

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Transmitting Loss

This book is about the transmission of massive loss over two or three generations. The loss in each of the three cases that will be described was caused by state violence, which has also been responsible for all the worst cases of human loss in the twentieth century. Since the loss transmitted was massive, it was to some extent shared. But of course, the loss was also personal and individual. So this book is about the interplay between personal transmission, including full and felt silence, and more public forms of transmission, commemoration and teaching, including omission that is partly registered.¹

It will be a comparison of three cases. Comparison of these events is a risky undertaking. It risks reducing the transmission of each unique and intensely personal experience to common denominators when finding in them processes that are similar. Conversely it risks finding features in each that by comparison are so contrasting that the similarities upon which the contrasts are drawn are reduced to banality. Nevertheless, those risks have been taken because the analogy each provides for the other does suggest questions worth asking and answers from each that say something new and important about them.

The three events and locations that I have chosen to compare are determined by the pattern of my own life, not for any more rational suitability. I was an infant refugee from Berlin from where my parents fled in 1938 arriving, after a year in Rotterdam, in London in April 1939. Later, as a student and then as an academic, my life was spent studying Chinese and then as an anthropologist visiting Taiwan and Mainland China, partly to get away from my European heritage. But I have also, as an academic and as a citizen, been driven to study European imperialism, racism and nationalism. So this book and the project of research on which it is based, binds these strands together. What I have undertaken may be of interest to a reader precisely because the cases are so arbitrarily chosen, yet passionately known. In any case, twentieth-century instances of great state violence are so numerous and so specific that there is probably no way to have represented them all.

To have chosen such very different histories and instances risks incomparability, but it also stretches the limits of imagination to see whether concepts

and issues arise in all three of them. To many among the European readership, and even more so those who count themselves Jewish, one of the three events of state violence being brought into comparative perspective is unique, not to be compared. To insist on drawing it into a comparison, rather than to treat it as a unique horror, is, for some, including some of those with whom I spoke in Berlin, a sacrilegious mistake. But at the same time even for them, as well as for many others, it is a paradigm of genocide, and therefore has the contrary claim to be both unique and comparable. It is, of course, the Nazi Third Reich, installed in 1933 and committing Germany to a war of expansion and acts of racial hygiene including the annihilation of Jews in Germany and in the countries invaded between 1938 and 1944. This was an act of massive dislocation as well as ruin and death. I chose the city of Berlin, then and recently again the capital of Germany, to find families to visit and interview about the transmission of their losses down three generations.

The event of state violence in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that I have chosen is the famine of 1958–61, the most lethal event of the twentieth century and the greatest famine ever recorded in terms of the number of deaths attributable to it – well over thirty million, 5 per cent of the population of China at the time. It was caused by the Great Leap Forward campaign of collectivised living and work to increase production of grain and steel with the aim of achieving abundance within a few years. It caused severe malnutrition, premature death for the old, infertility among women and in many areas starvation to death. But unlike the Third Reich it did not involve massive and severe dislocation unless (as in some parts of China, but not in our field site) it coincided with state projects of water control. For the most part, only two generations were involved in this study, the generation of those who had lived through the famine as adults or as children, and their children, though we were able also to talk to some schoolchildren who are the third generation from the event.

The third event of state violence is much smaller but it did involve severe hardship, death, and dislocation. It was a military operation starting in December 1952 to wipe out what the Nationalist (Guomindang) martial-law government claimed was a planned insurrection from an armed Communist base in the Luku mountains of northern Taiwan. The hamlets near which some anti-Nationalist activists had hidden, and were conducting political education secretly among some of the families there, were decimated. This event has now been included as the largest single incident in a period, designated the White Terror, of military suppression of all opposition to the regime (1947–86). The operation removed up to half the economically active population of the upper Luku hamlets, very few of whom had any idea what 'Communism' or the Guomindang stood for, and caused the migration of many families to find work elsewhere in conditions of extreme hardship. It was, for the families of

the affected area, as harsh and severe a loss as was the Great Leap famine in China and the Second World War in Germany, but not shared with the rest of the population. In this case we were able to interview victims and close family members of those who were executed or imprisoned for the political crime of insurrection and of being ‘Communist spies’, as well as the next generation, but, as on the mainland site, far fewer of the third generation.

