

**Repairing the Irreparable:
Challenges facing compensation and reparations in societies in transition**

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Reparations can imply a range of responses and actions. Generally, reparations entail, amongst other things, acts of restoring what has been lost, giving back something that is equivalent to a loss to the person who has undergone the loss, or making amends for what has been done, whether symbolic or material amends. They may even entail specific gestures such as an apology. Most often, drawing on largely legal notions, reparations are understood as the effort to restore someone (or something) to the state they (or it) were in before harm was done. From this perspective, reparations generally imply a structured and procedurally just way of trying to redress or compensate for harm.

However, from a psychological perspective, reparations have a slightly different meaning. This is perhaps most evident in psychoanalytic thinking. Historically, the meaning is mostly closely associated with the work of Melanie Klein (Klein & Riviere, 1964). Space does not permit a thorough examination of Klein's work, but suffice it to say that in psychoanalytic thinking, reparation generally deals with internal psychic processes. It is closely associated with intrapsychic guilt; that is, the profound (psychological) urge to 'make good' for injuries done to others.

For Klein, the human need to make amends for perceived wrong is closely tied to developing the capacity for taking responsibility. The capacity to understand others and have sympathy for them is developed each time the infant engages in the psychological process of making reparation. Space does not permit a more detailed discussion of this point, but it is central to much psychoanalytic thinking. It is probably best expressed by Winnicott's notion (drawn from Klein's work) that the

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beginning of the socialisation process is the development of the capacity for concern. Winnicott sees maturity as the ability of individuals to compromise and to feel and act responsibly (see e.g. Davis & Wallbridge, 1981). Thus, for many psychoanalysts, the notion of reparation is woven into reaching a new developmental milestone insofar as feelings of personal guilt in respect of aggression lead to the urge for reparation and the beginnings of social responsibility. In this sense, the psychological ability to make reparation is considered an essential component in the psychological development of the child and, ultimately, necessary in the formation of all relationships. Klein's analysis tells us that not only do most people have an urge to try to set things right that have been damaged in some way, but that they also expect similar behaviour from others. If this theory is correct then reparation, and the urge to make amends for perceived or actual wrongs to others, holds a fairly central place in human psychology.

Interestingly in this context psychologists talk about 'reparation' (without an s).

I believe a distinction between the terms 'reparation' and 'reparations' can be useful. I define 'reparations' as the acts or objects associated with attempts to make amends, such as compensation payments or building a memorial for victims. Reparations can also be representational in form or intent, such as the act of stating an apology. Simply put, reparations are the things done or given as an attempt to deal with the consequences of political violence.

The term 'reparation' describes what is sought through the granting of reparations. Reparation, as I frame it, is a psychological state in which victims feel that adequate amends have been made for a wrong committed. From an individual psychological perspective, it is helpful to think about the aim of reparations, as obvious as it may sound on first reading, as being about making reparation. From the Kleinian perspective, the purpose of reparations is to make good psychologically what has been damaged, lost, or destroyed. From a macro perspective, a government may also aspire to its reparations programme broadly satisfying victims in this way; or, at the least, it might hope that the programme brings some level of satisfaction. The advantage of using the term 'reparation' in this way is that it can assist in providing an understanding of how an individual victim may think about reparations and what they may ultimately desire from them. However, whether reparation has taken place for an individual is difficult to measure.

Reparations are also a double-edged sword. Symbolic acknowledgement and monetary compensation can be useful, but they can never wholly meet all the psychological needs of survivors or deliver full reparation. I will return to this point.

Benefits of Reparations

All objects or acts of reparations have a symbolic meaning to individuals – they are never merely acts or objects. This symbolism to individuals operates at two levels.

First, reparations generally symbolise something to individuals. In form, quality, shape, or image, they represent or indirectly express something abstract or invisible, such as the memory of a loved one. Such acts and objects can be profoundly meaningful to victims or survivors at a psychological level.

Second, reparations also represent or indirectly express something abstract or invisible to victims about those giving or granting the reparations. Reparations can, for example, symbolise an admission of guilt, benevolence, care for citizens by society, and/or a willingness to pay back what has been lost.

