

Eve-Marie Becker / Jan Dochhorn / Else K. Holt (ed.)

Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions

Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond



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Preface, Short Introduction and Acknowledgments

The present volume results from an international conference at Aarhus University (June 6–9, 2012) organized by the research sections of Old and New Testament studies, where scholars from the fields of Biblical exegesis, Classics, Patristics, the history of medicine, literary sciences, sociology, religious studies, psychology and psychiatry met in order to approach and discuss the phenomena of “Trauma and Traumatization in and Beyond Biblical Literature.”

The focus of this highly interdisciplinary endeavor was placed on Biblical texts which—as eminent parts of ancient literature—were considered as cultural reservoirs pointing back in a historical sense to traumatization of either individuals or (religious) groups, containing traumatic experiences in a literary form or delivering them further in the sense of a ‘cultural trauma.’ The aim of the conference was two-fold. Firstly, by discussing the diverse papers presented by both Biblical scholars and researchers in the various fields of the humanities, social sciences and medicine, the conference wished to critically review existing trauma epidemiology and to broaden its empirical evidence historically, methodologically and terminologically. Secondly, the conference also wished to debate how far trauma studies could reasonably be applied to Biblical exegesis in order to enrich our understanding of Biblical texts as well as to establish how far ‘Old’ and ‘New Testament’ writings appear as crucial ‘literary witnesses’ to the experience, documentation and reprocessing of traumatization in history.

The editors have decided to arrange the publication of the various contributions into three sections: In the first section, trauma epidemiology is presented from a psychiatric point of view and applied—in the sense of a case study test case—to a core piece of ancient literature (history-writing). At the same time, the fruitfulness and limitations of trauma studies are discussed methodologically with regard to the instrument of ‘retrospective diagnosis’ as well as in their specific relation to Biblical exegesis. In the second and third sections, the phenomena of trauma and traumatization are presented on the basis of textual interpretations in “individual” as well as “collective” dimensions: Here, it may become evident how trauma and traumatization on the one hand affect the individual in a psychological or even somatic respect and,

on the other hand, how trauma and traumatization relate to collectives or groups and ultimately become a trans-generational syndrome. While section two concentrates comparatively on literary examples of Old Testament literature (Job and Psalms), parabiblical literature from late antiquity, as well as 'orthonymous writers' from antiquity and modern times, such as Augustine and Thomas Bernhard, section three is divided into two parts: The first part covers phenomena of collective traumatization, ranging from the ancient Near East to modern Mexico, and the second part focuses specifically on textual material from the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible. This focus is based on the fact that trauma studies is currently concerned primarily with the field of the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible. For the time being, and due to the literary character of the texts—as well as the complicated and fundamentally ambiguous state of their chronological and relative dating—, many Old Testament / Hebrew Bible exegetes since the 1970s have included more literary interpretation than those of New Testament and classical antiquity. Thus, for some time, trauma studies has already served as a valuable scholarly approach in the field of Old Testament studies.

It is our hope that this collection of essays will impact on the reader in three ways: it may encourage Biblical scholars to approach common contemporary theories and methods of textual interpretation—such as trauma and traumatization—in order to facilitate interdisciplinary research in and beyond the humanities; it may encourage scholars from the humanities, as well as the social sciences and medicine, to consider Biblical interpretation as a valuable tool to better understand the individual as well as the collective psychic state in its social and cultural settings; finally, it may encourage scholars working specifically with traumatology to consider textual readings as an important means for enriching analytical expertise and cultural knowledge.

We would like to thank all who have supported this project from the very beginnings until the manuscript went to press: the Editor in Chief at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Jörg Persch, for accepting this volume for SANt 2; Silke Hartmann for accompanying the entire editorial process; the former Dean for Theology, Associate Professor Dr. phil. Carsten Riis (d. December 8, 2013), for allocating generous funding for the conference—this volume is edited in his memory; the Vice Dean of Research of the Faculty of Arts and the Head of the Department of Culture and Society, Anne Marie Pahuus and Bjarke Paarup-Laursen, for participating in the conference; the "International Society for the Study of Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature" (ISDCL) for its cooperation and financial support; PhD-student Erin J. Wright, research secretary Marlene Jessen and conference supporter Gitte Grønning Munk, as well as the students at the graduate course on "Trauma in the Book of Jeremiah" for their reliable organizational, administrative and technical help. We would also like to thank Malte Rosenau for his comprehensive edi-

torial work. And, last but not least, we would like to thank all the contributors for their tremendous interest in this project and their kind and professional cooperation throughout the entire editorial process.

