

MIGUEL ALIRANGUES LÓPEZ
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Is it Time to Give Up the Concept of Collective Trauma? On the Need for New (Old) Lexicons to Frame Social Suffering¹

*¿Ha llegado el momento de prescindir del concepto de trauma colectivo?
Sobre la necesidad de nuevos (viejos) léxicos para abordar el sufrimiento social*

Received: 1/11/2021. Accepted: 11/3/2022

Abstract: The present paper focuses on some of the tensions that have been recurrent in the concept of psychic trauma since the late nineteenth century. It further argues that these tensions have been introduced into the concepts of collective trauma and cultural trauma, but have remained undertheorized. These theories have not been able to understand the relationship established between the structural forms of damage and its eventual forms. We therefore draw on some critiques of these concepts to point out the impasses of cultural trauma theories in understanding the dialectic between the general and the particular that is at play in socially mediated psychic suffering. We propose that in order to bring this understanding to fruition, it is necessary to look back to the tradition of critical theory and its concept of suffering, and take up its normative character through a theory of harm based on the concept of negativity.

Resumen: El presente artículo se centra en algunas de las tensiones que han sido recurrentes en el concepto de trauma psíquico desde finales del siglo XIX. Además, se plantea que esas tensiones se han introducido en el concepto de trauma colecti-

¹ This paper is a result of a Grant for Training University Teachers (FPU) funded by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training of Spain. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at a Workshop on the Concept of Cultural Trauma at the Goethe University of Frankfurt and at the Workshop “History as Emotion” at the Carlos III University of Madrid. I thank the organizers and participants for their feedback, as well as those of the two peer reviewers of the paper.

vo y de trauma cultural, pero han permanecido insuficientemente teorizadas. Estas teorías no han sido capaces de entender la relación que se establece entre las formas estructurales de daño y sus formas puntuales. Por ello, se recurre a algunas críticas de estos conceptos para señalar los impasses de las teorías del trauma cultural para comprender la dialéctica entre lo general y lo particular que está en juego en el sufrimiento psíquico socialmente mediado. Proponemos que para llevar esta comprensión a cabo, es preciso volver a mirar a la tradición de la teoría crítica y su concepto de sufrimiento, así como retomar su carácter normativo en una teoría del daño basada en el concepto de negatividad.

Keywords: psychic Trauma, Collective Trauma, Social Suffering, Harm, Critical Theory.

Palabras clave: trauma psíquico, trauma colectivo, sufrimiento social, daño, teoría crítica.

I. INTRODUCTION

WHAT PROMPTS THE QUESTION that gives title to this paper is the fact that, on the one hand, the concept of trauma has become an all-pervasive concept in contemporary societies and in the theoretical reflection on history and violent pasts. On the other hand, this same process has raised theoretical concerns and criticisms that have opened the door to a questioning of the heuristic value of the concept.

In this paper I will try to trace a brief history of the concept based on the tensions that have constituted it and yet have remained untheorized. I will focus especially on the theory of the so-called Yale School of Deconstruction, because of its importance in the cultural turn of the concept, as well as on the criticisms that its approach to trauma has raised. Starting from these criticisms, the conclusions of which we essentially accept, the paper goes on to assess the need to turn to the tradition of critical theory, in order to reclaim its approach to social suffering. In this theoretical tradition, whose reception in Trauma Studies has been quite reductionist, we find one of the main sources that allows us to address the tension between isolated episodes of violence and structural conditions of inequality and exploitation. To this end, the concept of suffering in the thought of Theodor W. Adorno will be discussed, which allows us to raise the future lines of development of the proposal of a normative theory of harm (Thiebaut) that makes the category of negativity its central concept.

2. A BRIEF GENEALOGY OF SOME RECURRING TENSIONS

The challenge of an unambiguous definition of psychological trauma can be traced back to its origins. The most important commentators on the history of this concept all agree in pointing out the importance that railroad accidents had in the progressive and much contested process of psychologization of trauma. In fact, the pioneering works of Erichsen and Page on the pathological effects of these accidents on some of their survivors and those of Charcot in relation to hysteria, that operated within a mechanicist and physiological framework, are always cited at the beginning of this history. It is also routinely stated that the complete psychologization of the concept of trauma occurs in the works of Janet and Freud (with Breuer) in the 1890's. Thus, the concept shifted from designating a physical wound to designating a psychological wound. What is more relevant to our topic, it is in the works of these two authors that trauma and memory are decisively linked. Of course, this process is not by any means linear, but these are somehow the milestones in the history of the concept. This is not the place to conduct a detailed account of that history, so I will just be focusing on some of its recurring tensions.

Undoubtedly, Freud's work has been decisive for the further development of the concept of cultural trauma. In Freud's early works the cure is dependent on the ability to integrate a "reminiscence" (let us recall the famous formula of Freud and Breuer: "hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences" (1981, 7)) that the psychism is incapable of integrating into the rest of its representations. But as is well known, Freud's concept of trauma underwent substantial transformations throughout his life. So much so that a recent analyst of this concept in Freud, Luis Sanfelippo, has detected up to four different configurations of trauma in the psychoanalyst's work (2018, 325s). I will limit myself to suggesting that there are at least two major constellations of the concept of trauma in Freud:

- a. The first constellation is linked to the Oedipus complex and the founding effect of castration anxiety. This is what Leys has called "mimetic theory of trauma" (2000, 10, 298), which stresses that the said trauma is prior to the constitution of the subject.² This is so after Freud's famous rejection of the seduction theory that postulated a real sexual event at the origin of neurosis, after which Freud explored the role that fantasy played in the constitution of such scenes. What we must remember from this first model is that trauma lies at the basis of

² Barnaby points out how, although the introduction of the Oedipus complex brought about the universalization of the conditions for the production of trauma, the Freudian subject remained gendered as masculine (BARNABY 2018, 26).

“normal” psychological development. (Neil Smelser has termed this the “the unacceptable impulse model”, 2004, 55).

- b. The second model is the economic model that Freud developed after the Great War and which understands trauma as a stressor that is capable of breaking the anti-stimulus barrier of the organism,³ flooding it with large amounts of energy. This model is often considered as a partial recovery of the importance Freud gave to an actual event as a trigger for pathology in his pre-psychoanalytic writings. Here trauma is closer to being considered as an external event that happens to an already constituted subject. We can link this tendency to the antimimetic thesis as framed by Leys and the “unbearable situation model” as Smelser calls it.