Symbolic Value of the Type of Reparations

In terms of the first point, acts of reparations (for example, reburials, monuments, apologies) and material acts of reparations (for example, payments) serve the same symbolic end. Both stand as symbolic markers of redress, recognition, or acknowledgment in their own right. This is not to say, however, that political conflict cannot have very real material impacts (such as goods being stolen or destroyed, and/or a breadwinner's income being lost) that may need to be redressed in a financial or compensatory way. But financial reparations (or compensation) are often mistakenly viewed as, and spoken about by policymakers and survivors alike, as forms of concrete assistance that are significantly different from and certainly more substantial than symbolic acts, such as the erection of tombstones or the naming of streets after the dead. However, although they can have real material benefits, the reality is that seldom will the sums of money granted ever equal the actual amount of money lost over the years since a breadwinner has died and, psychologically speaking, there is nothing inherent in money that will cause it to have a greater psychological impact than other mechanisms. Therefore, we should view financial reparations as another form of symbolic or nominal reparations. I am not suggesting that symbolic reparations should replace financial compensation or that they are less important. Compensation can have a direct and important impact on individuals' lives.

However, although compensation can make a material difference, as can more traditional symbolic

measures, it is limited in its psychologically reparative power, particularly if unaccompanied by other measures. It is important to think about compensation in this way as it militates against political attempts to present compensation as the point of closure rather than as only one component of a complex healing process and should never be treated in isolation.

But to get back to the benefits of reparations.

At an individual level, financial reparations and other acts of reparations, such as building a monument, have the potential to play an important role in any process of healing, coping with bereavement, and addressing the impact of violence for victims. They can symbolically acknowledge and recognize the individual's suffering. Symbolic representations of what happened, particularly if the symbol is personalised as in a memorial on which the name of a loved one is inscribed, and culturally relevant, can help concretise a traumatic event, aid an individual to come to terms with it and help label responsibility. The final point is important because labeling responsibility can appropriately redirect blame toward those responsible and relieve the guilt that survivors often feel. In addition, reparations can serve as focal points in the grieving process and be a physical or visual representation of what was lost, allowing individuals the space to channel their emotions and address them in a focused or specific way. This can aid recovery by allowing individuals to focus exclusively on their grief through the symbol.

Messages about those Giving or Granting the Reparations

In terms of the second level of symbolism mentioned above – that is, what the granting of reparations represents to victims about those giving or granting them – a few points are worth making. First, the offering of reparations to victims can represent a societal or community willingness to deal with and part from the past. Reparations are a form of social action, which, in the symbolic realm, aims to repair the victim's relationship with society (Lira, 2001). Reparations can assist victims to feel a greater level of integration, recognition, and acceptance into society. This in turn can combat feelings of isolation, which are a common consequence of political violence, as well as assist survivors in breaking the silence surrounding what happened to them or their loved ones. Pablo de Grieff has argued that reparations can lead to greater feelings of recognition by the state and increase levels of civic trust (de Greiff, 2006). This can be vital in countering the consequences of extreme political traumatisation, that is the undermining of an individual's sense of belonging to society and the destruction of individual, community, and institutional bonds.

Monuments, museums, plaques, and other markers are some of the ways that governments, as well as social actors, can try to embody memories. They are spatial markers and can be focal points for grieving as noted. The establishment of monuments and museums, plaques, and other markers, demonstrates a societal or community willingness to deal with and acknowledge the hurts of the past. They may result in lessons from the past being carried into the future and convince victims of the possibility of nonrepetition. According to Lean, reparations demonstrate a government's interest in, and the state's acceptance of, responsibility for the wellbeing of its citizens (Lean, 2003). Reparations are, according to de Greiff, a materialisation of society's willingness to do things differently (de Greiff, 2006).

At a more micro level, in restorative justice, restitution paid by the perpetrator to the victim can also help symbolise the perpetrator's commitment to apologising, making amends, and taking responsibility. There is research from Petrucci and others to show that many victims of criminal violence want reparations in the form of a sincere apology from their offender, as well as compensation from them for damages, promises not to reoffend, and the taking of responsibility by the offender for their actions (Petrucci, 2002).

Limitations: Repairing the Irreparable

As much as survivors might desire an apology, acknowledgement or some form of compensation, all are limited in their potential impact.

From an individual perspective, reparations for human rights violations are attempts to repair the irreparable (Doxtader & Villa-Vicencio, 2004b; Hamber, 2000; Minow, 2002 ; South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003 , Volume 6, p. 161). Put another way, Jon Elster writes that life does not have an "Undo" button' (Elster, 2004, p. 167). Acknowledgment, apology, recognition and even substantial material assistance do not bring back the dead nor are they guaranteed to converge with, and alleviate, all the levels of psychological pain suffered. No matter what the motive, all reparations strategies face this intractable problem. All reparations, in the context of trying to redress the impact of political violence, whether financial or in the form of an object, are nominal in nature, as I noted earlier. It is impossible to wholly close the gap between an individual's personal psychological needs and what the society can offer at a social and political level. Furthermore, the difficulties of trying to repair the irreparable can be compounded in transitional contexts.