Aarhus, December 15, 2013

Eve-Marie Becker
Jan Dochhorn
Else Kragelund Holt

Contents

Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dochhorn, Else Kragelund Holt
Preface, Short Introduction and Acknowledgments 5

Part One Individual and Existential Dimensions

Eve-Marie Becker
'Trauma Studies' and Exegesis
Challenges, Limits and Prospects 15

Raben Rosenberg
Trauma and Mental Disorders: A Biomedical Approach 30

Nadine Metzger
Railway Spine, Shell Shock and Psychological Trauma
The Limits of Retrospective Diagnosis 43

Kirsten Nielsen
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and the Book of Job 62

Christopher G. Frechette
Destroying the Internalized Perpetrator
A Healing Function of the Violent Language against Enemies
in the Psalms 71

Jan Dochhorn
Peter's Daughter: A Case Story from Late Antiquity 85

Virginia Burrus
"Nec sanabatur vulnus illud meum" (Conf. 6.15)
Trauma, Time, and Voice in Augustine's Confessions 100

Burkhard Meyer-Sickendiek
 Trauma and Sarcasm in Modern Austrian Literature
 Thomas Bernhard's Novel "Extinction" 111

Part Two
 Collective Dimensions

Roberto Castro and Joaquina Erviti
 A Society Undergoing Trauma
 Criminal Violence in Mexico and the Search for Justice and Hope 127

Jan Dietrich
 Cultural Traumata in the Ancient Near East. 145

Else K. Holt
 Daughter Zion
 Trauma, Cultural Memory and Gender in OT Poetics 162

Louis Stulman
 Reading the Bible through the Lens of Trauma and Art 177

Elizabeth Boase
 The Traumatized Body
 Communal Trauma and Somatization in Lamentations 193

Kathleen M. O'Connor
 How Trauma Studies Can Contribute to Old Testament Studies 210

Daniel L. Smith-Christopher
 Trauma and Old Testament: Some Problems and Prospects 223

Andreas Mehl
 Individual and Collective Psychiatric Traumas in Ancient
 Historiographical Literature 244

Alexandra Eckert
 Remembering Cultural Trauma
 Sulla's Proscriptions, Roman Responses, and Christian Perspectives . . . 262

Adele Reinhartz

The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple as a Trauma
for Nascent Christianity 275

Frank Ursin

Handling Traumatic Events in Greek Past:
Plutarch's 'Political Precepts' as a Struggle between
Memory and Oblivion 289

Primary Source Citations 309

Subject Index 312

Part One
Individual and Existential Dimensions

Eve-Marie Becker

‘Trauma Studies’ and Exegesis

Challenges, Limits and Prospects

Abstract

This article reflects the origin, history and current state of “trauma studies” by discussing more detailed questions such as: speaking primarily as Biblical scholars, can or will we establish something like “trauma studies” in our fields of research? What could be the result or even the benefit of traumatology within theology, the humanities and cultural studies? There are several aspects of current trauma discourse demonstrating that the humanities and theology as well as Biblical exegesis in particular can and should contribute with essential observations and critical reflections based on what we could best call “cultural knowledge” and analytical expertise when interpreting textual traditions.

1. What Are ‘Trauma Studies’?

‘Trauma and traumatization’ is an extensive field of research¹ that extends far beyond the boundaries of modern psychiatry, psychology and sociology. There is currently a growing interest in trauma studies among scholars in the diverse fields of theology,² religious studies, across the humanities and, in particular, in the literary sciences.³ The approach to trauma and traumatization within these fields of research is based on the insight that studies in psychic mentality are crucially important to all academic disciplines that deal with the ‘human’ and the ‘social’ in their interaction within history, culture and religion. In that sense, trauma studies in the humanities and theology contribute to the historical and literary analysis of psychic mentality, which is, first and foremost, mediated through historical documents and literature.

Hereby, trauma studies focus on the aspect of disorder and vulnerability caused by external factors, such as human or natural violence, terror, viola-

1 Cf. lately: Alexander, *Trauma*.

2 Cf., for instance: Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*.

3 Cf., for instance, recently: Modlinger and Sonntag, *Other People’s Pain*.

tion, and so forth⁴. By investigating the psychic states of individuals and groups in history, theology and the humanities can widen the picture of the 'human' and its living conditions in the past and present⁵: While psychiatry and psychology base their analysis of the human psyche on a *contemporary* view of anthropology, a *historical* investigation enlarges our principal knowledge of psychic action and reaction tremendously. Thus, the interplay between psychology and psychiatry on the one hand and the humanities and theology on the other enriches both approaches to the 'human' in its socio-cultural setting. Here, interdisciplinarity is valuable to both parties.

