

De Facto Trauma Reconsidered

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Edited by

Faten Haouioui

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*This volume is dedicated to the memory
of Professor Lynn Hannachi
my mentor, supervisor, and friend*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	x
Notes on Contributors.....	xi
Foreword	xv
Professor Mounir Triki	
Introduction	1
The De facto Trauma: Torture and Terror or Resistance and Survival Faten Haouioui (University of Tunis, ISEAHT)	
Part 1: Decolonizing Trauma Theory in Maghrebean Literature	
Chapter One.....	14
Undoing Trauma, Unchaining Historiography: The Rise of Tunisian Prison Literature Yosra Amraoui (University of Carthage, ISLT)	
Chapter Two	23
Ahlem Mosteghanemi's Poetics of Nationhood: Trauma in the Flesh Bootheina Majoul (University of Carthage, ISLT)	
Chapter Three	35
White Trauma in Assia Djébar's <i>Algerian White</i> Hanene Baroumi (University of Jendouba, ISLAHIB)	
Part 2: African American Trauma Theory	
Chapter Four.....	44
The Decolonization of Trauma Theories in the Writings of Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, and Toni Morrison Salwa Mezguidi Jdei (University of Kairouan ISEAHS)	

Chapter Five	58
Empowering the Traumatized Subject through Resistance Discourse in <i>Beloved</i>	
Hajer Ayedi (University of Tunis, ISEAHT)	

Chapter Six	69
Voicing Trauma through Silence: African American Women's Rape Experiences in the Nineteenth Century	
Mahassen Mgadmi (University of Tunis, ISEAHT)	

Part 3: Poetics of Post-Trauma Theory

Chapter Seven.....	84
On Literary Memory, Resistance and Historical Traumata: "Sparkling Consciences" and a "Revolution that Crackles" in the Darkness of History (Juan Gelman)	
Céline Richard (Sorbonne University)	

Chapter Eight.....	103
"Stop This Hysterical Outburst and Tell Me What's Happened?" Gendered Rape Trauma Syndrome of the Fallen Madonna in Tennessee Williams's <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	
Olfa Gandouz (University of Prince Sattam Bin Abdul-Aziz Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)	

Chapter Nine.....	114
Female Howl/Male Awe: Resilience and Genderic Trauma in Angela Carter's "Peter and the Wolf"	
Sana Ben Ali (University of Jendouba, ISLAIB)	

Part 4: The De facto Trauma

Chapter Ten	130
The City as a Space of Trauma: The Flaneur's Spatial Dynamics and the Genesis of Urban Angst in T. S. Eliot's Psychogeographies	
Amira Hdhili (University of Jendouba, ISLAIB)	

Chapter Eleven	144
Narrative Trauma as Second Skin: A Reading of John Hawkes's <i>Second Skin</i>	
Heifa Dallagi (University of Jendouba, ISLAIB)	

Chapter Twelve	156
Poetics of Survival in the Mindscapes/Landscapes of <i>The Valley of Amazement</i>	
Faten Haouioui (University of Tunis, ISEAHT)	

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

Yosra Amraoui holds a PhD in culture studies. She currently teaches at the High Institute of Languages of Tunis, University of Carthage, Tunisia. Her areas of research and teaching revolve around Jewish studies, historiography, media studies, Anglophone culture studies, British history, and research methodology in culture studies. She has published a number of articles on the history and identity of Jewish subgroups in the UK and the US before the creation of Israel.

Hajer Ayadi is a Tunisian researcher. She currently teaches at the Higher Institute of Applied Humanities of Tunis. Her PhD thesis is entitled “Voices beyond Walls: The Use of Storytelling to Break Maghrebian Women’s Silence through the Prism of Feminism.” She graduated from the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis where she received her bachelor’s degree in English literature and a master’s degree in cross-cultural poetics with a dissertation entitled “A Womanist Poststructuralist Reading of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*.” She also published articles in several international journals such as “Towards a Reconstruction of African American Identity in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*” in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* as well as “Women’s Political Power: The Power of Telling Silence in Maghrebian Folktales” in the *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*. Her main research areas include gender studies, women’s literature, African American literature, Maghrebian literature, etc.

Hanene Baroumi is a lecturer at the Higher Institute of Applied Languages and Computer Sciences of Béja, Tunisia. She holds an MA in Cross Cultural Poetics from the University of Carthage and received her PhD in English Literature from Manouba University. She participated in many conferences and workshops in Tunisia, Germany, Qatar, and Algeria. She won a Research Grant and visited the State University of New York, USA. Her research interests are in literary and cultural studies, North-African and Maghrebian literature, and women and gender studies.