The Luku Incident has a memorial, as part of a state acknowledgement of grievous loss that each family has suffered. In this, it is much more like the acknowledgement and apology so conscientiously conducted by the German government for the annihilation of the Jews by the Third Reich, and unlike the Great Leap famine, of which there is no commemoration. From there, and from other similarities between each event, the contrasts come thick and fast, as will be seen in the course of reading, or sampling, the chapters of this book.

How the Research was Conducted

As the references will show, I have consulted others’ research on each event in the languages of each country as well as in English. Alongside their research is the first-hand research conducted for this study. It was conducted in each case with a different colleague. We asked similar questions of those we selected for conversation and interview. The questions always started with contextually prompted or very general questions about their lives, but then reached by indirect means the event in question, how they knew about it, and in the case of Berlin and Luku, what they thought about the public memorials and institutions of commemoration.

Because the topic was an event that was sensitive in all senses, personally painful and of high political significance, trust was important; so we chose people with whom we were already familiar and had established a bond, and through them found others. There is no clear start and end date to the research, for the same reason. We had already begun to learn about the events from some of the people involved before I designed this project, the field research for which began in 2002. And we have kept contact with some people in each place until the present day, asking further questions. The most concentrated field research took place in the years 2002 and 2004, over periods of several weeks. Beside conversations and interviews, it involved direct observation, adding to previous direct observations of the people and institutions concerned.

We interviewed judgemental samples (not a representative sample, rather one that maximised contrasts across a number of variables that I judged to be significant) of people of different ages, positions or statuses.

In Berlin, my research colleague was Dr Tsypylma Darieva. She received her Ph.D. from Humboldt University of Berlin. She had conducted her

doctoral field work in Berlin, focusing on migration, media and social memory. The result is 'Russkij Berlin. Migranten und Medien in Berlin und London' (Münster 2004). After research with me she became a post-doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology before taking a position as research fellow and teacher at the Department for European Ethnology, Humboldt University, moving from there to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the University of Tsukuba, Japan, as Associate Professor in 2010. Some but not all of those she and I interviewed for this project had already been involved in her first research. Tsypylma conducted most of the interviews either jointly with me or on her own, while I conducted a few on my own. Between us we interviewed thirty-four people, half of them women. Thirteen were Russian Jews, eight were German Jews of mixed birth, and thirteen were German with no Jewish background. Most of these interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated into English, a painstaking process that required close attention to what they had said. During this process and in subsequent repeated readings, the themes that now organise my descriptions emerged.

Field research on the Great Leap famine was conducted in the Quanzhou area of southern Fujian province. There my research colleague was Professor Wang Mingming, a native of Quanzhou and a teacher and researcher in social and cultural anthropology at Peking University. We started doing research and writing on various topics together in 1991 and continue to this day. For this project we interviewed thirty-four people in the Quanzhou region of southern Fujian, not a severely affected area but one in which people nevertheless suffered acute malnutrition to the point of oedema for the only time in their lives. Many of those we spoke to lived in a village to which we have been returning since 1991. Others to whom we spoke were in two rural townships of the same County, some in the County capital, and a few in Quanzhou city itself.

We conducted most of our interviews in March 2004. Their practical circumstances varied greatly. Very few were one-to-one intimate conversations on the topic, which was in contrast to those in Berlin. Most were with other people present, including even less directable conversations in gatherings of more than two, beside Wang Mingming and me. This had the distinct advantage of revealing something like the way people referred to the famine among themselves. Most of the people we talked to were selected through previous acquaintance in field research on other topics, so that we had established a relation of trust with them. Even so, the subject of the famine is still surrounded by fear. In most, but not all cases, we will not have heard what those with whom we spoke might have said to close and trusted intimates.

One further important observation about our interviews is that of the thirty-four people only six were women. This was probably because Wang

Mingming and I are men. It was also because, as we experienced when we were prevented by one of our interviewees from interviewing his mother, men thought that women are not reliable as informants. It may also be because women are less involved in governmental politics. I shall say more about this when discussing what one woman of the famine generation told us.

A small minority of the interviews were recorded. But my citations will come from close paraphrases based on detailed notes made during the interviews and my observations recalled very soon after.

In Luku my co-researcher was Dr Shih Fang-long, a native Taiwanese with copious research experience and a doctorate in religious studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. The field site, to which I introduced her, was in a township to which I have been returning since my first fieldwork there in 1966–68.