How do the humanities and theology approach the field of trauma studies? In a general sense, historians such as Peter Burke claim that 'history' can only be constructed and reconstructed adequately when it takes into account socio-psychological and individual-psychological factors that determine historical contexts in a social as well as a biographical dimension.⁶ To be more concrete from the point of view of Biblical exegesis and Classics: Mediterranean life in antiquity should also be explored from a psychological point of view.⁷

This evidently applies to the field of trauma studies,⁸ both in an individual and a collective as well as a cultural sense.⁹ For example, as scholars dealing with antiquity, we continuously investigate social groupings and certain socio-cultural and religious conditions that may cause traumatization for the individual as well as the collective.¹⁰ Hereby, trauma studies specifically include the interpretation of religious experiences:¹¹ In combination with per-

4 It should be noted that, while completing this contribution, the "super typhoon Haiyan strikes the Philippines" (see: Samenow and McNoldy, "Super Typhoon"). This has provided numerous pictures that illustrate various forms of traumatic experience. Cf. FAZ-net: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/gesellschaft/philippinen-taifun-ueberlebende-sind-traumatisiert-12683155.html> (cited 27 November 2013).

5 The philosopher Hans Blumenberg has suggested a detailed phenomenology of how to describe the 'human'; for instance, in its experience of pain: Blumenberg, *Beschreibung des Menschen*.

6 Cf. Burke, *History and Social Theory*.

7 Some previous work has been carried out in this field, either regarding psychology of religion or cultural anthropology: Cf., e.g.: Berger, *Historische Psychologie*; idem, *Identity and Experience*; Bilde, "Kognitive Dissonanzreduktion"; Türcke, *Jesu Traum*; Theißen, *Erleben und Verhalten*; Malina, *New Testament World*.

8 Cf. especially Andreas Mehl's, Alexandra Eckert's and Frank Ursin's contributions in this volume.

9 For this distinction and its implications for social theory, cf. recently: Eyerman, "Social Theory and Trauma." On 'cultural trauma' see: Alexander, "Toward a Theory."

10 Cf. J. Dietrich's contribution in this volume. Cf., e.g., also: Guldager Bilde, "Eschatological Currents." – This contribution is dedicated to the memory of my dear friend and colleague in Classical Archaeology at Aarhus University, Pia Guldager Bilde, who died, much too early, on January 10, 2013. She was planning to contribute to the 'Trauma Conference' in June 2012, but, due to serious illness, could not be present.

11 Cf. Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*.

sonality research in sociology¹² or psychology¹³, we can reveal how the personal identity and the personal development of individuals—like Paul or Augustine¹⁴—can be violated by external stressors and thus become disordered, with huge consequences for the individual itself as well as the larger community.¹⁵

From here, it soon becomes evident how trauma studies can contribute to the historical understanding of the mental state of groups as well as individuals in a certain cultural and religious setting. Conversely, contemporary psychiatry may also profit from a broadened (i.e. historically enlarged picture) of the human psyche. At the same time, trauma studies themselves are rooted in a specific historical context and interrelated to various histories, to which we will now turn.

2. Trauma Discourse and Its Various 'Histories'

The contemporary interest in 'trauma and traumatization' is itself a historical phenomenon, since it is by no means only a modern invention. Even the terminology derives from ancient times, in both an etymological and a phenomenological sense:¹⁶ In antiquity, the semantic field of τραῦμα (τρώμα; lat.: *vulnus*) and its derivatives is well attested. According to Liddell, Scott and Jones, at this point, we have to consider a wide range of Greek lexemes:¹⁷ "Trauma" and its derivatives primarily denote physical kinds of wounds and wounding. This is true of pagan literature from Herodotus' time onwards (*Hist.* 2.63), and it can also be observed later in the Septuagint writings.¹⁸ Furthermore, Luke—who is the only New Testament author and one of the few earliest Christian writers¹⁹ to make use of this terminology—conceives of trauma first and foremost in terms of physical wounding.²⁰ However, in Acts 19:16, he speaks of a wounding which was caused by a demon (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ πονηρὸν); here, the borderline between physical or somatic and psychic

12 Cf. e.g. Funder, *Studying Lives Through Time*.

13 Cf. Klessmann, "Identität des Paulus"; Thilo, "Paulus."

14 Cf., V. Burrus' contribution in this volume. – On Paul, see: Becker, "Person des Paulus."

15 See also below.

16 For a broader field of relevant trauma terminology in the Coptic language, cf. J. Dochhorn's contribution in this volume.