Sana’ Ben Ali Taga is an assistant-teacher of English at the Higher Institute of Applied Languages and Computer Sciences of Beja, University of Jendouba, Tunisia. She has several degrees in Anglophone literature including the

Ecole Normale Supérieure Degree, a first-year master's diploma and a "Maîtrise" degree from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Tunis, and the Agrégation Degree from the Faculty of Letters, Arts, and Humanities of Manouba, where she is also a final year doctoral candidate. Her fields of study include postmodern literature, literary theory and studies, French philosophy, pedagogy, and translation. Her conference participations and articles encompass, but are not limited to, most of these fields. She participated in and organized various conferences and study days in her affiliated institute and at international gatherings. Her latest article is entitled "Collective Oblivion and the Metaphorics of (meta)History: The Three-Ring Circus in Robert Coover's *The Public Burning*" in the 2018 History and Memory Conference hosted by ISLAIB, University of Jendouba. Her maîtrise degree dissertation is entitled "Aspects of the Absurd in Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*." Currently, she is expecting to defend her PhD dissertation entitled "Story Re-telling as a Parodic Mode in Selected Postmodern Novels and Short Stories by Angela Carter and Robert Coover."

Haifa Dallegi is a PhD student at Manouba University (Tunisia). She is also a professeur agrégé who graduated in English language, literature, and civilization from the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Tunis, Tunisia). She is currently working at ISLAIB where she teaches various courses; namely literature, translation, poetry, British literature survey, and methodology.

Olfa Gandouz is currently a teaching assistant at the College of Humanities and Sciences Al Kharej, University of Prince Sattam Bin Abdul-Aziz (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). Her PhD thesis is entitled "Female Oscillation between Idealization and Debasement in Selected Plays of Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams" (Faculty of Sousse, June 2018). She has participated in several international conferences and was a member of the Cultural Dialogues Research Unit at the University of Sousse. She is currently a member of the Discourse Analysis research unit at the university of Sfax (Tunisia). Her research interests range between modern drama, Irish literature, psychoanalysis, gender and feminist studies, and postcolonial literature.

Amira Hedhili. I am an assistant professor of English language, civilization, and literature currently teaching at Beja Higher Institute of Applied Languages, Tunisia. After finishing the preparatory cycle at Tunis Preparatory Institute of Humanities, Literature and Languages, I studied English and

American literature at Ecole Normale Supérieure de Tunis and carried out a graduation memoir on "T.S. Eliot's Aesthetics of Representation". In 2011, I graduated from the Ecole Normale de Tunis as an agrégé teacher of English language and literature. I carried out a thesis dissertation entitled "Urban Flanery and the Aesthetics of the Unpresentable in Modern/Postmodern English Literature" at Manouba Faculty of Humanities, Languages, and Arts, Tunisia, and obtained my PhD diploma with honors. Currently, I am teaching first- and second-year master's and supervising a number of graduation projects for third-year Business English and Translation students. I am also a member of the master's committee and subjects coordinator at Beja Higher Institute of Applied Languages, Tunisia.

Faten Haouioui, PhD is an assistant professor of English Studies at the Higher Institute of Studies Applied to Humanities in Tunis. She holds a PhD on trauma, resilience and identity construction in Amy Tan's fiction and an MA on myths and multiplicity of voices in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*. Her areas of research and teaching include trauma studies, Asian American literature, literary theory, and literary studies. She has published many articles on Chinese American literature and trauma theory.

Bootheina Majoul is currently an Associate Professor of English Studies at ISLT, University of Carthage. She holds an MA in cross-cultural poetics (ISLT, University of Carthage) and a PhD in English Literature (FLAHM, University of Manouba). She is the author of two books: *Doris Lessing: Poetics of Being and Time* (June, 2016) and *The Genetic and Generic Affiliations of Rushdie's Satire in Midnight's Children* (July, 2017); and the editor of two volumes: *On Trauma and Traumatic Memory* (August, 2017) and *Terrorism in Literature: On Examining a Global Phenomenon* (2019). She published several academic articles and collections of poems. She delivered presentations at several national and international conferences in Tunisia and other foreign countries, and organized several academic events: conferences, workshops, and study days. She serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies R&D* (USA). She is a member of an advisory board (Comparative Literature) at Cambridge Scholars Publishing (UK). She is a reviewer at the Common Ground Research Networks (University of Illinois, USA). She is a member of the Doris Lessing Society (Ontario, Canada), of AT e-L the Tunisian Association of E-Learning (Tunisian Virtual University), and of the research unit "Language and Cultural Forms" (ISLT, University of Carthage). She is also a Member of Challenging Precarity: A Global Network.

