

## Unclaimed Experience Trauma Narrative History

Literary Aesthetics of Trauma: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson investigates a fundamental shift, from the 1920s to the present day, in the way that trauma is aesthetically expressed. Modernism's emphasis on impersonality and narrative abstraction has been replaced by the contemporary trauma memoir and an ethical imperative to bear witness.

Trauma has become a catchword of our time and a central category in contemporary theory and criticism. In this illuminating and accessible volume, Lucy Bond and Stef Craps: provide an account of the history of the concept of trauma from the late nineteenth century to the present day examine debates around the term in their historical and cultural contexts trace the origins and growth of literary trauma theory introduce the reader to key thinkers in the field explore important issues and tensions in the study of trauma as a cultural phenomenon outline and assess recent critiques and revisions of cultural trauma research Trauma is an essential guide to a rich and vibrant area of literary and cultural inquiry.

Her afterword serves as a decisive intervention in the ongoing discussions in and about the field.

This updated edition includes a substantive new preface that reconsiders some of the issues raised in the book.

“After Auschwitz to write even a single poem is barbaric.” The Conflagration of Community challenges Theodor Adorno’s famous statement about aesthetic production after the Holocaust, arguing for the possibility of literature to bear witness to extreme collective and personal experiences. J. Hillis Miller masterfully considers how novels about the Holocaust relate to fictions written before and after it, and uses theories of community from Jean-Luc Nancy and Derrida to explore the dissolution of community bonds in its wake. Miller juxtaposes readings of books about the Holocaust—Keneally’s *Schindler’s List*, McEwan’s *Black Dogs*, Spiegelman’s *Maus*, and Kertész’s *Fatelessness*—with Kafka’s novels and Morrison’s *Beloved*, asking what it means to think of texts as acts of testimony. Throughout, Miller questions the resonance between the difficulty of imagining, understanding, or remembering Auschwitz—a difficulty so often a theme in records of the Holocaust—and the exasperating resistance to clear, conclusive interpretation of these novels. The Conflagration of Community is an eloquent study of literature’s value to fathoming the unfathomable.

The Great War of 1914–1918 marks a turning point in modern history and culture. This Companion offers critical overviews of the major literary genres and social contexts that define the study of the literatures produced by the First World War. The volume comprises original essays by distinguished scholars of international reputation, who examine the impact of the war on various national literatures, principally Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States, before addressing the way the war affected Modernism, the European avant-garde, film, women's writing, memoirs, and of

course the war poets. It concludes by addressing the legacy of the war for twentieth-century literature. The Companion offers readers a chronology of key events and publication dates covering the years leading up to and including the war, and ends with a current bibliography of further reading organised by chapter topics.

As a concept, 'trauma' has attracted a great deal of interest in literary studies. A key term in psychoanalytic approaches to literary study, trauma theory represents a critical approach that enables new modes of reading and of listening. It is a leading concept of our time, applicable to individuals, cultures, and nations. This book traces how trauma theory has come to constitute a discrete but influential approach within literary criticism in recent decades. It offers an overview of the genesis and growth of literary trauma theory, recording the evolution of the concept of trauma in relation to literary studies. In twenty-one essays, covering the origins, development, and applications of trauma in literary studies, *Trauma and Literature* addresses the relevance and impact this concept has in the field.

The relations between memory and history have recently become a subject of contention, and the implications of that debate are particularly troubling for aesthetic, ethical, and political issues. Dominick LaCapra focuses on the interactions among history, memory, and ethico-political concerns as they emerge in the aftermath of the Shoah. Particularly notable are his analyses of Albert Camus's novella *The Fall*, Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*, and Art Spiegelman's "comic book" *Maus*. LaCapra also considers the Historians' Debate in the aftermath of German reunification and the role of psychoanalysis in historical understanding and critical theory. In six essays, LaCapra addresses a series of related questions. Are there experiences whose traumatic nature blocks understanding and disrupts memory while producing belated effects that have an impact on attempts to address the past? Do some events present moral and representational issues even for groups or individuals not directly involved in them? Do those more directly involved have special responsibilities to the past and the way it is remembered in the present? Can or should historiography define itself in a purely scholarly and professional way that distances it from public memory and its ethical implications? Does art itself have a special responsibility with respect to traumatic events that remain invested with value and emotion?

