

Overall, *Inne bębny* is a well-edited and harmoniously balanced work. Even though the quality of some of the articles in this eclectic, multifaceted collection is sometimes uneven, each one of them is of great academic merit, offering new perspectives on contemporary American literature and culture. An insightful examination and meditation on the American tradition of rebellion and resistance, *Inne bębny* is ultimately a careful and mature reflection on America's ongoing quest for freedom.

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Buelens, Gert, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone, eds. *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. London: Routledge, 2014. 200 pages.

Trauma theory has become a prominent discourse in American literary and cultural studies since the early 1990s and the publication of Shoshona Felman and Dori Laub's influential work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* which has creatively integrated the Holocaust studies, psychoanalysis and deconstruction in order to conceptualize witnessing, memory and testimony of trauma in literature, film and medical science. In addition, Cathy Caruth's seminal edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, which was followed by her own influential work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, have laid the groundwork for the practice of interdisciplinary trauma studies. These innovative texts have inspired explosion of interest in trauma theory and criticism which still shows no signs of abating. The interdisciplinary focus of the new field has been continuously expanded by numerous scholars from diverse disciplines such as medical science in Judith Lewis Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, history studies in Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, literary criticism in Laurie Vickroy's *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* as well as cultural studies in E. Ann Kaplan's *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. Initially, a number of American research projects associated with Yale University, trauma studies have soon expanded to include also studies of European contexts. English-language European trauma studies such Jane Kilby's *Violence and the Cultural Politics of Trauma* and Roger Luckhurst's *The Trauma Question* have also helped to problematize theoretical issues arising with accumulated body of knowledge and practice concerning fast-growing trauma studies in the new geographic locations. This predominantly Euro-American

approach of trauma theory to literature and culture with its primary focus on two iconic historical traumas of the Holocaust and the 9/11 terrorist attack has recently become challenged and redefined as more global concerns have gained attention of contemporary trauma theoreticians and critics. Attempts to broaden and reconceptualize the scope and framework of trauma discourse to include African, Asian and Australian perspectives have already been made within the study of one medium by E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang in *Trauma and Cinema: Cross Cultural Explorations* (2004).

Similar but more comprehensive major theoretical and thematic reformulation of discourse on trauma is also undertaken in a new compelling collection of essays titled progressively *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism* edited by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone. The study published this year, theorizes literary and cultural representations of more recent late twentieth and early twenty-first century collective traumas in the increasingly globalized world. This theoretical volume advances a project of further dialogizing and pluralizing of not only Euro-American but also postcolonial traumas. By dividing *The Future of Trauma Theory* thematically into two parts focusing first on the situated examples of history and culture and then exploring politics and subjectivity its editors by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, accomplished trauma scholars, clearly stated their primary concerns and constructed a logical book structure. Two introductory texts and ten inspiring essays charter new territories and concepts associated with the recent collective traumas historically situated in such diverse locations as Angola, Australia, Cambodia, Lebanon, South Africa, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. The substantial contributions to the volume are written by the major international scholars in trauma theory and criticism representing many research disciplines such as critical theory, contemporary, comparative, postcolonial literary studies, international politics, history departments, Holocaust, memory and genocide studies.

The volume opens with a fascinating Preface by Michael Rothberg, an accomplished scholar of Holocaust and memory studies, who, in this way, is credited for providing a ground-breaking example for the new trauma paradigm showing how Holocaust memory and postcolonial studies can be productively combined in his *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009). In his thought-provoking introductory text to *The Future of Trauma Theory* Rothberg tests the limits of classical trauma theory by drawing attention to new conceptualizations of “systemic non-spectacular violence” associated with the exploitative conditions of workers in globalized economy or cumulative, devastating effects of climate change, which have been so far less frequently analyzed within the framework of trauma studies than more dramatic “event-centered accounts of

violence" (XV). Such new areas, concepts and connections are productively explored throughout the individual chapters of this ambitious future-oriented collection.