Salwa Mezguidi Jday is an Assistant Professor at the English Department of the Higher Institute of Applied Studies in the Humanities, Sbeitla, University of Kairouan. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sousse where in 2017 she defended a PhD thesis entitled “Daughterly Recovery of/from the Maternal Traumatic Histories in a Selection of Novels by Caribbean and African American Women Writers.” She has presented and published a number of articles related to her research area of interest. The latter includes feminist and postcolonial theories as well as Anglophone Caribbean literature.

Mahassen Mgadmi, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Higher Institute of Applied Languages and Computer Science of Beja (ISLAIB), University of Jendouba, and a lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tunis (FHST), University of Tunis. Her PhD is entitled “The Call of God: African American Women Preachers Transforming the Holy Word and the World in the Nineteenth Century.” Her main areas of interest include African American history, history of slavery in the United States, American studies, and historiography. She has participated in national and international conferences and published articles in local and international journals on a range of issues pertaining to African American history. Dr. Mgadmi has supervised MA dissertations. She received the American Studies Grant and was a visiting researcher at Howard University in Washington D.C. She is also a former participant in the Media Studies Program in the USA.

Céline Richard is a PhD student at the Sorbonne University in Paris, France. She holds graduate degrees in philosophy, religions and societies, and comparative literature as well. Currently completing a PhD, her research focuses on the literary memory of historical traumata (military dictatorships and genocides, notably) in the Latin-American and French-speaking worlds. Her research fields are trauma studies, the writing of history, poetry in the wake of atrocities, and literature and human rights, among others.

FOREWORD

PROFESSOR MOUNIR TRIKI

I have been humbled by the honor graciously granted to me by the organizers of this research project to write the foreword for this special volume. I am particularly pleased to oblige, in view of the opportunity offered to me to say something with some purpose on the academic importance of this project.

Although “de facto trauma” had been initially conceived as an idea for a study day, it soon developed into a larger project that took a different shape and the present anthology is expected to pave the way for further developments. The modifier “de facto” presupposes other “de jure” types of trauma. This volume operates from the assumption that trauma intrudes into the private and the public and affects the individual and the group; it can be single or collective, causing several syndromes. Hence, the need to reconceptualize and retheorize trauma theory from different perspectives. Accordingly, the De facto Trauma project is an extension or a revision of contemporary trauma theory that is mainly developed by white Western thinkers. The editor and contributors aspire through the present volume to revise, adopt, and adapt trauma theory to other cases.

As a matter of fact, the organizers of this project perceive “de facto trauma” as “trauma reconsidered” with a view to establishing the ground for a post-trauma theory. It is conceptualized to focus more on resistance, survival, and management of trauma. They stress the need to move on and be reconciled with the trauma we represent and narrate. This could only be achieved, in their view, after cognizing the context of trauma, its discourse and different uses. The corpora that they subject to analysis include testimonial literature, biography, life writing, storytelling, scar literature, and prison literature, which represent not only trauma but especially the language of the traumatized.

Interestingly, the first part of the volume, which deals with decolonizing trauma in Maghrebean literature through case studies written by Tunisian and Algerian novelists, seeks to retheorize trauma in terms of post-traumatic stress disorders, oral and written testimony, the survival of the traumatized,

and the history of the absent other. What transpires from these writings is that trauma is a present, past, and future reality.

The second part is devoted to established African American trauma theory, created at the beginning of the second millennium with Joy DeGruy's revolutionary text *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*. The third part deals with the poetics of post trauma, consisting of three chapters on the artistic representation of trauma. The authors draw on poetry, drama, and a short story to demonstrate that trauma, resilience, and recovery can equally be illustrated across genres.

The last part explores the very nature of de facto trauma, that is, it lays emphasis on trauma and survival with a focus on trauma space. Trauma spaces cover both the geographical and psychic realities that resonate with trauma. The traumata lived are transcribed onto the spaces that register traumas and become traumatizing. Consequently, trauma space has to be worked through like all post-traumatic stress disorders survivors suffer from.

The connecting thread throughout the whole volume is the claim that trauma theory crosses several disciplines, such as history, language, psychology, literature, media studies, and so on, and that it varies accordingly. Trauma as a concept, idea, experience, and theory figures cross-culturally and has disparate names ("injury" for African Americans, "fate" for the Chinese, "divine plight" for Muslims). It evolves and changes to explain traumatic events, syndromes, and reactions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, post-traumatic slave syndrome, and post-traumatic growth.