Fang-long conducted most of the interviews on her own, most of them with the same people for a second or third time during which I had the chance to join her. In total we interviewed fifty-four people. The main period of interviewing was September–October 2004. But there have been subsequent interviews every year since then. Only eleven interviewees (under a quarter) were female, despite the fact that the main interviewer was female. The male bias may be due to the fact that women of the younger generation were more inclined to say they had nothing to add. Many of the interviews were conducted on social occasions, such as a family feast, or just in the presence of other members of close family or with close friends. Others were conducted one-to-one but in public places such as cafés or restaurants. One joint interview of victims was filmed, some others were audio recorded. But most were not recorded. In these cases, notes taken during the interviews and expanded immediately afterwards provide some direct verbatim quotations. Fang-long and I worked together producing what are close to transcripts and translations of every interview.

In Berlin, Tsypylma Darieva and I chose families to cover the range of different kinds of violence and its transmission to include German Germans and German Jews who had remained in Germany, plus Russian Jews – involved in the east European invasion by Nazi Germany and now living in Berlin as the main replacements of the annihilated Berlin Jews. All the German and Russian Jews in Berlin are, whatever their economic status (which was unemployment for many Russian Jews), identifiable as ‘intelligentsia’ in their own self-designation. The comparable German Germans selected were similarly well educated. This meant that the selection of families in the two Chinese sites had, in order to be comparable, to include some who were also well educated.

One of the points of the investigation became the capacity and willingness of our subjects to engage in the public documentation of the history of the respective events, assuming correctly that the more they are educated the

more engaged they would be in composing archives and narratives of the event. But the Chinese and Taiwanese sites included a far greater range across class. They were from largely rural locations, with a wide range of occupations and class positions, including non-agricultural occupations such as teaching, factory management, coal mining and recruiting of coalminers. In these two cases, but not in the Berlin case, it has therefore been possible to draw out class differences.

Another variable in each situation is the difference in transmission and recognition between those who held positions of responsibility for the event and those who did not. Most of our interviews in all three sites were with those who would, in European languages, be called victims, and with their children or grandchildren. For information about those responsible for the violence, in the German case I have relied on interviews by others published in a number of books on perpetrators and the children of perpetrators. In the case of the Taiwan incident I have relied on an extensive set of unpublished interviews with the main perpetrator. In the Mainland China case we interviewed a number of people who were local cadres at the time and I have added the documentation of the Great Leap Forward in Fujian published by the Party History Press (2001). For translation of excerpts from this and other sources I employed another long-term research colleague, Dr Chang Xiangqun, a research fellow in the London School of Economics.

One finding of this research has been that the language of perpetrator, bystander and victim, which is so prevalent in the transmission of the experience of Third Reich violence, is absent in the Mainland case, and only partly used in the Taiwanese. But this is not just a difference in political cultures. It is also due to the difference between the events, a difference to be explored in the next two chapters.

Initial Directions and Common Themes

More of the research was conducted by my research colleagues than by me, and I am deeply indebted to them. They will, if so inclined, write their own accounts. But the comparison, the design of the project and the final responsibility for the contents of this book are all mine.

Some of the theoretical perspectives I entertained in designing the research that resulted in this book are set out in Feuchtwang (2000) as a problem of grievance in terms derived from Sigmund Freud and from Jacques Derrida. From Freud I took the concept of melancholia as the pathology of mourning and reformulated it as a source of emotional drive and energy for grievance, which is a social motive made out of but going beyond grief and grieving. From Derrida I took the idea of 'archive' as an activity of disposition, of cen-

shorship and of storage, true of both social and individual commemoration. I also grappled with the copious literature on memory and on social memory, and the next section will include what happened to that. Here I want to set out what occurred during, and as a result of, the research in practice and in the exercise of comparison, namely what happened to these theoretical orientations and what emerged from them or despite them.

The three events of state violence are, as mentioned already, highly unlike each other. But their triangulation offers a set of contrasts and their great differences are a test bed for topics and concepts that were not in the original design but that emerged from each study separately and through comparison.

The biggest and most basic contrast is between two histories, of Germany in Europe and of China as a subcontinental polity (chapter 2). They are both histories of self-strengthening, culminating in two different kinds of dictatorial rule in each of which two kinds of extreme violence were committed against their populations. I have named these two 'targeted violence' against designated population categories and 'aggravated indifference' to the population that the dictatorship professed to represent. The two histories are conceivable as contrasting cases of a political leadership whose people obeyed its command of self-strengthening sacrifice, in Germany by a war of expansion, and in China by an internal war of economic and military redemption from humiliation and civil war. The Nazis used a discourse of race-nation, and the Chinese Communists a discourse of people-class, even though China is also defined as race-people, a united people of several linked races (*minzu*).