17 Τραῦμα, τραυματίζειν, τραυματίας, τιτρώσκω, τραυματεία, τραυματιαῖος, τραυματικός, τραυματισμός, τραυματοθεραπεύω, τραυματοποιός. Cf. Liddell et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1799b, 1811a.

18 Τραῦμα, τραυματίζειν, τραυματίας: Gen 4:23; 34:27; Ex 21:25; Num 19:16, 18; 1 Sam 31:3; Ies 53:5 etc. – To the Hebrew equivalents cf.: Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 119.

19 Among the so-called Apostolic Fathers, see: Pol 2:1; Barn 5:2; 1 Clem 16:5.

20 Τραῦμα: Lk 10:34; τραυματίζειν: Lk 20:12; Acts 19:16.

kinds of wounding is evidently crossed. And already in Herodotus, τρώμα could, in a wider sense, be understood as “defeat” (*Hist.* 1.18).

In various early Christian texts (such as 1 Clem 16:5 or Barn 5:2), trauma terminology is even constructed as a *theologoumenon*; in other words, it is applied to a Christological idea (ἐτραυματίσθη). What we read here is: ‘Jesus is wounded (= traumatized) because of our sins’ (διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας) viz. ‘Jesus was wounded (= traumatized) because of our ἀνομία’—the letter of Barnabas quotes Isaiah (53:5, 7) in particular. Should we think of a physical and/or a psychic wounding here? The terminology itself soon becomes an interpretive challenge. Already in Archaic and Classical Greece, we find some instances of what we might best call a ‘metaphorical use of wounding’ (trauma).²¹ In the Septuagint writings, the verb τιτρώσκω in a passive form is also used explicitly for emotional, i.e. psychological, kinds of wounding.²² Most interesting in this respect is Ct 5:8. The phrase: ... ὅτι τετρωμένη ἀγάπης ἐγώ εἰμι, which refers to an inner wounding of the fictitious author, is formulated as a direct consequence of a wounding that was obviously caused externally, i.e. in a physical sense (Ct 5:7: ... ἐπάταξάν με, ἐτραυμάτισάν με). A combining of somatic and psychic dimensions can also be observed in the Hellenistic world, beyond LXX-writings: In Diodorus Siculus (*Hist.* 17.112), the term τιτρώσκω (as participle passive) is even directly related to ψυχή. Trauma studies thus take their natural point of departure from the ancient world.²³

Thus, we can by no means claim that it is only the *modern* pathological usage of ‘trauma’ and ‘traumatization’ in psychiatry and psychology that is oriented towards an inner wounding. Ancient authors were already making use of this terminology in various, partly metaphorical ways. Having said this, we should nevertheless admit that the analysis and treatment of an *inner wounding in a psychiatric and psychotherapeutic dimension* is certainly a result of the modern development of psychology and psychiatry, dating back to the mid and late 19th century.²⁴ Trauma studies in a contemporary sense are thus to be understood as a late result of what we might best call the modern ‘history of psychology.’²⁵

Interestingly enough, however, even here, where we meet the specialization of psychiatry in a modern sense, the focus on history and on a historical investigation of psychology is constant: It is in this context that the ‘retro-

21 Cf. LSJ, 1799: regarding wine (Homer, *Od.* 21.293), love (Euripides, *Hipp.* 392), persons (Euripides, *Hipp.* 703) and examples (Plato, *Philb.* 13c).

22 Cf. Lust et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 2:477.

23 Cf., e.g.: Shay, “Combat Stress.”

24 Cf. N. Metzger’s contribution in this volume, with various references to, for instance: H. Oppenheim, J.-M. Charcot, and S. Freud/J. Breuer.

25 Cf. Löwe et al., “Geschichte.”

spective diagnosis' appeared on the scene²⁶—we could think, for instance, of Sigmund Freud's prominent essay on Leonardo da Vinci (1910).²⁷ At the same time—the beginning of the 20th century—, New Testament scholars were commenting in different, partly controversial, ways on how to apply—or not to apply²⁸—'historical psychology' to eminent figures of earliest Christianity, and especially to Paul²⁹.

