Southern New Hampshire University

Literary Analysis of Trauma Narrative for Composition Course

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Literary Analysis of Trauma Narrative for Composition Course

Analysis of a trauma narrative can empower an individual by providing opportunity and means to create or reform one's self-identity. Including a literary analysis of a trauma narrative within a composition course offers a unique opportunity for a writer to not only rhetorically engage with the meaning of the narrative's message, but also to acquire agency in his/her writing. This proposed unit plan weaves together social identity theory, feminist theory, and critical race theory to help students glean a deeper, and maybe more personal, meaning from a narrative. Additionally, this plan draws upon the ideas behind scriptotherapy and bibliotherapy. These are both clinical uses of writing and reading as methods to speed emotional and psychological healing.

Social identity theory, feminist theory and critical race theory address how the narrative's message connects to the greater culture within which the narrative is set. The application of social identity theory to the use of trauma narratives in the classroom allows for exploration of socially constructed identities and the ramifications of forced adherence to these identities. Consequently, within this unit plan lies the potential to empower an individual by providing a rhetorical situation in which to explore the creation of self-identity. Additionally, the focus on the feminist and critical race lenses offer a modern perception by which to examine the narrative's message. While keeping in mind the benefits of scriptotherapy and bibliotherapy, the instructor can create a classroom in which students feel empowered to develop their own meanings of and relationships to the narratives.

This plan considers multimodal literacies and incorporates listening and speaking activities. Collaboration among small group members is included as well as small group discussion. The final analysis is an individual project.

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Introduction

Humans begin life with no specific identity. Families, people, experiences, and culture contribute to the formation of a person's identity. As a child grows older, becoming a teenager and then an adult, he/she might have cause to consider self-identity along the way. Yet, how to change one's identity is not always obvious. Furthermore, many are not even aware that a choice in identity is even possible. Analysis of trauma narratives can empower an individual by providing opportunity and means to create or reform one's self-identity.

Literary analysis is a useful exercise in training the brain how to pay attention to details and constantly connect and reconnect information to understand a message. The application of theory to this process provides a tunnel through which to filter the information and give meaning to the message. When the message pertains to an individual's identity, then the filtration and the connection can become more relevant to the reader. Thus, by guiding an analysis of trauma narratives within either a composition or literature based course, the instructor opens the door for a student to empower him/herself in the construction/reformation of his/her own identity if that student desires to do so. Concurrently, such an analysis can become the impetus for discussion of social justice. At the very least, an analysis of a trauma narrative can offer a reader an alternate perspective to a situation or way of life.

Background

Before discussing the benefits of analyzing a trauma narrative, definitions must be clarified. First, within the context of this project, a narrative is simply a story with a main character who confronts a conflict within a setting. The main character engages with the problem in a significant way (Cleaver) and the story provides the audience with a lesson or insight into an

issue (Types of Papers). The narrative may be either fiction or nonfiction. Second, trauma refers to an unexpected affront to a person's psyche through a confrontation with violence or extremely emotional experience. The trauma may consist of a single instance or repeated events over time. Combining these two definitions produces the definition of a trauma narrative: a story about a character's traumatic experience and/or the emotional and physical consequences of that experience.

The character's response to the trauma is an important aspect of the narrative. According to scholar Michelle Balaev, trauma can destroy an individual's identity. However, this identity can be reformed by transmission of the trauma (149). How the character comes to an understanding about the traumatic experience leads the reader to a lesson or perspective about the experience. Through an analysis, the focus of the reading switches from a story about trauma to a story through which the individual tale of a trauma survivor relates to the larger story of society. As Balaev explains, such an overwhelming event dissolves an individual's sense of self and how that individual fits into society (149). Consideration of a character's intersection of self and society can lead to a reader's consideration of his/her own intersection of self and society. Balaev ultimately concludes that within a trauma narrative the individual experience represents an oscillation between public and private meanings and between personal and political paradigms (155). While the narrative concerns an individual's private experience and reaction, its simple transmission supports a dynamic in which the reader can, through analysis, apply meanings and understandings outside of the confines of the narrative. Additionally, an instructor can encourage a focus on three elements highlighted by Lynn Gumb: resilience, reconciliation, and resistance (460). A focus on these elements switches the emphasis on the event to the emphasis on the individual and how the individual responds to the experience. Gumb argues for

the reorientation of literary trauma studies toward more life-affirming subjectivities which subsequently enables the trauma victim to become a trauma survivor (462). A literary analysis focused through a theoretical lens allows the reader to place the story in context of societal expectations, oppressions, and misconceptions. By examining how a character confronts the memory of a traumatic experience, a reader can potentially realize what Gumb calls "an alternative representation of the traumatic experience . . . which will offer a deeper understanding of the process of recovery and more varied representations of the trauma and trauma victims" (465). A deeper understanding of the relationship between trauma and society potentially can lead the reader to acknowledge or confront the relationship among the trauma, society, and him/herself.