I propose to reconsider this tension as the one between an approach to trauma that understands it as *constitutive* of subjectivity, and another that understands it as *disruptive* of subjectivity. While it is necessary to keep in mind the analytical difference between these two constellations, we should note that these two major models describe a tension that is not resolved in any of Freud’s approaches. An example of this is *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* itself, which is a text that is tremendously confusing in this respect, despite being considered the key text in the development of the model of trauma as a disruptive element through the consolidation of the economic theory of the psyche.

Moreover, this tension allows us to address another, which does not coincide exactly with these two major models. It is the tension between a real event and a scene that only has psychic reality. This problem will remain unresolved in the later approaches to psychological trauma and is clearly expressed in our current use of the word trauma, which can indicate both an event and a psychological and emotional state. This tension between objectivist and subjectivist interpretations of trauma is also expressed in the never-ending debate about simulation by patients who could obtain benefits (such as financial compensation in the case of railroad accidents or the leave from military service in a war context). This question remains unsolved too, but the landmark appearance of the nosographic category of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder somewhat cornered it in 1980 by establishing a large number of events “outside the range of usual human experience” (APA, 236) which were understood as basic etiological elements.

³ All the histories of the concept also focus on the role played by World War I and war psychiatry and the development of the concept of shell shock by Myers or the study of “war neuroses” by Ferenczi and other psychoanalysts close to Freud who had direct contact - unlike Freud himself - with patients presenting symptoms compatible with hysteria. Herbert Page himself wrote a letter to a psychologist who in the 1930s had published his thesis on war neuroses pointing out to him that “all the symptoms of shell shock could be found in his book *Railway Injuries* (1892)” but that what he had tried to raise had been forgotten (STEFFENS 2018, 36).

This clinical category, which appeared in a diagnostic manual following very important mobilizations carried out by psychiatrists such as Robert Lifton and Chaim Shatan and groups of Vietnam War veterans, represented a real turning point in approaches to psychic trauma and had long lasting consequences. On the one hand, as we have said, a real event once again emerges as the fundamental etiological element. On the other hand, the subjective reaction is understood as a normal adaptive reaction with harmful consequences for the life of the individual.⁴ Finally, some PTSD research involved to a great extent a return of the 19th century corporealist theses by biologizing trauma and understanding it as the structuring of neural pathways that prevent ordinary narrative recovery (as in the work of Bessel van der Kolk). These few remarks about the history of the development of the concept in the field of medical, psychological and psychiatric discourses suffice, not because this history is so simple or easily simplified, but because this general outline already contains the key issues concerning the appropriation of the concept by studies within the field of the humanities and social sciences, which are the focus of my interest in this paper.

3. THE CULTURAL TURN

The PTSD model became popular with astonishing ease. Because of its universalist vocation, this diagnostic category could be projected retrospectively onto events in all times and places. However, the history of psychiatry since the 1990s has offered excellent monographs on the development of the concept of trauma (Young, Hacking, Leys, Micale and Lerner) that had in common an approach that takes distance from the various theories developed on the subject and studied the specific dynamics of its development in particular psychiatric and therapeutic contexts. Thus, Young has convincingly stated that “[the PTSD] disorder is not timeless, nor does it possess an intrinsic unity. Rather, it is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented and by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these efforts and resources” (1995, 5). Moreover, despite the aim of the chair of the DSM-III task force, Robert Spitzer, to integrate the different psychiatric approaches present in the United States at the time, the truth is that psychodynamic tendencies were abandoned in favor of an approach inspired by the classificatory spirit of symptomatological patterns developed by Emil Kraepelin (see YOUNG).

⁴ “Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life” (HERMAN, 33).

At the same time, during the 80's, the Holocaust was one of the elements that was shaping Western self-consciousness. As is well known, after a period of little attention to the issue, the brief but tremendously influential Historians' Debate took place in Germany. The fact that this aspect of the German past had been relegated for decades has caused it to be understood as a paradigmatic example of the kind of deferred temporality that Freud detected in trauma. Thus, it is understood that German society, in a manner analogous to the way in which the individual experiences trauma, underwent a process of repression and a delayed return of the repressed.

However, the place to look closely at is the United States, where since the 1990s the most emphatic appropriation of the concept of trauma by the humanities took place, in explicit connection with the ongoing debates about the status of the Holocaust in history and its ethic and aesthetic implications. In particular, the focus should be placed on what has been called the Yale School of deconstruction, which brought together a number of literary theorists including Geoffrey Hartman, Hillis Miller, Harold Bloom, Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth, and is usually considered the origin of *Trauma Theory*. Also in this orbit was Dori Laub, a psychiatrist who had survived the concentration camps and who, together with Hartman, founded the most important archive of Holocaust testimonies in the world, the Fortunoff Archive. This group was marked by the assumption that the Holocaust was the historical trauma *par excellence*, and all their approaches gave it a central role in the conceptualization of trauma.⁵ For the sake of synthesis, we can offer a number of traits shared by these authors:

1. Trauma has an appellative structure, it is always addressed to someone else who is essential for the testimony to take place. We could say that this is the essential feature of the ethical emphasis of all these authors (see HARTMAN).
2. In the original event trauma itself is not experienced, or is experienced as an impossibility of cognitive control.
3. The traumatized subject literally re-experiences the traumatic event because traumatic memory, unlike ordinary and narrative memory, is reproduced in the form of a present experience that confuses past and present.
4. When re-experienced in the present, the witness or survivor creates a situation in which the listener can be vicariously traumatized.

⁵ This is a point of view that is not unique to these authors. It is the type of approach that Michael Rothberg has called the "antirealist position" towards the Holocaust. Cfr. Rothberg (2009).

5. The former point describes a “contagious” model of trauma (LEYS) which is essential for its intergenerational transmission, which is assumed as a fact.

These features can all be precisely explained within the PTSD model. As has been noted on numerous occasions, this new diagnostic category allowed its application to the victims of violence as well as to the perpetrators and bystanders of violence. This is one of the most controversial aspects of the cultural theory of trauma, precisely because of the ethical indifferentiation involved in this universalization of the status of trauma. It is also one of the features most emphasized by Wulf Kansteiner in his critical article on the “cultural trauma metaphor”, along with the fact that cultural theories of trauma confuse the ordinary and the extraordinary. But this last issue needs to be qualified. The confusion between the ordinary and the extraordinary is by no means a novelty of the cultural treatment of trauma, but can already be observed in the tension between *constitutive* and *disruptive* trauma in Freud. Thus, in some sense this conflation in the cultural theory of trauma is only a development already implied in the origins of the concept. In addition, the confusion between victims and perpetrators is not absolute, since this distinction is established in the legal and moral domains, and cultural approaches only blur this line in the psychological domain, where, in fact, the role played by the subject in the scene of violence need not be decisive according to the PTSD model. Curiously enough, however, Kansteiner defends the *DSM-III* notion of trauma as an event outside the range of human experience, and in this sense he takes distance from what he considers the essential feature of psychoanalysis, which is the concern with structural (read constitutive) trauma (2004, 2006). As we have seen, this is not entirely accurate, but we will come back to it later on.