It is worthwhile keeping in mind the various reasons why theology and the humanities are indispensably involved in the studies of traumatology—we may even say that traumatology in medicine as well as in cultural studies can hardly escape from either historical or religious quests, since it always moves back and forth to the field of history in order to analyze how far the construction of our common past or 'history' is actually affected by the traumatic experience and its memorization, and to what extent the production of 'cultural artifacts'—especially literature, arts and music—in fact results from the transformation of an individual's or a group's traumatic experience. As well as this, trauma studies have to continuously reflect upon their own emergence and their precise role in the history of psychology and psychiatry.

Therefore, last but not least, there is another history related to traumatology. This becomes clear when we think back to how and when trauma studies came into being: The recent interest in traumatology takes its point of departure from the experiences of American soldiers during the Vietnam War and the psycho-somatic effects it had on them. Modern 'trauma studies' derive from here, in the sense that the aftermath of these war experiences and their psychological interpretations led to the introduction of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis in the DSM-III in 1980 (s. also below).³⁰ Ever since, various previous or subsequent war experiences have been seen in the light of PTSD (e.g., 1948 Arab-Israeli War; Yom Kippur).³¹

26 Cf. also: Leven, "Ancient Facts"; to more recent applied historical psychiatry and psychology: Gottschalk and Bechtel, "Computerized Content Analysis"; Göttel-Leybold and Demling, "Persönlichkeitsstruktur."

27 Cf. Freud, *Eine Kindheitserinnerung*.

28 In his well-known book on the "Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien," William Wrede rejected psychologizing methods and instead voted for a literary and literary-historical interpretation of New Testament texts: Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, 3–4.

29 Cf. to some degree, already: Cf. Deissmann, *Paulus*, 50; Pfister, "Entwicklung." – In more recent times: Bash, "Psychodynamic Approach."

30 Cf. Rubin et al., "Memory-Based Model."

31 Cf., e.g.: Rom, "Combat Stress Reactions"; Solomon and Mikulincer, "Combat Stress Reaction"; Solomon, *Combat Stress Reaction*.

3. The Quest for Definitions and Its Socio-Political Agenda

The interconnection of modern trauma studies with the Vietnam War can by no means be underestimated, since it guides the majority of how traumatology has been approached ever since: Psychiatric pathology, epidemiology and diagnosis are directly interrelated to social and cultural as well as juridical and economic issues; soldiers who, according to trauma-diagnosis, were traumatized by psychic incidents of the war could demand medical and psychotherapeutic treatment as well as economic compensation and reparation.

Traumatology, thus, is not only a matter of cultural studies: To a large extent, it is dependent on political recognition and social acceptance. This continues to be the case regarding current military conflicts and wars, such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.³² The interdependency of politics and sociology can be observed whether we appeal to history or to our own present time. First, victims of the Holocaust can now be better understood and eventually be treated and compensated in the light of trauma therapy. Thus, trauma studies can be said to shed light on the darkest chapter of European genocide. In this context, in the field of literature and literary theory, we can observe how the traumatic experience of historical concentration camp reality appears to be transformed into the aesthetics of world literature.³³ We therefore need to establish whether traumatization ultimately leads to the elimination of a victim's autobiography—for example, in the form of depersonalization—so that only literary means remain at hand, such as sarcasm, exaggeration and repetition, which may help to express the 'unsayable.'³⁴

Secondly, current societies are now more sensitive when they raise the question of how the effects of World War II on soldiers, as well as civil victims³⁵ (especially refugees and children³⁶), might have impacted on the psychic and cultural development of European societies in the second half the 20th century; and, more specifically, how various families have suffered, and may continue to suffer, from the psychic stress and somatic injury and violation caused by the war and post-war incidents. This, of course, becomes most evident in the field of so-called post-War and, more specifically, 'Holocaust

32 Cf., e.g.: Hummel, "Traumatisierte Soldaten." – Interestingly enough, the new German Defense Secretary, Ursula von der Leyen, who is a medical doctor, considers it one of her future socio-political responsibilities to take care of the various types of wounding, including PTSD, with which soldiers return home.

33 Cf., e.g., the works of Ruth Klüger, Professor em. of German Studies: Klüger, *Gelesene Wirklichkeit*. A recent interview with her was published in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 273 (November 2013): 40. – Cf. in general: Selg, *Überleben in Auschwitz*.

34 Similar questions regarding the interrelation between 'traumatization' and literature were discussed frequently during the conference in Aarhus.

