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## Editor's Note

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Since its inception in Ancient Greece, the concept of trauma (τραῦμα) has come a long way of different usages by many scholars and disciplines. Its modern form had emerged in a transformation from medical to psychological concept and started to evolve with the Industrial revolution and acceleration of life as well as the world. Its culmination was devastatingly realized in the industry of death, which we are faced with even today, as if “never again” became an empty slogan. On that unfortunate road the traumatic experience was only partially captured through several terms: “railroad spine syndrome” (Erichsen, 1866), “Da Costa syndrome” (da Costa, 1871), which appeared during the American Civil War, “traumatic neurosis” (Oppenheim, 1889), which was related to “hysteria” (Charcot, 1889), “shell shock”, during and after the First World War, etc. These concepts contributed to the understanding of trauma as a real experience. Consequently, trauma became more seriously recognized, treated, and compensated after the Second World War, as well as the Vietnam War, especially with the introduction of PTSD as a psychiatric category, which produced further social and cultural transformation of legitimate victimhood (Davis and Mertoja, 2020, p. 2). However, the metaphor of trauma covers a much larger terrain than these concepts and respective fields of knowledge can provide. It indicates “a vast array of situations of extremity and equally varied individual and collective responses... [that] can be seen at once as a sociopolitical event, a psychophysiological process, a physical and emotional experience, and a narrative theme in explanations of individual and social suffering” (Kirkmayer, Lemelson and Barad, 2007, p. 1). In terms of consequences, trauma studies further raised important political and ethical questions regarding responsible dealing with the violent past, forms of its public memorialization, and ways of its transmission to the post-traumatic generations that should enable critical distance to the past and dispel the specters of old enmities.

In that sense, this special issue approaches trauma as a multidimensional phenomenon beyond the individualistic approaches, with the attempt to explain its social, political, and cultural conditions of emergence and various levels of discursive articulations. All articles contribute to the growing sensitivity to the violence, each from their own disciplinary perspective, as well as to the studies of trauma's tight relationship to social, political, and cultural memory and identity (Assmann, 2011, pp. 13-14). Accordingly, these articles can be read as a contribution to the politics of memory, which we understand here as institutional forms of dealing with the violent past, both in terms of suffering and responsibility. Politics of memory include interpretation, contestation, symbolic appropriation, objectification, decision-making and creation of public policies, as well as practices of commemoration, trials, establishment of various public bodies, laws, declarations, reparations, financing of various projects, as well as scientific, publicist, literary, and other artistic productions. Its integral part are also those mnemonic actors who question such practices, problematize, subvert, and seek to destabilize established regimes of memory. All these articles are written exactly from positions of questioning such regimes.

Most of the articles in this special issue started to gain shape during the *Summer Institute on Cultural Trauma* held in June 2021 at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik. Our thorough discussions at such a unique place, as well as the further editing and reviewing process, finally delivered eleven of them, only provisionally divided into two blocks. The first block deals with the representational issues, symptoms, and practices expressed and communicated through various media and from various subject positions regarding collective and/or cultural traumas. Analyzed cases range from the destructive power of capitalism, which threatens to annihilate the whole planet, to the current global pandemic, recent cultural traumas of genocide in Srebrenica and the destruction of Vukovar, together with those related to atrocities from the Second World War, which still shape the haunting legacy in the transgenerational transmission of traumas (Schwab, 2010). Starting from Homer's provocative thesis about the ahistorical nature of the traumatic event and passing to the, possibly, near catastrophe of the Anthropocene, dealing with representations of current, recent, and more distant traumas, the first block of articles announces the logic of the second block, titled "Back to the Past". However, by dealing with local and regional cases and examples occurred during the post-1989 traumatic conjunction, the second block provides in-depth analyses of specific phenomena as ingredients of cultural trauma, such as ordinary affects during the war, ethos of conflict, motives of specific mnemonic actors as carriers of political influence, as well as the analysis of larger cultural conditions and historically embedded consequences of the trauma of social change (Sztompka, 2004). Taken together, these articles provide innovative insights into the "trauma drama", and make the fabric of trauma studies denser, more interconnected, and more interdisciplinary.

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