Perhaps Cathy Caruth has been the most widely read and influential theorist of trauma within the humanities. As I say, her approach can be understood as an adoption of the PTSD model, and specifically van der Kolk’s neurobiological model, and its integration with a critical-theoretical discourse on the Holocaust. Van der Kolk’s idea that trauma is recorded in a memory system of its own and parallel to that of ordinary memory (which as Ruth Leys has shown has less scientific foundation than it claims to have) is a dogma in Caruth’s work. This leads to a defense of the unrepresentable and unspeakable character of trauma that has been tremendously influential, as I say, in the literary and cultural studies of the last twenty-five years. I agree with Kansteiner in labeling this use of the concept that simply takes as an article of faith the irrepresentability of experience as ideological. Let us take a closer look at some of Caruth’s basic theses from Kansteiner’s standpoint, one of his most relentless critics.

The main problem that Kansteiner finds in Caruth's approach is the presupposition of a "traumatic component" in "all human communication", which is made equivalent to the concrete traumas experienced by the victims (2004, 194). To this end, Caruth and her colleagues try to link two traditions, Kansteiner argues, one based on psychological research and the other on philosophical grounding in critical theory and most especially in Adorno and Horkheimer's thesis that twentieth-century barbarism is the dialectical counterpart of rationalist enlightenment, which is understood by Kansteiner as a universalization of Western guilt. For Kansteiner, this union is impossible and comes about through a downgrading of both traditions. This impossibility derives from the fact that psychological research has as its main objective to establish the distinction between the traumatic and the non-traumatic, whereas the philosophical tradition tends to collapse this distinction. Even if such an interpretation of the critical theory's approach to social suffering can be sustained—and this is much to assume, as I will argue—that argument is untenable for the psychological currents that, since the emergence of the diagnosis of PTSD, have tended to shape trauma as a normal reaction to particularly stressful events and thus have contributed to the collapse that Kansteiner attributes to the philosophical tradition.

Kansteiner's critique of Caruth's deconstructive theory of trauma rests on four arguments. First, he finds disrespectful to victims of actual violence the idea that we are all survivors, which can be drawn from the collapse of the experience of the spectator and that of the victim in the contagious model of trauma. Second, he considers her reading of Freud to be selective and her reading of the psychological literature to be reductive (2004, 203). Third, he takes a stand against interpreting symptoms as literal repetitions. Finally, he questions the conversion of the problem of representation that occurs in trauma into a universal crisis of representation.⁶ All these problems, according to Kansteiner, stem from Caruth's central problem:

Since she [Caruth] does not content herself with exploring the limits of knowledge of past events of catastrophic proportions and instead highlights the alleged traumatic component in all representations of history, she has transformed the experience of trauma into a basic anthropological condition (2004, 204)

This is precisely what allows the concept of trauma developed in changing historical contexts to be used in an ahistorical and universalizing way, and in this respect, it is consistent with the concept of PTSD, but it is not con-

⁶ Kansteiner is not alone in making these charges. Different versions of these arguments are found in most critiques of Caruth's work. *cfr.*, among others, LaCapra and Leys.

sistent with Adorno's dialectical approach to the historically specific forms of social suffering, *pace* Kansteiner. Indeed, Caruth stresses in her seminal book, *Unclaimed Experience*, that history is always a traumatic history. The idea of history as the history of trauma that Caruth proposes means "that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (2016, 18). It is worth noting, however, that what returns to haunt the traumatized subject according to Caruth is not only the reality of the event, but also the way in which the violence of the event is not fully known (2016, 6). All this is articulated through the idea of implication: "history, like trauma, is never simply our own, that history is precisely the way in which we are implicated in the traumas of others" (2016, 6).

This notion of history has been the subject of important criticisms, most notably that of the historian Dominick LaCapra, contained both in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* and in *History in Transit*. To put it briefly, LaCapra assesses the confusion between the concepts of absence and loss that he observes in the theories of trauma in the 1990s, and specifically that of Caruth's. What is interesting is that LaCapra links absence to a structural trauma whose events cannot be determined, contrary to what happens with historical trauma understood as loss and whose events are determined by the articulatory work of historiography. However, what he conceives as absence is understood as the absence of ultimate foundations (among his examples is the idea of the death of God), which is abstractly opposed to the concept of loss as *historically determinable* loss. Elsewhere I have developed the need to understand dialectically the categories of absence and loss, so I will not dwell on this point.⁷ However, it is relevant to point out that, while LaCapra offers a separation that seems to fit the Freudian distinction between a constitutive trauma and a disruptive trauma, the fact is that he does not study the relationship between one and the other, but focuses on the second model—the one which is related to historical "loss". This is essential because, again, as in Caruth, trauma is configured as a disruptive event in the form of a catastrophic, event-based model. In this sense, and despite her undifferentiated generalization of historical trauma, Caruth comes closer, in her collapse of both models, to understanding how the two of them interact and does not lose sight of the fact that constitutive trauma and disruptive trauma have complex relationships that need to be unraveled. What is true of LaCapra's critique of Caruth, however, is that Caruth mystifies this concept of trauma as absence and makes it equivalent to the sublime. This, however, is no reason to reject the very notion of structural (read constitutive) trauma.

⁷ Cfr. Alirangues (2018).

The fact that both authors handle a catastrophic and disruptive concept of historical trauma can be better understood by the centrality of the Holocaust in their different conceptualizations of trauma. Just like Caruth, LaCapra assumes the traumatizing effects of the Holocaust on the culture that followed it, and he maintains the possibility of applying a psychoanalytic concept of trauma based on the opposition between acting-out and working through to collectivities. The association of acting-out and trauma in LaCapra has been considered problematic by Sanfelippo, who considers that it overlooks the conditions by which after repression and the consequent latency of an event there is a return of the repressed. Sanfelippo also notes that the decisive, central opposition in Freud's text, "Remember, repeat, reelaborate", is not established between acting out and working through, but between the former and memory, to which the present action is resisted. This resistance is produced "by the 'present' conditions, that is, by the repressive instances for whom that once forgotten fragment, which bids to come to consciousness, remains 'conflictive'", and is not only determined by the past (2013, 54). This interpretative nuance is relevant insofar as it shows that LaCapra's approach focuses too much on the role played by the event in the determination of its aftermath, without taking into account the resistances in the present, which is in itself expressive of a whole series of theorizations on trauma subsequent to *DSM-III* and which have the Holocaust as their model of collective trauma. The processing of trauma, Sanfelippo suggests on the basis of Freud, requires both working through the past and working on the present conditions.