Summary of Sources

Numerous studies, essays, and articles address the importance of storytelling or journal writing as a means to heal. In one such article, Lawrence Gross offers detailed accounts of the use of storytelling as a means to help heal Native American Vietnam war veterans who suffer from war trauma. Researchers examined the use of traditional ceremonies within the culture, and one of these ceremonies relies heavily on the incorporation of storytelling, both listening and telling (Gross 388). Trevor Boffone provides another example of using trauma as a path to self-discovery. He examines playwright Josefina Lopez's use of writing to heal by giving voice to emotions suppressed within her subconscious. Rachel Spear argues for a pedagogy centered around the teaching of trauma texts. By doing so, she says, "The discourse will then be better able to move past a product-focused pedagogy and consider purposes and processes associated within larger frameworks and multiple layers of trauma while simultaneously acknowledging the course as a space that may yield transformations for more than just students" (Spear 54).

Additionally, Spear argues that such narratives have value beyond mere eliciting of student reactions. Instead, these works provide a valuable tool by which students can acquire agency in their writing. Bronwyn Williams decries the formulaic convention of academic writing which belittles the power writing about topics of a personal nature. Williams suggests that writing of a personal nature that addresses issues of identity can be as intellectually rigorous as typical academic writing (711). Henri Tajfel and Jaclyn Rodriguez explain the origins of social identity theory and how individuals create a self-image. Rodriguez also connects the individual self-image with the individual's group affiliation.

Scriptotherapy

Scriptotherapy and bibliotherapy are both clinical uses of writing and reading as methods to speed emotional and psychological healing. Scriptotherapy involves the "conscious/ unconscious act through which individuals write/read themselves out of some form of neurotic condition into wellness" (Mayaki and Omobowale 109). Researchers have been examining the use of writing to heal for more than 100 years. Several ideas connect especially well to the benefits of analyzing a trauma narrative. Pierre Janet was a leading theorist and researcher in the study of trauma. His theories placed emphasis on the effects of trauma on personality formation and development as well as the importance of cognitively integrating trauma into existing worldviews (Smyth and Greenberg 131). While researchers examined the effects on writing about a personal trauma, a writing analysis of someone else's trauma can potentially meet similar points of importance. The positive aspects of analyzing someone else's traumatic experience increase when consideration is given to those who face social stigma when revealing personal trauma. As Smyth and Greenberg point out, "populations who face social stigma . . . may chronically inhibit important aspects of their identity . . . These include ethnic minorities, gay

men and lesbians, and women who have been raped or sexually abused" (154-155). Increasingly diverse populations inhabit post-secondary schools. It stands to reason that any number of students in a composition course will be members of a socially stigmatized population. Offering these students the possibility of examining response to a personal trauma, whether or not it is similar to their own, provides students with a safe place to cognitively integrate trauma into worldviews, in this case focusing on feminism and critical race theory. If students are allowed some choice in the narrative they analyze, the potential effects should increase.

Helping students to mitigate their responses to trauma promises to improve their experience as a student and as an employee. Research has shown that repression of traumatic experiences impedes normal psychological development leaving few psychological resources with which the individual can respond to current stressors or developmental hurdles (Smyth and Greenberg 132). While an analysis of a trauma narrative is not meant to replace or serve as clinical treatment, it does provide an opportunity to benefit the student which subsequently benefits the school. Smyth and Greenberg list several conditions of writing about trauma that aid in an individual's adjustment to that experience. Of those, three that apply to the analysis include organizing the trauma into a coherent narrative, gaining insight into personal meanings, and cognitively shifting one's view of the trauma to align with pre-existing schema (Smyth and Greenberg 138). Instead of the narrative being about the experience, a coherent analysis of the narrative requires that the reader cognitively apply specific schema to elucidate the meaning of the trauma. Such an analysis potentially can benefit male students especially. Referencing study in the *Journal of Personality*, Smyth and Greenberg note that men tend to use problem-solving as a coping mechanism and can benefit from cognitive reframing (146). Thus, while not necessarily

reframing their own traumatic experiences, they would examine a particular trauma and analyze a response to that experience through the cognitive application of a theory's schema.