35 Cf. Berntsen, *Lidt skydning*. Cf. K. O'Connor's contribution, in this volume.

36 Cf., e.g.: Wendt et al., "Kinder des 2. Weltkrieges."

literature.³⁷ In this context, we can think of the German-writing poet Paul Celan and his impressive poem "Todesfuge" (1948),³⁸ which is a well-known piece of 'Holocaust-lyrics'.³⁹ At the same time, a variety of literature was, and still is, heavily influenced by traumatic experience.⁴⁰ This fact is indeed intriguing. It indicates that 'trauma and traumatization' can clearly—beyond mere reflections on autobiography—have a stimulating effect on literature and literary history.⁴¹

Such an observation prepares the shift from an (auto-)biographical or existential conceptualization of trauma to its cultural dimensions, which are implied in its 'transgenerational communication'.⁴² As a consequence, it can again act as a reading tool for ancient literature; read in this light, various parts of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible appear as a literary adaption of traumatic experiences.⁴³ Conversely, the trauma-related process of producing literature can be seen as an essential cultural and religious strategy for coping with trauma, traumatization, PTSD and its socio-historical consequences.⁴⁴

Finally, contemporary victims of political or sexual violence are also viewed against the criteria of trauma diagnosis. Such an analysis can be revealing in many ways, since it invites discussion about suppressive structures in modern societies and their later impact on politics, economy and culture.⁴⁵ In all of these cases where trauma studies can help to illuminate and explain psychic disorder, ethical questions appear on the scene: Should trauma diagnosis ultimately focus on the victim alone or also on the perpetrator? To what extent do trauma studies reveal 'guilt' and 'shame' on both sides? Will trauma studies help to better understand family history and thus have a liberating, or even a reconciling, function?

Alongside these considerations, there are other aspects related to trauma diagnosis that warrant our attention. In general, the PTSD criteriology, which has only recently been re-revised (DSM-V, May 2013),⁴⁶ also reveals itself as a highly ambivalent tool: In a diagnostic and an analytical sense, it does help to clarify psychic symptoms and work out psychiatric pathology and epide-

37 Cf., e.g.: Kansteiner, "Testing the Limits."

38 Cf. in: Celan, "Mohn und Gedächtnis" (1952); see the link to Paul Celan's own presentation of his poem: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVwLqEHDCQE>.

39 For the broad field of "Holocaust literature," see, for instance: Kremer, *Holocaust literature*; Patterson et al., *Encyclopedia of Holocaust literature*.

40 Cf. B. Meyer-Sickendiek's contribution on Thomas Bernhard's "Auslöschung," in this volume.

41 Cf. Neumann, "Schönheit des Grauens."

42 Cf. lately: Anastasiadis, "Transgenerational Communication"

43 Cf. K. Nielsen's, L. Stulman's and E. Boase's contributions, in this volume.

44 Cf. C. Frechette's contribution, in this volume.

45 Cf. R. Castro's contribution on contemporary Mexico, in this volume.

46 Further information is to be found at: <http://www.dsm5.org/Pages/Default.aspx>.

miology. However, at the same time, it also tends to be used (and eventually misused) as a political and juridical instrument that is defined by various social and economic interests, primarily in Western societies. In other words, traumatology itself can easily become a battlefield of its own where the definition and the authority of definition is already a matter of debate: Should one follow the DSM (= Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, ed. by the American Psychiatric Association) or the ICD-10 (= International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, ed. by the WHO)⁴⁷ criteriology? How do scholars in the field list, determine and limit the symptoms of a 'Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder' concisely?

The traditional trauma phenomenology, when applied to PTSD- and trauma-diagnosis, mostly makes use of adjectives such as *uncontrollable*, *unpredictable*, *unscripted*, *immoral*, *un-sharable*, and *in-credible*. It is said that a trauma has biological as well as psychological effects,⁴⁸ and that it is possibly influenced and determined by pre- and peri-traumatic variables ('psychological risk factors').⁴⁹ A trauma affects the emotional as well as the intellectual part of the human brain. A PTSD appears as an 'intense emotional experience, a sense of detachment, de-realization, de-personalization, dissociative amnesia;⁵⁰ a re-experiencing of the traumatic event, and an avoidance of trauma-related stimuli.'⁵¹ However, we can also identify further effects on the intellectual mind, such as violence imprinted on the mind, a loss of language, an emotional shutdown, or possibly a loss of faith and trust, which leads to a habit of latency.⁵² Here, again, the interplay between trauma studies and social, as well as religious ethics proves to be highly relevant.