Why has shame recently displaced guilt as a dominant emotional reference in the West? After the Holocaust, survivors often reported feeling guilty for living when so many others had died, and in the 1960s psychoanalysts and psychiatrists in the United States helped make survivor guilt a defining feature of the "survivor syndrome." Yet the idea of survivor guilt has always caused trouble, largely because it appears to imply that, by unconsciously identifying with the perpetrator, victims psychically collude with power. In *From Guilt to Shame*, Ruth Leys has written the first genealogical-critical study of the vicissitudes of the concept of survivor guilt and the momentous but largely unrecognized significance of guilt's replacement by shame. Ultimately, Leys challenges the theoretical and empirical validity of the shame theory proposed by figures such as Silvan Tomkins, Eve Kosofsky

Sedgwick, and Giorgio Agamben, demonstrating that while the notion of survivor guilt has depended on an intentionalist framework, shame theorists share a problematic commitment to interpreting the emotions, including shame, in antiintentionalist and materialist terms.

From mass murder to genocide, slavery to colonial suppression, acts of atrocity have lives that extend far beyond the horrific moment. They engender trauma that echoes for generations, in the experiences of those on both sides of the act. Gabriele Schwab reads these legacies in a number of narratives, primarily through the writing of postwar Germans and the descendents of Holocaust survivors. She connects their work to earlier histories of slavery and colonialism and to more recent events, such as South African Apartheid, the practice of torture after 9/11, and the "disappearances" that occurred during South American dictatorships. Schwab's texts include memoirs, such as Ruth Kluger's *Still Alive* and Marguerite Duras's *La Douleur*; second-generation accounts by the children of Holocaust survivors, such as Georges Perec's *W*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, and Philippe Grimbert's *Secret*; and second-generation recollections by Germans, such as W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, Sabine Reichel's *What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?*, and Ursula Duba's *Tales from a Child of the Enemy*. She also incorporates her own reminiscences of growing up in postwar Germany, mapping interlaced memories and histories as they interact in psychic life and cultural memory. Schwab concludes with a bracing look at issues of responsibility, reparation, and forgiveness across the victim/perpetrator divide. Features interviews with a diverse group of leaders in the theorization of, and response to, traumatic experience in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Each month brings new scientific findings that demonstrate the ways in which human activities, from resource extraction to carbon emissions, are doing unprecedented, perhaps irreparable damage to our world. As we hear these climate change reports and their predictions for the future of Earth, many of us feel a sickening sense of *déjà vu*, as though we have already seen the sad outcome to this story. Drawing from recent scholarship that analyzes climate change as a form of "slow violence" that humans are inflicting on the environment, *Climate Trauma* theorizes that such violence is accompanied by its own psychological condition, what its author terms "Pretraumatic Stress Disorder." Examining a variety of films that imagine a dystopian future, renowned media scholar E. Ann Kaplan considers how the increasing ubiquity of these works has exacerbated our sense of impending dread. But she also explores ways these films might help us productively engage with our anxieties, giving us a seemingly prophetic glimpse of the terrifying future selves we might still work to avoid becoming. Examining dystopian classics like *Soylent Green* alongside more recent examples like *The Book of Eli*, *Climate Trauma* also stretches the limits of the genre to include features such as *Blindness*, *The Happening*, *Take Shelter*, and a number of documentaries on climate change. These eclectic texts allow Kaplan to outline the typical blind-spots of the genre, which rarely depicts climate catastrophe from the vantage point of women or minorities. Lucidly synthesizing cutting-edge research in media studies, psychoanalytic theory, and environmental science, *Climate Trauma* provides us with the tools we need to extract something useful from our nightmares of a catastrophic future.

