

WHEN INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE FAILS: EMOTION, ART, AND RESOLUTION

PAUL SANT CASSIA
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

INTRODUCTION: ART, EMOTION, AND COGNITION

In this chapter I explore emotion partly, but not exclusively, in terms of its cognitive dimension. I am interested in emotion in terms of its relationship to thought, and the impossibilities or difficulties in following logical reasoning through to its inevitable conclusions. My starting point is some observations by Aristotle. In his writings on rhetoric, poetry, and tragedy, Aristotle suggested, *contra* Plato, that thought played a central role in emotion. Aristotle was interested not in emotions *per se*, but rather in affective effects, especially through the operations of rhetoric, poetry (and in a more complex form with tragedy, where he introduces the notions of *mimesis* and *katharsis*), in short with the *affects* on an audience or a receiving public. He suggests that the effectiveness of rhetoric and poetry is that they move us through thought, which alter or stimulate our emotions. I wish to explore some of these insights, but give my interpretation a more anthropological turn. I suggest that emotions, as in the situation I shall be dealing with (the traumas surrounding Missing Persons in Cyprus), are embedded in social frameworks that sets limits to, as well as providing common interpretative frameworks to, the cognitive linkages that are made.

The two particular sets of emotions I am interested in are grief and desire, hope, and fear. I am interested in how these pathic states are refracted and reflected in, and through, popular art. Although emotion has received attention by anthropologists, the general focus has tended to concentrate on communities of communication. In this chapter I explore the emotional situation of a specific social group (relatives of Greek Cypriot missing persons) by reference to a particularly powerful set of murals in a church dedicated to missing persons. I follow Aristotle's hint that emotions occur "because of" (*dia*) thought, and I suggest that such thoughts stimulated as they are by exposure to these paintings, follow a mimetic narrative that helps sustain certain sets of emotions. I explore the relationship between emotions (specifically hope and fear) and religion, and suggest that in certain situations because formal religion (in this case Greek Orthodoxy) cannot offer any resolution to certain cognitive aporias, art can have an important cathartic role in enabling individuals to deal with their emotional predicaments. By 'aporia', I mean an insoluble conflict between rhetoric on the one hand, and reasonable experience on the other. The example upon which my account is based, that of relatives of missing persons, is an admittedly particular case, and is therefore not necessarily generalisable. Nevertheless, we can see perhaps more clearly in such situations how the study of emotions requires recourse to both cognitive elements and social frameworks.

RITUAL AND EMOTION: AN INFERNAL COUPLE?

In a widely quoted article, Renato Rosaldo (1984) tackled the problematical relationship between emotion and ritual. Following the accidental death of his wife he wrote a semi-autobiographical paper suggesting that emotion is prior to, and more dominant than, ritual: 'Just as the intense emotions of

bereavement do not explain obligatory ritual acts, so obligatory ritual acts do not explain the intense emotions of bereavement' (1984: 187). 'Funeral rituals, for example, do not contain the entire process of mourning. It is a mistake to collapse the two because neither ritual nor mourning fully encapsulates or fully explains the other' (1984: 192). If we were to follow this suggestion then we could see rituals as an occasionally inadequate means to legitimate and control emotions. Rituals therefore, do not necessarily provide 'closure' to adopt a bland word that has been adopted by therapists in the western world. We therefore need to explore other means of coming to terms with emotions.

Rosaldo identified anger and action (including rage) as means to resolve, and provide expression to emotion (grief). Yet his account does not address one problem, and bypasses another. First, although as he says, we find it difficult to understand and explain why an Ilongot man from the Philippines facing the loss of someone dear is impelled by his rage to kill his fellow human being and toss his head away, most of us can probably understand why Achilles drags the body of Hektor around the walls of Troy following the slaying of his friend, Patroclus, or why Ajax cuts the head of Imbrios from his slender neck and hurls it like a ball to roll in the dust. I have selected two similar situations (revenge at the loss of a loved one and desecration of the body) to explain why one set of actions can seem understandable or comprehensible and another not. The difference is not merely that one culture (Ancient Greece) may be familiar and the other not. This explains nothing, except the fact of difference. I think it is due to another factor. The Classics deal with characters and their emotions, and anthropology rarely does so. Characters create stories: 'a character is the one who performs the action in the narrative' ... 'characters are themselves plots' (Ricoeur, 1992: 143). Their emotions become more understandable.

Their actions sometimes say much more about what they feel than their words. This gives us a handle on the force of emotion. Often because it is tragedy it is an imitation of actions and of life: 'Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but *of actions and life*, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end of which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality...a tragedy is impossible without action, but there may be one without Character" (Aristotle, 1999: 23). Although tragedy is impossible without action, *understanding* tragedy (such as bereavement) is probably impossible without embeddedness in characters.