For example, one of the needs often highlighted by victims of human rights violations is the need for justice. However, in societies in transition, justice through the courts is a need seldom met – for example, in cases where concessions to former combatants and amnesties to state officials are part of a peace agreement or where there are insufficient resources or evidence to prosecute human rights violators. In the South African context, for example, there is little doubt that the granting of amnesty to perpetrators of human rights violations compounded the sense that some survivors had that their situation was irreparable, whether retributive justice through the courts was a pragmatic possibility or not.

This is not to say that even if justice had been forthcoming (in the retributive sense through the courts, say) a past wrong of the extreme kind (murder) could ever have been totally set right from a psychological perspective either, although it is generally the preferred option for most victims (Hamber, 2009).

Reparations can also be difficult to bear for victims. For example, passively accepting reparations can be experienced by some survivors as a disrespectful act that betrays the loss they have endured or the memory of those killed. In the case of families of the disappeared, for example, accepting reparations can often unconsciously make survivors feel complicit in betraying the final memory of their missing relatives. For the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina (mothers of the disappeared) some of whom feel that they would become the ‘executioners’ of their children if they accepted reparations (Suarez-Orozco, 1991, pp. 469–505).

Clearly, therefore, trying to psychologically come to terms with human rights violations is a difficult, complex and lengthy process, not to mention a highly individualized one. For the most part, at the time reparations are granted, survivors will not be ready to put the past behind them. Reparations can be part of the individual process of psychological healing. It is likely that their personal process of coming to terms with what has happened to them will not fully overlap with the protracted process or political timing of granting reparations. The granting of reparations is a political act with its own time frame and its own potent social dynamic.

In addition, it is critical that reparations are not conditional and do not make demands on the recipient. For example, victims should not be expected, either implicitly or explicitly, to forgive the perpetrators or forget about the past because some form of reparations has been made. Any form of reparations can be expected to leave the survivor feeling dissatisfied. Reparations designed or granted with the naive aim of closure are embarking on a misguided trajectory. This is not to say,

however, that reparations cannot be psychologically beneficial as I said, but the reality is that the gap between what reparations can achieve at an individual and internal level and what they can offer at a collective and political level will never completely close.

Reparation (singular) can never be fully achieved at an individual level. The psychological impact can never be totally alleviated and the actual harm done cannot, psychologically speaking, be completely 'made good' in the Kleinian sense. It is for this reason, and because what has been lost can never be fully replaced, that the type of reparation that reparations can contribute to for individual victims can at best only be psychologically 'good enough'.

Reparations: The Case of South Africa

Space does not permit a detailed explanation of the South African process and I have discussed this at length in other work (see among others Hamber, 2000; 2007; 2009). But in short, the South African TRC gave space for some 20,000 victims to give testimony to the Commission and the TRC was legally obligated to make recommendations for reparations for such victims. The government was to consider and implement such reparations. The Reparations and Rehabilitations Committee (R&R Committee) of the TRC made a set of recommendations in its 1998 Final Report that included symbolic, administrative and financial forms of reparations, e.g. tombstones for those who could not afford, death certificates, apologies, memorialisation, and a 6 year pension scheme among others.

Some symbolic measures driven by government have been undertaken, although these have been limited.² In terms of long-term payments,³ the government rejected the idea of 6-year pension and instead opted for a once-off final payment. A final reparations grant of R30,000 (about US\$4,000) was made to some 19,050 individuals in 2003. No victim received more than about

² The new Freedom Park memorial site just outside Tshwane (formerly Pretoria) in South Africa is reported to be linked with the TRC's recommendations for symbolic reparations. The 52-hectare site includes a memorial with the names of all those killed in the various wars in South Africa, and will ultimately include a museum, an array of sculptures, and various water features within botanic and reflective gardens. The Freedom Park development however did not flow directly from the TRC. Essentially the TRC's name has been linked into the developments, and the site, once established, was used for TRC-related ceremonies and symbolic forms of reparations. The sites remit is also much larger than the TRC focus (for example, it includes information on genocide, slavery, the wars of resistance, the Anglo-Boer wars, the struggle for liberation and the first and second world wars). See Hamber (2009) for more detail on the memorial and its relationship to the TRC.