Bibliotherapy

Similar in some ways to scriptotherapy, bibliotherapy uses reading as therapy to heal an individual's mental health. This particular therapy deals with the intensity and scope of the process occurring between text and patient (Czernianin, et al. 80). A literary analysis of a work enhances this process as doing so necessitates close reading and synthesis of information. As is noted in an article in the *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, "for optimum efficacy, the patient should have a connection with the aesthetic function . . . and cognitive function" (80). Analyzing a trauma narrative necessitates an understanding of the aesthetic value of a literary work. According to Czernianin, et al., "Readers read because they want to be moved or scared, they want to despair and commiserate, feel resentment and triumph, awe and joy. The intentional effect that a literary work has on the reader is related to catharsis – one of the most fundamental and characteristic categories of aesthetics used to describe the response to literature" (81). In an analysis, a reader would investigate what creates this catharsis beyond the simple plot and/or character experience. This analysis involves the use of literary terms, theory, and research. Czernianin, et al. explain that the literary content of a book provides educational value by impacting the reader's morality, aesthetic sensitivity and various aspects of their social life. This is done by the book's offering of a certain way to perceive aesthetic, cultural, and philosophical values (81). In other words, readers can gain a new perspective on an experience they may or may not have had. However, a learned new perspective on values can be applied to the reader's personal situations. Again, the analysis is not meant as a clinical activity, but it can aid in an individual's development as a person and a learner. The association of one event with a reader's

different event can contribute to self-discovery by the reader and, if the reader has repressed traumatic experiences, can assist in the alleviation of psychological manifestations of the trauma (Czernianin, et al. 90). As trauma results in a loss or confusion of identity, any mitigation of trauma's effects would ameliorate the negative effects upon a person's identity.

Social Identity Theory

The concepts behind social identity theory emphasize the need for people to support their own self-identities while simultaneously comparing themselves with others to figure out how they fit into society. The theory was developed by psychologists John Turner and Henri Tajfel. Tajfel widely spoke about the interaction between self-identity and an individual's relationship to a group or society. According to Tajfel, "Social identity is . . . part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership" (24). Jaclyn Rodriguez offers a similar definition of self-identity. She explains that individuals combine personal traits with the traits of the social group with which the individual identifies (Rodriguez). Self-identity cannot be forced and it would not be the purpose of this unit to do so. However, the literary analysis offers the writer the opportunity to explore group identification that in turn influences self-identification.

The existence of a cultural memory connects an individual to a group. Scholars Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka discuss the implications of such a memory on an individual's perception of self. They explain that "cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of unity and peculiarity . . . [and] sharp distinctions made between those who belong and those who do not" (Assmann and Czaplicka 130). The distinction between belonging and not can define an individual's self-image. If he/she fits the culture's

peculiar characteristics, then that person has a connection to the group. However, if an individual does not conform, there is no connection. When an individual experiences a trauma, that individual is suddenly separated from the culture if that the experienced event does not fit the unique characteristics of the group, such as in cases of incest. Within the process of the literary analysis lies an opportunity for a reader to navigate the boundary between group and self, belonging and not, in order to understand how to shape a self-image. The application of literary theory allows the reader to apply a specific perspective to a situation and come to an understanding of the relationship between self and society.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) offers a means through which to explore group identification. Through the lens of CRT, a writer examines the influence of race, cultural, and the expression of accompanying prejudices within the dominant culture. Use of CRT in analysis offers a lens to focus on the effect of culture and prejudice on an individual's self-identity. According to the Purdue Owl, the use of CRT "emphasizes the importance of finding a way for diverse individuals to share their experiences. . . [to] not only locate an individual's identity and experience of the world in his or her racial identifications, but also their membership to a specific class, gender, nation, sexual orientation, etc." ("Critical Race Theory"). Because CRT applies to such a broad range of prejudices, it is useful as a focusing lens through which to see the potential effects of the dominant culture upon an individual. Historical trauma affects many cultural groups and the memory of that trauma resides in the DNA of cultural group members. CRT provides a lens with which to study the relationship among culture, identity, and trauma.