This is what may be missing in Rosaldo's account. This lacuna is not Rosaldo's *per se*, but stems from the way Anthropology has traditionally charted out its problematic. We rarely deal with tragedy, which we consider to be a one-off occurrence, inimical to our concentration on structure, society, or culture. Rosaldo attempts to chart a way through this unknown territory by criticising the tendency of anthropologists to see all practice as spectacle, and augurs that as anthropologists we should not write about death as if we were 'positioned as uninvolved spectators who have no lived experience that could provide knowledge about the cultural force of emotions' (1984: 193). This is salutary. We should cultivate empathy for the pathetic states of our informants. However, my understanding of the etymology of 'spectacle' is not merely *spectaculum* (show, sight, and spectacle), but also *speculum* (a looking glass or mirror). Through their (sometimes 'excessive') actions, individuals do not just vent their emotions, but resolve them precisely by re-presenting them as *specula* (mirrors) to their rage to be viewed by others as 'spectacle'. Achilles' grief and rage is assuaged not just by killing and dragging Hector's body around the walls of Troy, but also by *presenting it as a spectacle of his own internal state*. He does

not serve revenge cold, but white-hot "like flaming fire or the rising sun" (Il. 22.370-71). In matters of high emotion, display and re-presentation, even spectacle, are critical.

The case I explore in this chapter is both similar and different. It deals with the loss of loved ones, but there is no body to mourn. Individuals do not therefore have the means to express their emotions by 'conventional' means, either through 'ritual', however inadequate, or through spectacles, however cathartic they may be. In such situations we are obliged to concentrate on representation as a means to work through emotions. Briefly, I deal with the art used to represent missing persons, people who following inter-ethnic hostilities, and war and invasion, are in all probability dead, but who cannot be dispatched through mortuary rituals. I raise the possibility that popular art, partly because it may be seen as 'naïve' or 'simplistic' by political and artistic elites whose tastes are generally oriented towards the European metropolis, and partly because its religious emplotting contradicts rationalism, can be used to resolve contradictions in the relationship between emotions that are so strong that they become beliefs (for example, hope that a missing person might still be alive after a disappearance of some thirty years) and intuitive knowledge (for example, that the person must have long been dead).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DISAPPEARANCES IN CYPRUS

Cyprus, an island with a population distribution of 78% Greeks and 18% Turks became independent of Britain in 1960 following an armed uprising in favour of union with Greece (*enosis*). Between 1963 and 1974 over 2000 persons, both Greek and Turkish Cypriot, disappeared in Cyprus. They disappeared in the course of hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots between 1963-67, and during the mainland-Greek backed coup and the

subsequent Turkish invasion in 1974. Responsibility for the disappearances appears straightforward in some cases, more murky in others. Few bodies have been officially recovered. There are major differences in the manner Greek and Turkish Cypriots regard their missing. Briefly put, whereas the Turkish Cypriots regard their missing as *kayıplı* (as disappeared/dead/lost), the Greek Cypriots regard their missing as of unknown fate, *agnoumeni*, as not- (yet)-recovered either as living prisoners at best, or at worst as concealed bodies requiring proper and suitable burials. Turkish Cypriots claim they have lost a considerable number of civilians missing who disappeared between 1963 and 1974. By contrast, the majority of Greek Cypriot missing persons date from the 1974 Turkish invasion. Officially the Turkish Cypriots claim 803 missing persons, and the Greek Cypriots claim 1619 missing persons. The latter further claim that their missing were captured by the Turkish army, that they disappeared in captivity, and that the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot claims that these men are dead, goes against the evidence as they want to close the issue and not accept responsibility.

There are further differences in perception. The Turkish Cypriots have long been encouraged to perceive their missing as dead by their leaders, desiring to distance the Turkish Cypriot community from the Greek Cypriots, whom they blame as the culprits. For the Turkish Cypriot leadership it is important that the missing are dead, while for the Greek Cypriots it is important that they may still be alive, and that the main culprits are not the Turkish Cypriots (with whom they claim they coexisted peacefully in the past) but the Turkish army occupying some 38% of the island. Thus, whereas the Turkish Cypriots appear to wish the matter closed in its present manifestation, but keep the memory and memorials of their oppression alive, the Greek Cypriots wish to maintain the issue as open in a present

continuous tense, as an issue that is very much alive and will only be buried when the missing are finally returned and their bodies laid to rest. The issue is far from closed and continues to poison relations between the two groups.