The basic assumption behind every attempt to define PTSD and 'trauma' is that it can be distinguished from "personal weakness." Accordingly, Chris Brewin (2003) has suggested the following definition of trauma and post-traumatic stress: "Victims of war, oppression, child abuse, marital violence, robbery, natural disaster or disaster of human origin, life-threatening accidents, and other overwhelming events have in common a mental and psychic response that is caused by the traumatic incident and has nothing to do with any personal weakness or vulnerability..."⁵³ However, the more detailed classification of PTSD has remained (and will remain) a constant matter of

47 Cf. World Health Organization, *ICD-10 Classification*. – For the distinction, cf. also: Maercker, "Symptomatik," 14-15.

48 Cf. Resick, *Stress und Trauma*, 91-107.

49 Ibid., 109-32.

50 Dorthé Berntsen highlights the fact that the dissociative amnesia claim is debatable, since it is supported by little empirical evidence.

51 Cf. R. Rosenberg's contribution, in this volume.

52 Cf. K. O'Connor's contribution, in this volume. – For more general aspects of latency in a cultural sense, cf. Gumbrecht, *After 1945*.

53 Brewin, *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*, 1.

definition and dispute since the PTSD found its "formal recognition" in 1980.⁵⁴ As Dorthe Berntsen has identified, the revised DSM-V diagnosis for PTSD, for instance, leaves more room for considering the so-called predisposing factors, such as female gender and low socioeconomic status (SES).⁵⁵ Trauma studies thus look back on approximately 30 years of relatively intense research and discourse.

4. Prospects: Trauma Studies and Exegesis

Against this background, we may now ask the more detailed question: in the long run, can we or will we—primarily as Biblical scholars—establish something like 'trauma studies'? What could be the result or even the benefit of traumatology within theology, the humanities and cultural studies? There are several aspects of current trauma discourse which demonstrate that the humanities and theology can and should contribute with essential observations and critical reflections, which are based on—what we could best call—'cultural knowledge' and analytical expertise.

Firstly, as we established earlier, it is important to reflect critically upon when and how the trauma concept was established and what fields of studies are currently related to it; for example, historical psychology, post-colonial studies, gender studies,⁵⁶ and, more specifically, refugee studies. In other words, 'trauma studies' themselves are to be found at the intersection of various academic subjects, such as medicine, psychology, social sciences, theology, and the humanities. Thus, trauma studies build a bridge between diverse fields of research in and beyond university. Are trauma studies a useful heuristic instrument for strengthening interdisciplinary research? And, if so, how do we best proceed from here? The following volume identifies some potential answers to these questions.

Secondly, in theology and the humanities, we might discuss the socio-cultural context in which trauma discourse is embedded as well as its socio-political implications and consequences: What is the historical, cultural, geographical and scientific context for establishing concepts of trauma-research? And what is the relevance of trauma research if 'only' ca. 10 % of contemporary (Western) society is in danger of being diagnosed with or developing trauma and PTSD? If we tend to 'collectivize' trauma heuristics, are we not in danger of finally dealing with a 'collective anxiety disorder'? Does trauma and traumatology ultimately become a postmodern, partly pessimistic 'world view' that reminds us of certain images already known from antiquity, such

54 Ibid., 2.

55 D. Berntsen in an e-mail comment on this contribution (December 5, 2013).

56 Cf. E. K. Holt's contribution, in this volume.

as the Nero *redivivus* myth?⁵⁷ How do we define the needs as well as the necessary limits of trauma phenomenology in our current political, social and religious discourse? It is not possible to provide answers to these questions here, but we should ensure that these questions are raised when discussing trauma research with scholars from medicine, psychology and the social sciences.

Thirdly, theology and the humanities can contribute extensively to the conceptualization and understanding of central patterns that are used in traumatology, such as ‘memory’,⁵⁸ reconciliation, disaster,⁵⁹ personality and personal identity.⁶⁰ It is, for instance, highly debated in trauma studies whether it is the traumatic experience itself or the memorization of it that actually causes PTSD.⁶¹ Similar questions regarding the construction of a history that is event-based and the role of memory within this process of construction have continuously been raised in theology and the humanities: How should we define an (traumatic) ‘event’ in the first place?⁶² And how do trauma studies help to distinguish between the intellectual, emotional, and psychic dimensions of memory as a place for saving experience?

