

DIAGNOSING IN RUINS: PHENOMENOLOGY, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, AND THE ECOLOGIES OF TRAUMA

with Pamela Krause, PHD



Tuesday, February 24
12 P.M. EST | ZOOM

Philosophy has long been regarded as a form of healing— a view rooted in antiquity and exemplified in the Platonic dialogues (Gorgias, Sophist), the Stoic writings of Cicero and Seneca, and the medical-philosophical works of Galen.

Within this tradition, epistemology provides a critical lens for examining the implicit and often unquestioned foundations of nosology. By interrogating these classificatory frameworks, epistemology illuminates how illness is shaped by biological dysfunction as well as social, cultural, normative, and increasingly ecological forces.

This talk will address the problem of collective memory in Lebanon, examining how unresolved histories, shared narratives of violence, and ecological destruction (ecocide) shape both individual suffering and the very frameworks through which pathology is conceptualized. Lebanon, for instance, endures not only war-induced trauma but also environmental degradation—from diesel generators and smog to bombardments—that compromises both land and life. I will argue that phenomenology offers tools to rethink collective trauma, attending to the lived and intersubjective dimensions of suffering that elude conventional diagnostic categories. Drawing on Jerome Wakefield, I will question the very notion of PTSD, exploring how psychiatric classifications may obscure more than they reveal when disentangled from historical, social, and ecological contexts. By bringing phenomenology into dialogue with contemporary research, collective memory, and ecological justice, this talk seeks to illuminate new ways of understanding and responding to trauma beyond standard nosological frameworks.



After completing a dual curriculum in philosophy and literature, **PAMELA KRAUSE** earned her PhD in philosophy from Sorbonne University under the supervision of Claude Romano. A specialist in contemporary philosophy and phenomenology, she is a philosophy program director at the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut. She is also a co-founder of the Middle-East Medical Humanities Research Lab, the first of its kind in the Middle East. Established in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Psychiatry at Hôtel-Dieu de France, the lab is a member of the international COLHUM (College of Medical Humanities) collective and organizes various research projects and international colloquia.

Her recent publications include: *L'Art de guérir: une introduction aux humanités médicales*, Paris, Revue des sciences humaines, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2025; *Penser l'évènement: de la phénoménologie aux trauma studies*, Elsenaur, Presses universitaires de Caen, 2025.



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