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PAINTING AN APORIA

It is important to draw attention to the representational difficulties attendant upon the concept of 'Disappearance'. 'Disappearance' pre-empts the possibility of representation. Clearly, the representation of the *action* of disappearance is non-realizable, whilst the representation of what has disappeared as object or subject is an *exercise of recall*. As the philosopher Patrice Loraux notes:

"Pour comprendre les difficultés de la représentation, il faut comprendre quelque chose à l'anesthésie; pour comprendre quelque chose à l'anesthésie, il faut comprendre quelque chose au trauma et, pour comprendre quelque chose au trauma, il faut comprendre quelque chose au disparaître" (2001:47).

("To understand the difficulties of representation, it is necessary to understand something about anesthesia; to understand something about anesthesia it is necessary to understand something about trauma; to understand something about trauma, it is necessary to understand something about disappearance")

Anesthesia of sentiments; trauma of recall. These are conditions one has to apprehend when precursing relatives of missing persons. The situation in Cyprus is rendered even more problematical because until very recently Greek Cypriots refused to accept that their missing were dead. The problematic of representation of disappearances is thus rendered even more acute. We are not in the presence of the representation of disappearance as

(permanent) *loss*, but as a (potentially 'recoverable') *absence of what has been disappeared*. We are therefore in the presence of an aporia – an insoluble conflict between rhetoric on the one hand, and reasonable experience on the other. Representationally, the aporia can therefore be expressed as a riddle: when can an absence not be presented a loss? How can one conceal disappearances-as-losses, as absences, and yet conjure them through presences? This is no mere word play. Greek Cypriot society has been traumatised by the 1974 disappearances following the Turkish invasion. These disappearances have not been officially accepted as final by the Greek Cypriot authorities and by their relatives. For many years Greek Cypriot missing persons have been treated as lost (i.e. potentially recoverable) rather than dead (i.e. absent and non-recoverable). Aporias emerge out of the disarticulation between experience/knowledge, hope/fear, and belief. This chapter explores how popular art has been employed to resolve these insoluble tensions.

The Alexandros Papachristophorou Church for Missing Persons outside Nicosia is a major pilgrimage centre, a place of remembrance expressing the continued trauma of relatives of missing persons. It is also a place where relatives of missing persons meet visiting dignitaries and politicians. It thus brings together private emotions and its public representation. As one woman told me: "This is a place that represents our *trauma* (wound). We try to prevent the problem of the Missing from being sealed, because according to Mr Denktash (the Turkish Cypriot leader), none are alive. We cannot accept that they are dead. We don't accept this erasure by official conjecture. We insist the fate of every missing person be clarified officially in detail".

The West side of the church facing the iconostasis consists of a wall completely covered by little windows each containing a photograph of a missing person. To the right of the Church is *the House of the Missing Persons*

(*Oikos ton Agnooumenon*). This contains an art gallery of murals representing the story of the Missing and their drama. An analysis of these murals provides a useful insight into the symbolism of the narratives of loss and absence. To refined aesthetic sensibilities these murals could be dismissed as kitsch. Yet the Church receives many visitors and pilgrims, and many commented to me how touched they were by them. Their apparent naivete and directness conceals as much as they display. An analysis of their iconography can help us understand that these pictures are an attempt to unsuccessfully resolve a number of contradictions between the political treatment of the Missing (the formal ideology that unless there is documentation of their death the State considers them still alive) and private experience and 'intuitive' knowledge that they are lost forever. I discuss the murals below, giving them titles that best capture their iconography, as well as their time frame. I hope that the reader will forgive the absence of illustrations in this chapter, but as I hope to show what is important are the *themes* which can be expressed in words, rather than their actual pictorial or aesthetic significance.

i. The Long March: The Struggle of the Relatives to obtain information on their missing. This is by far the largest picture. The style is in the tradition of social realism and shows people marching. Some of the poses are clearly taken from Bernardo Bertolucci's film *1900*, which in turn was based upon the famous painting called *The Fourth Estate*, by Giuseppe Pelizza de Volpedo, painted between 1898-1901 (Milan, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna). Time frame: Present

ii. Saviour Mother Church: Allegory of the Church as represented by the *Panayia* (Mother of God) reaching out to save a sinking boat. Time Frame: Past-Present-Future

iii. Early Christian Martyrs: A scene in a dungeon representing imprisoned Missing Persons. The words KYPROS (CYPRUS) AND ELEFThERIA (FREEDOM) incised on the walls. Time Frame: Past

iv. The Cross of the Missing: Allegory of a Mother and daughter carrying a cross with the number 1619 in place of the INRI sign with faces of the missing carved out of the rock resembling Mount Rushmore. Time Frame: Past-Present-Future

v. The Meeting with the Risen Christ: A family of a missing person clearly mourning his loss suddenly meeting him. Here the symbolism seems closely modeled on the disciples' meeting the risen Christ. The missing son, bare-chested, and wearing army fatigue trousers, seems as surprised by their mourning him as they are by his appearing to them. Interestingly the two groups (the living relatives on the one hand, and the Risen Christ/*Agnoumenos*) do not touch. A physical gap between the two groups symbolises that the two groups occupy different time zones: the family in the here and now, the risen son, the future. Time Frame: Future

vi. The Unsolable Family: A family consisting of a father, wife and daughter at the dinner table waiting for their son-brother who will never return. Symbolises: Incompleteness. Time Frame: Present.