As the director of the Cultural Memory Studies Initiative at Ghent University and a revisionist of trauma theory, Stef Craps established the framework of cultural trauma for non-Western and minority cultures arguing that cultural trauma is non-modernist, non-aporetic, and non-Western. In other words, Craps advocates a non-Freudian/poststructuralist trauma theory that is construed, in the present volume, as the de facto trauma. Consequently, *De facto Trauma* revisits contemporary Western trauma theory in form and content. It is culturally specific, focusing on responding to trauma rather than representing it and outliving/surviving it.

For all the above reasons, this volume is strongly recommended and badly needed.

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DE FACTO TRAUMA RECONSIDERED

At the graveyard's gate, we stopped.
Bodies shall be buried,
yet the truth shall rise.
Truth does not get into the graveyard.
It has no place among the dead.
It shall not be consumed by the worms of oblivion.
Your grave,
Aunt Majda,
shall not be your second solitary confinement.
It shall be a witness.
Historicizing.
Haunting.
Your pain, suffering and torture shall not be buried,
alive as they are.
At the graveyard's gate, we stopped . . .
Tic . . . Tic . . . Tic
And the burial is adjourned . . . until further notification from memory

(Bechir Khalfi 2017)
Translated by Yosra Amraoui

INTRODUCTION

FATEN HAOUIOUI

Today we talk of rape and genocide, of torture and slavery, of terrorist attacks and natural disasters in the same language, both clinical and metaphorical, of trauma; one signifier for a plurality of ill signified

Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman (2009)

Research on traumatic experience addresses the limits and possibilities of testimony in an age of violence, abuse, genocide, torture, war, and terror and raises issues of how trauma can or cannot be represented.

Marinella Rodi-Risberg (2018)

The two inaugural epigraphs suggest the genesis of “de facto trauma” as a label and a concept as per the volume’s title, *The De facto Trauma: Trauma Reconsidered*. While the first epigraph lists different types of atrocities—collective (genocide), individual (rape), private (torture), public (terrorist attacks), and cultural (slavery)—the second sheds light on testimony, addressing, and representation of these traumata. The development of trauma theory is notable across disciplines, time, and space. This development fosters post-trauma theory’s critical analysis of testimony and its literary representations such as testimonial literature, biography, life writing, storytelling, scar literature, and prison literature. It is worth noting that post-trauma theory was founded in two main volumes—*Decolonizing Trauma Studies: Trauma and Post-colonialism*, edited by Sonya Andermahr (2016), and *Trauma and Literature*, edited by J. Roger Kurtz (2018)—that shed light on issues of trauma and representation, trauma in non-Western contexts, trauma in the digital age, healing, reconciliation, trauma in aboriginal literature, the trauma of displacement, and gendered trauma. Reading such minority literature alongside trauma theory should, therefore, imply a retheorization, or as Sonya Andermahr suggests, “a radical re-routing of the field” (2016).

Theorist Stef Craps, in *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds*, considers that the founding texts of trauma theory fail because

they marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures, they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity, they often favour or even prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma, and they generally disregard the connections between metropolitan and non-Western or minority traumas. (2)

The De facto Trauma revisits contemporary Western trauma theory in form and content. It is culturally specific, focusing on responding to trauma rather than representing it and outliving/surviving it. Judith Lewis Herman considers that “the goal is not to obliterate fear but to learn how to live with it, and even how to use it as a source of energy and enlightenment” (199). The question remains: If trauma is exposed then what remains to be done? The best approaches to deal with post-trauma, therefore, would be spatial and temporal. Indeed, a trauma-informed reading ought not to study belatedness of the traumatic experience or its representation at the expense of the landscape and soundscape surrounding the experience. Both landscape and soundscape (vision and hearing) are of immanent importance in the individual’s *de facto* trauma and everyday life while being a permanent component of his/her mindscape. The survivor has to admit the existence of the event and feel it through the recorded after-effects to be able to integrate it in daily life and individual history. The locus of trauma will then move from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to post-traumatic growth (PTG) thus framing *de facto* trauma within trauma theory with a focus on survival and testimony.