In Taiwan, the state violence was entirely targeted, at those labelled 'Communist'. The Nationalist Communist civil war in China spread briefly to Taiwan after the defeat of the Japanese occupiers of the mainland in 1945. Taiwan had for fifty years before 1945 been a Japanese colony and was then caught in the Cold War stand off that divided both Taiwan from China and West from East Germany. 'Communist' is still a potent but transformed word in both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (chapter 3), carrying different loads, but in each case is a continuation of some sense of the civil war victory and defeat.

Another major point of contrast is in the comparison of the revisions of history and changes of the regimes in which the events of state violence have been reformulated out of their originating political and historical rhetorics. Defeat and occupation by the victors in Germany inaugurated a complete repudiation of the Nazi past and a contrast between the eventual commemoration of the targeted populations and the difficulty of commemorating those who were briefly beneficiaries and often complicit in Nazi self-glorification and demands for self-sacrifice, and were then victims of bombardment, wartime extremes and defeat. There was in this case a sharp discontinuity, ending one and building an entirely different political regime (chapter 8).

By contrast, the two histories of the PRC and Taiwan can be conceived as different cases of discontinuity within continuity of rule by the same regime that committed the act of extreme violence. In the case of the PRC, apology and removal of the stigma of the targeted political category of Rightists occurred very early and the capacity of the regime to demand self-sacrifice has been seriously reduced, but the same Party and much of its political discourse remains. In Taiwan, those who confessed to being Communist and turned informer were not imprisoned, yet anyone now found to have been Communist is not entitled to apology or compensation. This duplicity continues, but all those imprisoned and the families of the executed and imprisoned villagers have been given ample, ceremonial apology, recognition and some financial compensation by a regime in which the Guomintang has split into three parties, and in which they and several other parties now form an electoral civil society. Nevertheless, the Guomintang is again the ruling party, though it has been changed in the course of official apology for its past of severe repression.

This makes the Taiwan case more like that of Germany than of the People's Republic of China. But in Taiwan's case, apology occurred as part of a surging Taiwanese nationalism, whereas Germany's apology occurred as part of a merging into European Unity.

All three cases involve major political revisions in historiography. But the final comparable condition is the fact that in all three cases there has also been a radical economic transformation reinforcing generation gaps between those who experienced the event of state violence and their children and children's children. Each economy, at different times but most recently in the PRC, has had what in Germany was called an 'economic miracle' of fast and sustained growth, becoming a prominent world economy. Economic reconstruction after war, civil war, and semi-civil war in the case of the Cultural Revolution in the PRC, has itself been a way of obliterating as well as recovering from the violent past. It has increased the generation gap most in the two Chinese case studies.

A curious and poignant paradox emerges from this generation gap. It is greatest between the third and the first generation. Within families, the third generation is the generation that, as grandchildren, is most receptive to transmission. Victims in their old age often break the silence they have hitherto preserved. On the other hand there are the transformations and discontinuities marked and idiomatically known as 'generations' of recent history that make the experiences of the first and third generations so different that there can be third-generation incomprehension. Discontinuities marked by major events, principally those of mass dislocation and major changes of political regime, I shall call 'caesurae', cutting-off points in chronology. Family generations are mapped onto caesurae, generations of familial reproduction, disrupted or ended

by violence. For survivors and their children, or the children of their brothers and sisters or more distant collateral descendants, there are attempts to maintain continuity over disruption. Those attempts are what I shall call 'family repair'. Family repair is one of the main themes in this book. But family repair occurs at a time when the younger generations have, because of vast changes in either economy and regime, turned their back on their grandparents' past.

The caesurae of immediate concern are simply the most recent in a series of before/after moments by which generations can be dated. In my aim to compare these very different cases, the main feature to be considered is the variation between the political conditions of reappraisal that created the caesura, putting the transmitted event into a recent past. In the case of Berlin, there are two caesurae. One is the end of the Soviet Union for the Russian Jews. For them and for the German Jews the earlier caesura is the end of Nazism and the birth of Israel, and for the German Germans the end of the Third Reich. For the Chinese the caesura is the end of Maoism in 1978. For the Taiwanese it is the end of Nationalist martial law in 1987. All of them herald the abandonment of the past and the promises of a brighter future that were a part of that past. They all bring about attempts to know and acknowledge the abandoned past, but within a new political context, such as the Neo-Nazism of some Germans, but also a gentler nostalgia for a previous past of *Heimat* and of family, or the nostalgia for Maoism in China but also the revitalisation of genealogical memory and local temples stretching into the pre-Maoist past. This occurs even while political and personal effort to abandon the past behind the caesura continues, for instance in commemorations and reminders that it must never happen again and in historical and other kinds of academic research and writing devoted to that past and its repercussions. This book is a contribution to that body of work.