SOPHISTICATION THROUGH 'NAIVETE'?

The analysis that follows relies more on the iconography than on what people said about these pictures. The murals are too direct to allow anyone to say much. They empty or nullify conversation. One cannot ask people "what they mean" for they wear their emotions on their sleeve, so to speak. Nor can one directly challenge their message because this would be to question what Taussig calls the public secret as 'that which is generally known but cannot be spoken' (1999: 50), the public secret here being the fear that the missing persons are dead, but which cannot be aired openly.

The symbolism therefore could not be more unambiguous. Indeed their very naivete raises questions not so much about their 'propagandistic' purpose, but rather how such a relatively politically sophisticated culture and society could sustain such direct, unambiguous, unproblematic messages. We are amazed by such paintings because they seem to have been painted 'out of time'. There appears to be little personal interpretation by the artists. This is odd because Cyprus possesses a vibrant and sophisticated artistic community.

The closest one can get to understanding these pictures is that they appear to resemble social realism, in that no doubts, ambiguity, personal interpretations, or alternative voices are allowed to intrude. There is a 'smoothness' and 'completeness' about these images that excludes the personal or even the local. The collection of murals suggests a faith not so much in images *per se*, in their ability to convey an unambiguous message, but rather an absolute confidence in how to view and interpret the problem of the missing persons. The narrative appears to be monophonic rather than antiphonic, or even polyphonic. But is that confidence so strongly grounded? I suggest not. Behind the apparent certainty lies a plethora of

questions and emotions we have to decipher. I suggest that whilst these murals seem to depict unambiguous messages, they conceal a number of contradictions, and an immense emotional uncertainty. In this respect, the murals are quite different to icons, the dominant pictographic tradition in Orthodoxy. Although they utilise a Christian symbolism, their very naivete suggests an attempt to provide a resolution that cannot be offered by the theodicies of formal religion. We are in the presence of a millenarianism for the murals, like myth, depict a time outside time where anything can happen. They operate in what Minkowski called "mediated futures". And like Levi-Strauss' notion of myth, they encode a basic set of contradictions that formal religious beliefs cannot resolve because of political exigencies.

According to Levi-Strauss' celebrated definition, through being told, narrated, or in this case depicted, myths attempt (ultimately unsuccessfully) to resolve underlying contradictions. Although these murals appear similar to social realism in their apparent boundless certainty, they are in fact different. Social realist art operates in an unambiguous, unified, time frame - that of the constructed past and a realisable future. By contrast, these paintings operate in two irreconcilable time frames: that of the here and now, and that of religious time, in other words beyond time, time out of this world. Here, as in myth, 'anything can happen' - the missing can appear as early Christian martyrs, or as shadowing the risen Christ. The attempt to employ religious iconography to express (and resolve) what is recognizably a political problem on a societal level, and an existential one on the personal level, is thus vitiated.

The main tension the paintings try to resolve is that between political powerlessness and religious certainty, or at least the certainty that religion aims to offer. Put differently, the murals attempt to unsuccessfully resolve the main contradictions between the political treatment of the Missing (the

formal ideology) which holds that the Missing should be assumed to be alive unless their mode of death is clarified - in short that they are *absent* - and private experience and 'intuitive' knowledge that they are *lost*- i.e. it is reasonable to assume they are dead. By displaying a monophonic security, the paintings conceal a profound insecurity. They betray a fear that the missing are lost forever, which can only be transcended through a popular religious soteriology (theory of salvation). The contradiction these murals express is the following: how can one reclaim these people who have politically been kept alive and whose death has not been faced by the state, nor recognized by society, when all logic and experience suggests that they may well be dead? And the 'resolution' that can only be offered to this predicament is that they are alive outside time. Rather than becoming absent, these missing are still lost. They thus can even represent 'us'. Recovery of the missing is tantamount to the recovery of self. Ultimately, therefore, these pictures address the problem and tension between loss and absence.