Conceptualization of *de facto* trauma in this way aims to “decolonize” trauma as there are significant variations in traumatic experiences across time and space. *De facto* trauma is a cross-cultural concept; atrocities differ from one culture to another. Minority trauma studies engages with slavery trauma studies, Hispanic trauma studies, Asian trauma studies, and Arab trauma studies, among others. Besides, reception, testimony, and trauma management vary according to cultures, contexts, beliefs, religion, and personal reactions as new issues and controversies have destabilized canonized trauma theory and questioned its future. Traumatic experiences and events are narrated, represented, and recorded so as to generate and include other concepts and contexts creating variations, differences, and queries that reshape the theory to a certain extent. Consequently, this volume aims to unearth novel experiences of *de facto* trauma, raise debates around trauma, memory, language, and testimony, and suggest new trauma management measures.

The present volume is divided into four parts. The contributors to this volume aim to enlarge, revise, and reformulate trauma theory from various perspectives. The chapters differ in scope but they all converge in displacing the focus from Western trauma theory to a functional, situational, and contextual theory. The unifying thread between all the chapters is the focus on resistance, resilience, and the prominence of testimony. The need to develop the theory and construct “the de facto trauma” is driven by a growing exposure to traumatic events in social media, in literature, and in everyday life. The volume discusses Maghrebean literature (Tunisian and Algerian texts) and African American as well as Chinese American texts, and is diversified in terms of genres as it encloses poetry, drama, and fiction.

Decolonizing trauma theory in Maghrebean literature

In the first part, trauma is represented as a gateway and a witness to survival in the midst of traumatic experience. Wars, rape, genocide, colonialism, and torture are represented through their after-effects. The texts in this first part connect history with all the traumata exposed in literature. Through the corpus selected in this volume, the authors reroute trauma towards writing history in an attempt at righting memory. The dialectics of trauma theory are dispersed in the four parts of the volume, yet are more concentrated in the first one. Decolonizing trauma theory through case studies written by Tunisian and Algerian novelists retheorizes trauma in terms of post-traumatic stress disorders, oral and written testimony, the politics of survival, and the history of the absent other. Fictionalized trauma by Maghrebean writers interpreted and examined by Tunisian researchers proves that trauma is a present, past, and future reality. The authors in this part re-envision tales of trauma as survivors reminisce about their scars to testify and historicize. Consequently, in terms of structural, functional, and situational trauma, the first part portrays contemporary trauma theory as “trauma in the flesh” and as “white trauma.” The authors examine post-traumatic situations and reactions both at artistic and at historical levels. In an interdisciplinary approach to trauma texts, the researchers combine history, testimony, philosophy, and historiography to reconceptualize trauma from a Maghrebean perspective.

The first chapter, by Yosra Amraoui, is “Undoing Trauma, Unchaining Historiography: The Rise of Tunisian Prison Literature.” It describes Tunisian prison literature through a trilogy by Bechir Khalfi, a Tunisian ex-political prisoner sentenced to forty-eight years in prison, first under Habib Bourguiba (Tunisia’s first president after independence) and then

during the regime of the overthrown president Zin Elabidin Ben Ali. Khalfi is the writer of the “Trilogy of Refutation” comprising *Draga: A Curtain That Hides the Truth* (2015), *Al Madghour* (2015), and *Ghossa* (2017). Amraoui postulates that historiography is unchained by Tunisian prison literature, a new literary genre that emerged after the Tunisian revolution. Amraoui argues that Tunisian prison literature transcends trauma and uses testimony to prove resistance and reveal historical information. Trauma in prison literature is the present absent, the signifier without a signified. Inmates recount the history that led to their traumata but they rarely reveal any after-effects. They consequently rewrite stories and right histories. Amraoui explores this subgenre that unchains historiography and trauma narrative within the framework of historiographic trauma fiction.¹

The second chapter, “Ahlem Mosteghanemi’s Poetics of Nationhood: Trauma in the Flesh,” takes a literary approach to historiographic trauma fiction as the author refers to literary theorists (Barthes, Caruth, et al.). The author elicits a tripartite trauma: the traumatized body as incarnated in “Khaled”; the traumatized nation, Algeria; and the traumatized psyche. Despite all the traumata revealed and investigated in the chapter, the poetic writing style and focus on the constructive perspective of trauma theory allows us to read about empowerment, resistance, and survival. Trauma is decolonized in Algerian literature as the traumatized “is an emblem of a de facto trauma. His fictionalization is based on private and collective trauma, on psychic and cultural trauma.” He is but one instance of a survivor, a war veteran who witnessed all types of traumas (lost family members, a lover, his hand . . .). His body, memory, and history are a repository of survival and outliving of trauma. Elaborating on historiographic trauma fiction the author pinpoints that trauma is revealed through smell, taste, and space and advocates scriptotherapy, painting, and artistic revelations that heal traumata; she asserts that “Khaled’s body and canvas bear the pain of loss, but also the pleasure of memory.”

