Annotated Bibliography

“Encountering Historical Trauma in Two Forms of Narrative Knowledge: African-American Women’s Witnessing of Sexual Violence and Its Psychotherapeutic Response”
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D.T. McCormick

African-American Trauma: Intersectional and Psychotherapeutic Approaches


Discusses the relationship between the traumatic history of sexual violence within the slave economy and the contemporary silencing of African American women’s witnessing of their own traumas. Analyzes this silence as a survival strategy and also as a judicial neglect of these women’s right to legal protection.


Reviews psychological and psychotherapeutic research on race-related trauma and the effects of race on access to mental health treatment. Suggests a framework of emotional and psychological “injury” as a possible adjustment to theories of trauma that lead to blaming the traumatized person for their own distress.


Major work on the epistemological and ideological position of African American women’s scholarship, activism, and lived experiences. Argues that Black women’s sexuality has been constrained by white supremacist heterosexism, which devalues and hypersexualizes Black bodies while also providing only the most normatively limited access to sexual subjectivity.


Often cited as the origination of intersectional feminism. Analyzes the socio-political positioning of African American women with regard to legal-juridical and welfare state institutions. Argues that discrete analyses of sexism and racism neglect the specific effects experienced by women of color, due to the tendency in each of these discourses to foreground white women and Black men, respectively.

Proposes best practices for White therapists working with African American clients, towards the end of acknowledging and treating the psychological effects of racial injustice.


An ur-text of Black Feminism: traces the relations between systemic racism, class-based oppression, and gender inequality from the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the mid-20th century. Analyzes cultural narratives of racialized sexuality, including the supposed hypersexuality of African Americans and the history of racism and eugenics within the early women’s movement.


Discusses the historical effects of African American women’s systematic sexual violation within the trans-Atlantic slave economy. In particular, considers the relationship between sexual stereotypes such as the hypersexualized Jezebel and contemporary silencing of African American women’s need to witness sexual trauma.


Analyzes the traumatic effects of slavery from a psychoanalytic perspective. Includes a narrative case study illustration.


Describes a culture of “dissemblance” resulting from African American women’s need to present a self-reliant identity combined with the community taboo of drawing attention to African American men. Argues that this perceived need to contain possible community disruption due to men’s violent actions causes women to maintain a distance between external openness and internal silence.


Suggests best practices for treating African American women who have survived or witnessed sexual violence. Considers the importance of a critical awareness of the effect that community-based trauma can have on the level of the individual person.

Situated primarily in African American literary studies, particularly poetry, film, and visual art. Theorizes Black living as "in the wake" of trans-Atlantic slavery, and suggests "wake work" as a term for intellectual and cultural expression that engages with this ongoing history of pain. Pays particular attention to current exigencies of police violence and natural disaster response.


Considers the prevalence of what has been termed John Henryism Active Coping, as well as the Strong Black Woman ethos. Draws on qualitative data from the Black Women in a Study of Epidemics project and considers the potential relevance of various socio-demographic factors.


Suggests best practices for treating African American clients within the field of marriage and family therapy. Includes a narrative case study.

**Historical Trauma**


Theorizes notions of historical trauma and historical trauma response, and draws on quantitative demographic data of the Lakota tribe to show differences in the psychological and health effects of the historical trauma of Indigenous genocide.


Reviews literature on historical trauma in Indigenous theories of community and identity, and suggests clinical best practices for treating trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in Indigenous populations.


Central text in literary trauma studies; emerges from the intersection of psychoanalytic theory, literary criticism, and the study of traumatic historical events (primarily the Holocaust). Mostly stays within the boundaries of orthodox psychoanalysis, but includes
useful explication of basic tenets of trauma theory: trauma response results from inability to record in memory an overwhelming experience; survivor guilt as an effect of trauma; historical and collective traumas as events that cannot be contained within traditional temporal boundaries.


Considers the possibilities of resilient responses to historical trauma passed along intergenerationally through narratives. Includes qualitative analysis of a particular Coeur d’Alene family, as part of a larger ethnographic project on transmission of Indigenous identity between generations.