ABSENCE AND LOSS

Here some insights of Dominick LaCapra may be useful. He suggests we should tease out the differences between absence and loss: 'the difference (or nonidentity) between absence and loss is often elided, and the two are conflated with confusing and dubious results. This conflation tends to take place so rapidly that it escapes notice and seems natural or necessary' (1999: 700). He relates absence to structural trauma, and loss with historical trauma: 'In an obvious and restricted sense losses may entail absences but the converse need not be the case.' (1999: 700).²

LaCapra situates absence on a trans-historical level and loss on a historical level. By transhistorical he means 'that which arises or is asserted in a contingent or particular historical setting but which is postulated as

transhistorical' (note 7 p.700). Here one could refer to the mural *In Jail*. An event that arose out of a particular historical setting is transformed into a prototypical scene of a trans-historical early Christian martyrdom. Absence and loss can in some senses almost be seen as opposed. They also have different aetiologies, not just in the way the past is interpreted, but also in the way the past is dealt with, and in the means adopted to transcend or recover that loss or absence.

Let us begin by observing that both Greek and Turkish Cypriots faced a problem of the 'absence' of loved ones. How both groups responded to that fact varied. Initially, as with situations of death and trauma to which they certainly approximated, both groups were faced with two sets of experiences: absence and loss. In 'normal' mourning processes, the initial experience of sudden absence (of a loved one) is worked through as a loss, which in turn leads to a fuller acceptance of absence. I wish to suggest that on a societal level Greek Cypriots have never fully worked out the relationship between the two. This could be interpreted as a chronic case of melancholia, and this is indeed what the psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan has suggested (Volkan and Itzkowitz, 2000).

LaCapra suggests that 'When absence is converted into loss, one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community'. This applies particularly to the Greek Cypriots. The recovery of the missing is viewed as a means to recover not just lost territory but also heralding a type of reunification of the living with their missing loved ones.

I suggest that Greek and Turkish Cypriots responded to their loss/absences differently. Simply put, the Greek Cypriot experience of loss was of a sudden, massive, widespread societal dislocation, in a *war situation* that created a common solidarity and group awareness *qua* group and

predisposed the survivors to fear the worse. Their initial experience was that of loss (of loved ones, land, etc) rather than absence. They transformed those real losses into symbols of absence. By contrast, Turkish Cypriot experiences in the 1963-4 were much more individual, spread over a longer period, and in a situation of reciprocal hostage taking where the relatives may well have 'reasonably' expected to get their loved ones back, as indeed did happen to a certain extent. This does not make their suffering any less serious, nor less worthy of our sympathy. Indeed in some senses the very fabrication and simulation of normality by the Greek Cypriot authorities who controlled the state after 1963, renders Turkish Cypriot experiences more horrific and traumatisable. Nevertheless, it is important to note that their experiences and expectations then were more oriented towards the pole of absences. They subsequently transformed their real absences into symbols of losses.

For Greek Cypriots the private experiences of loss were transformed on the societal level into symbols of absence. They became markers of a structural trauma, which can probably never be resolved. As LaCapra notes: 'when loss is converted into (or encrypted in an indiscriminately generalised rhetoric of) absence, one faces the impasses of endless melancholy, impossible mourning, and interminable aporia in which any process of working through the past and its historical losses is foreclosed or prematurely aborted' (1999: 698). A good example of this is the mural of the Mother and her Daughter carrying the *Cross of the Missing*. The Mother and Daughter are condemned to carry the cross of the missing for the living/society for all time. The switch from Christ to the Mother/wife of the Missing Person as the person carrying the cross is a further demonstration of identification of permanently enacted suffering. LaCapra suggests that 'the anxiety attendant upon absence may never be entirely eliminated or overcome but must be lived with in various ways. Avoidance of this anxiety is one basis for the typical projection of blame for a putative loss onto

identifiable others, thereby inviting the generation of scapegoating or sacrificial scenarios' (1999: 707). We can represent the process in the following way:

Loss kkkkkk Absence: endless aporia: Carrying the Cross (Collective)

Yet on the private, individual, level as the society did not provide the institutional means to resolve the trauma of absence, to provide closure, and because the issue was kept alive on a political level, the private experience of absence has been transformed into an unending experience of loss. I suggest we are witnessing here the beginnings of the creation of sacrality. As Georges Bataille observed 'Sacred things are established through a labour of loss': in particular the success of Christianity must be explained by the significance of the theme of the appalling crucifixion of the Son of God, which takes human anguish to the point of a representation of loss and unlimited decline' (1998: 70)

A good example of how the private experience of absence has been transformed into an unending experience of loss is the mural of the *Disconsoleable Family* waiting for their Missing Son to come to the dinner table. Here the overriding sentiment is that of despair. As LaCapra notes 'the conversion of absence into loss gives anxiety an identifiable object - the lost object- and generates the hope that anxiety may be eliminated or overcome' (1999: 707). The emphasis on the symbols of absence - the empty chair and dinner setting, the substitution of the son by the photograph above, the uneaten bowl of fruit, suggest a self-conscious exploration of the symbols of melancholia. He suggests 'when mourning turns to absence and absence is conflated with loss, then mourning becomes impossible, endless,

quasi-transcendental grieving, scarcely distinguishable (if at all) from interminable melancholy' (1999: 716).