The first, more extensive part of the study, is titled "History and Culture" and comprises six stimulating essays by contributors from both American and European universities. The first two essays in the Part I "Knowledge, "afterwardsness" and the future of trauma theory" and "Fascism and the sacred: sites of inquiry after (or along with) trauma" are authored by the two expert Holocaust studies scholars respectively, Robert Eaglestone and Dominick LaCapra, offering original insights into representations of the Holocaust from the new vantage points provided by the less canonical texts of trauma studies.

In contrast to two previous essays, Stef Craps, a specialist in postcolonial and trauma literature, critiques classic trauma theory for its largely unfulfilled promise of creating ethical communal engagement through listening to another's traumatic history, and he proposes in his essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age" to move beyond Euro-American aesthetic and thematic focus in order to explore more diverse representations of trauma in their distinct local contexts and forms. He illustrates his argument with a detailed examination of Aminatta Forna's critically acclaimed novel, *The Memory of Love* published in 2010, to provide an example of "more inclusive, materialist and politicized form of trauma theory" (51). Craps underscores the contrast evoked in Forna's novel between the local consequences of the long civil war in Sierra Leone and ambivalence about efficacy of Euro-American therapeutic trauma models such as famous "talking cure" brought by the outsider, a British psychologist. Craps eloquently observes that Forna's silences in the novel effectively undermine the universality of Euro-American model narrative therapy.

Also Nouri Ghana's contribution "Trauma ties: Chiasmus and community in Lebanese civil war literature" challenges the readers of trauma theory to explore cultural differences in forms and effects of local violence in the regional literary texts. She specifically examines Elias Khoury's experimental novel, *City Gates*, published in 1981 and draws attention to haunting evocation of mourning in this postmodern Arabic text devoid of emotional and narrative closure. Ghana carefully lists a number of tropes such as chiasmus, metonymy, repetition which Khoury uses to simultaneously express and occlude the impact of trauma on the survivor. She emphasizes that the function of the central figure in the novel, a traumatized stranger, is to convey vulnerability of ineffectual agency and fragmented subjectivity but also to create new bonds within the post-traumatic community. Although Ghana is aware that the text she has chosen as her case study may be testing the limits of a reader used to European modes of expression, she still considers the effort required to enter the realm of Lebanese civil war literature a valuable experience promising more polyphonic future trauma research.

In one of the most accomplished and inspiring essays in this significant collection, titled "Affect, body, place: Trauma theory in the world," Anaya Johanara Kabir undertakes the mixed media approach to her consideration of the dynamic connectedness of affect, body and locality in the transnational trauma theory. Invoking the trope of unrequited love and self-annihilation in a Taliban poem at the beginning of her essay, Kabir suggests that to be emotionally and culturally proficient in Islamicate regions the readers from other cultural backgrounds should be willing to interrogate such Sufi-inspired concepts and complex traumas of postcolonial subjectivities. In her attempt to overcome the limits of Euro-American trauma theory and fill in its gaps with forward-looking projects in disparate settings, Kabir undertakes examination of textual and non-narrative, performative examples from culturally distinct regions of south-east Asia, Southern Africa, and contact zone between Afghanistan and Pakistan. One of Kabir's examples, which challenges the paradigm of Euro-American trauma studies, is a non-narrative spatial arrangement of the Phnom Penh's Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum commemorating the atrocities perpetrated by Khmer Rouge regime headed by Pol Pot, which traumatized Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. Although museum appears to be a classic site of memory as theorized by Pierre Nora, Kabir argues that it is far from exemplifying one of the "dominant and dominated" sites, as conceptualized by Nora (67). Instead, by collapsing features of two types of commemoration in the same space, namely as secular building of national memory situated next to a place focused on commercial activity but named "Bodhi, after sacred site of Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, and supplemented by a Buddhist altar introducing "commemoration-as-healing," Tuol Sleng constitutes a distinctly local affective and performative model of trauma witnessing and testimony which blurs the boundaries between reality and representation, official history and interactive affective involvement (68). Another, equally performative example of distinct non-Eurocentric expression of trauma, which Kabir discusses in "Affect, Body, Place" foregrounds body and affect in the Angolan electronic music-dance complex, kuduro. 'Kuduristas,' Angolan performers of kuduro, combine art and trauma to reconnect traumatized collective subjectivities through their body movements which evoke simultaneously suffering and joy. As Kabir perceptively observes, Kuduro's regenerating effect is closely attached to the local frames of reference and cannot be easily compared to European electronic dances. Still, Kabir envisions kuduro as becoming in future a part of broader "kinetic histories" of Black Transatlantic realm of dance, music and trauma partially described by Paul Gilroy with respect to jazz and hip hop music (71). Referring to Michael Rothberg's influential notion of "multidirectional memory," which conceptualizes multiple but complementary modes of memorialization of traumatic experiences, Kabir proposes to expand non-Eurocentric trauma theory by making vibrant interconnectedness of affect,