To enlarge the scope of historiographic trauma fiction, Hanen Baroumi writes “White Trauma in Assia Djebar’s *Algerian White*.” The author peacefully colors trauma and personifies the unclaimed experience into a female Algeria. Trauma, traumatic history, and memory are depicted as white despite the civil war, terror, terrorism, and the black decade. For this

¹ Historiographic trauma fiction is a sub-genre of trauma studies. It combines history, historiography, and trauma narratives in the form of testimony, autobiography, letters, correspondence, and storytelling. . . . The genesis of this new genre is both Tunisian prison literature and Maghrebian literature. Historiographic trauma fiction is examined in the three chapters in the first part of the volume.

purpose, “Assia Djébar deconstructs/revises the past and envisions the present as she listens to ‘the language of the dead’ and writes for the dead.” In her quest to voice the silenced traumas and speak for the traumatized who did not miss the death encounter, the researcher tries to construct “a white trauma” just as the novelist historicizes. Baroumi asserts that “White could refer to death and perpetual mourning as well as to instances of silence, praying, and festivity. ‘White’ coffins could be juxtaposed with the silence and peace that ‘white’ could bring to heal.” Construing the different meanings of white is bound to the trauma of the dead Algerian soldiers, the victims, and all the casualties.

The author’s choice of the concept “white trauma” deconstructs and decolonizes Western contemporary trauma theory. Post-traumatic syndromes and testimonies ought to be “white,” pure, and not restricted to absent/dead witnesses. Through listening to histories and trauma stories of the dead, the novelist recounts traumata that the analyst qualifies as white in *Algerian White*. Algerian survivors subvert post-traumatic stress disorders, all the bloody history, and traumatic experiences to construct a “White Algeria.”

African American trauma theory

The second part of the volume, “African American Trauma Theory,” is correlated to the project of decolonizing trauma theory, it becomes evident that African American literature is structured on a historical, cultural, and national trauma. African American trauma theory was established at the beginning of the second millennium with the revolutionary text *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* by Joy DeGruy. Theorist DeGruy develops the concept of PTSS while refuting European PTSD. She admits that there are no more slaves to interview in order to conceptualize an African American trauma theory; thus, she hypothesizes using available stories and diagnostic criteria. DeGruy inquires: “what about African slaves? Many slaves did not experience just one of the above stressors; rather, many experienced all of them! And the great preponderance of slaves was subjected to these traumatic experiences over and over again! Taking into consideration the fact that slaves brought to the Americas from Africa were exposed to a ‘lifetime’ of traumas” (2005). Therefore, contemporary trauma theory excludes the slaves’ experience. And this African American theorist construes that they do suffer from all the PTSDs identified in the American Psychiatric Association’s Statistical and Diagnostic Manual. While European trauma theory is conceptualized over one event, African

American trauma theory is reconceptualized over many events and a lifetime of trauma. Furthermore, the theorist acknowledges transgenerational trauma transmission: “246 years of protracted slavery guaranteed the prosperity and privilege of the South’s white progeny while correspondingly relegating its black progeny to a legacy of debt and suffering. It doesn’t really matter today if either of us, black or white, directly experienced or participated in slavery. What does matter is that African Americans have experienced a legacy of trauma.” Hence she develops a theory in line with the institution of slavery with a totally different syndrome: PTSS which she defines as “a condition that exists when a population has experienced multigenerational trauma resulting from centuries of slavery and continues to experience oppression and institutionalized racism today.” Furthermore, she equates trauma with America yet she presents the slaves as having a legacy of enduring injury and healing.

DeGruy associates slaves with enduring injury, which reflects a tendency from each cultural group to name trauma and to identify healing processes according to the group’s beliefs. First, there is PTSS, then, America, then injury, and last but not least there is healing. In this reconceptualization, the traumatized is the country that possesses an altered trauma defined through healing.² Consequently, DeGruy’s African American trauma theory bears similarities to the de facto trauma theory advanced in the first part of the volume. The three authors advance the arguments that trauma as an experience and cluster of syndromes is second in comparison with the narratives of resistance and survival.