Offers a close reading of figures of falling in 9-11 art and literature from the perspective of trauma theory.

In recent years, the field of Memory Studies has emerged as a key approach in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and has increasingly shown its ability to open new windows on Nordic Studies as well. The entries in this book document the work-to-date of this approach on the pre-modern Nordic world (mainly the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, but including as well both earlier and later periods). Given that Memory Studies is an ever expanding critical strategy, the approximately eighty contributors in this volume also discuss the potential for future research in this area. Topics covered range from texts to performance to visual and other aspects of material culture, all approached from within an interdisciplinary framework. International specialists, coming from such relevant fields as archaeology, mythology, history of religion, folklore, history, law, art, literature, philology, language, and mediality, offer assessments on the relevance of Memory Studies to their disciplines and show it at work in case studies. Finally, this handbook demonstrates the various levels of culture where memory had a critical impact in the pre-modern North and how deeply embedded the role of memory is in the material itself.

This book explores the close association between the literary representation of historical trauma and the alternative narrative form of magical realism, underscoring the role of memory, empathy and imagination. It discusses the potential of magical realism to give a literary representation to individual and collective trauma arising from the Holocaust, slavery, and apartheid, and to turn those unspoken memories into narratives. It also analyses the role of magical realism in depicting trauma suffered by female victims during and following those events. Again, by dealing with the above-mentioned events, their specific historical context and universal meaning for humankind, this book highlights a universal experience of trauma.

The *Unspeakable: Representations of Trauma in Francophone Literature and Art* is situated at the crossroads of language, culture and genre; it contends that suffering transcends time, space and cultural specificity. Even when extreme trauma is silenced, it often still emerges in surprising and painful ways. This volume draws together examples from throughout the Francophone world, including countries such as Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Rwanda, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, New Caledonia, Quebec and France, and across genres such as autobiography, poetry, theater, film, fiction and visual art to provide a cohesive analysis of the representation of trauma. In addition to the survivors' expression of trauma, the witnesses and receivers are also taken into account. By gathering studies that explore diverse bodily and psychological traumas through tropes such as repetition, silence and working-through, it tackles ethical responsibility and interrogates how expressive forms evoke a terrible reality through the use of imagination. The aim of this volume is not to question if suffering is representable, but rather to examine to what extent art surpasses its own limitations and goes straight to its essence. The *Unspeakable* hopes to provide models for the cultural translation of trauma, because, when represented and released from silence and isolation, trauma can give way to the arduous process of healing.

The literary potential of trauma is examined in this book, bringing trauma theory and literary texts together for the first time. *Trauma Fiction* focuses on the ways in which contemporary novelists explore the theme of trauma and incorporate its structures into their writing. It provides innovative readings of texts by Pat Barker, Jackie Kay, Anne Michaels, Toni

Morrison, Caryl Phillips, W. G. Sebald and Benjamin Wilkomirski. It also considers the ways in which trauma has affected fictional form, exploring how novelists have responded to the challenge of writing traumatic narratives, and identifying the key stylistic features associated with the genre. In addition, the book introduces the reader to key critics in the field of trauma theory such as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartman. The linking of trauma theory and literary texts not only sheds light on works of contemporary fiction, it also points to the inherent connections between trauma theory and the literary which have often been overlooked. The distinction between literary theme and style in the book opens up major questions regarding the nature of trauma itself. Trauma, like the novels discussed, is shown to take an uncertain but productive place between content and form.

**Key Features\***

- Identifies and explores a new and evolving genre in contemporary fiction
- Thinks through the relation between trauma and literature
- Produces innovative readings of key works of contemporary fiction
- Provides an introduction to key ideas in trauma theory

Combining fiction and autobiography in a quite unprecedented way, Georges Perec leads the reader inexorably towards the horror that lies at the origin of the post-World War Two world and at the crux of his own identity.

