” (Barstow, 2000, p. 47). Some scholars believe that “the Rape of Nanking was probably the single worst instance of wartime rape inflicted on a civilian population with the sole exception of the treatment of Bengali women by Pakistani soldiers in 1971” (Barstow, 2000, p. 48). This public event led to the kidnapping of thousands of women and girls for more private Japanese military brothels during World War II (Barstow, 2000, p. 1).

culture of silence is partly due to wartime rape being seen as an inevitable by-product of war (Farwell, 2004, p. 389). It is also partly due to cultural norms that foster shame and guilt within victims of rape. In addition, it was not considered a violation of international humanitarian law which guides the rules of war (Farwell, 2004, p. 389). It was perhaps considered a crime against male property but not an attack on the female body (Henry, 2011, p 52).

3.2 Response to the Atrocities of the 1990s

A few feminists and other organizations were writing about wartime rape before the 1990s but it was not until evidence of the rape camps in the former Yugoslavia surfaced that victims were suddenly paid attention to (Henry, 2011, p. 62). Reports spread around the globe of the thousands of women who were kidnapped and systematically raped in detention camps during the civil war (Barstow, 2000, p. 68). For example,

... [i]n 1995 Human Rights Watch published an impressive compilation of its recent reports on abuses against women's human rights, most of them dealing with armed conflicts. By this time also the United Nations and the NGOs that work with it began to publish important pieces calling attention to the increasing wartime violence against women. The report of the Center for Women's Global Leadership in the Vienna Conference of Human rights ... [also] added to our knowledge. (Barstow, 2000, p. 7)

These reports, regarding more than only the rapes in Eastern Europe, helped raise awareness regarding the issue of sexual violence against female civilians in war.

A few years later, the conflicts in Rwanda¹¹ and then in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)¹², helped propel wartime rape again to the forefront of global awareness

¹¹ "Between April and July of 1994, Rwandan murderers killed between 500,000 and 1 million men, women, and children in the culmination of an all-out war that followed years of pogroms, expulsions, casualties, and flight" (Barstow, 2000, p. 96).

¹² "The war there has been described as the largest war in African history ... owing to the numbers of countries involved in the conflict whilst simultaneously exploiting DRCs natural resources such as coltan, essential in

(Davis, 2011, p. 1228; Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 1). As a result, advocates called for changes in international law to protect the rights of women in war specifically. Since rape was being used so systematically, it was incorporated into the definitions of both crimes against humanity and genocide in the Rome Statute adopted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998. During the subsequent legal proceedings at both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), major milestones were attained. The ground-breaking Akayesu case in the ICTR was the first time someone was found guilty of rape as a crime against humanity and genocide (Henry, 2011, p. 95; Skjelsbaek, 2012, p. 68). Not only did this case set an important precedent but it also helped expand the legal definition of rape. The indictment against Akayesu included “forcible sexual penetration of the vagina, anus or oral cavity by a penis and/or of the vagina or anus by some other object, and sexual abuse, such as forced nudity” (Davis, 2000, p. 1243).

Another major milestone towards global awareness was attained during the criminal proceedings of the Special Court for Sierra Leone¹³. The Special Court was able to prosecute crimes against humanity that included “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and any other form of sexual violence” when committed “as part of a widespread or systematic attack” against civilians (Nowrojee, 2005, p. 97). The Special Court also expressly defined ‘rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault’ as violations of humanitarian law as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions (Nowrojee, 2005, p. 97). In May 2004, the Sierra Leone Special Court also included forced marriage into the definition

technological devices. The countries and corporations harvesting Congo’s wealth are in partnership with various militias responsible for the unprecedented and brutal mass raping (Trenholm, 2011, p. 140).

¹³ This court was established to prosecute war criminals from the Sierra Leonean civil war in which sexual violence was also rampant.

of rape. This decision was made to reflect the gruesome reality of hundreds of ‘bush wives’¹⁴ forced into marrying their captors.

In summary, rape in war has been encouraged through the centuries and has been embedded in a culture of silence. Since the atrocities committed in the 1990s, feminists, advocates and organizations worldwide have made progress in raising awareness and extending legal protection to women in war. Despite these great accomplishments, wartime rape is still used systematically around the world and goes largely unaddressed. One reason for the continued use of and tolerance towards wartime rape is the way in which society understands these atrocities.

4 Understanding Wartime Rape

How we understand wartime rape directly impacts how we react to it. If we understand it to be inevitable, hope for change diminishes. If we understand it to be simply a tool of warfare, hope for change is diminished. This section will review some of the main theories and modes of understanding that impact our reactions to wartime rape. The first subsection summarizes Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern’s two approaches of understanding wartime rape. The second subsection outlines the four most prominent theories in explaining the root causes of wartime rape.

¹⁴ “Rebels abducted thousands of women and girls and subjected them to sexual slavery, forcibly conscripting them into the rebel forces, or ‘married’ them to members of the rebel force. The women were held for prolonged periods of time. Aside from sexually servicing rebel fighters, ‘civilian’ abductees ... were also required to perform forced labour, such as cooking, washing, and portering (carrying ammunition and other looted items) for the rebels. Some of these women had children fathered by rebels” (Nowrojee, 2005, p. 89).

4.1 The Sexed versus Gendered Approach

In their book, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond* (2013), Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern offer an enlightening paradigm through which to understand wartime rape. They offer two approaches, the sexed and the gendered, to explain how society perceives, and therefore reacts, to rape in war.

4.1.1 The Sexed Approach

The “biological urge/substitution theory” is the older of the two modes of understanding. It recognizes rape as a by-product of war (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 17). The argument of this theory is that rape is the result of a genetic masculine urge and heterosexual needs. These needs are seen as quite natural and require satisfying. Since men are removed from their wives and/or girlfriends, with whom they would normally satisfy these biological urges, they rape women in the countries in which they are fighting (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 18). This is accepted in many military circles as it celebrates male sexual potency. The solution then is to expose men to more women either in the form of more leave periods or “comfort women” around the military base.

Proof of this understanding is found in the example of comfort women used by Japanese soldiers from 1932-1945. “‘Comfort’ bases were established in military tents, small houses near a base, in the mountains, in small ditches, in halls, etc” where one woman was expected to service up to ninety male soldiers a day (Barstow, 2000, p. 18). More than 200,000 women were forcibly taken from Korea alone to act as sexual slaves for the Japanese army. During the Japan-China War many soldiers engaged in killing, stealing,

burning, and raping. It is what came to be known as the rape of Nanking. It is why the system of comfort women was established. The Japanese military leaders needed a system of sexual release for their soldiers if they were not to rape the local women in the streets. In addition, “authorities needed comfort women based in the military. Otherwise soldiers would visit local brothels and spread military secrets by accident to local people” (Barstow, 2000, p. 19).

A final point to note regarding the sexed approach is the implication of this understanding. In war, the national laws that presumably keep men from raping are removed therefore giving them leave to rape. This understanding means that all men would be rapists without laws and proper socialization by their mothers and later their wives (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 18-19). The implication of this is that each man has the biological predisposition and potential to be a rapist.

4.1.2 The Gendered Approach

The gendered story is the understanding that boys and men are socialized to be ‘masculine’ and violent so they are able to defend their country. They are essentially militarized. Men are cast as heterosexual masculine citizen-soldiers and women as feminine, peaceful, life-givers in need of protection (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 20). According to this understanding, militaries celebrate violence, order, masculine-coded obedience and domination as strictly opposite to feminine, inferior, effeminate, and dangerous. The socialization breaks down the feminine boy and through indoctrination builds up a macho soldier. This indoctrination process occurs in a large group with certain rituals that bond the soldiers together. Sometimes those rituals include rape (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 20). In gang rape, each soldier tries to prove their prowess and dominance to the other men involved.

Gang rape also forges loyalty to the group. If most of the soldiers are involved in the rape it is less likely that one soldier will speak out against the sexual violence.

An example of socialization that leads to sexual violence is in the DRC. The rapes there are a result of gender inequalities and learned gender roles in society (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 23). In the documentary *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo* (2007), director, producer and rape survivor Lisa Jackson interviews soldiers who admit to regularly raping women in the Congo. A few tell her that they rape because they “feel more like a man”, because they suffer in the bush so women must also suffer, and “because God says men are superior to women” (Jackson, 2007). Their understanding of their situation is a result of unequal gender stereotypes in society that are simply heightened in war.

Despite the horrors of war rape, there is hope in this type of understanding. Seeing rape in war as a result of indoctrination and/or socialization moves our focus from natural states to socially constructed roles and behaviours (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 22). This means that men can learn different types of masculinity; it all depends on how they are socialized. They can also learn to accept new, more equal roles of women in society. In fact, both men and women can learn gender roles that more suit their lived reality according to the gendered approach (Baaz and Stern, 2013, p. 21).

4.2 Theories of the Roots Causes of Wartime Rape

As the atrocities of wartime rape became more publicized, scholars began to search for explanations of the root causes. There are many different theories of the root causes of wartime rape. This section will briefly explain the feminist theory, the cultural pathology theory, the strategic rape theory, and the biosocial theory.