The first chapter in the second part, chapter 4, is entitled “The Decolonization of Trauma Theories in the Writings of Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, and Toni Morrison,” by Salwa Mezguidi Jday; it provides an alternative view to trauma theory from a cross-cultural perspective. For this, the author focuses on a Caribbean autobiographical text and another Caribbean (yet half American novella) as well as on an African American novel. At the level of genres, there is a purposely chosen cross-generic approach. The writer studies three female writers who emblemize traumatic legacy, history, and writing. Third, the author engages in revising the Western trauma paradigm through “managing to account for the other’s differences without homogenizing or appropriating their specific experiences [so] that the project of decolonization of the Western trauma theory can be truly achieved.”

Chapter 5, written by Hajer Ayadi, is entitled “Empowering the Traumatized Subject through Resistance Discourse in *Beloved*.” It

² Healing is different from resistance or resilience or recovery. It is culture bound.

investigates African American trauma theory with a focus on Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Aside from the cultural specificity of the original trauma of slavery, the author scrutinizes the discourse of the traumatized as reported and constructed by the novelist. The main features of the discourse are empowerment and resilience. Traumatized subjects reflect post-trauma slave syndromes in their speech, behaviors, and stories; but they have a high level of resilience that enabled them to reconcile with their traumatic history and heritage in terms of relating the trauma they experienced and the one they inherited.

The discourse of the traumatized is accordingly theorized in terms of language, writing style, and even punctuation; and these details figure in both trauma theory and fiction. Ayadi analyses language play, fragmentation, oddness despite clarity, an extensive use of slashes, repetition, and inner monologue. In comparison with trauma studies, the fragmentation of the narrative reflects a fragmented psyche and memory. In the case of African American trauma experience, trauma is transmitted and the traumatized carries a fragmented history, psyche, and memory. Besides, despite the structural clarity, traumatized discourse is odd, with an abundant use of slashes that the author in the article interprets; and such discourse reflects hesitation and trauma dialectics: trauma and silence; trauma and shame; trauma and pain; trauma and integration of the suffering in ordinary memory and life. The last feature of traumatized discourse is repetition that is at the same time thematic, structural and psychic in terms of post-traumatic slave syndromes. Trauma in the African American context is specific as far as the circularity of the text and appropriate healing techniques are concerned.

The last article in this part, chapter 6, is written by Mahassen Mgadmi and is entitled "Voicing Trauma through Silence: African American Women's Rape Experiences in the Nineteenth Century." Though this article fits within the scope of historiographic trauma fiction, it fits better within the reconceptualization of African American trauma theory, as rape is a focal trauma in the identity of African American females and its after-effects are transgenerationally transmitted. Rape is also a weapon against victims from both sexes. Females are reminded that they are the master's possessions while husbands are doubly emasculated. Mgadmi investigates the secrecy surrounding rape experiences in terms of documentation and testimony. The author examines the reasons underlying African American women's "cult of secrecy" and maintains that the genesis of the so-called cult of secrecy lies in fear of further suffering, mutilation, and shame. The author treats the experience of rape from all perspectives including the

other's stand, both male and female. Besides, she reveals the cultural and historical amnesia covering this fragment of African American history.

Poetics of post-trauma theory

The third part of the volume contains three chapters on the artistic representation of trauma. The authors draw on poetry, drama, and a short story to demonstrate that trauma, resilience, and recovery can equally be illustrated across genres. The first article, chapter 7, by Céline Richard, is entitled "On Literary Memory, Resistance, and Historical Traumata: Sparkling Consciences and a Revolution That Crackles in the Darkness of History (Juan Gelman)." In the chapter, Richard draws on the representation of historical trauma in trauma poetry to investigate post-dictatorial Argentinian trauma in the poetry of Juan Gelman. The paper also examines the traumata of the totalitarian regime in Argentina from a different perspective. Richard draws on Paul Ricoeur and Tzvetan Todorov to maintain that "dictatorships and other forms of yoke attacked memory throughout history too, by means of extreme violence, lies and forced silence. They might have destroyed memory in part." Consequently, the paper is contextualized within poetic post-trauma theory, which the author labels an "era of commemoration." Richard analyses Juan Gelman's poetry as it denounces the horrors perpetrated during the Argentinian military dictatorship.

The second article in the penultimate part, chapter 8, is written by Olfa Gandouz. In "'Stop This Hysterical Outburst and Tell Me What's Happened?'" Gendered Rape Trauma Syndrome of the Fallen Madonna in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*," Gandouz examines the traumas of Blanche as both victim and survivor of prostitution, rape, and torture. The article is a reflection of the psychic state pre and post trauma, as the main perpetrator is Stanley, the brother-in law. The writer points out that the traumatized female subject suffers from rape trauma syndrome, yet she has high levels of resilience. The author concludes that through music and poetry, the traumatized works out her traumata and develops a post-trauma identity.