This theme merits further attention. The empty dinner place is clearly a trope of absence. Without having seen this picture, many Greek Cypriots often described this imaginary scene to me as an indication of the pain and suffering experienced by the families and the fact that they still hoped for the return of their loved ones. Interestingly, however, I have never come across such an actual practice among the families of the missing. It is clear that this represents a *symbolism* of absence, rather than a literal practice. Relatives adopted other actions (such as retaining items of clothing), but these were closer to *momento mori*. There is certain self-awareness here in the use of the popular symbolism of melancholia that should alert us to the fact that something subtle is taking place. It is precisely because of this self-awareness that certain psychoanalytical attempts to describe the predicament of the Greek Cypriots as a refusal to face reality and to persist in melancholia (e.g. Volkan, 2000) seem unsatisfactory.

From a cultural perspective in terms of the representation of Greek dining rooms, something is missing in this picture which gives us a clue as to the relationship between sentiments and faith. There is a total absence of any religious element in the living room, such as icons, etc. I believe this is not fortuitous. Christian theology considers sadness a sin. Of all the paintings, this is the most lacking in hope, and therefore problematic from a Christian perspective. As Kristeva elliptically notes 'The depressed person is a radical, sullen atheist' (Kristeva, 1989: 5). These pictures are subversive of formal Orthodox notions of *engarteresis* (the acceptance of suffering through patience and forbearance). Writing on depression and melancholia, Kristeva explores the feelings associated with the word "disconsolate". It suggests a 'paradoxical temporality: the one who speaks has not been solaced in the

past, and the effect of that frustration leads up to the present..... "Disconsolate" turns the present into the past when the trauma was experienced. The present is beyond repair, without the slightest solace' (1989:148) This mural, like the photographs to which it approximates in style and origin (for these murals are illustrations of staged photographs, rather than based upon sketches from life), suggests an unresolved absence experienced as a permanent state of loss. How is the tension between loss and recovery anticipated and resolved?

The mural of *The Returning Soldier* gives some suggestion of a 'solution'. Yet this is not fully a recovery. A returning soldier appears as a risen figure, almost as a phantasm, even in a manner similar to the period between Christ's Resurrection and Ascension- a transitional period, for the missing are located betwixt and between in Turner's felicitous phrase. In this mural he encounters his family, but both groups cannot believe whom they are seeing: the son that his family could be mourning, the family that he could (re)appear. There is no joy, just amazement. This is a Resurrection picture. The recovery anticipated here is not a collective but a familial one. The murals thus represent a collective struggle and problem, but they portray individual, familial loss, and suggest a familially based recovery. The nature, timing, and aetiology of such recovery is left vague. The viewer is not guided to visualise whether this will be an individual real homecoming or a symbolic one. Like the family in *The Returning Soldier*, we are never sure whether the recovered missing person is our phantasm. He is perfect, like a saint, or a *levendis*, an unblemished, handsome, resplendent eternally young man.

It is clear that these murals are designed to express and reflect the emotions experienced by the relatives of the missing. As we are dealing with an extraordinary situation (the resistance by a society to accept that persons missing since 1974 are dead), it proved difficult to directly explore the complex of emotions with relatives beyond a certain level. I discovered that direct engagement with the relatives on their emotional states to be fraught with practical, epistemological, ethical, and methodological difficulties. They were certainly 'emotional' about the political issue of missing persons, but there was also an understandable weariness in talking about their own personal feelings after so many years of frustration and political activism. Loraux would term this a type of (self-imposed) emotional anesthesia, suggesting: 'L'anesthésie implique, d'abord, la disjonction d'un sentir et d'un ressentir' (2001: 47) ('anesthesia implies above all a disjunction between feeling/experience and a reflection upon those feelings'). So I tended to approach the issue elliptically. In this chapter I therefore complement the insights obtained through discussions with relatives with a concentration on another form of language, that of popular art. The advantage of this approach is that such art is intended to be reflective of emotional states. Clearly there is an element of artifice, but the artifice here is that of a lack of artifice. This is not high art and it does not lend itself to the rigours of art criticism. But it is eminently suitable for anthropological analysis. We are in the presence of emotions, or more precisely the representation of pathetic states: hope and fear (e.g. *The Returning Soldier*), grief and desire (eg. *The Unconsolable Family*). As one woman protested: "Listen, every being wants its young! The dog, its puppy ! The cat, its kitten! Why can't we want our own returned to us?"