4.2.1 *The Feminist Theory*

“The classic feminist orientation is to extend the so-called power hypothesis of rape into the wartime milieu ... That is, rape in war, like rape in peace, is identified not as a crime of sexual passion but as a crime motivated by the desire of a man to exert dominance over a woman” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 130). Under this theory, men are socialized to hate women from a young age and rape is one way men show their distrust of and domination over women in society (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 32). Where this theory falls short is explaining why rape does not occur disproportionately in macho, patriarchal societies (Gottschall, 2004, p. 131). Rape is a universal phenomenon that cannot be broken down by certain cultures and societies.

4.2.2 *The Cultural Pathology Theory*

This theory takes the approach of “peer[ing] back into a nation’s history [to] see what developmental factors conspired to cause its men to descend to the vilest barbarism” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 131). Some writers point out that military culture breeds hostile attitudes towards women that can lead to the feelings of entitlement to rape. Though there is empirical data to provide support for this theory, it does not help us answer the question of why wartime rape prevails across eras and all types of cultures. In essence, “[h]ow is it that wartime rape is regularly perpetrated by men who have massively different socialization experiences: imperial Japanese troops, Mongol raiders ... New Guinean tribesman, and American soldiers in Vietnam?” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 131). Each of these groups has a different history yet wartime rape was recorded in all of them.

4.2.3 *The Strategic Rape Theory*

“Strategic rape theory is currently the most influential theory of mass wartime rape ... a consensus has been building that wholesale rape represents just another ordinance- like bombs, bullets, or propaganda- that a military can use to accomplish its strategic objectives; rape is just a tactic executed by soldiers in the service of larger strategic objectives” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 131). Essentially, it is a coordinated and brutally effective means of warfare. An example of such as systematic use of wartime rape was by the Serb army in Bosnia. Advocates of this theory refer to wartime rape as genocidal rape which is rape used systematically to destroy a people and a culture (Allen, 1996). Gottschall (2004), however, points out that supporters of this theory could possibly be confusing the consequences of wartime rape with the motives for it (p. 132).

4.2.4 *The Biosocial Theory*

Similar to the above sexed approach offered by Baaz and Stern, the biosocial theory proposes that wartime rape is an “inevitable, genetically determined reflex” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 133). Men possess biological urges that are typically suppressed by society in peacetime but are unleashed during war. This theory enjoys the most amount of empirical support as rape occurs over cultural, temporal and geographical boundaries. However, this theory “does a poor job of accounting for the fact that in many conflicts, many soldiers apparently do not rape. If the tendency to rape in war is biologically determined, then why do some soldiers rape freely while others abstain?” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 134).

There are many different ways to understand wartime rape. There are also many different theories to explain the root causes. There is more hope in understanding wartime

rape as a result of socialization. I agree with those who argue that boys and men can be socialized to value equal treatment of girls and women. A different, more equal socialization, would better reflect their lived reality and would improve the lives of women around the world. Unfortunately, the biosocial theory has a substantial amount of empirical evidence. Male biology is one constant factor in all wartime rapes around the world regardless of the culture and/or region. This theory can account for most of the problems that the other theories cannot. However, subscribing solely to this theory leaves little hope of change.

In conclusion, no single theory or understanding has thus far been able to provide the full picture of wartime rape. Perhaps a combination of a few theories gives us the best understanding. What is more certain, however, is the fact that how we understand and theorize about wartime rape determines how we react to it. How we react to it has direct implications for its victims.

5 Aims of Wartime Rape

Depending on the nature of the war, the aims of rape may vary. This next section explores some of the most common aims. They are to communicate, to humiliate and control, and to confuse identity and to destroy a people. This is by no means an exhaustive list of aims but simply a common one.

5.1 Aims to Communicate

Raping in war is a form of male communication (Skjelsbaek, 2012, p. 62-63). Examples show that it is used to communicate to both peers and enemies alike. It is used to send messages of dominance and defeat as well as to breed solidarity and camaraderie.

5.1.1 Aims to Communicate to Peers

In terms of communicating to one's own peers, wartime rape is used to reaffirm masculinity and military camaraderie (Skjelsbaek, 2012, p. 62-63). For example, one United States combat engineer from Fort Bragg said,

You'd be amazed. Most people have no idea what goes on ... The whores and sluts are circulated between the guys. (They go for pay, for no pay, for drinks, whatever) ... The guys talk and brag about it and share it with each other ... It's a lot of contempt toward the woman plus bragging about what studs they [the guys] are. (Barstow, 2000, p. 185)

This process of using women and bragging about it afterwards communicates the soldier's masculinity to each other and offers a friendly challenge to other soldiers to do the same.

5.1.2 Aims to Communicate to Enemies

In terms of communicating to one's enemies, wartime rape is used to show dominance and to celebrate total victory (Davis, 2000, p. 1226-7). Using rape to communicate dominance and defeat is one of the oldest aims of wartime rape. For example, "[t]he Bible records intertribal warfare that involves the capturing and raping of women as the ultimate significance of victory ... In World War II, the Japanese invasion of China incorporated rape as a strategy of domination ... [r]ape charges were [also] filed against American soldiers stationed in Vietnam" (Skjelsbaek, 2000, p. 1226). Many believe that "[n]o act of war better flaunts the power of the victor than the ability to defile the women of the conquered" (Barstow, 2000, p. 45).

An example of war rape to communicate dominance occurred in the 1970s in Bangladesh. "During two and a half decades of Pakistani rule (1947-1971), East Pakistan was effectively turned into an internal colony of West Pakistan through cultural and political subordination of the Bengali people" (Zaman, 1999, p. 38). After an election in which man

from East Pakistan won by a majority vote, the Pakistani military refused to transfer power and instead responded with extreme violence. In what has been since named the Liberation War, close to 30,000 Bengali women were raped by the Pakistani Army (Zaman, 1999, p. 39). Women from all classes of Bengali society were targeted by Pakistani men to communicate to the liberation forces that Pakistan still held power over East Pakistan. Despite the triumph of East Pakistan in becoming independent Bangladesh, the effects on the raped women and their families were devastating. This is also an example of the strategic rape theory.

5.2 Aims to Humiliate and Control

Raping in war is used to humiliate, shame and stigmatize (Barstow, 2000, p. 84; Henry, 2011, p. 4; Davis, 2000, p. 1225). Despite the frequency of rape around the world, there is still stigma around being a victim of rape and a social taboo about discussing it (Henry, 2011, p. 4). “Also, women sometimes feel responsible in some way for the rape, and this misconception can be reinforced by attitudes and comments from peers” and society in general (Barstow, 2000, p. 84). In some cases, “even other women who have been raped do not encourage peers to talk about the incident for fear that they will themselves be implicated as rape victims and stigmatized and ostracized by their families, husbands or communities” (Barstow, 2000, p. 84). Perpetrators of rape use this stigma and humiliation of rape in order to control their victims and keep them silent. In a few cases, the victims keep silent out of fear of further attacks from the perpetrator against her or her family (Trenholm, 2011, p. 144). Very few women will admit to being raped for fear of the either social repercussions or a repeated attack.

Rape can also be used to control displacement. For example, “[t]he Serbian objective of the conflict was to create pure Serbian territories in the former Yugoslavia by expelling Muslim and Croats from their homelands. The result was 3.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons and tens of thousands of Muslims and Croats who were killed” (Davis, 2000, p. 1234). A medical worker noted, “...when the rapes started they lost all hope. Until then they had hope that this war could pass” (Davis, 2000, p. 1223). Unfortunately, “[r]ape itself had become a weapon of war- a tool of the military of conquering and dispersing the Muslim and Croat people” (Davis, 2000, p. 1236).

5.3 Aims to Confuse Identity

Rape in war aims to confuse the victim’s identity (Skjelsbaek, 2012, p. 61). For example, “the female body constitutes yet another battlefield where ethnic conflict can be fought, where a woman’s sexual identity- in conjunction with her political and religious national identity- is the main target for the actions being carried out” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 375). Women are persecuted and violated because of an identity that is ascribed to them regardless of whether they themselves identify with it or not. For example, in the former Yugoslavia a woman may not have necessarily identified herself as a Muslim woman per se but simply because of her family or her Bosnian ties, she was attacked by Serbian forces trying to dilute the Bosnian Muslim population.

Furthermore, men use women in war for many different purposes which further complicates their identities. Women may be forced into acts of sexual violence as well as forced into participating in hostilities. For example, in the 1994 Rwandan genocide women were used as “both ‘agents and objects’ ... during which rape, gang rape, sexual torture, sexual slavery, and forced ‘marriage’ were used systematically against an estimated 200,000

to 350,000 women and girls” (Zrally and Nyirazinyoye, 2012, p. 1657). They also became warriors, soldiers, mothers and wives socializing men for war and/or against war, political leaders, feminists, heroes, war reporters, and spies. The nature of war today fragments as well as recreates female identities.

