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Kristen Brown Golden, Bettina G. Bergo, eds. *The Trauma Controversy: Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Dialogues.* Philosophy of the Social Sciences Series. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009. x + 280 pp. $70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4384-2819-2; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4384-2820-8.

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Trauma Research Goes beyond Borders

Trauma is one of the most discussed issues in contemporary social and literary thought, as the well-known work of Dominick LaCapra, Cathy Caruth, and Geoffrey Hartman shows. *The Trauma Controversy*, edited by Kristen Brown Golden and Bettina G. Bergo, gathers essays by almost twenty scholars, representing a variety of different disciplines: philosophy, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, anthropology, literary studies, and gender studies. The book is divided into four parts: "Trauma and Theoretical Frameworks: Psychoanalysis and Phenomenology"; "Trauma and Bodily Memory: Poetics and Neuroscience"; "Trauma and Clinical Approaches"; and "Trauma and Recent Cultural History." However, the title of the book suggests that trauma studies are doomed to argument, differences, and methodological disputes. Hence it is necessary to seek controversial aspects of "thought about trauma," questions that divide scholars and seem not to be resolved yet.

It is notable that the internal order of the book is determined by such issues as subjectivity, the relation between the individual and the collective dimensions of trauma, the significance of body/corporeity, and the reconceptualization of early Freudian ideas. These concepts and topics, going beyond disciplinary borders and methods, break through and complicate the lines that the editors have drawn by the division of the volume into four parts. The internal and latent problems connect the essays in a new, more complicated way and establish new configurations among them.

If we consider the topic of subjectivity, it is necessary to mention the very interesting account by Sara Beardsworth, "Overcoming the Confusion of Loss and Trauma." Beardsworth distinguishes between two types of subjectivity: Oedipian (Freudian) and Narcissian (introduced by Julia Kristeva). Kristeva's rewriting of Freudian tradition, focused on the moment of entrance in paternal law (symbolic order), reveals the significance of maternal values: the gift of love and the relationship to the Other. Forgetting this primal connection with the mother and detachment from maternal experience establish in the history of modern European subjectivity the "traumatogenic event," which ought to be called "loss of loss." This double loss, as Kristeva states, structures both individual personality and social order in European communities.

However, Golden undermines another aspect of the traumatic subject, showing it as rooted in corporeity. She argues that speech, which attempts to articulate the traumatogenic event (that is nonverbal and unreflected), could be considered more as "bodily adaptation" than as a kind of communication. This issue, directly connected with the topic of the "traumatic subject," questions the possibility of containing the traumatogenic event within language (intelligible) structures. Idit Dobbs-Weinstein analyzes a poem by Chaim Naliman Bialik, "City of the Slaughter" (1903), discovering there the strategy of erasing the individual dimension of a violent event, which is to interpret it as a construct of disembodied distance. According to Dobbs-Weinstein, this is a kind of metanarrative, enhancing the dualistic, Kantian separation between body and mind. The renowned psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman also argues against this separation, claiming that "traumatic memories could manifest in disguised form as somatic behavior symptoms" (p. 132).

Charles E. Scott, starting from a neuroscientific perspective, draws a different conclusion from the conviction of the unspeakability of trauma. In this very interesting chapter, he explains the causes of "empty" traumatic memory, discovering them in the incompatibility of the "amigdala" and "hipocampal" functions of the brain, which provides the lack of a spatial and temporary context for the violent event. But inability to ex-

press and completely remember traumatic events has a positive function, too–it enables the victim to recover after a traumatogenic experience.

Michael L. Galaty, Sharon R. Stocker, and Charles Watkinson raise the very important question of how collective trauma is written into the local landscape, of how we should "read" the texture of space marked by traces of history. The authors analyze the cultural function of (almost eight hundred thousand) bunkers built in Albania during the era of communism. These buildings symbolized the isolation policy of Edver Hoxha and legitimized the possibility of foreign invasion. After the era of communism, the bunkers, which had become a characteristic form in the Albanian landscape, came to be used for common ends, as sheepfolds, shelters, or even restaurants. They became the ironic symbol of historical oppression and evidence that landscape can be treated as testimony of changing social history.

Undoubtedly, this volume of essays offers a very interesting and thought-provoking look at trauma research, revealing and discussing the ostensibly resolved problems, which are regarded here from different and unexpected points of view.

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