Consider the importance that individuals attach to the need to belong to a group. What happens when a trauma severs the connection between culture and identity? What happens when

membership within a culture results in the denigration of an individual's identity? The application of CRT can repair this connection and reinforce the importance of self-image by revealing, through analysis, the displaced cultural measures applied to the group. As scholar Richard Delgado remarks, "stories create their own bonds and represent cohesion, shared understandings, and meanings . . . narratives are powerful means for destroying . . . the bundle of presuppositions, received wisdoms, and shared understandings against a background of which legal and political discourse takes place" (71). When a trauma involves racial elements, an analysis of the narrative provides an opportunity for a reader to focus on the effects of prejudice on the experience of the trauma which can lead to a greater understanding of the event, of the reader's connection to the event, and how the event fits into societal schema. In this way, a literary analysis becomes part of a pedagogical approach "that emphasizes the importance of including and learning about diverse family life experiences and social justice issues" (Nicki 3). Delgado also says of stories that "They can show that what we believe is ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel. They can show us the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion . . . They are the other half . . . of the creative dialectic" (72). These revelations can occur through a literary analysis of a trauma narrative. The writer provides the first half of the dialogue and the reader responds through reading and analysis. In this way, a literary analysis becomes a vehicle for social change. Andrea Nicki argues that trauma narratives "can be less narratives of trauma and healing than narratives of resistance and calls for social change" (7). While the assignment of a literary analysis does not have to lead to social activism, the opportunity for a reader to comprehend alternative social perspectives in a different light augments the educational experience of the reader.

A literary analysis through the lens of CRT can reveal the institutionalized trauma which affects a non-white population. George Lipsitz explains that the social movement history of CRT provides a means by which to examine how individuals and groups struggle for power, resources, rights, and recognition (1459). In order for these groups to succeed, they must partake of organizational learning. Organizational learning produces new perspectives and new identities because individuals must critically analyze the source of problems (Lipsitz 1465). A literary analysis of systemic racism and the related trauma requires such critical thinking. Through the use of CRT lens, a reader can recognize the writer's trauma as caused by oppression and a lack of resources and rights. This recognition can affect an individual's identity, especially if the reader is a member of the oppressed group, and can ultimately lead to social action because of the new perspective gained through the analysis.

Explanation of Pedagogy

Choosing a trauma narrative as the subject for a literary analysis requires special consideration of the pedagogy. Trauma scholar Shoshana Felman explores the relationship between trauma and pedagogy. After teaching trauma narratives in her classroom, Felman concludes that the teacher's task is to recontextualize the students' encounter with trauma, put the trauma into perspective, and guide students in transforming the meaning of the narrative (Spear 56). The communal experience of watching or viewing a trauma narrative provides a situation that students can process together. This togetherness supports the recontextualization of the trauma and exploration of different cultural and racial perspectives. Building on Felman's ideas, Julie Rak more recently considers study of the trauma narrative as a means to effect political transformation within students. She argues that while the teacher pedagogically sets the boundaries regarding the interaction with the trauma, it is up to the students to create their own

voices and direct their own learning (Spear 58). An understanding of the intersection between culture and trauma becomes necessary to create voice and learning.

An exploration of culture and trauma also provides an opportunity to increase the sense of inclusion for all students. Nicki stresses the importance of including trauma narratives in the curriculum. She argues that just as in the case of other minority groups, curricula should include the perspectives and life experiences of survivors of childhood trauma (Nicki 13). In order for students to have a complete educational experience, it is imperative that they be exposed to perspectives different from their own.

By analyzing someone else's trauma, a writer can develop insight into her/his personal situation as well as the situations of others. Similarly, when a reader voyeuristically experiences a trauma based on cultural differences or conflicts, the reader is given an alternative perspective. If the reader chooses to engage with this alternative perspective, the opportunities for self-discovery increase. Instructor Rachel Spear argues for the essential need for such opportunities when she discusses the use of trauma narratives in the university classroom. According to Spear, "texts become catalysts for learning, self-actualization, and social consciousness" (53). Not only reading the texts, but writing about them as well can contribute to an awareness of self-identity. According to Boffone, Lopez teaches students how to tap into their own subconscious and recognize how to use personal trauma to heal themselves (4). He describes Lopez's writing workshop "as a way to heal and cope with unresolved pain, as according to the playwright, writing is the best way to heal trauma. Writing, therefore, becomes therapy" (Boffone 4). While Lopez focuses on creative writing, a literary analysis can just as easily function as a method to explore self-identity. Just as Lopez guides her students on how to access their own experiences to create dramatic works, a teacher can guide students to self-discovery by teaching them how to

access the text and apply literary theory. By understanding the issues of identity within the narrative, the students can apply that understanding to their own identities.