When examining all forms of violence against women “there is [also] a risk of confining abused women to their sufferings and thereby constructing a homogenous and monolithic conceptualization of female victimhood” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 375). Not every woman fits into the ‘victim’ stereotype. In the late 1900s, as trauma became more medicalized¹⁵, the image of a victim became one of a helpless female robbed of her soul who is never angry or vengeful (Lamb, 2005, p. 71). Psychology and therapy disciplines helped develop this stereotype. Due to this meta-narrative, women who have been raped in war can find it very difficult to develop their own identity as a victim. They may also have a difficult time relating to the identity that they held before the attack.

5.4 Aims to Destroy a People

In some conflicts, women are raped in order to destroy the lineage of the community. An example is that of forced pregnancy in which women are detained until they are too far along to have an abortion. An example of forced pregnancy was in the former Yugoslavia. “[F]or the [Serbian] perpetrators it was the female victims’ ability to bear children that was the most important ... the aim of the perpetrators was to create more babies with the perpetrator’s ethnicity and through this destroy and erase the ethnic, religious and national

¹⁵ See Lamb, S. (2005). Forgiveness Therapy: The Context and Conflict. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 25(1): 61-80.

identities of their female victims” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 375). “Under Muslim culture and Islamic law, if she has become pregnant as the result of rape, the child would be considered non-Muslim; the ethnicity of the father determines the ethnicity of the child” (Davis, 2000, p. 1237). This explains why rape was so common;

It was institutionalized in the detention camps; it became a routine ... Women were raped in camps set up just for that purpose. They were raped multiple times. They were raped in groups. They were raped alone. They were raped by multiple perpetrators. They were raped until they lost consciousness. They were raped until they became pregnant with their rapists’ children. They were held in captivity until they could no longer safely obtain abortions. (Davis, 2000, p. 1236)

One Bosnian woman reported to a United Nations worker “if I’d ever had any chance to kill the kid inside me, I’d have done it” (Schott, 2011, p. 13). Ultimately, these women were complicit in destroying their own people as they gave birth to hundreds of Serb babies during and after the war.

In other conflicts, wartime rape does not have such devastating biological and reproductive effects but it still aims to destroy the essence of a community. Card described this phenomenon as ‘social death’ (as cited in Schott, 2011, p. 10). “The notion of social death that Card develops can refer to a broad spectrum of factors, both sexual and non-sexual, and to a broad range of experiences of both men and women. [In essence, s]ocial death focuses not on the physical destruction of a group, but it harms the ‘social vitality’ of a group, the relations of family, community, and intergenerational relations that give meanings to one’s identity and links one to both past and future” (Schott, 2011, p. 10-11). Card (2003) also refers to this as ‘soul murder’ (p. 77).

In conclusion, rape in war can be used to communicate to one’s own peers and one’s enemies. It can be used to humiliate and control a population. The shame that is still attached with rape can breed silence and force the displacement of thousands of people. Rape can also

both confuse identity and destroy a group of people. The act of rape can make a victim unidentifiable to herself by ascribing her an unfamiliar identity that she herself has not claimed. It can also make returning to a previous identity and a normal life very difficult. Rape in war is also used to destroy the identity of a people. By impregnating women with children from another group, that group is thereby diluted. By targeting the social vitality of a group, it can also be destroyed.

6 Physical and Psychological Health Concerns

Following an event as traumatic as rape, in war or in peace, there can remain both physical and psychological health concerns for the primary victim. Each victim requires a personalized process in order to heal. The following section will look briefly into some of the most common health concerns of a rape victim.

6.1 Physical Health

There can be significant health problems after such a violent event such as rape. Immediate physical health concerns after rape include injuries resulting from the severe abuse that usually accompanies rape. For example, in Nanking,

... [l]ittle girls were raped so brutally that some could not walk for weeks afterward. Many required surgery; others died. Chinese witnesses saw Japanese rape girls under ten year of age in the streets and then slash them in half by sword. In some cases, the Japanese sliced open the vaginas of preteen girls in order to ravish them more effectively ... After gang rape, Japanese soldiers sometimes slashed open the bellies of [already] pregnant women and ripped out the fetuses for amusement. (Barstow, 2000, p. 50)

It was also common in Nanking to thrust bamboo, bayonets, bottles and sticks up a girl's vagina after raping her thereby causing further internal damage (Barstow, 2000, p. 50-52).

Rape and violence often occur simultaneously.

Sexual mutilation, obstetric fistulas, and gynecological complications were also found in rape cases in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia (Davis, 2000, p. 1241; Zraly and Nyirazinyoye, 2012, p. 1657). Other physical health concerns after rape include the transmission of HIV/AIDS, reproductive difficulties due to internal damage, the dangers of self-induced abortions and the risk of complications resulting in miscarriages (Logan, 2006, p. 236). Many of these injuries have life-long implications for the victims despite the fact that they heal.

6.2 Psychological Health

For some women, the physical pain is linked to the psychological. For example, a victim of rape in the former Yugoslavia reported that “she has problems with men in general, and that when a man approaches her she ‘immediately has pains in her stomach’” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 392). Some women of rape also report frightening flashbacks (Crisp, 2007, p. 306).

For other women, though their physical injuries heal, their psychological health does not recover as quickly. “Rape in wartime [can] also [have] a devastating emotional impact on women” (Davis, 2000, p. 1245). The effects are similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The symptoms are called “rape-trauma syndrome” to convey the long-lasting psychological effects of rape (Henry, 2011, p. 103). The pain of the rape hurts but it does not do damage by itself; trauma is pain mixed with an unwillingness to experience it (Henry, 2011, 104). It can be understood as gendered PTSD. Reported symptoms include feelings of isolation, fear, anxiety, and withdrawal which can lead to attempts of suicide (Skinner, 2009, p. 171). The victims can also feel demoralized, without dignity and depressed (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 373). One woman raped in the former Yugoslavia said, “[i]t’s like killing really, in

my opinion. You know, I think sometimes that it would have been better for me if they had just killed me instead of raping me” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 385). One Albanian girl who had been raped by Serb soldiers said, “I don’t want to live, I wish someone would take my soul away” (Davis, 2000, p. 1223).

I must briefly point out that wartime rape, as with rape in general, is understood and experienced differently for different victims. For example, to assume that wartime rape completely shatters one’s worldview and understanding of self, reflects a “white, middle-class, never-victimized” interpretation (Wasco, 2003, p. 313). For some women, depending on the country they live in, “rape may confirm assumptions that violence is a routine part of life or that they do not have sexual control over their bodies” (Wasco, 2003, p. 313). Though wartime rape will always have an impact on the victim, that impact may vary greatly depending on their culture, context and previous experiences.

In conclusion, the health concerns for victims of rape in any situation span from the physical through to the deeply psychological. Many women suffer physical disfigurement and chronic pain due to the violence and brutality used during their rape. Despite the fact that these injuries heal, they have life-long implications for the victims. Many women also suffer psychological trauma long after their physical wounds heal. They also rarely have the proper support to deal with such trauma.

7 Greater Impact

As can be seen above, rape in war can have an immense and long-lasting impact on the victim herself. It can also have a significant impact on secondary victims, which is why is it used systematically in war. “In one act of aggression, the collective spirit of the woman

and the nation is broken, leaving a reminder long after the troops depart” (Davis, 2000, p. 1227). Rape in war is also called Collective Sexual Violence (CSV) due to the widespread effects of the trauma on family and community members (Zrally and Nyirazinyoye, 2012, p. 1657). It is the ‘bomb that continues to explode’ (Trenholm, 2011, p. 149). The first subsection below explores the impact on the children of rape victims. The second subsection focuses on the humiliation of the husband or male relatives. The last subsection outlines the impact on the community as a whole.

7.1 Intergenerational Impacts

Beyond the trauma for the victim, rape in war also has intergenerational impacts (Henry, 2011, p. 4). In many cases of rape in war, there is a chance of the victim becoming pregnant. With no way to hide the rape and no safe way to abort the child, some victims are forced to deliver and care for their rapists’ children. Some women have reported negative feelings towards those children and some are overly aggressive with them (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 392-393). In a study interviewing local leaders in the DRC, one respondent explained the feelings of the mother and family regarding the child born of rape. They said that “[e]very time the mother looks at that child it is the recollection of this violence ... But when the man sees this child, he sees already the assailant of the wife ... and the family of the man and the woman do not accept this child” (Trenholm, 2011, p. 144). These feelings and actions may lead to traumatic experiences, both physically and psychologically for the child. In the most extreme cases, some children are killed. “[A]ccording to an American sociologist in the city [Nanking] at the time of the massacre, numerous half-Japanese children were choked or drowned at birth” (Barstow, 2000, p. 48).