3.1 Trauma Theory and its Dicontents

In the last two decades, and following an extensive use of the concept of cultural trauma in the humanities that has not declined still, a sense of unease with the concept of trauma has developed, of which Kansteiner's critique is paradigmatic. It is not easy to determine the origin of this trend, although it seems that one of its main causes, as pointed out by critics of the concept, is the expansionist use of the category since the 1980's. By expansionist use I mean that the concept of trauma, which at the end of the 19th century was established as a psychic ailment, has broadened its semantics in two directions.⁸ On the one hand, after the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder appeared in 1980, "traumatic" has been increasingly predicated on a growing list of triggering events. As a result, the concept has become more and more

⁸ Among others, Micale and Lerner have pointed out the way in which the concept of trauma is inextricably linked to modernity: "This expansion of the trauma concept, we would suggest, was simultaneously responsive to and constitutive of 'modernity'" (2001, 10).

imprecise, both in its specialized use in psychiatry and in its common usage. On the other hand, prior to the appearance of the PTSD category, there was a shift from individual psychopathology to discourses in the social sciences and humanities, which have been intertwined with psychiatric discourses, both determining each other, and which, in addition to individual trauma, have been shaping a concept of collective trauma that is used by social groups to define their relationship with violent pasts.⁹

This expansive and “inflationary” use of the concept of trauma has recently been placed within what Nick Haslam has called “concept creep”. This phenomenon, which has been studied through methods of computational linguistics on very large textual corpora, can occur either in a “horizontal” direction, “to encompass qualitatively new phenomena” (HASLAM and McGRATH 2020, 511) and/or in a “vertical” direction, “to encompass less extreme or intense phenomena” (2020, 512). The article I am citing builds on an earlier one by Haslam whose main interpretative claim is that “it is specifically harm-related concepts that have inflated” due in part to “a rising sensitivity to harm in Western countries, which leads to less severe harms being redefined as problematic over time” (HASLAM and McGRATH 2020, 512). As the authors argue, this process has ambivalent consequences since, on the one hand, it entails an increased awareness of the diffracted ways in which harm occur while, on the other hand, “it can shade into hypersensitivity and fragility; innocuous experiences can be pathologized or subject to unnecessarily harsh legal remedies; vulnerability can be amplified and coddled rather than diminished; and harm-based victim identities can be fostered” (2020, 513). This study, which is intended to be merely descriptive and not evaluative, lists and develops four major expansions of the concept of trauma that have occurred since the late nineteenth century: from the corporeal to the psychological, from the extraordinary to the ordinary, from direct trauma to indirect trauma, and from individual trauma to collective trauma.

Nonetheless, this process of proliferation has indeed been adduced on numerous occasions to point out the risk of trauma becoming an empty sig-

⁹ In this paper I use the concepts of cultural trauma and collective trauma indistinctly. It is difficult to find a strict distinction in the literature on collective trauma, including Freud’s “Moses”. Authors such as Neil Smelser have proposed a distinction within collective trauma, that between “social trauma” and “cultural trauma”, which seems to me to lack sufficient foundation. Cfr. Smelser (2004). There is also another possible confusion that needs to be clarified between what I call “collective” and what I call “structural”. A succinct way of putting it would be to state that everything structural is collective (insofar as it affects people collectively), while not everything collective is structural, given that collective suffering can have its origin in factors other than the strictly structural ones, even though such factors always play a role, for instance in the unequal distribution of the consequences of a traumatic event. I am grateful to one of the reviewers for drawing my attention to this issue.

nifier due to semantic satiation (cfr. LEYS). However, the impulse that drives this increased generalization must be preserved. Thus, for example, psychiatrist Judith Herman famously proposed the diagnosis of “complex PTSD” precisely to correct the *DSM-III* specification of the trauma model linked to a single event and incorporate recurrent experiences. Although this diagnostic proposal has not been taken up by any of the successive *DSMs*, from the *IVth* onwards the criterion that the etiological event was “outside of usual human experience” was eliminated and the list of potentially traumatizing events was expanded.¹⁰ Along the same feminist line of incorporating structural violence into the etiology of trauma, the notion of “insidious trauma” proposed by Maria Root has been particularly successful, as demonstrated in Laura S. Brown’s influential essay “Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma”.¹¹ Despite the great value of these efforts, I cannot help but wonder whether the most appropriate framework for the study of structural and institutional forms of violence may not be that of the psychopathological discourse on trauma.¹² However, the psychological discourse on distress and pain is not something that can simply be dispensed with in the understanding of harm. Ultimately, the question is whether the concept of trauma is the most appropriate for framing these structural relationships. Precisely, the focus of interest in the present article lies in the distinction and relationship between what we have so far called constitutive trauma and disruptive trauma. Not only at the individual level, but also at the collective level, and above all in the non-excluding relationship between *constitutive* and *disruptive* harm that occurs precisely in the relationship between these two analytic levels.

3.2 *The Problems of Cultural Trauma*

It is now time to address the limits of the concept of trauma when it is applied to “traumatized” groups, societies or whole cultures. To begin with the most obvious, there is a clear problem of conceptual accuracy that all critics of the concept point out. It is not clear exactly what we mean by trauma, and the lowest common denominator is what Jeffrey Alexander has called a “lay theory of trauma” (2012, 7), i.e. our spontaneous and unscientific understanding of

¹⁰ Although it has never been considered as a diagnosis by the APA, the category of “complex PTSD” has been incorporated in the latest edition of the *International Classification of Diseases* of the World Health Organization.

¹¹ Other feminist and queer authors such as Susan Brison and Ann Cvetkovich are also expressive of this tendency to use the concept of trauma to understand structural forms of violence.