body and place central to post-traumatic recovery and re-establishment of shattered communal connections exercising “resources of the body to re-embed itself in place” and “affect world” (73).

Following Sigmund Freud’s biological account of traumatization in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and Judith Butler’s response to 9/11 in *Precarious Life*, Sam Durrant, an expert of postcolonial literature, traces the trajectory of critical engagement with individual corporeal vulnerability and collective traumas in his essay “Undoing sovereignty: Towards a theory of critical mourning.” By using insights from Marxist theory Durrant proposes to theorize critique of postcolonial mourning in an attempt to upset connections between practice of mourning and property claims. In order to achieve this aim, Durrant discusses a critique of memorialization of Irish Famine, reexamines Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s reading of *The Odyssey* focusing on its unsuccessful attempts to account for and contain the traces of violence during re-establishment of community and the cycle of post-apartheid poems about recovery of corporeality and rejection of reconciliation in the aftermath of Truth and Reconciliation Commission written by the South African poet, Ingrid de Kok.

The second, much shorter, part of *The Future of Trauma Theory* titled “Politics and subjectivity” highlights the traumas caused by the state and political subjection. In the title featuring a memorable quote from the poem by the refugee detained in western Australian immigration detention camp near Woomera “‘That which you are denying us’: Refugees, rights and writing in Arendt,” Lyndsey Stonebridge convincingly argues that the discourse of denial of human rights invoked by Arendt in her analysis of the impact of Holocaust and her 17-years of being “stateless” is comparable to the current situation of detained refugees and their testimonial writing and for these reasons it should be acknowledged by the future trauma theory. In Stonebridge’s essay, like in Kabir’s contribution, body also features prominently, this time in its traumatized form of Australian refugee’s lips sutured in an act of silent protest. In contrast, Jenny Edkins’ text “Time, Personhood, Politics” theorizes the philosophical concept of “trauma time” which can be used in political analysis as a means to defy sovereign power and its connection to linear time. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben’s and Eric Santner’s notions of time and personhood, Edkins, who specializes in international politics, suggests that escape from oppression by sovereign power leads, paradoxically, not from but rather to the ordinary time and relinquishing the fantasy of exceptionality. Similarly to Edkins, Pieter Vermeulen evaluates the sovereign power’s policing of wounded subjectivity in “The Biopolitics of trauma.” Vermeulen claims that such traumatic events as 9/11 and efforts aimed at revenge and prevention of similar suffering helped to perpetuate vicious circle of violence. Drawing insights from Jenny Edkins, that work of trauma scholars has effects comparable to other

social actions, and the paradigm represented by the functioning of our immune system in contact with alterity, Vermeulen emphasizes that trauma studies with its affinity to work of memory can perform the role of an immunitary system which resists repetition or escalation of life-threatening violence. Finally, in the last essay “Future shock: Science fiction and the trauma paradigm” Roger Luckhurst, the author of impressive outline of trauma studies and its centrality to many contemporary cultural concepts and practices, *The Trauma Question* published in 2008, boldly declares that future trauma criticism should go beyond the study of aporias in modernist texts and instead should redirect its attention to new radically reconceptualized visions of trauma neurology and post-human visions of trauma evoked in “hard Science Fiction.”

