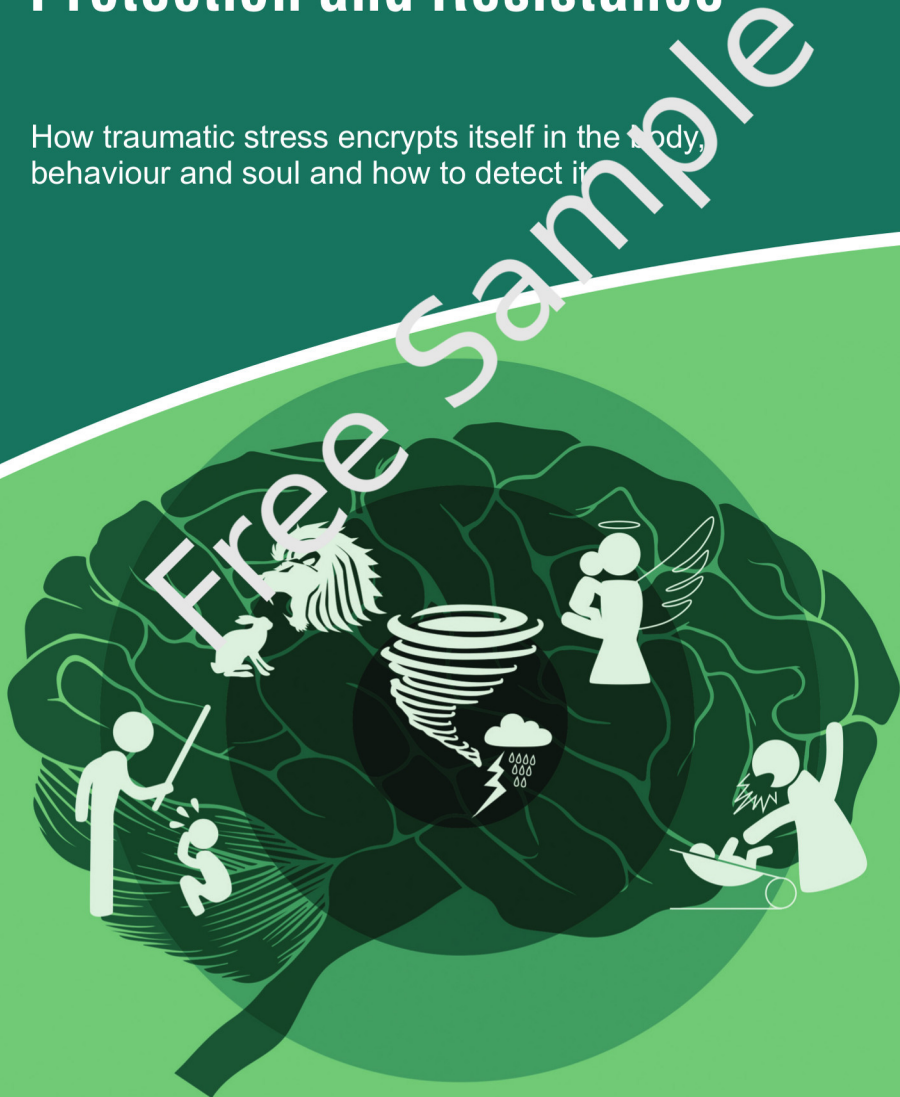


Ralf Vogt (Editor)

# The Traumatized Memory – Protection and Resistance

How traumatic stress encrypts itself in the body,  
behaviour and soul and how to detect it



*Ralf Vogt*

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With contributions by:

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Printed in Poland by Totem • Inowrocław

Published by Lehmanns Media GmbH, Helmholtzstr. 2-9, 10587 Berlin, Germany

Cover Designer: Bernhard Bönisch

Interior Designer: L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X(Zapf Palatino) Volker Thurner

ISBN 978-3-96543-004-4

[www.lehmanns.de](http://www.lehmanns.de)

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# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this book. Special gratitude goes to the translators for this project. They are; Sabine Budnick, who translated articles 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 4.1, 4.2 and 5.4, Winja Lutz, who translated articles 1.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 and Julian Pottier, who translated articles 1.1, 1.4, 3.1 and 5.1.

Furthermore, I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the role of Julian Pottier during editing process.

Last but not least, many thanks go to Sylvia Pöttsch for her support, dedication and organisational skills in overseeing this project as well as her hard work compiling the List of References.

Ralf Vogt, November 2018

### Note on “Beseelbare”

The German adjective “beseelbare” is used because it has no literal equivalent in the English language. Beseelbare describes something that can be ensouled, i.e. endowed with a soul. While ensoulment is an ancient philosophical and religious concept, it is used metaphorically in the context of SPIM and describes how inanimate objects may be ensouled by clients’ transference mechanisms. Objects can elicit feelings, and sometimes actions, in clients because certain characteristics of those objects remind them of situations or significant other persons in their past. These transference processes can be used in therapy.

# Theoretical Previews

## 1.1 Zeitgeist and Trauma Memory

*Ralf Vogt*

The zeitgeist has a great influence on everyday psychological and psychotherapeutic thinking (Vogt, 2012, pp. 13-15; Vogt, 2014, pp. 6-12). In my view, the reason for this is firstly, the state of the relatively young scientific discipline of psychotherapy, in which many contradictory concepts are practiced and the crystallisation of a relatively clear, universally valid, widely accepted doctrine is still a long way off. Secondly, psychotherapy is traditionally considered to be a “soft” science, as opposed to physics or medicine, although these disciplines have not yet solved the essential problems of their subject matter, such as black holes or cancer treatment. Even a weather forecast, which offers only a rough guide seven days in advance, is trusted by many more people than a psychologist, on top of which, there are even greater demands and human behavioural prognosis with months, if not even years, of validity expectations. Why is that? Most people claim to have sufficient knowledge of their psyche, their inner processes with motives, feelings, thoughts and behaviour. To paraphrase Descartes; I think, therefore I know! Or better still; I suspect, therefore am I! But fun aside, we are entering a minefield. The psyche is a sensitive thing, because no one can say something quickly, this is in contrast to the doctor or scientist, where the people of our time quickly become believers.