¹² My use of the term “structural” refers to the social factors that shape and condition individual experience. For a similar use, cfr. the reflections on “structural injustices” by Iris Marion Young (2013). For a valuable use of Young’s theory, cfr. Rothberg (2019).

a highly stressful event that causes lasting effects on the person or group who suffers it. This has generated a wave of unease and debate about the concept of cultural trauma. Discomfort with the concept of cultural trauma should not be conceived of as an isolated dynamic, however. Rather, this current is part of a broader critique that, since the 1990s, has contested “the abuses of memory” (Todorov) and the fixation of memory on historical wounds. These critiques have sought to show how a “pathological public sphere” has been constituted through a “wound culture” that is particularly evident in the resuscitation of the concept of trauma: “The understanding of trauma, I am suggesting, is *inseparable from the breakdown between psychic and social registers*—the breakdown between inner and outer and “subject” and “world”—that defines the pathological public sphere” (SELTZER, 11). Another version of this critique consists in denouncing the “tendency to displace the political with the ethical” (MOWITT, 273), which is at the basis, according to John Mowitt, of Trauma Theory and its inherent “trauma envy”. It is tremendously illuminating to note that both Mowitt and Seltzer cite Wendy Brown’s critique of “wounded attachments” with approval. Brown argues—based on a reconstruction of the dynamics of resentment in Nietzsche—that the forms of political attachment which underlie identity politics are ultimately self-defeating. It is not my purpose here to disentangle these critiques, but it is necessary to retain that they are in part a response to the political difficulties presented by the ideologizing uses of the concepts of trauma and memory.

The text that is set in some way at the origin of the concept of cultural trauma is *Moses and Monotheism*, the last book published by Freud. In that text Freud argues that the origin of Jewish monotheism is to be found in a scheme analogous to that of trauma. I will not try to discuss in these lines the intricate argument of the book. What I want to point out is that, however suggestive an approach based on Freud’s mass psychology may be, it has a central problem, which is the assumption that the individual psyche and collective psychology operate in an analogous way. And this is manifest in my view for two reasons, previously stated by Neil Smelser. First, neither the concept of repression nor that of latency are adequate to explain the ways in which societies remember or fail to elaborate their violent pasts. This implies a full rejection of LaCapra’s basic thesis, which conceives of the concept of trauma as appropriate for framing particular historical narratives. Second, the repetition compulsion that has become central to our understanding of collective trauma is not self-evident at all when we speak about collective suffering. And this is simply the case because in a given group there is not such thing as an unconscious, which is an exclusive characteristic of individuals. In this sense, social trauma theorists (such as Alexander, Smelser, Ron Eyerman and others) are right in stressing the importance of the distinction between individual and collective trauma.

Another challenge we face when translating the concept of trauma from the scientific or clinical sphere to the cultural sphere is the presupposition of the concept of pathology. Such an issue affects questions of narrativity and temporality. The concept of PTSD, as Lisa Diedrich has pointed out, is rather a disorder of temporality than of memory (2018, 85). The confusion between past and present is its hallmark. But to maintain this we would need to presuppose that the subject is normally constituted narratively, which is something we can be skeptical about. The support for this skepticism is to be found in the proposal of Galen Strawson, who in a now famous text posed a challenge to the narrativist identity thesis by proposing that there are subjects who experience themselves in an episodic manner. I suppose trauma theorists would argue that this form of constitution is itself pathological, although it does not seem clear to me that they can do so without recourse to the normative and circular presupposition that narrative constitution is the standard process of identity formation. This theory presupposes that the capacity for narrative integration and the structuring of a story is the basic characteristic that is radically challenged by trauma. This is why trauma is treated as a challenge to history (paradigmatically in Caruth's theory), given that history is a kind of discourse that operates through complex structuring processes that establish delimitations between the past and the present. In this way, history appears as the corresponding feature of the narrative integration of subjects at the collective level. Thus, trying to depathologize the way in which we relate to the past and the way in which we understand social processes while preserving the concept of trauma based on the diagnosis of PTSD seems an impossible task.¹³ Moreover, using a concept stemming from psychopathology implies that the ultimate goal of social processes of elaboration is the healing of society, another metaphor that seems to me inadequate to approach social processes.

Moreover, all these approaches, despite the fact that some of them postulate the objectivity of the etiological event, always focus on the effects, on the "aftermath", the sequels of this said event. Thus, they simply leave untreated the way in which these experiences take place, their "phenomenology", so to speak.¹⁴ This is also the case in the sociological approach of Alexander and Eyerman and their "social trauma theory". These authors emphasize the ways in which traumatic meaning is attributed to events and states based on a so-

¹³ As Micale and Lerner remind us: "critics of the PTSD concept contest the current tendency to ground rights in competing claims of victimization, pointing out the moral and political dangers of reducing all types of human suffering to fixed pathological categories" (2001, 4). Cfr. also Steffens (2018).

¹⁴ This has been pointed out by Kansteiner and Weilnböck: "The proponents of the deconstructive trauma paradigm (...) are not interested in the empirical phenomenon of trauma and the traumatic experiences of actual people" (2008, 232).

ciocultural construction with particular attention to the affective dimensions of trauma. Simply put, they study how something comes to be understood collectively as a cultural trauma. They all quote with approval Kai Erikson's distinction between individual trauma (defined in strict Freudian economic terms) and collective trauma: "By collective trauma (...) I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality" (ERIKSON, 187). Even if this is the case, the constructivist approach forgets the particular experiences of harm that are at the basis of these meaning attributions. Alexander goes so far as to affirm that individual suffering belongs to the realm of ethics and psychology (2), disregarding the role that such suffering plays in the very processes of discursive construction of collective traumas.

4. ADORNO'S CONCEPT OF SUFFERING AS A BETTER FRAME

If we want to get out of the impasses described so far, it seems necessary to bring back the question in the title to this paper: Is it time to give up the concept of collective trauma? And if so, why? The answer to this second question is that the various theories of trauma develop competing claims that cannot be integrated unless they are introduced into a broader theory. My proposal is that this theory should be developed from a dialectical approach that is able to understand the relationships between *constitutive* (structural) "traumas" and *disruptive* (event-based) "traumas". Likewise, we must deal from a dialectical perspective with the individual and collective levels, which cannot be treated abstractly and separately. On the other hand, the first question is rhetorical. The concept of collective trauma can only have heuristic validity if it is used in the constructivist way proposed by Alexander. This heuristic validity, however, comes at the price of forgetting the concrete experiences of suffering, its normative and psychological dimension in order to focus exclusively on a discursive analysis. Ultimately, this neglect of the individual experience of suffering is shared by trauma theorists who focus exclusively on its symptomatology and aftermath.