³ Prior to the final policy 'Urgent Interim Reparations' (UIR) were also granted to those considered in desperate need. UIR was paid to 16,885 individuals in the form of a once-off payment ranging from a baseline of approximately R2,000 (about US\$260, exchange rate on May 2008 for all figures below) up to R6,000 (US\$790) in exceptional circumstances. The payments, despite being urgent, began two-and-a-half years after the TRC began and only months before it ended its victim hearings.

R36,000 (US\$4,760 at May 2008 exchange rate) in total from the government in response to the Commission's recommendations. The response from victims to the government's eventual offer of reparations was predictable, given the delays and the disparities between it and the TRC recommendations.

Although some seem satisfied, most were unhappy. Victims were quoted as saying that President Mbeki's words stung like salt in a wound (Thompson, 2003), and Ntombi Mosikare, co-ordinator of Khulumani, added, 'We are not putting a price tag on our pain...we only want the country to acknowledge us. What they are giving us is too little' (Thompson, 2003, A5). Others referred to the grants as 'peanuts' and, in some cases, insufficient to cover medical expenses (News24, 2003). On the whole, many victims felt betrayed (Doxtader & Villa-Vicencio, 2004a).

Notwithstanding the pitiful amount granted, these responses cannot be divorced from the acrimonious relationship between victim groups and the government that developed over the process. Broken promises by the government to deal with the matter swiftly and a 5-6 year struggle to get the once off payment, including court battles and the like, soured relationships in most cases. On top of this President Mbeki also dismissed the claims rather disparagingly saying in Parliament in May 2000:

Did our people engage in a gigantic struggle, with some deciding to lay down their lives, with the prospect of financial reward in their minds? I have said, and I will say again, that any such suggestion is an insult to them and to all of us who now enjoy the freedom that they fought for.

To make matters worse President Mbeki reiterated the sentiment in his announcement that long-term reparations were to be granted in his statement at the tabling of the final reports of the TRC on 15 April 2003.

Arguably the dismal and hostile response by government to TRC reparations claims are linked to the reason victim groups have sought alternative redress through the international courts. These are known as the 'apartheid reparations'; that is, the case using the American Alien Tort Claims Act filed in the US Courts in 2002 by members of Khulumani against 23 multinational corporations and leading international banks for aiding and abetting the apartheid state. Until recently the government did not support these claims either writing to the courts in the US opposing the action. The Zuma government however has now said they will not stand in the way of the case.

So what does the South African case teach us? It tells us about the importance of two issues, that is the importance of:

1. Context, process and discourse surrounding the granting of reparations, and
2. The importance of the content, nature and type of reparations.

Context, Process and Discourse

The South African case clearly demonstrates the value of process and public discourse in the delivery of reparations. Process is important to victims because it is one of the ways in which the symbolic importance of reparations is conveyed to them. Reparations are laden with value judgements for survivors as was mentioned earlier. In South Africa the failure to deliver adequate reparations in the words of Nomfundo Walaza sent the message that the nation did not care (Walaza, 2000).

Genuine reparations and the process of healing do not only occur through the delivery of an object such as a pension or a monument, but also through the process that takes place around the object and the way in which those who can grant reparations manage and deal with their delivery. This process is also integrally tied to questions of language and discourse, which in South Africa has largely been negative and typified by government attempts to equate a demand for reparations with a desire for money. Thus, careful attention needs to be paid to the process of reparations and the language used in their delivery.

In the report of the Consultative Group (CGP) on the Past in Northern Ireland there was some confusion at the discourse level. In the CGP's recommendations for so-called recognition payments they placed this under a section called compensation.⁴ I think the CGP's notion of recognition, irrespective who would qualified, was moving more towards the idea of reparations (or trying to make amends) – but packaging it with compensation created problems. The measure, partly because of its placement in the report and because of political pressure, also became isolated within the report. International lessons suggest that reparations work best when the messages around them are clear and when they are presented as an interrelated package made up of a range of measures. In

⁴ The Consultative Group on the Past was set up by the British government to come up with recommendations on how to deal with the past in Northern Ireland. They made some 30 recommendations. One included a recommendation for a £12,000 payment to all victims of the conflict. This created controversy in some circles as it implied that all the families of those killed, including families of paramilitaries that lost relatives, were eligible. The government unilaterally scrapped the recommendation. The other recommendations are under consideration.

addition, they are more widely accepted if they flow from a process. Although the CGP was itself a process and it consulted widely it seemed as if the 'payment' recommendation was tacked onto the process rather than emerging as part of an organic consensus concerning a package of measures to make amends to victims.