Another example of the use of storytelling to heal lies in Gross' study of the Sweat Lodge ceremony. This particular ceremony holistically affects the participants as it addresses physical, mental, and emotional wounds (Gross 381). One of the reasons for the ceremony's effectiveness at healing is its reliance on community and connection among those who need healing. As Gross asserts, the sweat lodge ceremony includes group songs and individual expression which serve to release emotions and encourage the acceptance of others (380). Thus, not only does writing about trauma advance the healing process but so does hearing the stories of other people. The communal experience within the sweat lodge can be applied to the classroom. While the use of a trauma narrative is not meant as therapy in the way the sweat lodge ceremony is, the effects of individual expression and acceptance of other perspectives do pertain to the unit's goals. Various memoirs by famous writers have been used in the classroom as a means by which readers can study trauma and then consider how those events shape the writers' works. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou and *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure* by Dorothy Allison are two such examples. It happens that both these women write about incest, arguably one of the most traumatic experiences a child can have. However, rather than merely examine these works for what they are, college instructor Rachel Spear uses these or similar works as a catalyst to encourage opportunities for her students to transform themselves. Rhetorical situations and course objectives should move beyond trauma and revolve around healing (Spear 54). Such revision can render a result similar to those seen in the Sweat Lodge ceremony. Spear argues that moving away from a pedagogy focused on product and instead

emphasizing the potential for transformation can aid individual and communal healing processes by supporting an interconnectedness among participants (54).

While a traditional literary analysis is one of those products Spear argues against using, the analysis need not be traditional. An analysis can still incorporate the reading of the narrative, a reaction to said narrative, and an understanding that writing such narratives have healing powers. Understanding the identity which lies behind the narrative informs the understanding of the narrative itself.

The application of social identity theory to the use of trauma narratives in the classroom provides two complementary opportunities. One, analysis of the narrative itself offers a communal experience as well as individual and communal reactions in order to process the trauma. Two, the process of analysis allows for exploration of socially constructed identities and the ramifications of forced adherence to these identities. These complementary opportunities have the potential to empower an individual by providing a rhetorical situation in which to explore the creation of self-identity.

Conclusion

The search for identity is a relevant topic for all students no matter their age. Consequently, the topics in this unit can appeal to young students just out of high school as well as older students with several decades of life experience. The focus on the feminist and critical race lenses offer a modern perception of the themes and readings that will be examined. While keeping in mind the benefits of scriptotherapy and bibliotherapy, the instructor can create a classroom in which students feel empowered to develop their own meanings of and relationships to the narratives. Overall, a literary analysis of a trauma narrative can provide students with the means to explore another person's perspective and learn how to process and synthesize

information and personal emotions in order to realize the author's message. This realization will hopefully lead to growth as an individual and a scholar, arguably two of the basic reasons for studying literature.

Unit Plan for the Literary Analysis Essay

Goals and Learning Objectives

The primary goal of this unit will be for students to analyze a literary trauma narrative by applying the ideas behind a specific literary theory. Spear argues that reading trauma narratives as a class can emphasize "an interconnectedness among participants, aiding in individual and communal healing processes" (54). Since a composition course is not intended as a therapy session, an alternative or additional purpose must be found. This project proposes that analysis of a trauma narrative provides a unique opportunity for a writer to develop his/her voice. In an analysis of a trauma narrative, the author's identity strongly relates to the author's purpose. Through close reading and analysis, a reader must consider identity. As Spear notes, "trauma disrupts and alters one's identity" (64). As a reader considers the impact of events upon an author's identity and examines how an individual was able to give voice to the experience, it is hoped that students will see the power in creating their own voice. Therefore, a secondary goal of the unit is for students to develop their unique voices within their writing and at least begin to understand the powers of their won agency when writing. Composition of this essay will meet several objectives regarding analysis, research, argumentation, and the use of MLA citation. The unit plan consists of an introduction to several literary theories, group role play, small group and online class discussions, journal writing, small group and individual analysis of narratives, and peer review.

While the list of literary possibilities is rather long, one work will be highlighted here. Additional works will be included in Section 7-Options for Trauma Narratives. One book option is *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. In this story of her family from age three through early adulthood, multiple societal issues arise in this book including alcoholism, bullying, parental neglect, poverty, and homelessness. While the author is female, this book equally appeals to students of any gender. It can be read in its entirety (approximately 300 pages) or in segments. Walls could have written a bitter book about her childhood, but her story offers an alternative perspective about some societal issues. For example, homelessness can be a preferred choice of some. Or, suffering should be encouraged because it will make a person stronger. Forcing children to take care of themselves teaches them independence and resiliency and is not neglect. Students may not agree with these ideas which provides a solid basis for discussions and the importance of perspective.

Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

Understand that trauma can be physical and/or emotional and does not necessarily result from a single event.

> Either way, healing does not happen instantaneously. Physical trauma involves violent experienced by an individual's physical body. Emotional trauma involves the destabilization of an individual's emotional well-being. Trauma can result from a singular event such as the death of someone or loss of a limb. Chronic trauma develops when a destabilizing situation or event repeatedly occurs such as in cases of abuse or neglect.

Recognize author's purpose

>By ascertaining the connection between author's purpose and themselves, students will develop a better understanding of the overall message or lesson to be gleaned from the narrative.

Understand the connection between the author's purpose and the chosen literary theory

Conduct research to develop a fuller understanding of a literary theory

>Analytical skills require the ability to synthesize the meaning behind a text and the ideas of a literary theory. Additionally, learning how to support an argument requires the evaluation of sources for bias and credibility.

Compose work that reflects clear, organized thoughts

>Obvious logic is necessary in order to convey ideas. Lack of clarity in writing hinders communication of ideas.

Properly cite sources using MLA citation

>There must be clear identification of thoughts not original to the writer. In this English course, MLA citation is the preferred method. Any lack of attention to detail regarding citations suggests an equivalent lack of detail in analysis thereby undermining the credibility of the writer and the essay's argument.

Unit Introduction

Prior to class, students will read several excerpts from *The Glass Castle* in order to develop basic background knowledge of trauma. These excerpts will be available online to minimize student cost and provide ease of access. Students will be asked to submit short definitions or synonyms for trauma which will be combined to compose a word cloud to be shown when class begins discussion of trauma and its relationship to different theories.

At the beginning of class, students will listen to William Faulkner's Nobel Prize Speech. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENIj5oNtapw) Students will have a paper copy of the speech to annotate at that time. (www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1949/faulkner/speech/) In addition to the words, students will be urged to pay attention to Faulkner's inflections, volume, and pace. How he speaks will be just as important as what he speaks.

Requiring them to read and listen will reinforce the message. Steph Ceraso examines the use of sound in a college composition course. She argues that students develop a better understanding when multiple senses are used: "[sound] seems to serve the same purpose as text: to heighten or convey meaning" (Ceraso 114). As students search for meaning within the words, they should consider how they are affected by the sounds they hear. In his three minute long speech, Faulkner decrees that the only subjects worth writing about are those concerned with universal truths of the heart. He ends his speech explaining why writers should write about these truths:

> I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.
>
> Faulkner

At the end of his speech, students will be given a few moments to reflect upon several key phrases: "a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance," "the writer's duty is to

write about these things," and "the poet's voice . . . one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail." Students will be asked to share ideas about the connections between these statements especially and trauma narratives.

Unit Lessons

After the introduction, the unit will segue into the rhetorical structure of narrative writing. This small group activity is detailed in Section 1-Genre-Specific Activity.

In order to understand different literary theories, students will watch a screencast of an assigned theory, research the basic tenets of the theory, and create a synopsis of the theory. This small group activity is detailed in Section 2-Theory Exploration and Discovery. Next, the instructor will display the word cloud. Students will brainstorm how trauma might intersect with the ideas behind social identity theory, critical race theory, and feminism. A question to begin this discussion might be "As you read a trauma narrative, what questions would you have if you were concurrently thinking about social identity, feminism, or critical race theory?" This brainstorming session can also function as a homework assignment via an online discussion. In order to recognize author's purpose and the connection between it and themselves, students will role play a Sweat Lodge ceremony. This whole class activity is detailed in Section 3-Author's Purpose.

In order to understand the connection between the author's purpose and the chosen literary theory, students will form small groups and apply the designated literary theories. This activity is detailed in Section 4-Literary Theory Application. This activity can either end or begin as homework.

In order to clarify the connections between author and reader, students will choose a narrative involving trauma related to race/culture or gender or of a physical/sexual/emotional nature. This activity is detailed in Section 5-Individual Narrative Reading and Response.

In order to clarify the connections among author, reader, and literary theory, students will each write a short paragraph evaluating the connection between the theory and the narrative. They will share these paragraphs within the group and discuss the pros and cons of their evaluations. This activity is detailed in Section 6-Beginning Analysis Paragraph.

