

Trauma Theory As an Approach to Analyzing Literary Texts

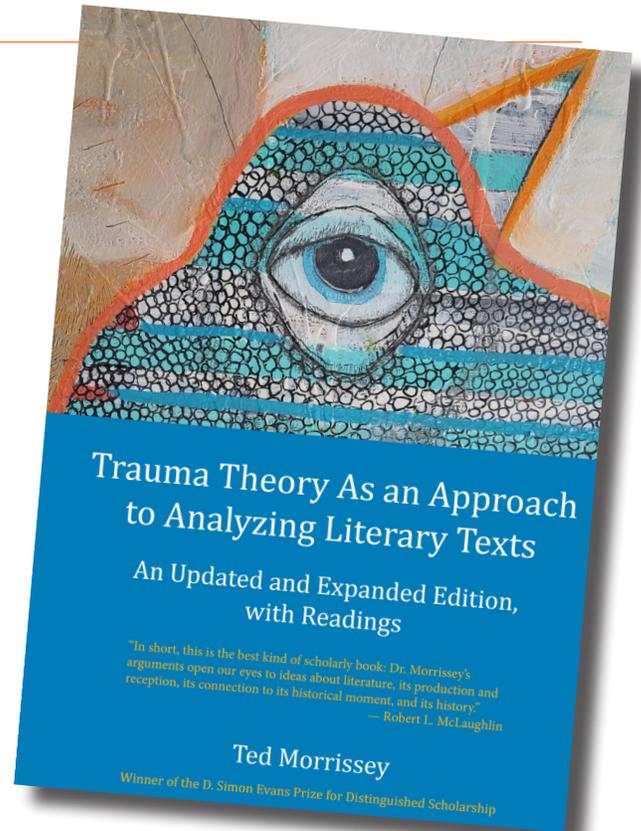
An Updated and Expanded Edition, with Readings

Ted Morrissey, Ph.D.

Foreword by Robert L. McLaughlin

New Introduction, Notes & Readings
by the Author

Trauma Theory As an Approach to Analyzing Literary Texts investigates the hypothesis that cultural trauma affects a society's literary production (really, its artistic production as a whole), resulting in a narrative voice we have come to call "postmodern" since midway through the twentieth century (set in motion, perhaps, by the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima). A theoretical framework is established based on the work of pioneers in the field of psychoanalysis, like Freud and Lacan, and refined by contemporary trauma theorists (Caruth, Di Prete, Whitehead, et al.). In order to bolster the claim that cultural trauma leads to a "postmodern" narrative style, the Anglo-Saxon Period of English history is examined, and especially the poem *Beowulf*. Meanwhile, several twentieth-century postmodernists are discussed (Pynchon, Gaddis, Vonnegut, etc.), but especially the work of William H. Gass. In addition to a thorough discussion of literary trauma theory, there is also a chapter on trauma writing, and its practice in the classroom and classroom-like settings. This edition is updated and expanded beyond its related 2016 publication, including a new introduction, notes, and four readings by the author. Special attention is paid to the fiction of William Gass, particularly his novels *The Tunnel* and *Omensetter's Luck*, and the novellas "The Pedersen Kid" and "In the Heart of the Heart of the Country." Like the book's 2016 counterpart, *Trauma Theory As an Approach to Analyzing Literary Texts* includes a Foreword by Robert L. McLaughlin, a leading scholar in the field of American postmodernism.



'This book sheds new light on a problem that has bedeviled scholars of contemporary literature for many years.'

— Robert L. McLaughlin,
a leading scholar of American postmodernism

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TED MORRISSEY's other books of scholarship include *A Concise Summary and Analysis of The Mueller Report* and *The 'Beowulf' Poet and His Real Monsters*, for which he won the D. Simon Evans Prize for Distinguished Scholarship.

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His most recent novels include *The Artist Spoke*, *Mrs*

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