It is also important that programmes are contextual. In other words is it not just what is said about reparations that are important but also the context in which they are delivered. The most important factors in this regard are the issues of truth and justice. When some survivors or families of victims talk of reparations as a form of blood money as some do in Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Northern Ireland, this is because the national process of moving forward and making amends is not coinciding with the individual process of reparation; or, the content or type of reparations and the context in which reparations are made may be mitigating individual reparation being achieved. This is particularly the case when survivors feel that reparations are being used to buy their silence in the absence of the truth and justice.

Without some form of justice reparations can often be perceived as being a pay off or, in the South African case, victims can view them as bolstering a process of false reconciliation. Without justice, generally through the courts, survivors tend to see reparations and compensation as attempts to buy their silence or to force them into colluding with a state's lack of will to prosecute those responsible for violence against them.

Reparations, justice, and truth recovery need to be linked in order for reparation to be good enough at the individual level. In this way my view fits well with de Greiff's notion of reparations programmes needing to be externally coherent; that is they must bear a close relationship to the other transitional justice mechanisms or structures than can deliver truth and justice, such as criminal justice system, truth telling processes such as truth commissions, and wider institutional reform (de Greiff, 2006).

One further factor is the socioeconomic status of the society, which could also undermine the reparative value of reparations. Structural inequality and ongoing oppression are two of the most destructive factors that undermine the possibility of a context that is conducive to achieving individual reparation.

In addition, it is important to remember that survivors are not passive agents in any reparations process. Much of how they come to terms with the past will involve interaction with the reparations

process and the wider context. If we accept that in societies in transition this context is often filled with social contradiction and political compromise, it is likely that the context in which survivors have to negotiate reparations will always be one fraught with tension between what they desire and what a society can deliver. Thus, for any reparations programme to be successful, ongoing space has to be provided for survivors to express their feelings of sadness and rage as they struggle to come to terms with the psychological and emotional impact of their loss – a loss that reparations can only nominally acknowledge. These spaces can take the form of private spaces, such as counselling or traditional mechanisms for story telling and sharing, and the ongoing use of public space such as the media, exhibitions, and theatre. Civic participation in campaigns to attain reparations can also narrow the gap between the individual healing process and the unfolding political context.

Content, Nature and Type

At the level of content, it is difficult to categorise or discuss the potential impact of all the different types of reparations, whether they take the form of apologies, memorials or service packages, because this will be different from context to context. On the whole, if victims are part of the process of creating the meaning and symbolism of an object such as a memorial, and the symbol relates personally to them and their suffering, the object is more likely to have increased inner significance for them.

But process aside my other contention is that if an object embodies both an individual and collective dimension, it is more likely to have significance to individuals and its value as a form of reparation (singular) will increase.

One initiative that demonstrates this, although not related to political violence, is the development of the AIDS Quilt, which is the largest ongoing community arts project in the world. To date, 44,000 colourful panels have been sewn by family members and loved ones of those who have died of AIDS. The individual squares are sewn together into a massive memorial that is now large enough to cover the entire Mall in Washington DC. I have seen similar projects in political contexts, including a quilt being developed by victims of state violence in Northern Ireland through the victims group “Relatives for Justice”, as well as the production of small stained glass windows which were amalgamated into one large window by the WAVE victims group.

The reason for the popularity of this approach is that it allows for individual symbolism to be

created and controlled by the family and loved ones, while the overall experience of memorialisation is collective.

Names, as part of the process of individualising those lost, are also important in these projects. It is also common practice to put the name of individuals onto such squares. For example, in the AIDS Quilt Project, now under the banner of a foundation known as the 'Names Project Foundation', the reading of names is now a tradition followed at nearly every quilt display. On a much larger scale, and directly related to political violence, the worldwide holocaust memorial project, 'Unto Every Person There Is A Name', now in its eleventh consecutive year, attempts to perpetuate the memory of the Jewish victims of the Shoah as individuals, by the public recitation of their names on Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day.

Another example is the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington. One of the strengths of the memorial is the way it personalises individuals through the names on it, whilst recognising the suffering of others and drawing reflective relevance to the present.

As Sutherland writes:

Looking at the Wall, we see the world reflected: sun, moon, clouds, the trees in the distance, the people standing next to us. Finally, we see ourselves on its surface. These reflections remind us that the Wall is as much about the present as the past. We see our world mirrored in the names we find there and realise that the slightest movement changes the view. No image is permanent on the Wall. Only the names are eternal (Sutherland, 1995 cited in Edkins, 2003, p. 89).