A distinguished group of analysts and critics offers a compelling look at what literature and the new approaches of theoretical disciplines bring to the understanding of traumatic experiences such as child abuse, AIDS, and the effects of historical atrocities such as the Holocaust. "These essays offer fresh approaches on the subject of trauma from both a psychoanalytic and contemporary theoretical point of view".--Alan Bass, Ph.D., psychoanalyst.

In this interesting study, Jenny Edkins explores how we remember traumatic events such as wars, famines, genocides and terrorism, and questions the assumed role of commemorations as simply reinforcing state and nationhood. Taking examples from the World Wars, Vietnam, the Holocaust, Kosovo and September 11th, Edkins offers a thorough discussion of practices of memory such as memorials, museums, remembrance ceremonies, the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress and the act of bearing witness. She examines the implications of these commemorations in terms of language, political power, sovereignty and nationalism. She argues that some forms of remembering do not ignore the horror of what happened but rather use memory to promote change and to challenge the political systems that produced the violence of wars and genocides in the first place. This wide-ranging study embraces literature, history, politics and international relations, and makes a significant contribution to the study of memory.

The book consists of three essays and is an extension of Freud's work on psychoanalytic theory as a means of generating hypotheses about historical events. Freud hypothesizes that Moses was not Hebrew, but actually born into Ancient Egyptian nobility and was probably a follower of Akhenaten, an ancient Egyptian monotheist. Freud contradicts the biblical story of Moses with his own retelling of events, claiming that Moses only led his close followers into freedom

during an unstable period in Egyptian history after Akhenaten (ca. 1350 BCE) and that they subsequently killed Moses in rebellion and later combined with another monotheistic tribe in Midian based on a volcanic God, Jahweh. Freud explains that years after the murder of Moses, the rebels regretted their action, thus forming the concept of the Messiah as a hope for the return of Moses as the Saviour of the Israelites. Freud said that the guilt from the murder of Moses is inherited through the generations; this guilt then drives the Jews to religion to make them feel better.

Psychic trauma is one of the most frequently invoked ideas in the behavioral sciences and the humanities today. Yet bitter disputes have marked the discussion of trauma ever since it first became an issue in the 1870s, growing even more heated in recent years following official recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In a book that is bound to ignite controversy, Ruth Leys investigates the history of the concept of trauma. She explores the emergence of multiple personality disorder, Freud's approaches to trauma, medical responses to shellshock and combat fatigue, Sándor Ferenczi's revisions of psychoanalysis, and the mutually reinforcing, often problematic work of certain contemporary neurobiological and postmodernist theorists. Leys argues that the concept of trauma has always been fundamentally unstable, oscillating uncontrollably between two competing models, each of which tends at its limit to collapse into the other. A powerfully argued work of intellectual history, *Trauma* will rewrite the terms of future discussion of its subject. In *Trauma Culture*, E. Ann Kaplan explores the relationship between the impact of trauma on individuals and on entire cultures and nations. Arguing that humans possess a need to draw meaning from personal experience and to communicate what happens to others, she examines the forms that are used to bridge the experience.

Trauma is a universal human experience. While each person responds differently to trauma, its presence in our lives nonetheless marks a continual thread through human history and prehistory. In *Critical Trauma Studies*, a diverse group of writers, activists, and scholars of sociology, anthropology, literature, and cultural studies reflects on the study of trauma and how multidisciplinary approaches lend richness and a sense of deeper understanding to this burgeoning field of inquiry. The original essays within this collection cover topics such as female suicide bombers from the Chechen Republic, singing prisoners in Iranian prison camps, sexual assault and survivor advocacy, and families facing the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As it proceeds, *Critical Trauma Studies* never loses sight of the way those who study trauma as an academic field, and those who experience, narrate, and remediate trauma as a personal and embodied event, inform one another. Theoretically adventurous and deeply particular, this book aims to advance trauma studies as a discipline that transcends intellectual boundaries, to be mapped but also to be unmoored from conceptual and practical imperatives. Remaining embedded in lived experiences and material realities, *Critical Trauma Studies* frames the field as both richly unbounded and yet clearly defined, historical, and evidence-based.