Collaboration between a psychoanalytic literary theorist (Felman) and a practicing psychoanalyst specializing in trauma counselling, who is also a child survivor of the Holocaust (Laub). Includes essays written individually by Felman and by Laub; Laub’s pieces focus more directly on the practice of listening to a trauma survivor’s testimony, and on the importance of witnessing trauma as a way of recovering from it.


Situated within Indigenous Feminism as a theoretical orientation and Indigenism as a political viewpoint. Considers the application of trauma discourse to the political struggles and socio-economic situations of Canadian Indigenous peoples, particularly the public aftermath of the residential school sexual abuse scandals. Proposes that trauma narratives provide a framework for engaging with claims for self-determination, even as they also constrict those claims to a post-WWII neoliberal-biopolitical worldview.


Reviews scholarship drawing connections between trauma, narrative, and political power. Argues that discourses and narratives of trauma do not necessarily account for a community’s entire experience, nor do they necessarily best represent the interests of a particular community. Considers, nevertheless, the potential for political self-determination within psychotherapeutic narratives of recovery and reparations.

Describes a theoretical account of historical trauma for use in public health research, based in studies of Holocaust survivors’ trauma and Indigenous descriptions of collective trauma. Maps the relationship between large scale trauma and adverse health effects on the level of the individual person.

**Psychotherapy and Narrative**


Edited collection considering the uses of narrative frameworks for theorizing and for practicing psychotherapy. Includes essays on psychological assessment through narratives, re-mapping identity into narrative-based multiplicities, narrative forms of therapeutic intervention, and other topics.


Traces the use of individual narrative case histories within the discipline of psychiatry, from its inception in early asylums up to contemporary biomedical understandings of mental illness. Argues that the shifting genres of psychiatric knowledge production involve epistemological shifts between humanism, naturalism, and positivism; traces how the functions of patient-centered narratives also shift during these developments.


Connects the narrative study of illness with psychotherapeutic discourse. Analyzes particular client narratives for generic elements.


Uses narrative analysis to discuss interviews with a woman with agoraphobia; suggests that her symptoms are often responses to particular, narratively-contextualized stressors. Integrates narrative theories of the self with qualitative methodology.


Draws on narrative theories of the self to assess recovery in sexual abuse survivors. Suggests that survivor narratives can be analyzed for changes in meaning and self-identification in order to show therapeutic progress.

Discusses the relationship between moral notions of development and conversion and generic narratives of illness and recovery.


Building on Harvey et al, argues that narrative conventions such as coherence and tone can show survivor recovery progress.


Discusses psychiatry’s uptake of narrative theory. In particular, argues that narrative serves disciplinary interests of psychiatry by allowing for integration between varying psychotherapeutic practices.


Uses the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme method to analyze narratives of second-generation trauma. Proposes that examining such narratives for indirect communication of traumatic experiences through interpersonal conflict.

**Transdisciplinary Narratives**


Uses genre theory and discourse analysis to show how therapists’ written notes serve as recontextualization of clients’ speech. Suggests that this recontextualization serves the diagnostic purposes of the discipline more than it serves any clinical purpose.

Describes notions of multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary knowledges that were beginning to circulate across the human sciences at the end of the 20th century—and uses this as evidence that rhetorical modes of inquiry have emerged as essential ways of understanding the modes of communication between and within disciplines.


Early explication of ideas later developed further in *Networked Reenactments*. Considers the trend toward para-academic styles of historical reenactment on TV documentaries and reality shows. Introduces the terms “pastpresents” and “glocalization” as keywords for theorizing entanglement across time and space of many different material actors.


Takes up the project of articulating a feminist “posthumanities” that would allow for new materialist and transdisciplinary inquiry inside and outside the bounds of the academy. Based primarily in science and technology studies. Important contributions: flexible knowledges, pastpresents, theorizing narrative knowledges as constituted collaboratively through context-bound claims to expertise.


Introduces notion of “boundary object” to describe something that allows for collaborative activity between knowledge worlds of unequal authority and differing expertise. Describes boundary objects as flexible enough to carry multiple meanings but rigid enough retain form and recognizability across different contexts. Uses early-20th century zoological practices of specimen collecting and cataloging as an illustrative example.