In summary, *The Future of Trauma Theory* is a rich, valuable and stimulating contribution to recent interdisciplinary research on literary and cultural criticism in which trauma studies have continued to play a major role. However, in their persistent effort to make trauma studies more inclusive of non-Euro-American topics and contributors, the editors *The Future of Trauma Theory* focused primarily on collective traumas as discussed by predominantly male contributors. It should be noted that only three out of twelve contributions to this collection are written by the women researchers. Furthermore, feminist and gender studies scholarship which was instrumental, not only for the rise, but also the later development of the trauma studies has been relegated in *The Future of Trauma Theory* to one reference in a section entitled rather pejoratively “the empire of trauma” and a perfunctory footnote acknowledging a borrowing (49).

While I agree with Stef Craps, who argues in his essay “Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the global age” that Euro-American trauma theory requires more diverse, global contexts to consider collective as well as individual consequences of traumatic racist or otherwise oppressive systems, I would like to emphasize that those systems have produced not only numerous military and economic conflicts, which his essay and other contributions in the collection consider, but also high rates of gender-based physical and sexual violence. Multimedia global projects such as protest dance action “One Billion Rising to End Violence Against Women,” initiated in 2013 after a series of gang rapes in India by Eve Ensler, a renowned playwright and performer, and continued by transnational activists in 200 countries in 2014, testify to the rising public awareness of the interdependence of gender stereotyping and traumas of physical and sexual violations acknowledged by many trauma researchers I referred to in the opening of this review (e.g. Judith Herman, Cathy Caruth and Laurie Vickroy). However, this significant omission in the otherwise comprehensive volume, can be remedied by a new more intersectional analysis of the role played by race, class and gender in trauma-inflicting systems of oppressions.

In conclusion, *The Future of Trauma Theory* constitutes a ground-breaking theoretical contribution to the field of contemporary literary and cultural trauma studies and it testifies both to the current productivity and future potential of trauma research by outlining several directions in which it can be developed. The contemporary and global focus of the collection pluralizes, politicizes and opens trauma theory to innovative forms of testimonies, witnessing and conceptions of recovery. Importantly, it also establishes new grounds for connections between trauma studies and postcolonial studies. The collection is also a valuable source for its theoretical gaps as they too pose new challenges to the trauma paradigm by raising important questions and stimulating further discussion in this quickly-developing field. Since neither feminist nor gender studies perspectives, which have been central to both emergence and recognition of trauma studies, have been discussed in this collection in depth, it remains for the future scholars to undertake a yet more inclusive analysis of intersections of, not only racial, and economic, but also gender-based contexts of traumatic experience and its literary and cultural (re)presentations. In general, both the new trajectories outlined in the study as well as its silences can prove stimulating for an ongoing engagement of literary and cultural studies in which trauma theory holds an important place. *The Future of Trauma Theory* is a must for researchers of contemporary, comparative, postcolonial literary and cultural studies as well as for scholars from the departments of the history, memory and politics who are interested in the cutting-edge theoretical framework of trauma studies and the invigorating visions of its future aspirations.

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The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism edited by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, reviews the development of the trauma theory and illustrates the theory's social function which goes beyond the literary texts from different perspectives. With contributions from an international selection of leading critics and thinkers from the US and Europe, this book, guided by the principle of interdisciplinary approach, will exert key critical influence on the contemporary literary criticism and the ongoing studies on the other social sciences. Do you