Literary trauma studies is a rapidly developing field which examines how literature deals with the personal and cultural aspects of trauma and engages with such historical and current phenomena as the Holocaust and other genocides, 9/11, climate catastrophe or the still unsettled legacy of colonialism. The Routledge Companion to Literature and Trauma is a comprehensive guide to the history and theory of trauma studies, including key concepts, consideration of critical perspectives and discussion of future developments. It also explores different genres and media, such as poetry, life-writing, graphic narratives, photography and post-apocalyptic fiction, and analyses how literature engages with particular traumatic situations and events, such as the Holocaust, the Occupation of France, the Rwandan genocide, Hurricane Katrina and transgenerational nuclear trauma. Forty essays from top thinkers in the field demonstrate the range and vitality of trauma studies as it has been used to further the understanding of literature and other cultural forms across the world.

A cyclone inexorably sweeps Eliette into her past in this novel about the wayward violence of love and nature in Guadeloupe. In *Macadam Dreams* the celebrated Creole writer Gisèle Pineau cunningly unveils the two cataclysms that have devastated Eliette's life: first, the cyclone of 1928, when she was only eight years old, and now, Hurricane Hugo, whose destruction shatters the elaborate defenses the old woman has built around the sorrows and madness of her life in the small, accursed town of Savane Mulet. As Hugo unleashes its fury, a final blow frees Eliette's repressed memories of madness, isolation, and loss, and of the grievous failure of a prophecy that promised her a child. A story of self-discovery, *Macadam Dreams* speaks eloquently of the violence and poverty endured by women of this island nation—violence every bit as devastating, and seemingly inescapable, as the perpetually returning cyclone. Viewed by many as a canonical author in the Creole movement in Francophone literature, Pineau has created an extraordinary work that is recognized as a masterpiece of French-Caribbean literature.

In the prevailing account of English empiricism, Locke conceived of self-understanding as a matter of mere observation, bound closely to the laws of physical perception. English Romantic poets and German critical philosophers challenged Locke's conception, arguing that it failed to account adequately for the power of thought to turn upon itself—to detach itself from the laws of the physical world. Cathy Caruth reinterprets questions at the heart of empiricism by treating Locke's text not simply as philosophical doctrine but also as a narrative in which "experience" plays an unexpected and uncanny role. Rediscovering traces and transformations of this narrative in Wordsworth, Kant, and Freud, Caruth argues that these authors must not be read only as rejecting or overcoming empirical doctrine but also as reencountering in their own narratives the complex and difficult relation between language and experience. Beginning her inquiry with the moment of empirical self-reflection in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*—when a mad mother mourns her dead child—Caruth asks what it means that empiricism represents itself as an act of mourning and explores why scenes of mourning reappear in later texts such as Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, and Freud's *Civilization*. From these readings Caruth traces a recurring narrative of radical loss and the continual displacement of the object or the agent of loss. In Locke it is the mother who mourns her dead child, while in Wordsworth it is the child who mourns the dead mother. In Kant the

father murders the son, while in Freud the sons murder the father. As she traces this pattern, Caruth shows that the conceptual claims of each text to move beyond empiricism are implicit claims to move beyond reference. Yet the narrative of death in each text, she argues, leaves a referential residue that cannot be reclaimed by empirical or conceptual logic. Caruth thus reveals, in each of these authors, a tension between the abstraction of a conceptual language freed from reference and the compelling referential resistance of particular stories to abstraction.