Once this concept has proven its limits, it is necessary to consider that it may not be in the field of psychopathology that a substitute should be sought for. This is where I diverge from Kansteiner's critique since he argues that psychological concepts are adequate for "the analysis of processes of social and cultural transmission which address the reproduction of power and violence but which avoid the moral and existential excess of the trauma claim" (2004, 195). However, it is not enough to ask for a new terminology, as Kansteiner

does: this new lexicon must be developed. This lexicon, however, need not be strictly new. I suggest that the place to find this conceptual repertoire is in the tradition of critical theory, and specifically in the category of suffering as framed in that tradition. This is not only a minor divergence, for Kansteiner precisely accuses the “moral and existential excess” of Caruth’s trauma theory in some way to the indifferentiation between structural states and particular moments of violence that he finds in Adorno’s work.¹⁵

Recently, Ulrich Koch has explored the role that critical theory played in the “normalization of trauma”. As he points out, references to trauma in Adorno’s writings are rather anecdotal and appear mostly in his sociological writings. When they do appear, they do so in the context of a critique of the prototypical type of experience of capitalist modernity: in his view, the experience of fragmentation. As Koch argues, for Adorno, this kind of experience is the norm, and thus a “universal experience.” Koch is in agreement with Kansteiner when arguing that “trauma’s moral impetus, as well as the epistemology underpinning the study of traumatic stress, rest on the opposing assumption, namely that traumatic experiences are the exception rather than the norm” (2021, 215). In this sense, Koch upholds the disruptive model of trauma, just as Kansteiner does, as opposed to the constitutive model of harm that Adorno would have adopted according to him. This is perhaps the case when we speak of the experience of the individual, precisely the experience of trauma that destroys a subject’s world and basic expectations. However, Adorno set out to understand the ways in which these seemingly isolated sufferings were related to social forms.

Precisely for this reason Adorno was fiercely critical with what he called “revisionist psychoanalysis”, which the philosopher considered as a therapeutic form aimed at the social adjusting of the individual without taking into account the conditions of possibility of her social suffering (KOCH 2021, 216). In short, the aim of the healing process in Adorno’s view was the normalization of individuals, their adaptation to an unjust system that was at the basis of the subject’s forms of suffering. Koch argues that Adorno employs the concept of trauma to explain the pattern of experience in capitalist socialization, but the truth is that, as he himself admits, the concept of trauma does not play an essential role in his philosophical work, as does that of suffering. Moreover, Adorno considers this suffering as constitutive of the experience of socialization, and therefore universal, but insofar as its conditions of possibility are found in a capitalist and administered society, the conditions of such univer-

¹⁵ We should note that this link between critical theory and Caruth’s work is not exclusive of Kansteiner. Roger Luckhurst also locates critical theory as one of the sources of deconstructive trauma theory in his important monograph *The Trauma Question*. However, no sustained treatment of the German philosophers’ work is found in Caruth’s essays, making it at best only an indirect source.

sality are clearly historical. The disruptive discontinuities of harm have *become* ordinary, therefore, and in this sense Adorno accepts the thesis of constitutive trauma in Freud but adds a fundamental qualification: such constitutive trauma is itself the product of a given social form. Thus, I believe, one must understand his idea that subjects in capitalist societies are “a priori damaged”. So, despite resorting to the language of trauma at very isolated moments, I think it is more appropriate to understand this constitutive element as the harm or suffering the self undergoes. Those who have incorporated these considerations into the language of trauma have been rather later theorists, who have read in Adorno’s reflections on the Holocaust a trauma theory *avant la lettre*. All of the above is summarized in a quote from “The Revisionist Psychoanalysis”:

What Freud actually induces to attribute particular weight to individual processes in childhood, although not explicitly [*unausdrücklich*], is the concept of damage. A totality of the character, assumed by the revisionists as given, is an ideal which would be realized only in a non-traumatic society. Whoever criticizes the present society, as most revisionists do, cannot shut themselves up and so they will suddenly be surprised by abrupt blows caused by just the alienation of individual from society, which is rightly emphasized by the revisionists, when they argue sociologically. The character they hypostasize, is by far a greater measure of the effect of such shocks than that of continuous experience. The totality of the so-called ‘character’ is fictitious: one could almost call it a system of scars, which are integrated only under suffering, and never completely (ADORNO 2014, 328)

Koch has suggested that it was during the 1960s and 1970s, with the new forms of political activism, that the Adornian idea that “society itself was pathological” was recovered (225-6). This idea has been somehow at the basis of the feminist approaches to the concept of trauma, in their attempt to broaden its meaning in order to make it refer to prolonged situations of exposure to psychological harm. However, in all these authors the tension between constitutive trauma and disruptive trauma remained undertheorized, and has not been made explicit. As Koch has pointed out:

Condemning social injustices on the grounds that they have caused post-traumatic stress cannot function as a substitute for political or moral deliberations that engage with the social conditions that produce them. Trauma, conceived as ‘abnormal’ experience, is easily identified as the culprit, whereas the sadly all-too-often ‘normal’ social conditions that lead to trauma and shape its experience are more difficult to grasp and assess (2021, 230)

However, what in my opinion seems ill-advised is the incorporation of Adorno's thesis without assuming its dialectical component. This is a general feature of trauma theories that make more or less explicit reference to Adorno's thought "nach Auschwitz". In other words, Adorno's concept of suffering cannot be understood if it is not understood as the place where the dialectic between society and the individual is expressed. If it is not read in this way, Adorno may end up being accused of what he most strongly spoke out against: the identification of the individual and society.

For Adorno it is vital to take into account the psychological consequences of the processes of social integration. Moreover, only by taking into account these psychological consequences of the process of eradication of the individual can a theory that aims to criticize the social totality be proposed. As Emmanuel Renault has pointed out, in the project of a critical theory of society "philosophy has to intervene as epistemological reflection on the limits of disciplinary boundaries, but also as a social philosophy capable of providing the psychic, social, and cultural dimensions of social experience" (2010, 222). Taking into consideration the different disciplinary fields in which social suffering has become a field of study, Renault points out the limits of each and the need for their combination: "sociology fails to explain suffering as individual experience; psychology fails to give due consideration to the social processes and cultural meanings that are involved in this individual experience; and anthropology fails to describe the part of the experience that cannot be explained solely as a social construction" (2010, 226). In this sense, psychological theories of trauma must be complemented by a social approach, which rejects these theories when they are at the service of social adaptation to imperatives that are themselves the source of harm. This serves to clarify that our proposal does not aim to completely reject the concept of trauma, but to denounce its inadequacy whenever it is transferred without mediation to the analysis of society. I completely agree with Renault that this is precisely Adorno's approach:

According to [Adorno], the knowledge of the subjective aspect of our suffering is a way to understand its social component, just as the knowledge of this component is necessary to interpret this subjective aspect. Such a dialectical account of the interrelation between subjective and objective components of our negative social experiences is the very condition of the knowledge of what is "untrue" in our societies (2010, 227)

This is clear in the dialectics between social objectivity and individual subjectivity that Adorno conceived of as taking place in suffering:

The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject; its most subjective experience, its expression, is objectively conveyed (2004, 17-8)

According to Adorno, the capacity for suffering, like the capacity for happiness, is what is at stake (170). Suffering is not merely the objective, but the mediation of objectivity in the subject. Once the subject is reduced to nothing, its capacity to suffer is also suppressed. Or, to put it another way, suffering is the subjective expression of the weight of social objectivity. Suffering disappears from consciousness as soon as consciousness itself has disappeared in its identification with and blind integration into the social whole. Moreover, in Adorno's philosophy, the concept of suffering cannot be understood without understanding its somatic basis:

The supposed basic facts of consciousness are something other than mere facts of consciousness. In the dimension of pleasure and displeasure they are invaded by a physical moment. All pain and all negativity, the moving forces of dialectical thinking, assume the variously conveyed, sometimes unrecognizable form of physical things, just as all happiness aims at sensual fulfillment and obtains its objectivity in that fulfillment (...). It is the somatic element's survival, in knowledge, as the unrest that makes knowledge move, the unassuaged unrest that reproduces itself in the advancement of knowledge (...). The physical moment tells our knowledge that suffering ought not to be, that things should be different "Woe speaks: 'Go.'" Hence the convergence of specific materialism with criticism, with social change in practice. It is not up to the individual sufferer to abolish suffering or mitigate it to a degree which theory cannot anticipate, to which it can set no limit. This job is up solely to the species, to which the individual belongs even where he subjectively renounces it and is objectively thrust into the absolute loneliness of a helpless object (2004, 203)¹⁶

In fact, and despite the fact that in Adorno's non-specialized reception it is not usually quoted to its full extent, it is the somatic component which is at the basis of the famous new categorical imperative:

¹⁶ Pablo López has accurately captured the importance of the somatic element in Adorno's concept of suffering: "Suffering is not something that has to be raised to concept, but precisely the element that makes visible to thought the limitation of its categories: for this reason, the very disintegration of the individual allows him an experience of himself that he could not have had if he continued to be dominant and had not had to face his fissures. "Pain" and "negativity" are then constituted as "motors of dialectical thought": the recognition that pain "should not be", derived from the somatic component of experience, is the point at which "the specifically materialistic and the critical, the praxis that changes society" are to be found" (55-6).

A new categorical imperative has been imposed by Hitler upon unfree mankind: to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen. When we want to find reasons for it, this imperative is as refractory as the given one of Kant was once upon a time. Dealing discursively with it would be an outrage, for the new imperative gives us a bodily sensation of the moral addendum—bodily, because it is now the practical abhorrence of the unbearable physical agony to which individuals are exposed even with individuality about to vanish as a form of mental reflection. It is in the unvarnished materialistic motive only that morality survives (2004, 365)

It is in this sense that Adorno can affirm that the “telos” of a rational social organization “would be to negate the physical suffering of even the least of its members, and to negate the internal reflexive forms of that suffering” (203-4). The somatic and psychic elements are not confused, but neither can they be approached in isolation, but in their tension. This is also the case with the concepts of society and the individual, so that structural and collective harm is inseparable from the subjects in whom it is expressed. In this dialectical model of suffering, the categories of constitutive and disruptive suffering are neither collapsed, as in Caruth, nor abstractly opposed, as in LaCapra. Both instances are necessary because they both point beyond themselves and into each other. The way in which certain social forms are harmful to individuals is the meeting point in this dialectic between the general and the particular, the structural and the eventual, the disruptive and the constitutive. That meeting point, when experienced and named as violence is what we call harm. The tension between constitutive harm and disruptive harm can be better conceptualized from moral and political philosophy than from psychopathology. The way in which socialization itself is a harmful process in late capitalism, advanced capitalism, or however you wish, is something that is not easy to explain using the concept of trauma, but can be better understood with an explicit concept of harm that is not excessively committed to psychopathology. This does not mean that we can do without psychological or psychoanalytic discourse, but that it must be integrated into a dialectical approach to society in order to understand the individual ways in which social suffering expresses itself. This suffering is not made up of isolated events “outside the range of human experience”, but is also the result of structural processes with which it is necessary to link those events in order to understand them and to understand that the “range of human experience” is not a universal fact, but is historically and socially modeled.

5. A THEORY OF THE NEGATIVITY OF HARM

Finally, I would like to address a category that is central to Adorno's concept of suffering and that has been generally neglected in the literature on collective or cultural trauma. That category is the category of negativity. I do not intend to address here the dialectical dimension of the negative, on the one hand as a description of irrational society and on the other hand as the archimedean point of its immanent critique. I simply want to refer to the work that Carlos Thiebaut has been developing in recent years on the concept of "experience of harm", insofar as I consider that based on it, which is founded on the category of negativity, a correction can be made to the concept of collective trauma:

[...] The term "harm" seems to entail an array of semantic meanings to which we attach the generalized category of negativity. I have referred to physical and moral forms of harming in the examples of slavery, war and domination. It is relevant to note that this polymorphism of harm parallels what Richard Bernstein calls the protean quality of violence. As with this latter case, there is no closed list of semantic meanings for harm, i.e., of what things or types of things have ended up being understood under the category of harm, thus expressing some sort of social and moral condemnation and refusal (2013)

This in no way means that the concept of "harm" is an empty signifier, but rather that it is a signifier that depends, both in its experience and its conceptualization, on changing social conditions. While Adorno's concept of suffering provides the tools necessary to deal with a recurring experience in history, the concept of harm arises from social self-reflection on such suffering. Thus, Thiebaut considers constitutive of the experience of harm the fact that it comes to be named as such in order to be perceived. However, it is not merely a description of the ways in which we frame certain experiences socially, as proposed by the sociological theory of cultural trauma, but takes up the normative component embedded in the very experiences through their introduction into a negatively modalized space:

[...] When we name an action, behavior or institution as harmful, we are making an exercise in judgment. We place their negative forces and effects —such as hurting, despising, or whatever— in a set of peculiar modal spaces. Our judgment of something as harmful first takes it out of the realm of what is necessary and places it in the realm of what need not have happened, of what could not have happened; it could have been otherwise (2013)