When thinking about apology as a means of making reparations, the issue of content, nature and type is also important. Take, for example, the case of the so-called 'comfort women', and this term is a euphemism for the 200,000 women, mainly but not exclusively from Korea and China, who became sexual labourers for the Japanese troops before and during the Second World War. One issue that has been a constant source of contention is the compensation that has been offered through the Asian Women's Fund and the issue of apology. This fund, disbanded on 31 March 2007, was a private institution supported by donations and some Japanese government money and was set up by the government to improve the conditions for all women, in lieu of payments to individual survivors (Choi, 2008; Vandeginste, 2003). The fund has broadly not satisfied the demands of many of the comfort women (Torpey, 2003), and a feeling remains that the state should

pay compensation directly from government and make a formal apology, fully acknowledging what happened (Brooks, 2003). There has also been disputes over the wording of the various official apologies. In terms of the nature or content of the apology, it is argued that several of the apologies to date were acontextual because, although it mentions ‘honor and dignity’ and ‘remorse’, it does not make reference to the war of aggression or colonial domination by the Japanese (Soh, 2001).

Personalising a process makes a difference.

In Chile, for example, the apology by President Patricio Aylwin for the violations of the Pinochet regime was seen by some as healing to a degree and symbolically meaningful. But so too was the delivery of the truth commission report to the house of each victim, with a card from the President of the republic attached. For many, this was the most significant aspect of the process (Roberta Bacic, statement taker for the Chilean truth commission, personal communication, 6 September 2006). Comparing this to the way in the ‘comfort women’ case, many women rejected the apology they were given because it came via Women’s Fund functionaries and not government diplomats.

Clearly, therefore, the process surrounding the making of reparations is important, but the individual content of memorials, or the wording of apologies for that matter, is also important.

Conclusion

In the final instance, one could understand reparations objects, such as memorials and money, as objects that assist in bridging the gaps between the internal psychological world and the social world for victims and individuals in the society. However, all reparations are symbolic—they are trying to repair the irreparable.

Reparations objects of this kind bridge inner-directed grief and suffering and mirror to the world and the individual how that suffering is understood and accepted or not within the real socio-political world. Through the object, the reactions of the real world are tested and messages are sent back at a deep psychological level to the victims about their personal value and sense of belonging in society. How the object that symbolises reparations comes into being is created and delivered, and is treated by others and society is of great significance to victims. Victims have to actively be part of the reparations process and not merely offered something.

The context in which reparations is granted needs to be one that demonstrates adequate levels of

recognition, responsibility, social change and acknowledgement of the individual and the collective to a degree within an environment where its meaning is felt to be genuine by those it directly affects. If not, the object itself can become the metaphorical vehicle for re-evoking inner pain and suffering. Instead of helping to bridge and externalise suffering and convince victims that the outer world or the society is a safe and caring place in which the victim has a stake and place, the object and those who supported its establishment become 'persecutory' in a very profound psychological sense and drive suffering inward once again.

That said reparations are filled with promise as one vehicle for assisting victims but they are also delicate processes and not a quick fix. It requires careful attention and an integrated holistic approach.

To summarise, the reparative nature of reparations at the individual level can be maximised in several ways.

First, the context, processes of delivery, and how reparations are spoken about at the macro level are important. An adequate reparations context needs to be fostered. Such a context should attempt to address the needs of those harmed in a timely fashion and with sincerity and, objectively, reparations should be substantial relative to other social priorities. South Africa offers a good example of how not to produce a conducive reparations context. We cannot separate out reparations from other attempts to set right past wrongs, such as attempts to uncover the truth, do justice, and acknowledge past atrocity. Reparations should complement other mechanisms and not be seen as a replacement for them. Accepting reparations is also a challenge for victims and survivors as noted. For reparation to take place, ongoing space has to be provided for survivors to express their feelings of sadness and rage as they struggle to come to terms with the psychological impact of their loss.

Second, greater attention can be paid to the nature and type of reparations offered, their psychological meaning, and their personal symbolic capital. Acts and objects of reparations have a greater likelihood of being considered meaningful and of being of value to recipients if they have a direct and personalised reference to the issue or form of suffering they are trying to deal with. Acts and objects also need to embody an appropriate mix of individual, political and social symbolism. This process needs to be seen as dynamic and developmental. It is only when reparations are treated with this level of sensitivity that they can ever be 'good enough'.

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