*Wounds of History* takes a new view in psychoanalysis using a trans-generational and social/political/cultural model looking at trauma and its transmission. The view is radical in looking beyond maternal dyads and Oedipal triangles and in its portrayal of a multi-generational world that is no longer hierarchical. This look allows for greater clinical creativity for conceptualizing and treating human suffering, situating healing in expanding circles of witnessing. The contributors to this volume look at inherited personal trauma involving legacies of war, genocide, slavery, political persecution, forced migration/unwelcomed immigration and the way attachment and connection is disrupted, traumatized and ultimately longing for repair and reconnection. The book addresses several themes such as the ethical/social turn in psychoanalysis; the repetition of resilience and wounds and the repair of these wounds; the complexity of attachment in the aftermath of trauma, and the move towards social justice. In their contributions, the authors remain close to the human stories. *Wounds of History* will be of interest to psychoanalysts, psychologists and other mental health professionals, as well as students or teachers of trauma studies, Jewish and gender studies and studies of genocide.

*Trauma in Contemporary Literature* analyzes contemporary narrative texts in English in the light of trauma theory, including essays by scholars of different countries who approach trauma from a variety of perspectives. The book analyzes and applies the most relevant concepts and themes discussed in trauma theory, such as the relationship between individual and collective trauma, historical trauma, absence vs. loss, the roles of perpetrator and victim, dissociation, *nachträglichkeit*, transgenerational trauma, the process of acting out and working through, introjection and incorporation, mourning and melancholia, the phantom and the crypt, postmemory and multidirectional memory, shame and the affects, and the power of resilience to overcome trauma. Significantly, the essays not only focus on the phenomenon of trauma and its diverse manifestations but, above all, consider the elements that challenge the aporias of trauma, the traps of stasis and repetition, in order to reach beyond the confines of the traumatic condition and explore the possibilities of survival, healing and recovery.

In this book Jeffrey C. Alexander develops an original social theory of trauma and uses it to carry out a series of empirical investigations into social suffering around the globe. Alexander argues that traumas are not merely psychological but collective experiences, and that trauma work plays a key role in defining the origins and outcomes of critical social conflicts. He outlines a model of trauma work that relates interests of carrier groups, competing narrative identifications of victim and perpetrator, utopian and dystopian proposals for trauma resolution, the performative power of constructed events, and the distribution of organizational resources. Alexander explores these processes in richly textured case studies of cultural-trauma origins and effects, from the universalism of the Holocaust to the particularism of the Israeli right, from postcolonial battles over the Partition of India and

Pakistan to the invisibility of the Rape of Nanjing in Maoist China. In a particularly controversial chapter, Alexander describes the idealizing discourse of globalization as a trauma-response to the Cold War. Contemporary societies have often been described as more concerned with the past than the future, more with tragedy than progress. In *Trauma: A Social Theory*, Alexander explains why.

This is a study of the literature of trauma focusing on the Holocaust, the Vietnam war, and sexual violence against women. *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* broadens the discussion of trauma in literary criticism by introducing new perspectives on the field's theoretical foundations and future directions. This collection indicates that trauma in literature is best read through a theoretical pluralism that allows for an understanding of trauma's variable representations that include, but move beyond, the concept of trauma as unspeakable.

These stories of trauma cannot be limited to the catastrophes they name, and the theory of catastrophic history may ultimately be written in a language that already lingers in a time that comes to us from the other side of the disaster.

"Memory, trauma, and history is composed of essays that fall into five overlapping subject areas: history and memory; psychoanalysis and trauma; postmodernism, scholarship, and cultural politics; photography and representation; and liberal education." -- Introduction.