Here some thoughts of Vincent Crapanzano might be useful. He notes that hope as a category of experience and analysis has been ignored in

anthropology. Crapanzano is acutely aware that hope as an emotion cannot be approached independently of religion, and unsurprisingly finds it difficult to disentangle the two. Instead he concentrates more on the mystification that is inherent in hope. He begins by comparing hope and desire: 'hope is intimately related to desire. It is desire's passive counterpart...Desire is effective. It presupposes human agency...while desire presumes a psychology, hope presupposes a metaphysics. Both require an ethics – of expectation, constraint, and resignation' (2004: 100). Hope shares the same direction as expectation (*attente*) – toward the future-present: 'Unlike desire, which is continuous, hope assumes a moment of arrest' (2004: 104), a condition that certainly applies to the relatives of the missing. He then points to the dimensions of hope: 'imaginative stimulus; vague hope; effective desire...and dreams, waking dreams, daydreams, and illusion; anticipation, expectation, and possibility; the future; patience and waiting; doubt, fear, and joy; revolution, utopia, and apocalypse; and a quantity of theological terms like salvation, redemption, and of course, expiation' (2004: 100, my emphasis). These are terms that certainly apply to these murals, and I am interested in the last sets of terms. On one level, the symbols provided by religion provide a useful way for Greek Cypriots to 'resolve' their emotional predicaments. It provides them with a ready and obvious iconography. But on another level, these murals also indicate that the theodicies of formal orthodoxy cannot offer much relief or consolation. Holst-Warhaft (1992) has suggested that in contrast to Catholicism, orthodoxy cannot offer much consolation to people's feelings as it lacks the rituals which closely follow and replicate the passage of the individual through life to deal with extreme crises. Indeed, these pictures veer more towards popular Catholicism, rather than formal Orthodoxy in their freedom of expression. The result is therefore something that *appears* to be religious art, but is actually something more: a series of emotional *mises en*

scenes utilising iconographies provided by religion, because they are the only ones imaginatively available, to 'resolve' an aporia: a insoluble conflict between rhetoric (that the missing are recoverable, because they might be still alive to be returned to their loved ones), and reasonable experience on the other (that they are dead and thus non-recoverable). The murals project imagined futures for an unimaginable reality.

In his study of myth, Levi Strauss (1963) suggested that myths have three features: one that in myth anything could happen; two, that myths are unsuccessful attempts to resolve contradictions or aporias; and three that the mythic value of a myth emerges in spite of the worst translation (in contrast to poetry). These features are applicable to these murals. First, as in myth, anything could happen in these paintings: The Mother of God saving the Missing; a young soldier returning like the Risen Christ to meet his loved ones; a missing person returning to join a family meal. 'Anything' could happen, except 'we' 'know' that these are precisely the things that will *not* happen. But who is the 'we' here? The readers of this chapter / viewers of the murals, or the relatives of the missing? This partly depends on the contingency of emotions, and highlights the difficulty in conveying / communicating emotions felt by others except through some form of representation – which is where the ideas of Aristotle might be useful. Second, these paintings attempt to unsuccessfully resolve a contradiction between hope and desire on the one hand and reasonable expectations on the other. This contradiction is repeated in various forms in all the murals. In short, they are all variations on the same theme. The viewers, like the Missing Persons in the murals, are in the words of Crapanzano, 'caught in the *structure* of waiting' (2004: 115 my emphasis). Waiting is a structure, rather than a (temporary) condition, because in this case what is waited for is unrealisable. Finally, the mythic values of these paintings emerge in spite

of their very coarseness of execution and would not be enhanced through a more refined rendition (indeed one could argue that their coarseness reinforces their distance from logical presumption). Could we not therefore entertain the possibility that modern contemporary societies also employ some forms of mythic thought when dealing with traumatic emotions, whilst being alerted to the possibility that desire may have a politics and politics a desire - in short, that certain segments of society may well have benefited from the harvesting of the mystification of hope? I explore the latter part of this question in my conclusion. Here I am interested in the homology between such art and mythic thought. Indeed, it is precisely their very naivete in their narrative structure, their day-dream quality, their anticipation, expectation and possibility, which suggests the murals are attempting to express mythic messages. Our sensibilities are challenged precisely through the disjuncture between medium and message, for they employ a medium (representative art) to say things which we (and most Cypriots) would not normally culturally associate with such a medium. And although both Orthodox and Catholic religious art depict miracles, these are associated with the lives of saints or holy personages *in the past*, not (as in these murals) with the anticipated outcomes *in the future* of the fates of ordinary people who disappeared in the course of violent conflict. It is not the lives of these people that were miraculous, it is their non-deaths or redemption from a death that cannot be faced that is thaumaturgical (miracle producing).