All these terms, targeted violence and aggravated indifference, caesurae, and family repair, occurred in the course of writing as a result of the comparative triangulation or simply in trying to understand each case of interplay between different kinds of transmission, the more personal and the more public.

The main variable of the conditions of reappraisal is the power of official governmental authorities over the writing and teaching of history, and in the politics of commemorating and explaining the event: this power of disposal is a power of authorising archives and of authorising stories. That is something from the original research design that the actual research has reinforced. It has been found that where such power is least dogmatically exerted and where there is most possibility of forming archives and contributing to the way the event is known (as in Germany), personal transmission is most involved in institutional transmission. Where the power of disposal is most dogmatically exerted (as in the PRC), personal transmission is most muted but, when expressed, is surpris-

ingly similar in many particulars with the official version, though there is little participation in the writing and documenting of history.

Where the originating situation was most politically confusing (PRC and Taiwan) there is most caution. Even the doctors, teachers, and other so-called (in China) ‘intellectuals’ (*zhishi fenzi*) in the generation of those who lived through the famine were not interested in, or they avoided being interested in, the rewriting of the history of the famine. They leave it to the professional historians, journalists and demographers, who have slowly moved towards further reappraisal by a gradual testing and stretching of the boundaries of tolerance held by Party-led publishers and censors (chapter 3).

By contrast, a few of the ex-coalminers who were victims of the Taiwanese event, without any pretensions to being intellectuals, wanted there to be a museum about the event, to which they could contribute the few documents and photographs that they possessed and with their own contributions say what had happened then and since. They said that a museum would be more alive and changing than the memorial erected by the County government. Some of them also indicated that they agree with the opinion of the authors of the two volumes of interviews with them, published by the County, that the story as told so far has been politicised by the two main coalitions of parties in Taiwan and this has put them off (chapter 6).

They are inclined to keep to themselves their more confused and politically sensitive memories of the event and what they had learned about it and about politics while they were in prison. Even the Berlin families, in the most welcoming context and indeed while being the most active in taking records, held back a sense of their own relation to Russian history, German history, and Jewish history, commemoration, heroes and God (chapter 9).

In sum, in all three cases, interpersonal transmission and family archives are strongly affected by the different politics, both of the time of the event and of its reappraisal. But in all three cases also, the most interesting finding is that some quite strong reservations are held about both, which provides a potential for other narratives about the event and its consequences. I have called this potential resource a ‘reserve’, using both its senses, one of holding something back in reservation, the other of being a resource for another historical narrative.

Why Transmission and Why Not ‘Memory’

I have preferred to describe the object of my inquiry the ‘transmission’ of state violence and grievous loss. My initial orientation was to describe the motivation to transmit as melancholic mourning turned into grievance. Others have gone further and attributed the vagaries of transmission, its silent effects as well as its compulsions, to trauma. But in the course of the research and com-

parison both have been found to be inadequate or simply irrelevant. What survivors told their families and us was vivid. But what motivated the telling, some of it repetitions of oft-told stories, other stories told only rarely or just the once and for the first time, is too varied to identify in any one way. In addition, our research was not clinical. So while we can describe indications of strong feelings, what they were in each case – the mix in each case – was beyond analysis. Instead of guessing individual emotional states, I have concentrated on suggesting what social senses or feelings might have determined the telling: fear, shame, pride, avoidance, embarrassment, and others.

Very few of the survivors to whom we spoke exhibited the symptoms of post-trauma syndrome, and none transmitted trauma. Nevertheless, in the discourses of commemoration it has become common, in Taiwan and Germany, to refer to ‘collective trauma’ and its transmission. I can find no evidence of this in any clinical sense. Instead, the usage is interesting as a rhetorical device, as an analogical appeal to a personal state of distress. It can further be argued that a predominant political culture of being a victim, with its accompanying mythic history of persecution, and its contrasting figures of identification – the downtrodden and the strong – does mobilise the capacity in everyone to imagine trauma out of their own experiences. Can we call this imagination and its public culture ‘memory’?