In the former Yugoslavia specifically, children born of Serbian rapes were then identified as Serbian babies. This not only ostracized them from their community but also categorized them as Serb children,

... thus placing them not only outside the victimized group, but in the perpetrating group. Therefore, children could be seen not just as non-victims but somehow as perpetrators ... [In this regard,] they are footnoted and marginalized, their fate is reduced to an interesting issue to ponder rather than as a set of crimes to observe and address. (Carpenter, 2000, p. 452)

7.2 Humiliation of Men

Unfortunately, after wartime rape, the focus is often on the men. In some contexts, wartime rape is not even committed against women in their own right but is rather committed to humiliate the primary victim's male relatives. Often the husband is made to watch while soldiers rape his wife. Witnessing such an act while being unable to help or comfort a loved one is devastating. One participant from a study conducted in the DRC said, "... I am as traumatized as my wife. Why? Because I saw my wife being raped and I was powerless despite the fact that I am her husband. How can they play with the body of my wife and I was there powerless and I could not defend my wife ... It forces me to cry out ... I become impotent" (Trenholm, 2011, p. 144).

Some justifications for the focus remaining on the male even though the female suffered the rape "are rooted in the masculine myth perpetrated by a patriarchal ideal that men are responsible for 'their' women. This myth ... demonstrates a model of masculine-feminine relations in which men possess, rather than relate with women. According to this myth, when a 'man's woman' is violated through rape, it is often very difficult for him to accept the humiliation of such an event" (Barstow, 2000, p. 85). Men therefore use wartime rape against women to humiliate their male enemy.

7.3 Structural Impacts

Another impact of wartime rape is on the population and continuation of the family structure. Genocidal violence is relational (Schott, 2011, p. 14). For example, “[t]he intent of rape is not only to inflict humiliation and terror on individual women but also to degrade the woman’s ethnic groups and community as a whole” (Logan, 2006, p. 235). For many women raised in a traditional and patriarchal culture, they are taught to believe that their virginity is what makes them eligible to marry (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 395). There may not be any marriage prospects for victims that society views as “damaged goods” thereby diminishing overall marriage rates (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 395). This then diminishes the overall population size as fewer families are started.

In some scenarios where the victim is already married, the husbands may become angry and violent towards their wives. “In interviews conducted with rape survivors, one of the recurring concerns is that if their husbands found out about the rape, their husbands would not take them back or might violently abuse, or in some cases even kill, them” (Barstow, 2000, p. 85). For example, the husband of a young Serb women who denies being raped said that “[i]f she admitted to being raped] I would ask for a divorce- even if I had 20 children. I don’t hate her, but the story is before my eyes. I feel very cold towards her. [Kissing her] is like kissing a dead body” (Davis, 2000, p. 1223). When male honour is connected to the protection of female sexuality such a violation of the woman can be emasculating for her male relatives (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 386 & 388). This can lead to the dissolution of the family itself.

In conclusion, despite the incredibly private nature of rape it also creates secondary victims. Rape in war may have an impact on the next generation. Children of raped women

can be either killed at birth or abused as they grow up, furthering the psychological trauma in the community. In some contexts, men are secondary victims in that they are humiliated by the attack on ‘their’ women. Also, the family structure itself is at risk if husbands refuse to accept their wives back into their homes after they have been raped.

8 Conclusion

Wartime rape has been encouraged for centuries. It is still tolerated and perpetrated in most modern conflicts. It has been hidden under a culture of silence in which victims do not speak about it. Perpetrators, on the other hand, do speak about it. They brag about it and encourage it. Due to recent conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the DRC, awareness and condemnation of wartime rape is rising. This can be seen in new international regulations that outlaw the horrific aspects of wartime rape. Our understanding of these atrocities has also expanded with new theories to explain the root causes. We understand the aims of wartime rape more clearly now. Some include the aim to communicate, to humiliate, to control, to confuse identity, and to destroy a people. There are also both physical and psychological health concerns as most wartime rape is accompanied by significant violence. Due to the severity of wartime rape, it has a greater impact than only to female victim. Wartime rape has intergenerational impacts which can negatively affect the children born of rape as well. It can also greatly affect communities at large if female victims are not responded to in a compassionate and supportive way after the rape.

In conclusion, parts of society has learned a great deal about wartime rape. It is certainly what Card would consider an intolerable harm. Our understanding promotes awareness and that awareness promotes aid to victims. Organizations, both local and international, are now working towards further protection for women and girls in wartime.

The fact that wartime rape still occurs across borders, cultures and generations though is indicative that we still have a long way to go before the subordination of women is considered universally unacceptable. There remains hope in the resilience and strength of female victims. They have the capacity to survive and support their families after their attack and some also possess the capacity to forgive. The next chapter will explore the considerations found at the intersection of radical forgiveness and wartime rape.

Chapter Four: Radical Forgiveness after Wartime Rape

1 Introduction

In previous chapters, I offered an overview of forgiveness and I developed a definition of radical forgiveness in the context of wartime rape. This final chapter will review what debates and other considerations lay at the intersection of radical forgiveness and wartime rape. Recall that radical forgiveness is defined as the following:

the type of forgiveness that occurs

- (1) when it is given by the primary victim for their own suffering;
- (2) when it is given to an unrepentant offender;
- (3) who is culpably responsible;

(4) for acts so atrocious we are inclined to call them unforgivable; and

(5) is based possibly on conditions of the victim but most certainly not on conditions that must be fulfilled by the perpetrator.

Also recall that “the term wartime rape ... never indicates isolated examples of rape by individual fighters. Rather, the term is used interchangeably with mass wartime rape to indicate distinct patterns of rape by soldiers at rates that are much increased over rates of rape that prevail in peacetime” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 129).

The first section of this chapter will examine the probability of radical forgiveness occurring after wartime rape. It offers testimonials of women from Bosnia and Sierra Leone. The second section of this chapter outlines the debate whether women who have been raped in war ought to forgive. Feminist arguments will be explored to highlight the potential consequences of radical forgiveness after wartime rape. The third section of this chapter argues that no one other than the victim has the moral authority to decide whether or not radical forgiveness is appropriate after wartime rape. The fourth section of this chapter explores what obligations women as a collective have if wartime rape can be viewed as an attack on the entire group. Taking the above into consideration, the final section argues that there exists no recourse for victims that matches the magnitude of suffering experienced because of gender violence.

2 Can Radical Forgiveness Occur after Wartime Rape?

In chapter two I acknowledge that acts themselves are not unforgivable because acts themselves do not have agency. But are certain acts unforgivable because of the psychological trauma they inflict upon the victim? Recall that the effect suffered after the

rape is called “rape-trauma syndrome” (Henry, 2011, p. 103). Do some acts, such as wartime rape, inflict such trauma that the victim is actually psychologically unable to forgive afterwards (Govier, 2002, p. 101)? Could rape-trauma syndrome extinguish the possibility of radical forgiveness on a psychological level?

2.1 Radical Forgiveness after Wartime Rape: Impossible

Some scholars argue that one does not recover from such trauma. One simply learns to absorb it and move on. Jacques Derrida outlines that certain acts may strip the victim of their capacity to forgive. He explains:

... the victim is a double victim because not only is the injury an irreparable violation; the victim is also stripped ‘of the minimal elementary *possibility of virtually* considering forgiving the unforgivable’ ... perpetrators who commit unspeakable atrocities make victims ‘unrecognizable’ to themselves. They *make* victims into what they are not, dehumanizing victims to the point where they lose the very essence of their humanity, the ability to make moral choices about the dilemmas of life, including the dilemma of whether to forgive or not to forgive. Victims are no longer truly able, or they no longer possess the power or capacity to make either of these choices because the dehumanization of the abuse has taken away the ‘will’, if you may, the capacity, to actually engage in the *human* process that requires moral reflection. (as cited in Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008, p. 337-338)

This is “absolute victimization” according to Derrida (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008, p. 338). It is the loss of capacity to forgive due to the severity of the trauma suffered during an atrocity such as wartime rape¹⁶.

There are empirical examples of the above argument which show that some victims suffer flashbacks of the violence which are traumatic experiences in themselves (Crisp, 2007, p. 306). Others report losing their sense of control over their own lives. Some women also

¹⁶ I acknowledge that not all acts of wartime rape cause such devastating effects. “Although some researchers have found that the majority (anywhere from 73%-94%) of rape victims meet symptomatic criteria after the rape ... other findings show that far fewer (about one third) of female rape victims experience levels of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)” (Wasco, 2003, p. 313).

report feeling soiled or defiled and others show signs that “trauma severs the connection an individual feels to their community” (Davis, 2000, p. 1237; Doran et al., 2011, p. 614). Any one of these could disable a victim’s ability to forgive. It seems probable that after such traumatic experiences, such as those women suffered in the former Yugoslavian rape camps, that some women remain too traumatized to forgive. For example, when interviewed by Inger Skjelsbaek (2006), a victim of wartime rape in the former Yugoslavia said “He beat me so I could not breathe, and he kicked me in the stomach. I lost consciousness, and when I regained consciousness, he raped me and there was blood all over ... I will never forgive and I will never forget” (p. 383). Claudia Card (2002) notes that “[e]vil tends to ruin lives, or significant parts of lives. It is not surprising if victims never recover or are never quite able to move on, although sometimes people do recover and move on” (p. 3-4).

