Trauma and Computer Games: Transdisciplinary Perspectives

Call for Chapters

For the series *Transdisciplinary Trauma Studies,* De Gruyter
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Computer games increasingly are the subject of academic inquiry in a number of disciplines ranging from cultural studies through media studies to psychology. By allowing individuals to immerse themselves into the narrative and (re)interpet it through their actions and experiences, computer games create possibilities for negotiating meanings of various societal phenomena, including the ones related to individual and collective trauma. Examples of such phenomena include armed conflicts and post-traumatic stress disorder (*Spec Ops: The Line*, *Knights of the Old Republic 2*), colonialism and contemporary discrimination (*Blackhaven*, *Life is Strange 2*), childhood trauma (*Tell Me Why*), illness *(That Dragon Cancer)*, or climage change (*The Climate Trail*).

Despite the growing use of computer games for narrating and remediating traumatic experiences, and some relevant studies belonging to specific disciplinary paradigms (Granic et al., 2014; Smethurst & Craps, 2015; Westin & Hedlund, 2016) and examining the use and benefits of games in education, in cultural practices, or in mental health treatment, the comprehensive assessment of the role of this specific medium within trauma-centred research remains lacking. This volume will focus on understanding the complex interplay among technical affordances, societal practices, and individual experiences that define interactions between computer games and trauma.

It will propose a number of questions to engage with: How are various technical and narrative techniques used in computer game design to facilitate engagement with trauma? In which ways can computer games be used to inform individuals and societies about trauma? How can games, on the other hand, be also utilised to enforce collective traumatic silence, and by what actors? What are the differences between game genres (e.g., strategies, shooters, and role-playing games) in terms of their potential for mediating different forms of traumatic experiences (e.g., historical trauma or individual trauma)? What can be the role of computer games in shaping trauma-informed societal practices and how can computer games promote resilience and empathy? How to use trauma games in education without transmitting trauma to the gamers?

To better understand the complex relationship between trauma and computer games and how it can be studied across disciplines, the current volume invites scholars from different academic fields to submit their chapter proposals. The proposals (250 words max) shall be submitted by 1 October 2022 and must include information on the conceptual and methodological framework which the authors' expect to use in their chapter, as well as on the games they will analyse. Proposals should be sent to Boglárka Balajthy, the project assistant, by the deadline. The completed chapters (5-7 thousand words) are due by 1 January 2023.

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Publisher: De Gruyter

Series: *Transdisciplinary Trauma Studies*
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Anna Menyhért is a Professor of Trauma Studies at the Budapest University of Jewish Studies. She is a senior affiliated researcher at the Democracy Institute of the Central European University, and also the course director of the CEU Summer University Course Transdisciplinary Trauma Studies: Trauma Through Contemporary and Historical Perspectives. She is the author of the monograph 'Women's Literary Tradition and Twentieth-Century Hungarian Women Writers' (Brill, 2020). Currently she is working on a book entitled 'Trauma in the Digital Age: The Representation, Transmission and Processing of Trauma on Social Media'.

Mykola Makhortykh is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Communication and Media Research at the University of Bern. In his research, Mykola examines politics- and history-centred information behaviour in online environments and how it is affected by the algorithmic systems, such as search engines and recommender systems. His other research interests include armed conflict reporting, digital Holocaust remembrance, cybersecurity and critical security studies, and bias in information retrieval systems. His research has been featured in a number of peer-reviewed journals including New Media & Society, Digital Journalism, Memory Studies, and Visual Communication.

Dr. Annie St. John-Stark is Assistant Professor in History in the Department of Philosophy, History and Politics at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia, Canada. She is Co-Chair of the Memory and Trauma Working Group in the Memory Studies Association. She has written on the dilemma of heroic labelling for survivors and first responders and is currently working on a paper on language marker analysis, heroic master narratives and individual experiences of traumatic violence in Britain and the United States, 18th-20th centuries. Her research focuses on trauma-informed pedagogy in university curriculum development.

Project assistant is Boglárka Balajthy. Proposals should be sent to the following email address: balajthyb@or-zse.hu