Certainly, the subject of this book could be accurately described as public and interpersonal ‘memory’. But I have come to the conclusion that ‘transmission’ is better because it draws attention to the activity and stresses the social nature of both individual recall and public narrative and commemoration. ‘Transmission’ avoids the constant need to say that social (or public) memory is not a fixed social system, and the various strands of public memory are not necessarily cohesive, as the Durkheimian originators of the study of social memory assumed and then sought to demonstrate in their idea of ‘the social’. The strands of transmission are, rather, a number of linked activities and resources and occur in different modes.

Memory proper is a capacity of human cognition and feeling. It is individual. But it is possible to understand individual human memory in more social terms, as the relation between learned habits (semantic memory) of telling stories, episodic (or autobiographical) memory, and public narratives. But this does not cover the fullness of the dynamic interaction between personal recall and various modes of transmission covered by the term ‘social’ or ‘public’ memory. The dynamic that interests me comes from two kinds of experience – of memory and of learning. On the one hand recalling something experienced, recalling it to oneself or for interpersonal transmission, can produce not just an interpretation but also possibly an alternative or more conflicted sense of what is transmitted much more simply in public memory. On the other hand recalling even personal experiences is strongly affected by

what is learned through the transmission of public memory. We all learn habits of how to tell a story, in various registers and genres. So there is a dynamic between the experiences and the ways of sharing experiences that are learned in the process of remembering.

Public and social memory are often used so broadly as to include all forms of transmission, including the documentation and issuing of histories. This can be justified by counting all modes of archiving and transmission as resources for official and non-official discourses and the narratives that can be learned and transmitted by a social group or the population of a country or any other social formation. But I prefer to reserve the word 'memory' for knowledge that is appropriated as a truth for that person and transmitted as such, and to do this without assuming congruence with a larger group – this has to be demonstrated empirically. I think it is necessary to distinguish history as a disputable attempt at factual reconstruction, for instance a history of memory or of a ritual. In addition, as will be elaborated later in this chapter and again in the conclusion to this book, personal and familial transmission may include what is learned from reading histories or from museums and other public media. But these public media cannot include the personal detail and naming that a memory includes. For what I have just called 'memory' I prefer and hope to demonstrate the validity of saying it is in a different temporality and a different mode of transmission.²

Biographical memory, including autobiographical, and the way another's life is remembered, always contains many directions and details, often conflicting and chronologically unsorted. Public memory sorts. So does the removing of snippets of biographical memory triggered by this and that in everyday life into the contexts of lifestyle interviews, and then sorting them into chronologically ordered stories, as has been done for this book. So, I and my research colleagues have participated in the simplification of personal memories. But I have also tried to convey some of the confusion and have held on to what has already been introduced as the reserve in intimate transmission, distinct from more public transmission, history and commemoration.

Quite apart from exclusion or alternative versions of history and commemoration, interpersonal transmission may be publicly recognised in other modes of transmission than the 'public memory' of narrative historiography and commemoration altogether. Ritual forms of recognition of loss include many that are not state-organised and may have no direct reference to a state. All three cases contain examples of all three: interpersonal, public, and ritual transmission.

In addition I have found most intriguing the non-verbal effects in the younger generations of the violence of aggravated indifference, starvation or the firebombing of cities. In Germany, the most evident effect was the energy that went into the rebuilding of cities and the economic miracle. Similarly, the Chinese expansion of cities and rebuilding and enlarging of homes with

more expensive materials was a turning of their backs on the period before 1978. But more evident from our interviews is how the younger generation turn their backs on the generation that had lived through the famine despite their being constantly reminded as children to eat up because they should consider themselves lucky to have what is in their bowls. It is in the pursuit of material well-being and the negation of their parent generation's hardship (acknowledging it without wanting to have anything more to do with it) that the famine is most commonly transmitted (chapter 5).

There is also a Chinese and a German avoidance of nationalism in localism. In Germany, non-Jewish Germans tend to avoid nationalism in favour of pride in their region of belonging or of residence (chapter 10). In China, the resurgence of local temple cults and the refounding of ancestral halls and genealogies in the area of our fieldwork has accommodated the suffering of the past, without specifying it, in the course of reconstituting local identity and its history, which local authorities both encourage for tourist interest and income and try to incorporate into a new nationalism (chapter 5). German *Lokalpatriotismus* and Chinese revival of local temples and ancestral genealogies are thus distinct modes of the transmission of loss.