2.2 Radical Forgiveness after Wartime Rape: Possible

Those who study the phenomenon of forgiveness have noted that, at times, victims still retain the ability to forgive. Somehow victims, such as those described by Derrida, do manage to recover psychologically and reclaim ‘themselves’. In doing so, they also reclaim the capacity to decide whether or not to forgive. Here, I offer the examples of Jasna and Satta Joe. They are victims of wartime rape. Jasna, a young Bosnian woman, was living with her husband and children when Serb soldiers came to her town in March 1992. This is part of her story as recorded by the Forgiveness Project¹⁷:

One morning, my husband opened the door to find a young man standing there. He was someone I knew who had once made a lewd comment when I was in the street with my

¹⁷ “The Forgiveness Project is a UK based charity that uses storytelling to explore how ideas around forgiveness, reconciliation and conflict resolution can be used to impact positively on people’s lives, through the personal testimonies of both victims and perpetrators of crime and violence. [Their] aim is to provide tools that facilitate conflict resolution and promote behavioural change” (theforgivenessproject.com)

children. “Where’s Jasna?” he asked. He then came straight into the house and raped me in front of my family. Afterwards he said: “I promised you months ago I would have my five minutes worth.” This was just the start. Other men followed him into our house, looking for money and arms. They hit my husband, knocked him down and then stamped on his face until he bled. Both my sister-in-law and myself were raped and I lost consciousness. When I came round, my mother-in-law was cowering in the corner with my children. Then she told me the soldiers had taken away my husband. I was later taken to a camp full of women, together with my children. Soldiers came every day and would say “come with me”, then they’d take us away to be raped or some to be sent to the front lines. I don’t know how I found the strength to endure what happened to me. I remained in that camp for one year and ten days. (Jasna (Bosnia), 2014)

Despite what Jasna suffered during the war, the final line of her page on the Forgiveness Project website reads: “[e]very day when I say my prayers, I pray to God to forgive those men for what they did to me” (Jasna (Bosnia), 2014).

In the Islamic faith, it is only Allah who may determine and grant forgiveness regardless of the perpetrator’s repentance (Abu-Nimer and Nasser 2013, p. 480). Therefore for Jasna, radical forgiveness takes the form of her praying to God to ask Him to forgive her perpetrator. Due to her faith, this type of forgiveness (given only by God) is the only type of forgiveness available to her. It is a prime example of how radical forgiveness may take different forms for different individuals as well as proof that radical forgiveness can occur after wartime rape.

In another example, during the Sierra Leone civil war, Satta Joe was raped by a relative and then gang raped by his band of rebels in her home in the Kono District. This is part of her story as recorded by the Forgiveness Project:

When the rebels entered my village, there was one person I recognised among them and that was my own blood relative – Nyuma Saffa. He was now the leader of this particular band of rebels and was the first to enter my house. I was shocked when I saw him and screamed out of fear because he had previously tried to force me into loving him. When he saw me, he looked at me and said “I failed to convince you to fall in love with me before, so now that

I've caught up with you and you're at my mercy, I'm going to do with you as I please." Then he announced that he was going to rape me. I pleaded with him not to do this as I was a feeding mother, but he took no notice and went on to rape me several times. Afterwards some more rebels came and they all took turns to rape me. When my husband saw this, he panicked and, fearing for his own life, ran away leaving me behind. Unfortunately for him, on his way out of the village, he met another band of rebels, who killed him on the spot.

I had my son aged seven years old with me and the poor boy witnessed everything that happened to me. When the other rebels, who had gang-raped me, saw him they killed him too – right there in front of my eyes. Then they left me for dead with my newborn child and ran off. It is impossible to describe the agony of watching your own child slaughtered in front of you. I was only able to keep living for my baby's sake but I was not able to do anything for myself for the remaining years of the war. (Satta Joe, 2012)

After the war, Satta Joe and her rapist Nyuma Saffa both returned to live in the same village. Volunteers running a community-led reconciliation program invited them both to share their story. After both told their version of the rape, they were invited by the program volunteers to participate in a dance as a forgiveness ritual. Satta Joe at first refused to participate but in the end she did. She said, "[a]s I took his hand I was sobbing – not out of despair but a sense relief that perhaps now we could move on from this terrible pain in our past" (Satta Joe, 2012). In essence, Satta Joe went through a process of radical forgiveness celebrated in the end by a public ritual.

These two testimonies are examples that radical forgiveness is possible after wartime rape. These two women survived the long and difficult road to recovery and eventually came to forgive their perpetrators. It is likely though that forgiveness is not the end of their journey. If radical forgiveness after wartime rape is possible, the remaining question then is, at what cost?

3 Ought Women Forgive? Consequence of Radical Forgiveness after Wartime Rape

The above section offers evidence that, although it is a difficult and emotional process, radical forgiveness can occur after wartime rape. The question to explore now is, what are the consequences? As explored in previous chapters, “the act of rape ... is not just a personal insult, it is an insult to all women and makes it dangerous for all women to exist in the world” (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 165). By the same token “the act of forgiveness as not just interpersonal, it has social repercussions and can be representative of more than an individual’s well-being” (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p 165-166).

A feminist analysis highlights that radical forgiveness for gender violence, such as wartime rape, can be judged as immoral. This is because of the consequences that decision has. Forgiveness for a crime such as wartime rape can negatively affect other women. A few arguments for victims not to forgive are explored in the subsections below.

3.1 Forgiveness in the Cycle of Abuse

Some scholars argue that radical forgiveness given to a perpetrator of gender violence can be immoral and therefore ought not to be given. One example explored most in literature on forgiveness is that of an abusive husband. Scholars, such as Sharon Lamb and Claudia Card bring attention to the inherent risk of forgiving an abusive husband (Lamb, 2006, p. 53). The following quote demonstrates how some women can be manipulated into forgiving:

When a sex offender apologizes, it can be an act of power with which he manipulates a victim, playing on her notion of herself—as well as her need to see herself— as good. Especially when a woman has been harmed, a perpetrator's sincere apology pulls at our own inclinations to expect and require forgiveness from a victim. To maintain her role in the dichotomy as the “good one,” the victim will need to forgive and show compassion. It would

not be consistent with her victim role to be angry, resentful, and retaliatory. (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 165)

In essence, a women abused by her misogynist husband is then praised for being “understanding” when she is coerced into forgiving (Card, 2002, p. 174-175). Instead of leaving the relationship and seeking safety, she forgives her husband. This act of forgiveness can grant him nearly unlimited power to abuse her again. Forgiveness as such becomes part of the cycle of domestic abuse.

The same argument can be made for wartime rape. If the victim forgives her perpetrator while he remains unrepentant, it may confirm his misogynistic views of women. He may understand the act of forgiveness to mean that he has done no wrong and has ‘moral leave’ to rape again. The fact that most rapists in wartime often go free and that they regularly evade the justice system are proof that this cycle of violence continues (Lamb, 2006, p. 56). Though the perpetrator may not rape that particular victim again, he may rape other women. Without requiring genuine repentance and a promise not to commit the act again, radical forgiveness can become part of this cycle of violence. In this case, feminists argue, it would be better not to forgive at all.

3.2 Forgiveness as Upholding Patriarchy

“Women who forgive their unrepentant abusers fail to challenge the patriarchal structures that allow abuse” argues Judith Boss (as cited in Norlock, 2009, p. 105). The previous chapter highlights that our current global system of patriarchy outlines a hierarchy which holds men and boys above women and girls. These positions are taught to and learned by children at very young ages. In such a system, there are gender stereotypes which are ascribed to both sexes. These stereotypes outline how both men and women are expected to

behave. For example, such “[s]ocialization practices teach young girls to place a high priority on the resolution of conflict, healing wounds, and repairing relationships” (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 163). Similarly, a “good girl” or “good woman” is typically expected to put relationship needs before her own (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 163). These two examples show that women are expected to suppress anger and resentment and also be more forgiving in order to reduce conflict in relationships (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 164; Norlock, 2009, p. 7). Kathryn Norlock (2009) makes a point of noting that:

... [t]his is not to say that (a) women, in fact, have more occasion to forgive; I don’t really believe women are wronged more often, although women may suffer from some kinds of wrongs more often than men do, and vice versa. Neither am I claiming that (b) women, on the whole and in practice, just are more forgiving (in nature or behavior). To make such a statement about all women without regard to race, class, sociopolitical power, religious commitments or personality seems preposterous. (p. 7)

Norlock argues that stereotypes of women as more forgiving are therefore false and do uphold patriarchal beliefs. Women are wronged just as much as men, albeit more frequently in specific ways. However, men are wronged more frequently in other ways. She also points out that one cannot claim that all women are more forgiving because ‘women’ is not a homogenous group. Each woman suffers differently and will therefore forgive (or not) differently.