The last instance of artistically gendering trauma is demonstrated in chapter 9, "Female Howl/Male Awe: Resilience and Genderic Trauma in Angela Carter's 'Peter and the Wolf'" by Sana Ben Ali. The author explores a different side of trauma studies with reference to mythical stories and figures. Using Angela Carter's rereading of "Peter and the Wolf," the article exposes sexual and traumatic experiences in light of resistance and recovery. The paper also examines the theory of resilience

as a “process of moving forward and not returning back” (Yehuda 2014). Ben Ali adopts a multi-dimensional approach to explore trauma cases. Indeed the survivor is a wolf girl, a war prisoner, and a bearer of a different culture and body. Though traumatized, transformed and held in captivity, the wolf girl howls to be rescued. The author maintains that resilience, violence, and trauma consequently are gendered since mythical times.

The de facto trauma

The concept of trauma, as it is conceived by Western literary theorists of trauma, is subverted in Tunisian Prison Literature to denounce the fall of the human after traumatic events and to announce that confrontation, exposure of facts and extroversion are key to survival. Here, one speaks no more of a “Literature in the Ashes of History” but of history, like a phoenix bird, resurrecting from the ashes of literature. (Yosra Amraoui 2019)

“The De facto Trauma”—the last part of the volume—lays emphasis on trauma and survival with a focus on trauma space. Trauma spaces cover both the geographical and psychic realities that resonate with trauma. The traumata lived are transcribed onto the spaces that register traumas and become traumatizing. Consequently, trauma space has to be worked through like all post-traumatic stress disorders that survivors suffer from. For this purpose, three articles on trauma space, survival, and resilience are incorporated in the last part. The first, chapter 10, “The City as a Space of Trauma: The Flaneur’s Spatial Dynamics and the Genesis of Urban Angst in T. S. Eliot’s Psychogeographies,” written by Amira Hdhili, studies the traumatizing metropolitan experience lived by the modern subject as the city is an exilic space inhabited by soulless inmates. The article investigates the traumas of early modernity as caused by city spaces. The traumatized psyche is poetically represented in a fragmented way just like broken images. Trauma space is self-reflective; it reproduces dislocation, loss, and dehumanization. The second article in this part treats traumatic experiences as well as the style of both the traumatized psyche and the person’s speech. Chapter 11, “Narrative Trauma as Second Skin: A Reading of John Hawkes’s *Second Skin*,” by Heifa Dallagi, offers a rereading of trauma theory in light of the metaphor encoded in the title “second skin.” Trauma as a lived experience or a fictionalized one is a second skin. It is second in terms of the enormity of the pain and shock that are outside the range of normal experiences. From this perspective trauma is second; it is narrated, recounted, and understood only through its

after-effects. Moreover, trauma is indeed a skin. It covers, defines, and identifies the traumatized. It cannot be removed but can scarcely be changed. While scrutinizing Skipper's past and present traumas, the author situates the de facto trauma between past, present, and future. Past traumata are compared to demons, specters, or ghosts, while present ones are the second skins stretching to the future suggesting trauma resistance and management.

The last chapter in the final part, chapter 12, is "Trauma in the Landscape or Survival in the Mindscape" by Faten Haouioui. It studies Amy Tan's most recent novel *The Valley of Amazement* (2014). The chapter presumes strategies of survival against traumata in both landscapes and mindscapes in the novel. Trauma is searched for and theorized in the Chinese American context of courtesans at the turn of the century and the chapter orients original trauma theory (Caruthian/Freudian trauma theory) towards a constructive trauma paradigm based on survival and aiming at empowering the survivor. Faten Haouioui presents an interpretation of a narrative of trauma in light of a parallel narrative of recovery, resistance, and survival that orients the analysis towards a different direction. The article is a reflection of an all-encompassing trauma case: the author analyses rape, physical abuse (beatings), killing, suicide, loss of children, and so on. These sub-narratives are intertwined with others about recovery, resistance, and survival. Consequently, the author opts for a constructive paradigm. The trauma of the courtesans in 1900s China, as fictionalized by Amy Tan, is collective, cyclical (repetitive), and developmental. Haouioui probes courtesanship and proves that as a Chinese institution it is better analyzed according to its socio-historical context. The author concludes that trauma narratives in *The Valley of Amazement* are written to represent and claim physical and psychic trauma against the backdrop of resistance, survival, and recovery narratives. Representation of courtesans' trauma reveals a continuity of female defiance in pre-modern China.

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