LaCapra has suggested 'in acting-out, the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed.... [] to the extent someone is possessed by the past and acting out a repetition compulsion, he or she may be incapable of ethically responsible

behaviour' (1999: 716). He suggests that 'with respect to traumatic losses, acting-out may well be a necessary condition of working-through, at least for victims' (1999: 717).³

CONCLUSION: THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORKS OF EMOTIONAL COGNITION

In this chapter I have been interested in the role of popular art to convey a complex alloy of emotions (grief and desire, hope and fear) that cannot be uncoupled without incurring symbolic collapse. The products of the imagination, such as myth in 'simple' societies, or certain forms of literary and artistic creation in more 'complex' literate ones, serve to resolve the tensions between epistemological intuitions and emotional states. These murals act as a societal counter-depressant. They have both aesthetic and cathartic dimensions. Aesthetically, they utilise the soteriological symbols and discourse provided by religion in an imaginary fictional mode to resolve some of the problems experienced by relatives of the missing. And they have a cathartic functional effectiveness whereby pilgrims can explore their predicament in a condition of symbolic collapse (the object of desire has disappeared and is a cause of pain). Some support for this view comes from Julia Kristeva who writes:

'Aesthetic and particularly literary creation, and also religious discourse in its imaginary, fictional essence, set forth a device whose prosodic economy, interaction of characters, and implicit symbolism constitute a very faithful semiological representation of the subject's battle with symbolic collapse. Such a literary representation is not an *elaboration* in the sense of "becoming aware" of the inter- and intrapsychic causes of moral suffering; that is where it diverges from the psychoanalytic course, which aims at dissolving the symptom. Nevertheless, the literary and religious representation possesses a

real and imaginary effectiveness that comes closer to catharsis than to elaboration; it is a therapeutic device used in all societies throughout the ages' (1989: 24-25 emphasis in original).

Kristeva's reference to catharsis enables us to approach emotions by reference to two things: first, their expression and elaboration, and second, their reception. Here some of Aristotle's insights might be useful. Aristotle had suggested that emotions, far from being irrational, have a cognitive dimension. This enables him to show how emotions are central to the effective and affective workings of poetry, ethics, and politics. Products of the imagination, such as rhetoric, poetry, and art, move us by altering or stimulating our emotions. They do so through the human proclivity for mimesis, which is part of human experience. All humans derive pleasure from learning and inference. Tragedy is particularly powerful because the emotions represented and evoked are pity and fear. Pity is felt towards those who suffer an undeserved misfortune; fear is evoked through the intuition that such misfortune could happen to anyone, like us. I suggest that it is through such dual processes that these works of art operate. They link the relatives of Missing Persons with the wider society through the *mise en scene* (dramatic presentation) of their tragedy to a wider audience, and create a national political community of suffering. But the catharsis involved here is not a psychoanalytic one of exposure of, and to, the underlying causes, the cathartic abreaction ('a discharge of emotion attaching to a previously repressed experience' (Rycroft, 1972: 1). Rather, it is a semiological representation of the subject's battle with symbolic collapse through an endless repetition of expectation (*attente*) towards the future-present.

Why such art does not ultimately provide closure to personal and national emotional traumas is related to politics. Greek Cypriot society has long refused to accept that the missing are dead. In short that these were losses,

because the loss of the Missing symbolically represents the loss of the north of the island, still under Turkish Occupation. Rather, it has conjured the missing as absences, to be (potentially) recovered, at least in terms of their remains (*leipsana*) which they are currently prevented from reclaiming because of 'Turkish intransigence'. This has been sustained by a whole scaffolding of laws (such as those which maintain that the missing, not having been declared dead by the state, require that their legal rights be protected), and by propaganda. This helps maintain what Taussig (1999) had called the 'public secret', something that most people recognize but refuse to admit. Emotions, therefore, are socially framed. The anthropology of emotions may require us to recognise that emotions have their own politics, and politics have their own emotions.

NOTES

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¹ For a fuller discussion of the issue, see Sant Cassia, 2000.

² There is a huge literature on the processes of mourning, cf. For example Bowlby, 1961; Doka, 1989; Freud, 1917; Parkes, 1995.

³ For an interesting philosophical treatment of the contemporary difficulties representation, see Rose, 1996.

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