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0521784352 - Cultures Under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma - Edited by Antonius

C. G. M. Robben and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco

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Cultures under Siege

Collective violence changes the perpetrators, the victims, and the societies in which it occurs. It targets the body, the psyche, and the sociocultural order. How do people come to terms with these tragic events, and how are cultures affected by massive outbreaks of violence? This book is a groundbreaking collection of essays by anthropologists, psychologists, and psychoanalysts, drawing on field research in many different parts of the world. Profiting from an interdisciplinary dialogue, the authors provide provocative, at times deeply troubling, insights into the darker side of humanity, and they also propose new ways of understanding human cruelty and suffering.

ANTONIUS C. G. M. ROBBEN is Professor of Anthropology at Utrecht University. He is the author of *Sons of the Sea Goddess: Economic Practice and Discursive Conflict in Brazil* (1989), and co-editor (with Carolyn Nordstrom) of *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival* (1995).

MARCELO M. SUÁREZ-OROZCO is Professor of Human Development and Psychology at Harvard University, and co-director of the Harvard Immigration Project. His recent books include *Transformations: Immigration, Family Life, and Achievement Motivation Among Latino Adolescents* (with Carola Suárez-Orozco) (1995), *The Making of Psychological Anthropology II* (1994) (with George and Louise Spindler), *Status Inequality* (1991) (with George De Vos), and *Central American Refugees* (1999) and *Children of Immigration* (with Carola Suárez-Orozco) (2000). He is the editor of *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (1998) and other collections.

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Tereska, Poland, 1948 (see p. xi).

Photograph by David Seymour (courtesy Magnum Photos).

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For Robert A. LeVine

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Preface

The unimaginable suffering and systematic devastation in Kosovo, the highly orchestrated programme of ethnic cleansing and rape in Bosnia, and the well-organized genocidal killings in Rwanda are recent examples of some of the terrible atrocities we have witnessed during the late twentieth century. Will the twenty-first century augur more horror and suffering? While no one can answer that question, even a casual survey of the last century's atrocities and its traumatic consequences suggests that we must continue to ponder such an ominous future. We hope that this volume will contribute in three ways to the understanding of future outbreaks of collective, large-scale violence and the multiple traumas they generate: first, by emphasizing that violence and trauma should be studied and analyzed in conjunction, rather than separately; secondly, by advancing an interdisciplinary approach to violence and trauma; and thirdly, by focusing on intra-psychic as well as social and cultural processes, by paying explicit attention to the effects of violence and trauma on both the individual and the social group.

The image on the frontispiece of this book captures many of its major themes. David Seymour took this photograph of a girl named Tereska in 1948 in a Polish residence for traumatised children. Tereska had grown up in a concentration camp, and her drawing on the blackboard was her representation of 'home'. We have chosen this timeless image of human suffering because the majority of the papers in this collection refer to traumatised children, their resiliency in violent contexts, and the importance of the home for them.

This collection brings together multi-level analytic approaches that cross over the traditional social science disciplinary boundaries by involving psychoanalysts, cultural psychologists, and social anthropologists. It is the result of a dialogue over half a decade among colleagues working in many different parts of the world. Their international standing and their commitment to interdisciplinary research on violence and trauma distinguish the scholars involved in this project.

We are grateful to many institutions for their support, especially

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critical during the earliest phases of this work. A core group was able to meet in Cambridge, Massachusetts, upon the initiative of Antonius Robben to prepare the agenda for the subsequent workshop in Europe. This meeting was made possible by a generous grant from the Innovation Fund of the Rockefeller Foundation. We are grateful to the Department of Human Development and Psychology at Harvard University for facilitating that first encounter. A grant from the Rockefeller Foundation allowed us to convene a larger group at the Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy. The conference was entitled *Civilization and Its Enduring Discontents: Violence and Aggression in Psychoanalytic and Anthropological Perspective*, and was held on 2–6 September 1996. This volume contains one-half of the papers presented at the workshop. We want to thank Gilbert Herdt and Bonno Thoden van Velzen for co-organizing the conference. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Susan Garfield of the Bellagio Center Office in New York, and the staff of Villa Serbelloni in Italy, in particular Gianna Celli, Pasquale Pesce, and Andrea Gilerdoni, for hosting this international meeting with great hospitality and professionalism. Naomi Quinn, Editor of the Society for Psychological Anthropology Series with Cambridge University Press, did a superb job guiding this project through its various phases. Her patience, good humour, and wisdom were greatly appreciated. We thank Jessica Kuper of Cambridge University Press for bringing this project to a successful completion. Finally, we dedicate this volume to Robert A. LeVine whose life's work best captures the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration that gave birth to this project.

ANTONIUS C. G. M. ROBBEN
MARCELO M. SUÁREZ-OROZCO

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