Another problem with women being perceived as more forgiving is that men do not necessarily feel more respect towards them because of it. An unrepentant perpetrator may take the act of forgiveness as an excusal of his behaviour. To be deserving of forgiveness generally sends the message that one has done something wrong to be forgiven for. Sometimes, as is the case with an unrepentant perpetrator, forgiveness may not send that message. Despite forgiving being considered a noble action by many, it can unfortunately uphold the perpetrators own negative views of women. Jeffrie Murphy and Sharon Lamb

(2002) write that “[o]pening the heart to a perpetrator who is unrepentant, although not a pardon, is extremely close to one and too consistent with the perpetrator's own worldview that allows him to excuse his behavior” (p. 156). If he is forgiven, he is not required to change his patriarchal view of women nor the abusive actions that accompany that view.

Can a victim, who is in a subordinate position, forgive the perpetrator who is in a dominant position without reinforcing their subordination (Murphy and Lamb, (2002), p. 165)? To answer his question, Norlock provides an interesting example in her book *Forgiveness from a Feminist Perspective* (2009). In South Africa during apartheid black and coloured South Africans were in a subordinate position to white South Africans. Nelson Mandela, being a black South African, was in a subordinate position to whites. Upon his release from prison, “[h]e could have used his considerable rhetorical and charismatic powers to convey a message of anger and hatred and rally blacks for an orgy of violence against whites” (Govier, 2002, p. 68). Instead he forgave his white oppressors:

I knew that white people expected me to harbor anger towards whites. But I had none. In prison, my anger towards whites decreased, but my hatred for the system grew. I wanted South Africa to see that I loved even my enemies, while I hated the system that turned us against each other. (as cited in Govier, 2002, p. 68)

Even after such a profound internal change, some South Africans remarked that “Mandela could forgive, but ‘Mandela is a saint’ so his capacities for forgiveness are of little general interest” (Norlock, 2009, p. 27). It is as if forgiveness is not possible for ‘mere mortals’. However, “Govier rightly objects to describing forgiveness for evils as saintly” (as cited in Norlock, 2009, p. 27). I would also add that it was his capacity for forgiveness that made him ‘saintly’ not the other way around. Mandela was an example of someone in a subordinate position who declared his forgiveness for those in a dominant position without further subordinating himself. The proof is in the fact that he became President of South

Africa in the first democratic election. Evidently, Mandela's forgiveness of the white community fostered respect among many South Africans instead of more racism.

One more consideration to be taken into account in this debate is that of Robin May Schott. She "quotes a South African woman who astutely observes a possible reason she cannot forgive and Mandela and [Archbishop] Tutu can [is because] 'they lead vindicated lives'" (as cited in Norlock, 2002, p. 27). Though I would again point out that Mandela forgave his white oppressors while he was still in a subordinate position, this woman brings up an important point. Both Mandela and Tutu enjoyed legal and social equality for the most part after apartheid thereby justifying radical forgiveness. But what about women?

In the case of female victims, the subordination and oppression of women has not yet been recognized or changed. Women remain subordinate to men in the home, in the work place and in society in general. Perhaps female victims of wartime rape cannot offer radical forgiveness without further subordinating themselves. Contrary to forgiveness advocates who argue that forgiveness brings more good into the world, the above scholars argue that forgiveness, when given to an unrepentant perpetrator, actually upholds the structures that cause suffering in the world (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 166). In order to break free from those structures of subordination then women should not forgive rapists in wartime but should rather hold onto their anger and resentment.

3.3 Not a One Size Fits All: The Spectrum of Violence

Women all over the world experience many forms of violence. Amnesty International USA (2013) reports that one in every three women worldwide is beaten, coerced into sex or abused in general. The spectrum of violence against women is devastating. Women face

abuse such as battering, sexual assault, rape, acid burning (dowry deaths), and female genital mutilation (Amnesty International USA, 2013). Abuse can happen almost anywhere as it is largely ignored. Abuses can take place in the home, in detention centers, on public transportation, on college campuses, in airports and in the community. Due to the spectrum of violence, forgiveness should not be a one size fits all response to trauma.

The belief that women should forgive, or are more forgiving, can also severely compromise a victim's response to trauma. Every women should be free to choose what recovery method best suits her. "Many survivors think they ought to forgive the perpetrator- that they are somehow not okay if they do not forgive" writes Bonnie Burstow (as cited in Lamb, 2006, p. 50). With such a belief, many female victims strive for forgiveness, at the encouragement of their therapists and family members, whether forgiveness is appropriate for their situation or not. In essence, their response to abuse is homogenized despite the variation of abusive experiences.

In addition, "[b]y treating forgiveness as necessary, we effectively pathologize anger" remarks Burstow (as cited in Lamb, 2006, p. 50). Women are socialized to suppress anger, vengeance and any other aggressive emotion perceived as unfeminine. These emotions may be useful and healthy for victims recovering from certain types of abuse. Suppressing anger and other similar emotions can effectively strangle the natural recovery process of each victim. "For women, refusing to be angry [and choosing forgiveness] historically has kept them in a position of subordination; realizing and acting on anger has led to greater rights and freedoms" (Murphy and Lamb, 2002, p. 165). Due to the variation of trauma suffered, women must be able to personalize their road to recovery. Forgiveness, as understood by

some men, puts women back into their gender stereotype. This is why women should be free to refuse to forgive and free to explore other emotions that feel right.

3.4 Forgiveness as a Betrayal of Women

Another example used to show that radical forgiveness should not occur after wartime rape is the argument that it is a betrayal of women as a group. In her article entitled *Forgiveness, Women and Responsibility to the Group* (2006), Lamb offers the example of women in shelters who have helped each other through support and solidarity. “If a woman who had been sheltered were to “forgive” her abuser and return to him, because the help she has received has been through her connections in the shelter to other women who were once victims themselves, such forgiveness is likely to be felt as a betrayal of those women with whom she has formed relationships” (Lamb, 2006, p. 54). Again this example can be expanded to fit the context of wartime rape. If a victim has been receiving support from other women either in her community or from an international organization, forgiving her perpetrator may make those women feel betrayed. It follows that in order to remain loyal to the group, radical forgiveness should be withheld.

Forgiving an unrepentant perpetrator may also cause a physical risk to other women. Returning to the abuse example, Lamb (2006) writes

...forgiving a husband could lead to revealing information about the whereabouts of a shelter (most are secret), which could endanger other women in the shelter and the shelter’s existence. When a woman forgives her perpetrator, similarly as when a client is murdered, a message reverberates throughout the shelter. The former act feels like a minimization of the harm done to all women by batterers, whereas the latter feels like all women are then in danger. (Lamb, 2006, p. 54)

Similarly, forgiving an unrepentant perpetrator for wartime rape may simply reinforce his sexist view of women. This can cause physical risk to women living nearby if he chooses to

rape again. Therefore, an argument can be made to withhold radical forgiveness in wartime in order to keep other women safe.

In conclusion, there is significant evidence to support the argument that radical forgiveness is not appropriate in the context of wartime rape. These arguments are presented in contrast to the reigning belief that forgiveness promotes good in the world. Four arguments to support the claim that radical forgiveness is not appropriate after wartime rape are that forgiveness can be a part of the cycle of abuse, that forgiveness upholds the patriarchal structures that allow abuse, forgiveness can impede the individualized road to recovery and that forgiveness can be seen as a betrayal, both physically and emotionally, of women as a group.

4 Who is to Say?

The above section offers valid considerations and concerning implications for victims of wartime rape regarding radical forgiveness. Though it may be possible, many scholars argue that it may be immoral for the victim and detrimental for society. At the same time though, they also acknowledge the incredible inner strength and emotional capacity that it takes for such victims to forgive. So another question to be explored is: who is to say that a victim should not forgive?

Most philosophers remind us that we cannot judge the decision of others because forgiveness is an internal and personal process. “Forgiveness is an issue for a victim who has been hurt, who has been psychologically and morally diminished because she was wronged, and who must struggle to restore her own self-respect and move forward in life. Forgiveness is an issue for victims: it is the victim who has been hurt and morally insulted and it is the

victim who is entitled to forgive or refuse to forgive” (Govier, 1999, p. 61). In addition, “[r]espect for that which we do not know, and cannot imagine, is mingled, for some of us, with the knowledge of our own experiences, which are likely incomparable to the atrocities we study” writes Norlock (2009, p. 26). No one can grasp the true extent of the trauma suffered by all women because our knowledge and experiences develop personal biases and shape how we view trauma. Therefore, each victim must do what is right for them and that depends on the relationship of the victim and the perpetrator.

Victims themselves cannot judge the decision of others either because rape itself is experienced differently by different people. Sharon Wasco (2003) writes, “[b]ecause their worldviews are different from women with class or skin privilege, women of colour or poor women may react to rape and other life events in unique ways; for example, gender, class, ethnicity, and previous victimization experiences may influence whether sexual violence- or other stressful life events- shatters survivors’ assumptions of a just world and reinforce other beliefs about the world” (p. 310). In conclusion, I argue that no one, scholar or victim, is in a position to judge the appropriateness of forgiveness but the primary victim of rape herself. To cast these women as simply mistaken about what they did is to trivialize what agency is left to them.