Detailed Lesson Activities

Section 1-Genre-Specific Activity

Students will be provided with a narrative and a non-narrative piece of writing. They will read and compare them. By doing so, they should create a list of what defines a narrative as well as any rhetorical devices used. In order to support this activity, students may be directed to a website such as literaryterms.net/rhetorical-device/ to find a summary of the more common rhetorical devices which they may reference. As a class, students will share these lists, adding and subtracting, to develop a working definition of a narrative as a literary form.

Section 2-Theory Exploration and Discovery

This activity begins at home and follows the flipped classroom format. According to Cynthia Brame, the flipped or inverted classroom requires that students be introduced to new material outside of the classroom. Use of this particular format means that the limited class time in post-secondary course can be used for feedback and analysis rather than transmission of basic information. As Brame notes, students do the lower levels of cognitive work outside of the classroom and focus on higher forms of cognitive work within the class when their peers and instructor can offer support.

Each student will choose a theory (critical race, feminist, social identity). Outside of class, students will first watch a screencast of the theory. Next, they will conduct some preliminary research on the basic tenets of the theory using a provided source list. (See Appendix A.) Since the main purpose of this activity is not to do research but to understand the theory, the focus is on synthesizing information and not on locating information. After learning about the chosen theory, students will write a short paragraph about it. In their paragraphs, they will elucidate how the theory can help them understand a narrative and/or a connection to the author. Students will return to class with these written paragraphs which will be shared and discussed within small groups.

Section 3-Author's Purpose

This activity is a role play of the Sweat Lodge ceremony as described by Gross. Students will begin in groups of five. Within each group, each person will read a short narrative. These can be fiction or nonfiction but must be very personal and describe a traumatic experience. Excerpts from the works for the final essay can be used.

To prepare for this role playing activity, students will silently read their pieces, making notes if they wish about how they will tell this story to their group. This portion could easily function as a homework assignment. When students return to class, they will go into their groups. Students will take turns reading the narratives as if the stories are their stories. The stories need not be memorized, but the less an individual has to read, the better they can convey their emotions.

While one student is telling his/her story, other students will keep a running list of words that pop into their minds as they hear the story. The words can be random and students should not think about the words they write. The purpose of this list is to help students engage with the

story on a visceral level. After the storyteller has finished, everyone will write some notes to themselves to use in a discussion at the end of the activity. This writing should answer one of two questions: How did it make you feel hearing someone else's personal story or how did it feel to share this story? Hopefully, during discussion, the responses to the former question suggest feelings of empathy and the responses to the latter question suggest feelings of catharsis.

Finally, the students should discuss how telling this story links to the author's purpose. Before this part of the discussion, they should watch a brief (about four minutes) video in which Jeannette Walls describes the benefits of telling her story and revealing her shame to the world ("Jeannette Walls"). After watching the video, students should respond to a quote from an interview with Walls:

It [publication of *The Glass Castle*] has changed how I feel hugely and immensely. I feel emancipated. I was so worried that people wouldn't like me or my story. But people have responded in such a positive way. It's taken me this long to realize that people could be astoundingly kind to me. People share back their stories with me. Everywhere I go, someone talks to me on this deep and loving level. Everyone has embarrassing things in their past. Mine might be 'more' but it hasn't mattered. People have this huge capacity for understanding each other. You know, it's like the clouds have cleared. We'll have these heart-to-hearts and I'm enjoying every moment of it. It's amazing what people carry around with them. Blooms

Students might be asked, "As the storyteller, do you think that telling your story helped ease pain or reduce the shame felt because of your experience? Why do you think your story was told?" The purpose of this reflection is for students to examine the author's purpose in telling this

narrative. If the author's purpose is to persuade, inform, or entertain, how does the telling of their respective narratives meet one or more of these characteristics?

Section 4-Literary Theory Application

Students will be placed in small groups of three to four individuals. Each group will receive a two to three page excerpt. As a group they will discuss how the theory applies to the excerpt.

Section 5-Individual Narrative Reading and Response

A limited choice of narratives will be provided so that the instructor can be familiar with the readings and be prepared to deal with any unplanned responses from students. However, some choice is necessary so that students may feel more connected to the narrative and consequently be better positioned to connect their own self-identities to that of the author. As students read, they will keep a journal of responses. These journal entries will be entered as a blog online or as a podcast.