In Taiwan we found its complementary opposite, the verbal transmission of the violent event was stressed most by the very few interested in local history. For the rest their concerns were even more specific; family repair, in particular death rituals and the refurbishment of tombs, were most important and urgent (chapters 6 and 7).

Such modes of transmission are entirely devoid of any requirement for state recognition.

Different Temporalities at the Same 'Time'

What is held in reserve from current public transmission does have a potential for the telling of other narratives and senses of past and future, but it is embroiled in family dynamics. Beyond visiting and communicating in other ways, such as eating together, joint budgeting, joint care for elders and children, and telephone calls, the longer-term ways out of which familial being is repaired and maintained are not the abstract concepts of blood or law, but stories, which I have called 'family myths and vignettes', and a number of loci that are a common reference or place of actual gathering: an old house, a recalled place-name, or simply named and shared places of residence and belonging, tombs and temples.

In the original design of our inquiries, the problem of recognition was emphasised. It has already been alluded to: the relation between interpersonal – which was mainly familial – and more public transmission. I wanted to ask

whether those who had suffered violence, or their children or grandchildren, had sought public recognition of their suffering, as a matter of justice or political history or both, and whether their interpersonal transmission was driven by grievance. In the course of the research, this question led to the possibility that we were dealing with two or more quite different ways of reckoning long-term time, each providing its own mode of recognition.

The time of political history and of public commemoration is a time of events in a national narrative or in a narrative of chronological progress, development, setback and overcoming. Its revisions coincide with political change, but remain in the same mode, which I call 'progressive time'. On the other hand, there is the time of family repair. It is what I call 'reproductive time', a time of repetition even if what is repeated is a reconstruction or a new version rather than a recovery of what was repeated before. Combined, the two kinds of narrative become one of family social achievement, failure and aspiration, and of nation as 'family' (chapter 11).

The time of life stories, of the recalling of memory triggered by situation or by perceived objects or people met, can be chronologically ordered by the efforts of a biographer, or ethnographer, or a friend with whom the memories are shared. Life stories are like historical narrative in their references to events, and larger events can prompt the idea of shared fate, history and collective life, but in life stories they are complicated by mixtures with other events that are filtered out or separated in historical narratives. Family stories (in reproductive time) treat stories or events as repeated and shared mementoes that carry in their retelling passionate concern or on the other hand nostalgia, but chronology is only important in its reference to a shared past that is the material of a continued being.

Family reproduction is a vulnerable, destructible, fragmentable but constantly renewed attempt to find fixed and physical coordinates (loci) and a changing but constant transmission of unifying objects (including letters, documents and photo albums), stories, pasts or origins in a place or a status in the past (of poverty, or of being part of the intelligentsia), and gatherings. Neither they nor more solid objects such as old homes and family tombs are permanent. But at any one moment in the constant repair and repetition of reproductive time they can be found again, after desecration and ruin, and serve as the fixed coordinates of family being.

So the three studies became cases of the interaction between on one hand a social being recognised by state commemorative, monumental, ceremonial, museological, judicial, and written (documented) or visual (documentary) archives and case narratives, and on the other hand familial continuity and transmission recognised in rituals and family stories. Between the two there is a relation of recognition or reserve. However, in ritual archiving, the construction of tombs or the inclusion of lost ancestors in collective rites, and in the repeated

liturgy of the year, there is another relation of recognition that cuts out the details of the family archive and the stories that the rites might trigger.

The same emergent question of how two kinds of long-term time interact came from the observation in all three cases that civic commemoration and ceremony, museum and heritage were separated from death rituals and other kinds of ritual. Do they recognise and substantiate different social beings, even when both might refer to individuals and families? My answer is that they do. The individuals and families recognised in monuments and ceremonies of commemoration are recruited into a historical narrative as a general subject, such as 'the Taiwanese', or a locale, a city or Heimat of a larger entity such as 'Germany', or an event such as 'the terror' of the Nazi regime, or the White Terror, or 'the three years of difficulty' (the famine years). Whereas in the rituals of a religious calendar and death rituals they are absorbed into a 'transcendent time' of repetition, a third time distinct from both progressive historical narrative and family or reproductive time. The distinction between nation-narrative ceremony or commemoration and transcendent ritual time in the case of Jews is made between the newly added Holocaust commemoration and the old liturgical cycle (chapter 11).

So, what will be traced through the following chapters are the conjunctions of these different temporalities and of the different forms of recognition they afford, or do not afford, to whatever is transmitted among intimates, close family and friends and trusted ethnographers, of events of state violence.