*Critical Encounters* addresses a central and long-standing concern in literary criticism and theory: What is the relation between literature and reality, or language and experience? The questions raised by poststructuralist criticism, and particularly deconstruction, concerning the establishment of reference, appear to many readers to involve a dangerous denial of any link between texts and reality: the possibility that reference is indirect seems to mean that we have no reliable access to experience or to history and, therefore, no basis for political action or ethical decision. Drawing on contemporary theories of literature, history, and feminism, the essays in this volume interrogate the assumptions underlying this critique of deconstruction by asking what it would mean to conceive of an experience that is constituted by the very way it escapes or resists comprehension. Taking as their starting point the attempt to rethink fundamental questions of reality and reference, the contributors ultimately ask how we might learn to recognize and to respond to the realities of a history, a politics, and an ethics not based on straightforward understanding. *Traumatic Affect* examines the intersection of trauma theory and affect theory, two areas of crucial relevance to contemporary thought. While both fields continue to offer insights into individual and collective experience, exploring their nexus offers timely and necessary critiques of film, literature, art, culture and politics. This collection of essays by established and emerging thinkers considers the dynamic relations within and between affect and trauma. Varied in style and approach, this volume asks how the relational subject conceived by affect theory might bring into question certain presuppositions common to trauma theory and how the ethical imperatives of trauma might require a rethinking of aspects of affect theory. Thus the contributors reimagine the unrepresentability of trauma, reveal its affective economies, and chart innovative understandings of experiences, embodiments, and events. From the silence into which Walter Benjamin fell after the suicide of his closest friend to the trauma of becoming the

emblematic media figure of the London bombings, Traumatic Affect traverses diverse terrain: gesture and the everyday, cinema and torture, art and writing, civility and specters, media representation and Indigenous Australian film. Featuring essays by Shoshana Felman, Karyn Ball, Jennifer L. Biddle, Anna Gibbs, Ben O'Loughlin, Anne Rutherford, Magdalena Zolkos, Aaron Kerner, Ricardo Mbaroko, Jonathan L. Knapp, Michael Richardson and Meera Atkinson, Traumatic Affect ventures into bold new territories at the juncture between trauma and affect, illuminating pressing realities that demand engagement.

This collection analyses the future of 'trauma theory', a major theoretical discourse in contemporary criticism and theory. The chapters advance the current state of the field by exploring new areas, asking new questions and making new connections. Part one, History and Culture, begins by developing trauma theory in its more familiar post-deconstructive mode and explores how these insights might still be productive. It goes on, via a critique of existing positions, to relocate trauma theory in a postcolonial and globalized world, theoretically, aesthetically and materially, and focuses on non-Western accounts and understandings of trauma, memory and suffering. Part two, Politics and Subjectivity, turns explicitly to politics and subjectivity, focussing on the state and the various forms of subjection to which it gives rise, and on human rights, biopolitics and community. Each chapter, in different ways, advocates a movement beyond the sort of texts and concepts that are the usual focus for trauma criticism and moves this dynamic network of ideas forward. With contributions from an international selection of leading critics and thinkers from the US and Europe, this volume will be a key critical intervention in one of the most important areas in contemporary literary criticism and theory.

"A brilliant first novel . . . shockingly good." —Rose Tremain, Daily Telegraph  
Ritwik Ghosh, twenty-two and recently orphaned, finds the chance to start a new life when he arrives in England from Calcutta. But Oxford holds little of the salvation Ritwik is looking for. Instead, he moves to London, where he drops out of official existence into a shadowy hinterland of illegal immigrants. The story that Ritwik writes to stave off his loneliness begins to find ghostly echoes in his own life. And, as present and past of several lives collide, Ritwik's own goes into free fall.

In this unique collection, Yale literary critic Shoshana Felman and psychoanalyst Dori Laub examine the nature and function of memory and the act of witnessing, both in their general relation to the acts of writing and reading, and in their particular relation to the Holocaust. Moving from the literary to the visual, from the artistic to the autobiographical, and from the psychoanalytic to the historical, the book defines for the first time the trauma of the Holocaust as a radical crisis of witnessing "the unprecedented historical occurrence of...an event eliminating its own witness." Through the alternation of a literary and clinical perspective, the authors focus on the henceforth modified relation between knowledge and event, literature and evidence, speech and survival, witnessing and ethics.

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