

Why society seems to not see discordant info and prefer to attack certain truth-telling can be addressed more generally. Here is an excerpt from my Wisdom University dissertation:

Military Moral Injury: *Un Cri du Coeur*

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Consensus trance.

Philosophers and theologians throughout time have grappled with the challenge of seeing the “ocean in which we swim.” As I will explore further in the chapter on brainscaping “Feelings and Limbic Mattering,” we humans tend to assume that how life is is the only way it can be. Further, we look to each other for guidance on what should be noticed; the group greatly influences what is attended or comprehended. In the modern world, the modern media plays a major role in shaping perceptions. Charles Tart (1987) has suggested that "human beings are in a perpetual state of trance induced by the society they live in." Tart calls this state "consensus trance" or "the sleep of everyday life." Operating under the consensus trance, society subtly agrees to notice some things and not notice others. Individuals who try to draw attention to the “emperor having no clothes” are often labeled and ostracized if not attacked. American society acted forcefully against “terrorists who seek to poison our air and water” without much attention to the home-grown polluters who were doing that with much greater impact.

Vulnerability and amnesia.

In the first chapter of Judith Herman’s monumental *Trauma and Recovery* (Herman, 1997), she notes the curious history of the study of psychological trauma. It’s as though society has amnesia about this subject, forgetting what it knew, and then having to learn it again at a later period. Herman attributes inattentiveness, not to the vagaries of interest (since trauma is always with us) but to mires of intense controversy. She concludes that periodically trauma

study becomes anathema, because it leads to the realms of that which cannot be thought.

Observing trauma requires the observer to take sides.

To study trauma is to come face to face both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity for evil in human nature.. To study psychological trauma means bearing witness to horrible events. (Herman, 1997, p.7)

She notes that when these events are caused by humans, the Perpetrator asks the Bystander to do nothing, appealing to what Herman calls the universal desire to see, hear, and speak no evil. But the Victim calls on the Bystander to act, engage, and remember – and to share the burden of pain.

Soldiers in every war, even those who have been regarded as heroes, complain bitterly that no one wants to know the real truth about war. When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable.(p.9)

Herman quotes concentration camp survivor therapist Leo Eitinger:

War and victims are something the community wants to forget. A veil of oblivion is drawn over everything painful and unpleasant. We find the two sides face to face; on one side the victims who may wish to forget but cannot, and on the other side, all those with strong, often unconscious, motivations wish to forget and succeed in doing so. (p.8)

According to Herman (1997), without a strong social context, the perpetrators usually prevail in convincing the Bystander to do nothing. “The study of war trauma becomes legitimate only in a context that challenges the sacrifice of young men in war.” (p.9)

She notes that the study of trauma itself is contingent on there being a political social movement that can protect the alliance of researchers and victims to stand against the “ordinary social processes of silencing and denial.” (p.9) Herman further posits that repression, dissociation, and denial are phenomena of social as well as individual consciousness.

In a similar vein, Colin Ross (1991) discusses the impact of culturally determined dissociative barriers on scientific inquiries into the functioning of the human psyche. According to Ross, multiplicity is a normal organizations principal of the human psyche, and the executive self or ego is just one of many parts that make up the whole human being. (This perspective may be more familiar to Wisdom University scholars as the Council of Selves taught by Hal and Sidra Stone.)

In our modern Western industrialized world, the executive self has suppressed all the other selves. Ross (1991) notes the *cultural* dissociation barrier that keeps from view parts of the self that deal with experiences that are unacceptable to Western thinking. Dr. Stan Grof tells stories of trying to get Western scholars to simply observe experiences that contradict their thinking. These rejected experiences fall into three main categories paranormal experiences, deep intuitive consciousness, and programs responsible for running the physical organism (p.6) The inability to even perceive contradictory information limits the capacity for the evolution and paradigm shifts that are necessary for survival. (p.7)

I turn to a laugh-line in Sarah Ruhl’s play “In the Next Room or the vibrator play” (Ruhl, 2009) which chronicles male scientists’s inability to recognize female orgasms as normal to

“civilized” marital relations. “What men do not observe because their intellect prevents them from seeing would fill many books.”