It is also possible to gain further insights into terminological or methodological distinctions. By examining how ancient figures such as Paul, Josephus or Augustine conceptualize their biography, we may on the one hand enrich our analytical tools for distinguishing between autobiographical and collective memory⁶³ and its transformation into cultural memory, and, on the other hand, we may sharpen our definition when analyzing the nature of an auto-biographical text as opposed to auto-fictional writing and how existential descriptions of trauma may vary from literary conceptualizations.

Finally, theology and the humanities will broaden the picture of how to define those “stressors” that occur over time or those that are connected to a particular point in time. Even if we assume that ‘brain activity’ from antiquity to today is more or less stable, we need to discuss whether the list of “stressors”—which cause trauma and affect PTSD—in ancient and modern societies is comparable.⁶⁴ On the one hand, we might argue for discontinuity here:

57 I would like to thank my colleague Jan Dochhorn for identifying this aspect during the conference. For a classification of *redivivus*-motifs in Biblical tradition, cf. Becker, “Elija *redivivus*.”

58 Cf., e.g., Brewin, *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*, 88ff.

59 Cf., e.g.: Keitel, “Art of Losing”; Berlejung, *Disaster and Relief Management*.

60 Cf., e.g., Brewin, *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*, 63ff.

61 Cf., e.g.: Rubin et al., “Memory-Based Model.” Cf. further reflections on this: Monroe and Mineka, “Mnemonic Model”; Berntsen and Rubin, “Contrasting Models.”

62 Cf. Saur et al., “Ereignis.” – To the concept of memory, cf., e.g.: Mendels, “Inscribed Memory.”

63 Cf., lately: Olick, *Collective Memory Reader*.

64 Cf. the various (partly controversial) ideas in the contributions by R. Rosenberg and N. Metzger in this volume.

Paul's narrative accounts on, for instance, *peristaseis*, which he experienced regularly (e.g. 2 Cor 11:23ff.), are specifically bound to his situation as an ancient person, travelling around the Mediterranean and living according to the conditions of an apostate Diaspora Jew confronted with Roman imperial power. In many ways, Paul's living conditions are far removed from modern life and travel experience. This is mostly true when we look at the ecstatic dimensions of his 'personality'.⁶⁵

On the other hand, we might look for continuity between ancient experiences of trauma and the modern world: In some sense, the implications and consequences of the temple destructions in 587 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. in Jerusalem⁶⁶ are quite similar to the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. In both cases, the events of monumental destruction—caused by either war or terroristic attack—symbolize the loss of a core piece of national or cultural identity. We thus need to analyze more in detail if and how far trauma phenomenology can be used as a trans-historical instrument of understanding individual as well as collective experience of disaster, catastrophe and trauma.

Trauma studies, thus, open up space for interdisciplinary research, even though the objects of study may vary significantly: In psychiatry, it is first and foremost the individual victim who needs treatment; in sociology, it is the society which could be considered to be in danger of collectivizing trauma; in studies of history, we aim to identify the possible traumatic 'event,' which might have continued to impact on later generations. In the text-based humanities—such as Biblical Studies—, we start by reading and interpreting various texts: These texts either appear as historical or literary sources to and religious and cultural reflections on trauma and traumatization. They could also be literary constructs of traumatic experience. We thus need to investigate whether apocalyptic writings such as *4 Ezra* or *2 Bar* are *sources* for traumatic experience or *results* viz. products of traumatization. Similar questions arise in relation to the passion narrative (Mk 14-15) and its actual origin. They could also be discussed when reading Flavius Josephus' "Bellum Judaicum" in close affinity to its author's (auto-)biography.⁶⁷

These various texts partly *result* from trauma, and partly aim at *overcoming* it, so as to perform a possible 'healing function,' either in a historical or in a contemporary sense.⁶⁸ However, in the end, we also need to admit that we

65 Cf. lately: Shantz, *Paul in Ecstasy*. – In a general sense cf.: Jeppesen and Bro Larsen, *Kognitionsforskning og eksegesi*.

66 Cf. Flower, "Temple Destruction"; A. Reinhartz's contribution, in this volume.

67 Cf., lately: Varneda, "Early Empire," 327ff.

68 Cf. K. O'Connor's and L. Stulman's as well as C. Frechette's contributions, in this volume. – I would like to thank my colleague in psychology, Dorthe Berntsen, and my colleagues in Biblical exegesis, Jan Dochhorn and Else K. Holt, for their critical comments on and suggestions for this article.