Section 6-Beginning Analysis Paragraph

After students have read the narrative, they will write several paragraphs explaining the connection between their narrative and the literary theory. Paragraphs will be shared within a small group and each group member will evaluate the paragraph based on the rubric. The goal of this activity is for students to learn to give and receive critical feedback. However, of almost equal importance is its function as peer support for the development of a final essay.

Rubric for analysis-to be graded by group members

Traits	100% Exemplary	90% Proficient	74% Needs Improvement	25% Not Evident
Organization	The paragraph states the writer's position and provides an overview of the issue. Position and support are presented in a logical order. Use of subtle transitions. 10	The paragraph states the writer's position and provides an overview of the issue. Position and support are presented in a logical order. 9	The paragraph does not clearly state the writer's position and provides a limited overview of the issue. Position and support are presented in a logical order. 7.4	The paragraph does not clearly state the writer's position or provide an overview of the issue. Order is illogical and may be difficult to understand. 2.5
Reasons and Support	Use of research demonstrates an understanding of the issue. Sourced information is explained and used to elaborate on and support the author's opinion. 20	Use of research demonstrates an understanding of the issue. Sourced information is explained. 18	Use of research demonstrates some knowledge of the issue. Sourced information may be inadequately explained. 14.8	Use of research demonstrates little knowledge or understanding of the issue. Sourced information is inadequately explained. 5
Mechanics	There are no errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling. Correct usage of MLA citation. 7	There are few errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling, but they do not interfere with understanding. Correct usage of MLA citation. 6.3	There are several errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling that impede understanding. Errors in MLA citation. 5.2	There are numerous errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling that prevent understanding. Substantial errors in MLA citation. 2.5
Total	_____ / 37			
	Points will be deducted if three sources are not used (-4 for each missing source).			

Section 7-Options for Trauma Narratives

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas

Beloved by Toni Morrison

The Sun Does Shine by Anthony Ray Hinton

Moll Flanders by Daniel Defoe

Strength in What Remains by Tracy Kidder

Night by Elie Wiesel

Two or Three Things I Know for Sure by Dorothy Allison

Appendix A

Source List for Feminist Theory

www.thoughtco.com/feminist-theory-3026624. This source provides a definition from a sociology viewpoint. It succinctly describes ideas concerning oppression, gender equality, and gender differences.

plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/histfem-condorcet/. This entry provides a detailed look at the history of feminism.

www.oakton.edu/user/2/hgraff/140Radical%20Feminism.htm. This source provides a brief overview of radical feminism.

www.thoughtco.com/cultural-feminism-definition-3528996. This source provides a definition of cultural feminism as well as detailing the differences with some more common types of feminism.

pages.uoregon.edu/munno/OregonCourses/REL408W03/REL408TongSummaries/Ryan-Tong.htm. This source provides an overview of liberal feminism.

plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/feminism-class/. This source elaborates on the connection between the ideas of Marxism and feminism.

journals.sagepub.com/toc/FTY/current. This source links to Feminist Theory, an inernational peer reviewed scholarly journal publishing articles concerning multiple aspects of feminist theory.

www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/38628_7.pdf. This sources leads to a pdf which begins by listing five influential scholars of feminist theory. The essay continues by elaborating on the main focus of each of these individuals and explaining the ideas behind their chosen points of focus.

journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/1464700115585721?. This article, published in the journal Feminist Theory, explains the social, natural, and psychological interactions as advanced by Simone de Beauvoir and her original writings on feminism.

Source List for Critical Race Theory

owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_theory_and_schools_of_criticism/critical_race_theory.html. This source provides a basic overview and definition of Critical Race Theory.

spacrs.wordpress.com/what-is-critical-race-theory/. While this source notes that critical race theory (CRT) was born out of legal scholarship, it also explains that racism pervades all systems in society and that an understanding of CRT becomes necessary to understand the narratives of the oppressed groups. The source offers a brief history of CRT.

www.thoughtco.com/critical-race-theory-4685094. This source begins with some key components of the theory. It also has sections devoted to "Definition and Origins, " "Race as a Social Construct," "Applications," and "Criticisms."

Source List for Social Identity Theory

ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=93872236&site=eds-live&scope=site. This source explains the basic ideas behind the development of social identity theory.

www.jstor.org/stable/488538. This source explains the connection between an individual and the collective memory and cultural identification.

ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsu&AN=28452104&site=eds-live&scope=site. This source explains the importance of knowing one's own identity in order to grow as a person.

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