5 What Can ‘We’ Do as Women?

The main question then is what can we, as women, do when others are contemplating radical forgiveness after wartime rape? Surely we have some role to play since we are women too? The following section will outline a few key tasks that women do play a role in regarding radical forgiveness. They include promoting safety, respect and education.

Most feminists, including Card, Norlock, Govier, Lamb and Holmgren, encourage safety before any other steps after an assault. Forgiveness should not occur if the victim is still in danger from her perpetrator. “[T]he social problem [of wartime rape] starts well before, and may continue long after, the assault itself ... [and] we may hinder our understanding by viewing rape experiences as an event” (Wasco, 2003, p. 312). It is on a continuum of violence against women. Women worldwide must promote physical safety before any other form of healing, especially forgiveness.

After taking safety into account, self-respect must then be evaluated. “[F]orgiveness in the absence of self-respect is dangerous” (Norlock, 2009, p. 78). Victims of wartime rape could benefit from the support of women worldwide trying to cultivate self-respect and respect for women in general. Third parties can serve to help those victims assert their moral worth. “Restoring dignity to victims ... should at minimum involve respecting their own responses” writes Martha Minow (as cited in Norlock, 2009, p. 85).

While simultaneously allowing private healing for the individual victims by respecting their decision to forgive or not, women as a collective then also play a role in keeping the public memory and social awareness of sexual violence alive (Lamb, 2006, p. 56). In doing so, women can educate others about wartime rape. For example, women must remind others that the definition of traumatic events (events that provoke feelings of fear, horror, and threat to life or integrity) “does not necessarily address the specific cultural, social, and relational context in which sexual violence usually occurs” (Wasco, 2003, p. 311). To fully understand wartime rape for those women who experience it, we must understand the structural violence that already exists in society. Women can be the vehicles for this education. Furthermore, it is the political will to understand and make changes that

women all over the world are responsible for upholding. Where there is political will, there can be change (Nowrojee, 2005, p. 99). It is up to women worldwide to show this solidarity.

6 Further Considerations: Options Available to Women

Trauma can occur on both the individual and collective level. Wartime rape is so devastating because it occurs on both the individual and the collective level. The physical and emotional pain is suffered by the woman individually. However she is targeted because of her membership to the subordinate gender group in society. This section will explore the dynamics of how the individual woman deals with collective trauma. I argue that all paths available to a woman after wartime rape are utterly inadequate in addressing gender-based violence and women's reality.

There are a number of paths for women to take after wartime rape. These paths include legal recourse, religious support, therapeutic sessions, community support, and, of course, the path of forgiveness. Each of these will be explored below in order to highlight their inadequacy to address gender-based violence.

6.1 Retributive Justice

For years, wartime rape was not included in national or international laws. "One of the main obstacles to the prosecution of rape as a war crime in previous tribunals has been the absence of ... awareness of the seriousness of gender crimes (Davis, 2000, p. 1233). There was also a lack of political will, a lack of finances and a lack of social mechanisms which disabled criminal proceedings. As noted previously, it was only recently included in international law and outlined specifically in the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute (1998). It was finally used to prosecute war criminals in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda

and in Sierra Leone. As referred to in the previous chapter, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the Special Court for Sierra Leone were established in the late 1990s to early 2000s. These courts were the first to analyze sexual violence against women in wartime. They were also the first courts to convict war criminals for the systemic use of rape as a weapon of war.

Despite this step forward for women's equal representation and protection, the legal path after wartime rape remains inadequate to respond to gender-based violence. To begin, legal proceedings can be an equally traumatic experience for women. "When a woman comes forward with an accusation of rape ... she is potentially exposing herself to a frightening process of invasive medical investigations, interrogations, and perhaps an unpleasant involvement with the court system. During the trial she will be forced to relive the trauma in a public forum" (Davis, 2000, p. 1245). When rape victims are asked to testify in court, they are once again being asked to put their reputation, safety and psychological well-being on the line. Some women have also experienced police intimidation and disbelief when reporting a rape (Skinner, 2009, p. 172).

Furthermore, the language used in criminal proceedings and the depth of detail needed are not sensitive to gender-based issues. For example, women are asked to speak about intimate details of the attack and are asked to use explicit language when testifying. This is particularly difficult for women from cultures where sex is not discussed. Similarly, investigators probe into their prior sexual activity which can be very uncomfortable in such a public setting (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 390).

In addition, other needs such as truth-telling, empowerment, and restitution go largely unaddressed in criminal trials (Kohen, 2009, p. 401). In some cases, the truth of the rape is

not told or is not recognized ‘beyond a doubt’ which can delegitimize the victim in the eyes of her community. Similarly, the perpetrator is released in some cases due to legal loopholes or the inability of the victim to produce concrete evidence. One wartime rape victim named Emila said that “[t]he authorities are deaf and blind to what happened [there] when they force us to leave the house we live in now ... I suffered a lot and I am still suffering [...] Nobody gave us any form of compensation. I live a life, but it’s not really a life” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p. 393).

Emila also made an insightful comment regarding the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) saying: “I was not pleased with the verdicts for those who committed sexual crimes and abuse. They would get 10 to 15 years in prison, and they would use that time to complete their studies and go to school or other things like that, while behind them are the women who were tortured. I do not think that justice in my sense of the word will be done” (Skjelsbaek, 2006, p 393). In this quote, she acknowledges that even after being charged, convicted and sent to prison for wartime rape, those men are still ahead of women living free in society. The perpetrators have access to food, shelter and they can complete their education which is not always an option for women.

6.2 Restorative Justice

The inadequacy of the criminal justice system to properly address gender-based crimes is why many people have turned to restorative justice practices. Amy Finnegan (2010) researched such practices among the Acholi people living in northern Uganda. Religious and cultural leaders emphasized the role of collective identity to promote healing and forgiveness in their community instead of criminal trials through the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, this was also inadequate. In her study she makes two

important observations. The first is that Acholi leaders promote restorative justice linked with forgiveness “for the ways it personally benefits them. The majority of these leaders are older adult men ... it is plausible that Acholi leaders may readily promote forgiveness for the ways it allows them to maintain power and placate women in Acholi society” (Finnegan, 2010, p. 434). Her second observation is that “an avoidance of interrogating the structural conditions from which perpetrators operate ... could maintain a status quo that perpetrates violence” (Finnegan, 2010, p. 442).

I agree with Finnegan but would argue that it is not simply plausible that community leaders promote restorative justice practices linked to forgiveness to benefit men. It is most likely that these are the primary reasons some male community leaders promote restorative justice practices¹⁸, especially if they too were complicit in the violence. Less attention is paid to individual crimes and punishment for those crimes in restorative practices compared to retributive or judicial practices. I also argue that the avoidance of interrogating structural conditions of violence does, in fact, maintain the status quo of violence against women. By only addressing the abuses in one conflict, the spectrum of violence against women is missed. By only addressing the abuses in one conflict, continuum of violence against women remains intact.

¹⁸ I acknowledge that restorative justice practices are more victim-centered. They publically acknowledge the victim’s suffering in order to promote victim healing and perpetrator accountability. However, they still ‘restore’ what was the status-quo in society. This is inevitably a system of patriarchy where men dominate women. For restorative justice practices to have a positive impact on the greater system of structural violence against women, they would have to include widespread educational programming in order to educate both men and women about the overt and covert ways patriarchy is upheld. They would also have to provide strategies for both men and women to effectively dismantle the system.

6.3 Religious Support

Another path that is available to women after wartime rape, or any sexual violence, is their faith. Religion has been used to cope with trauma for centuries. In Christian faiths, both victims and perpetrators have relied on the Church. Victims rely on the Church community and the priest for support and perpetrators have relied on the act of confession to absolve them of their sins. However, it is sometimes that case that religious institutions are complicit in silencing women and gender-based violence (Crisp, 2007, p. 303).

The promotion of silence is problematic for survivors who have suffered sexual abuse because they often need to break the silence regarding what happened to them (Crisp, 2007, p. 305-6). Speaking out about such abuse, or expressing negative emotions publically, is not promoted in many religious institutions though. For example, “[m]any Christians have been socialized to belief that anger is not an appropriate response for Christians and that the only acceptable response is to forgive and forget” (Crisp, 2007, 307). Forgiveness, as silence and forgetting, is therefore taught and promoted in almost all major religions.

In addition, “[r]eligious leaders and institutions pressure individuals ... to forgive without engaging in institutional truth-telling about their own collusion with violence ... the religious pressure is on the individual to forgive; but the religious institution absents itself from the process of truth-telling about its own contributions to abuse” (Arms, 2002, p. 110). It is no coincidence that men hold the positions of power in most religious institutions. Like the Acholi leaders, they are also able to promote forgiveness among female victims in order to benefit themselves.