Events of State Violence

The events will be described in a narrative of progressive time, with whatever evidential base we have been able to muster in order to verify the facts that will be recounted. Where facts are disputable, that too will be noted. In particular different possible narrations, each with a political charge relating past to present, will be noted, and so too will the political implications of what is reserved from these more public histories and commemorations.

That they are 'events' in the many senses given to that word in political and moral philosophy and in anthropology I have no doubt, and this introduction will be finished by explaining this. Of course their significance for each person involved varies enormously, from an event about which they have learned but by which they have not been personally affected, like the Irish famine, which was not suffered by a good many Irish families but about which all knew and know and count in their various identifications with 'Ireland', to an event that has caused a major breach in what would have been familial transmission – the cousin of a family completely wiped out who nevertheless makes efforts, three generations on, to include that loss in his sense of 'family'.

They were events because they were profoundly disruptive to an order, which was a political order of government and of moral leadership. They are, as already stated, before/after moments for both familial and historical generations. They were more than disruptions; they were destructions during which a new order and moral leadership was at stake because the new order enthused some people who wanted it and fought for it, but the fight at the same time forced upon others moments of great and decisive action – to follow, to oppose, to save family, others, or just self from destruction. The Great Leap Forward was a renewal of Communist revolution, to create a new, collective identity and its future. The famine was a test and a reversal of that ambition and changed the relationship of the Chinese Communist Party and its leadership, locally if not also centrally, with its ‘people’ most of all in the countryside. The Third Reich was for many a welcome destruction of what they experienced as a failed order, in which they could not prosper, and a renewal of a wonderfully mystified order of German greatness. It was acted upon enthusiastically by very many ordinary Germans, finding the new person in themselves, while others who were not able to flee its construction were faced with decisions whether and how to oppose or to accept. These were not one-off decisions, but part of the conduct of everyday life. Everyday life, conversely, had the quality of a drawn out event. Performance of acceptance in both events was coerced by the very enthusiasm of the construction of a new order and person. But as their catastrophic consequences unfolded, equally life-changing moments were multiplied, in which ordinary people began to review their identifications with the political order and the greater object which it invoked. The denial of the regime to recognise the events of ordinary individual lives intensified the event and for many became a turning point of disillusion.

There was massive and widespread destruction in China not just of lives but of trees and hillsides and home furnishings and stores, and in Germany of cities in the firestorms of allied bombings. The destruction and what had to be done to survive it were life-defining moments in both physical and moral senses.

But the radical reordering and destruction are not to be confined to the terms in which many recall it, as chaos or as an external and fateful force. People acted and contributed to the event that other people, themselves included, suffered, so that it is important to use both the active and passive tenses in describing the events. War, civil war or wars of nations and alliances, and catastrophes such as the Shoah (the Hebrew word for ‘Holocaust’) are all too easily described as great events with some unknown and external agency that we can wonder about, wondering how they might have affected the people in their midst, who to blame as perpetrators, as if they brought about a wind of fire, with whom to empathise as their victims, how we might have responded to it. We may better wonder how they were brought about, in

what social relations of action – for instance in what kind of followership and leadership, of what kind of political order. In any one location of the event there may indeed have been victims and perpetrators who came from outside, as Nazis and their willing anti-semites to Jews herded into ghettos and then into labour and annihilation camps. In its emergence the event was the creation of an order that was surely a sequence of unpredictable consequences and improvisations but just as surely was ordered by and in a discourse out of which an ideology and a rhetoric were improvised.

The Maoism of the Great Leap Forward and its later flowering in the Cultural Revolution was equally a fluctuation in the working out of a politics in conjunction and contrast with another, closely related politics in the same order, reaching the point of treating the other as an internal enemy.

In other words, the events were in both cases structural, in that they occurred out of and within a political order, a point that should become more apparent in the next chapter. The events were an unfolding of historical tragedy, in which the actors were leaders and followers at every scale of a political order. They were also events in the order of family and kinship, of a certain affirmation but in racial and eugenic terms in the German event, and reduced to mere residence within a collective in the Chinese case. In both, the repair of familial order and reproduction became the improvisation of a new order of reference and belonging, but one that also recuperated and revised an older order that informed its innovation.

The order of the catastrophic event itself is the subject which will now set the scene for how it was, in each case, turned into an abandoned past.

Notes

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2. For this clarification I am indebted to a conversation with Benedetta Rossi (31 Jan 10).