This is the central element of a critical theory of society. To quote Adorno again: “The physical moment tells our knowledge that suffering ought not to be, that things should be different “Woe speaks: ‘Go’” (2004, 223). Moreover, this normative component redresses the collapse of the victim’s and the perpetrator’s experience, for, “[the] perspective of harm, vis-à-vis the perspective of justification, makes us perceive these interactions from the perspective of the sufferer or the victim”. In contrast to the descriptive approaches of trauma theories, this normative component that emerges from the experience of the sufferer is precisely the basis for commitment and the possibility of society’s transforming action:

[...] That something can be otherwise breaks the naturalness and taken-for-grantedness of that negativity —slavery, for example, or war and domination— that, to a certain moment in time, had been taken to explain and even justify how things stood. But this first modal shift into the realm of possibility, of alternative possibilities, still does not fully capture the meaning of harm. To underscore the refusal or resistance to that very negativity, our judgments about harm significantly introduce a second modal displacement of what is considered harm into the realm of a new kind of necessity, into the realm of practical necessity. When we claim “Never again!”, we are condensing a more complex judgement in these words and, significantly, an attached commitment: that through our actions, never again, to no one, in no place, are these types of actions to happen again. (...) With the first modal shift, we articulate perception and attentiveness; with the second, action and concern (2013)

I consider this model to be more useful for linking constitutive and disruptive experiences of harm than the model of cultural trauma, which has not proved capable of articulating the normative moments and the negativity of the experience of suffering itself. This in no way implies getting rid forever of the fruitful elements of trauma theories (essentially in the psychological field on the subject’s defenses), but an attempt at reconceptualization that allows us to overcome some of its impasses and to understand that some of the supposed aporias to which it led us are not such, but real contradictions in the social experience of suffering that require a dialectical approach. I believe that this is the main reason why we should be more reflective when using the concept of trauma in academic contexts, in order to criticize its ideological use and proceed to abandon it when it is insufficient to understand the complexity of social processes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ADORNO, T. W. 2014, "Revisionist Psychoanalysis", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 40 (3): 326-38.
- ADORNO, T. W. 2004, *Negative Dialectics*, London, Routledge.
- ALEXANDER, J. C. 2012, *Trauma. A Social Theory*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- ALIRANGUES, M. 2018, "La dialéctica del olvido. Notas para reconceptualizar la tensión entre ausencia y pérdida", Colectivo Brumaria (ed.), *Olvidar/Forgetting*, Madrid, Brumaria.
- AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION (APA) 1980, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3ª ed. Washington, D.C., American Psychiatric Association.
- BARNABY, A. 2018, "The Psychoanalytic Origins of Literary Trauma Studies", KURTZ, J. R. (ed.), *Trauma and Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 21-35.
- BROWN, L. S. 1995, "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma", CARUTH, C. (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- BROWN, W. 1995, *States of Injury. Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- CARUTH, C. 2016, *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative and History*, 20th Anniversary Edition, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.
- DIEDRICH, L. 2018, "PTSD: A New Trauma Paradigm", KURTZ, J. R. (ed.), *Trauma and Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 83-94.
- ERIKSON, K. 1976, *Everything in its Path*, New York, Simon and Schuster.
- HASLAM, N. and McGRATH, M. J. 2020, "The Creeping Concept of Trauma", *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 87, 3: 509-31.
- HARTMANN, G. 1995, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", *New Literary History*, 26, 3: 537-63.
- HERMAN, J. 2015, *Trauma and Recovery. The Aftermath of Violence-From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, New York, Basic Books.
- FREUD, S. and BREUER, J. 1981, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Volume II, London, The Hogarth Press.
- KANSTEINER, W. and WEILNBÖCK, H. 2008, "Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma (or How I Learned to Love the Suffering of Others without the Help of Psychotherapy)", ERL, A., and NÜNNING, A. (ed.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 229-40.

- KANSTEINER, W. 2004, "Genealogy of a Category Mistake: A Critical Intellectual History of the Cultural Trauma Metaphor", *Rethinking History. The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 8 (2): 193-221.
- KOCH, U. 2021, "Between Social Criticism and Epistemological Critique: Critical Theory and the Normalization of Trauma", LEESE, P., CROUTHAMEL, J. and KÖHNE, J. B., (ed.), *Languages of Trauma. History, Memory, and Media*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 213-38.
- LACAPRA, D. 2014, *Writing History Writing Trauma*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.
- LEYS, R. 2000, *Trauma. A Genealogy*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- MICALE, M. S. and LERNER, P. 2001, "Trauma, Psychiatry, and History: A Conceptual and Historiographical Introduction", MICALE, M. S. and LERNER, P. (ed.), *Traumatic Pasts. History, Psychiatry and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870-1930*, Cambridge University Press.
- LÓPEZ, P. 2011, "Ocaso del individuo, recuerdo de lo vivo. Sujeto y naturaleza en Adorno", MUÑOZ, J. (ed.), *Melancolía y verdad. Invitación a la lectura de Th. W. Adorno*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 33-70.
- MOWITT, J. 2000, "Trauma Envy", *Cultural Critique*, 46, Trauma and Its Cultural Aftereffects (Autumn, 2000): 272-97
- RENAULT, E. 2010, "A Critical Theory of Social Suffering", *Critical Horizons. A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory*, Volume 11, Issue 2: 221-41.
- ROTHBERG, M. 2019, *The Implicated Subject. Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- ROTHBERG, M. 2009, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- SANFELIPPO, L. 2018, *Trauma. Un estudio histórico en torno a Sigmund Freud*, Buenos Aires, Miño y Dávila.
- SANFELIPPO, L. 2013, "Versiones de Trauma: LaCapra, Caruth y Freud", *Historiografías: revista de historia y teoría*, 5: 51-70.
- SELTZER, M. 1997, "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere", *October*, Vol. 80 (Spring): 3-26.
- SMELSER, N. J. 2004, "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma", ALEXANDER, J., EYERMAN, R., GIESEN, B., SMELSER, N. J. and SZTOMPKA, P., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- STEFFENS, K. 2018, "Modernity as the Cultural Crucible of Trauma", KURTZ, J. R. (ed.), *Trauma and Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 21-35.
- THIEBAUT, C., October 2013, *Harm and violence: Does the notion of harm help us to define violence and non-violence?* Conference "The Many Faces of Violence", The New School for Social Research, NY. <https://www.researchgate>.

net/publication/277345315_Harm_and_violence_Does_the_notion_of_harm_help_us_to_define_violence_and_non-violence

YOUNG, A. 1995, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

YOUNG, I. M. 2013, *Responsibility for Justice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.