6.4 *Therapeutic Sessions*

Another path that is suggested to women after sexual abuse is therapy. As noted in previous chapters, there is substantial evidence that therapists and psychologists are promoting and teaching ‘forgiveness therapy’. Psychotherapist Mary Baures (1996) writes, “[o]ne way people learn to recover from trauma is by learning to forgive” (p. 77). Forgiveness, as taught in therapy, is a way of reworking the memory of the trauma so that it is not as debilitating. It is about viewing the abuse in a new way that fosters a release of negative emotions, which is when true healing can occur (Logan, 2006, p. 238). This still does not change gender-based violence however. Women are simply taught coping strategies to survive.

A major issue with forgiveness therapy, other than the ones discussed previously¹⁹, is that most women who are raped in war do not have access to therapeutic support. In many cases, women are prevented from receiving psychological or therapeutic care and/or participating in reconstruction programs. This may either be as a result of poverty, stigma, geographic location or men not allowing them to attend. In a study done with wartime rape victim in Sierra Leone, the lack of access to therapy or programs led to less overall recovery and more severe traumatic stress reactions (Doran et al., 2011, p. 615). Even if the therapy offered was adequate to deal with gender-based violence, it is not adequately accessed by all who require it.

¹⁹ I refer to Sharon Lamb’s (2005) argument that forgiveness therapy does not address the root causes of sexual violence and trauma suffered as discussed in Chapter One.

6.5 Community Support

Another path available to most women after wartime rape is the support of her community. Community support can take the form of opening up to friends and family members, local reconciliation programs, cultural forgiveness rituals and publicized national commissions. Some women find forgiveness and healing through these practices. In an article called *Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation* (2004), Jodi Halpern and Harvey Weinstein note that “reconstituting social networks is critical not only for a functioning society but also for the health and well-being of its people” (p. 562). After adverse events, rehumanizing the other is one such important process.

Though I understand the idea behind rebuilding society’s networks, I argue that this process is not helpful to victims of wartime rape. It was those very networks that allowed for sexual abuse to occur in the first place, therefore it does not make sense that reconstructing them would help stop sexual abuse. Public processes of forgiveness and reconciliation put pressure on the victim to forgive and then return to the status quo. The benefit of the process is that some perpetrators of wartime rape may transform their thoughts and beliefs but bystanders and beneficiaries who do not participate in such community practices often do not (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008, 333). These individuals claim ignorance or powerlessness as an excuse for allowing rampant sexual violence to occur around them. They go through no change in beliefs or behaviour and continue to live according to the old social norms that allow sexual violence. Other than those specifically involved in the community process, society in general does not change. Without society changing in general, gender-based violence will not change either.

6.6 Radical Forgiveness

This thesis explored the path of radical forgiveness after wartime rape. In the above section, it concluded that radical forgiveness is possible, though not always advisable. Radical forgiveness has significant implications for victims of wartime rape as well as implications for all women. Though I make no judgement on whether or not radical forgiveness is appropriate or morally commendable for certain victims, I do argue that it is also an inadequate path available to women after wartime rape. It is said to free victims from their trauma and help them let go of negative emotions in order to move on in life. The benefit is that the victim does not need to encounter the perpetrator. It may be what some victims require to heal but it may also cause more suffering. Since the process is internal, nothing in society changes. Even in radical forgiveness, the system of patriarchy, and therefore the system of sexual violence, remains in place.

In conclusion, wartime rape is suffered on the individual and the collective level. Yet no recourse, present either on the individual or collective level, is sufficient to address the suffering of women. Though there exist many paths to take after wartime rape, research shows each method of recourse for victims of sexual abuse has significant flaws. From the most public to the most private, each is inadequate in its own way. The inadequacy of these options means that female victims can really only survive, absorb, endure their suffering.

7 Conclusion

After understanding some of the aims and impacts of wartime rape, radical forgiveness may seem very unlikely. It seems especially unlikely when the victim has been so dehumanized that their ability to consider radical forgiveness has been taken away. Such

is the case with severe trauma but is not necessarily the case with all trauma. Despite all of the suffering a victim is made to endure during wartime rape, some victims do forgive. The testimonies of Jasna and Satta Joe offer incredible accounts of radical forgiveness. It is possible.

This chapter also explored the consequences of radical forgiveness after wartime rape. Some include the cycle of abuse remaining intact, patriarchy remaining unchallenged, the road to recovery being too generalized and women as a collective being betrayed. It is for these reasons, and more not included here, that some scholars argue that radical forgiveness should not occur after gender-based atrocities such as wartime rape. In essence, radical forgiveness after wartime rape could be immoral.

I offered the opinion that no one person is in a position of such moral authority that allows them to judge other victim's choices. Radical forgiveness being such an internal and private process gives no one but the victim the right to evaluate it. Though we, as women, cannot judge the choices of other women, we are not powerless. Due to the gendered nature of wartime rape and due to our membership to the victim group, we have the duty to encourage safety of women, to foster respect for all women and self-respect for victims, and to educate others about abuses that women suffer in general.

This chapter also took a look at the options available to victims of wartime rape in general. Paths of legal recourse, religious support, therapeutic sessions, community support, and of forgiveness were each examined in turn. I argued that each is inadequate to deal with the magnitude of the atrocity that is wartime rape. Even radical forgiveness, which is an internal process for the victim to help them move on in life, only offers basic survival. My

final argument is that there exists no system of recovery or healing available to women that can deal with the complexities, discrepancies and injustices that is gender violence.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the dynamics of radical forgiveness in the context of culpable wrongdoing of intolerable harm. I chose the example of wartime rape in which to examine radical forgiveness because it is an intolerable harm suffered on many different levels. It is not only a physical or a psychological attack on a singular victim. It is also not only a physical or a psychological attack on a community. Wartime rape is all of these. It is a complex and dynamic atrocity that has been occurring for years. It is couched in the misogyny of patriarchy and manifests itself on a spectrum of violence that women all over the world suffer. Rape in war transcends time, borders, languages, and religions. It also transcends race, class, and cultures. It is a unique atrocity in the breadth of victims that it claims. Only such a devastating atrocity would provide the proper context to examine a phenomenon as profound as forgiveness.

This thesis illustrated a topography of literature. In doing so, my aim was to develop a deeper understanding of the subtleties and nuances of forgiveness rather than develop a

concrete definition. After writing this thesis, I do not believe that one definition of forgiveness will ever exist. Each experience and perspective moulds how individuals perceive forgiveness. I offer that the time and energy used searching for one definition would be better spent probing further into the complexities and consequences of the various examples of forgiveness.

For my part, I chose to delve deeper into the phenomenon of radical forgiveness. I chose radical forgiveness in particular because it reflects the only option of forgiveness available to most victims in armed conflict and wartime rape. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was extraordinary in terms of bringing a deeply internal concept, such as forgiveness, to the national level. It is a rare case however. More often than not, victims of atrocities are not granted an encounter with their perpetrators after their trauma. Only processes of internal forgiveness, such as radical forgiveness, are therefore available to such victims.

After examining common debates, dialogues, testimonies, and arguments, I offer that radical forgiveness is the type of forgiveness that occurs:

- (1) when it is given by the primary victim for their own suffering;
- (2) when it is given to an unrepentant offender;
- (3) who is culpably responsible;
- (4) for acts so atrocious we are inclined to call them unforgivable; and
- (5) is based possibly on considerations of the victim but most certainly not on conditions that must be fulfilled by the perpetrator.

I realize that this understanding of radical forgiveness merely sets a very specific context. As for the actual process itself, the formula of radical forgiveness remains completely up to the victim. It becomes whatever the victim feels would best serve him/her in recovering from trauma.

There are, however, limitations to what radical forgiveness can offer such victims. Each victim may be served differently by radical forgiveness but no victim is served completely. I pass no judgement on the decision of radical forgiveness for any victim. It is one of the more empowering paths a victim may take after trauma. However, I argue that even though it is a victim-driven path, it is severely inadequate. Others options include retributive justice, restorative justice, religious support, therapeutic sessions and community processes. They are also inadequate.

I conclude that there does not exists a recourse that sufficiently responds to the magnitude of trauma suffered by the millions of victims of wartime rape. Whether women forgive or not, and whether that process is private or not, the system of structural violence against women remains. This means that sexual violence also remains unchanged. Victims may recover from their own trauma in order to move on and live a healthy life but in no scenario does that change the reality of violence against women as a collective.

Despite its inadequacy in addressing structural violence, I propose that there is still merit in studying and grappling with radical forgiveness in the context of wartime rape. This type of study can offer a few levels of analysis and understanding to the larger field of post-conflict justice and healing. It may offer a deeper understanding of the individual victim's healing process as well as some insight into certain factors that may lead to forgiveness. At

minimum, it offers the understanding that forgiveness can mean something different to each individual and in some cases it may not be desirable.

Further studies would be welcomed to search for a path that includes forgiveness and provides sufficient recourse for victims of sexual violence. Forgiveness literature could also be nurtured with more research regarding radical forgiveness as an internal emotional process and how it can impact collective social structures. My hope is that such explorations could yield private healing options for victims of sexual violence as well as solutions to dismantling structural violence and discrimination against women.

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