In terms of the psyche and its quality characteristics, such as a memory or personality attitude, the personal self-concept of everyone seems more at stake. At the

doctor one usually listens to lifestyle criticism quiet easily, such as; “Just peel the cucumbers in the future because they are sprayed with pesticide and industrial fertiliser.” It’s no problem, the cucumber is essentially preserved. You can live with that, unless you are a guinea pig and you enjoy your bowl of cucumber peel.

With psychological feedback on mental processing capacity, the person being addressed quickly becomes sceptical, distant and annoyed – or to put it simply, immediately adopting the opposite opinion because it is just a normal reaction. That means that psychological or psychotherapeutic advice meets a form of half-knowledge, which often has to be defended immediately and vehemently in the self-image and image of the world. After all, it’s about unconscious processes, and if you do not know what it is about, fear creeps up on you and suddenly you want to drop the entire subject, so as not to experience any unease or inner turmoil. A number of colleagues feel equally stressed when they get the impression that the deserved reputation of the pioneer of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, could cause objectively incurable damage as a result of modern trauma research.

In the field of technology, such an emotional yearning for stagnation is unimaginable. Who would like to be driving around in Carl Benz’s first automobile at a top speed of 16 km/h today? Which technician would come up with the sad interpretation that when building new cars, we would simply ignore the legacy of Carl Benz, or simply disregard what has traditionally been proven? The zeitgeist in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy is sometimes much stronger than the past. The adherence to conservative norms also influences the school of thought in psychotherapy. That in turn, also influences the sluggish adoption of trauma therapeutic concepts. There is, in general, a lack of research in depth psychology-analytic psychotherapy, and so far it has been insufficiently concerned with the investigation of traumatic memory problems and their methodological psychological solution.

The zeitgeist, does not deal with the fear of the unknown traumatic unconscious nor dissociated objects of memory, had been recognised and recorded by Sigmund Freud when, in 1897, after nearly two years of postulating the trauma background hypothesis for severe mental disorders (Freud’s theory of seduction, 1895-1897, see Hirsch, 2004 and Vogt, 2004, pp. 35-39), he turned away from it and put the fantasy hypothesis first and so as a more important explanation for violent, traumatic sexual assaults on children.

Jennifer Freyd (1994) has been investigating the trauma of betrayal for years, this trauma occurs in the victims when violent or compromising abuses by important reference persons and caregivers take places. A summary of this dispute is that the betrayal leaves the deepest emotional scars, especially on endeared people, and this betrayal is also in the area of psychotherapy and university structures a serious

factor. This topic has also been tackled by Jeffery Masson (1986) and Vogt (2014, pp. 52-61).

Accordingly, it can be assumed that there should be deeper unconscious / dissociated reasons for the conservative fixation and the non-shaking want to the own self-experience deficit, in addition to all other character blind spots, from both everyday people and in particular, psychotherapists.

The vast media landscape is also not immune here; in our fast-paced world it gains more and more influence as a source of education. For example, within a short period of time the report “The deceived memory” was aired twice on “Scobel”, a well-known science programme on the German TV channel ‘3sat’, on 22.09.2016 and on 30.03.2017. The core of this 45-minute programme was one-sided contributions by the representative ,Loftus (USA), of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF), as well as arguments by research shooting star Shaw (GB) on memory manipulation research as well as a discussion contribution by Steller (Germany) as an expert witness and court psychologist. The tenor of this highly biased TV report was the intention to provide evidence that human memory is very unreliable and when influenced by investigators, and psychotherapists alike, could be manipulated quickly. A short counter-hypothesis by Ulrich Sachsse had little impact on the overriding direction of the report.

The unscientific studies of the False Memory movement and the inadequate sprawl of court psychology into fields of clinical psychotrauma therapy are also dealt with by Lutz in this book as well as in our research contribution in this book’s later chapters. For me, this section is primarily about the disposition of the journalistic editorial staff, which just commissioned this report unilaterally and then enthusiastically aired the programme twice in just six months. This comparable short-term rearing of a programme is, for me, not so common, especially in the otherwise often sophisticated selection of topics. It must have something to do with the underrunning climate of the broad-based editorial staff.

It is probably more plausible not to believe the content of the memory, which is traumatically fragmented and therapeutically recoverable as vice versa. As I emphasised at the beginning, the victims are betrayed twice by the trauma-sceptical zeitgeist. Firstly, by the lack of protection and assistance of the social environment towards the victims during and after the violent incident/s of the perpetrator/s and secondly due to of the lack of social environmental support in the work-up and the tendential assumption of morbid fantasy, which is allegedly at work, when trauma contents are later therapeutically reconstructed – insinuations by non-psychotraumatology trained professionals and courts in the context of legal processes.

It should not be forgotten that we, in Germany, have been marked transgenerationally by two world wars, not only as victims but also as perpetrators. In addition, psychotrauma therapy has never played a role in the previous generations or was not allowed to play a role in the upbringing or education during the militant period. With my 30 years of professional experience, I see the trivialisation of emotional suffering in others and the vehement dismissal of self-concern as the dominant zeitgeist in our transgenerationally lost mother and dreaded homeland (see Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1977; Moser, 2010 and others).