Linnæus University
Sweden

Independent Project, 15 Credits

Focalising trauma narrative

An analysis of Konigsberg's The Music of What Happens and its pedagogical use

Author: Louise Gunnarsson
Supervisor: Anna Thyberg
Examiner: Per Sivefors
Term: Autumn 2020
Subject: English
Level: Bachelor
Course code: 2ENÄ2E

Abstract

This essay argues that Bill Konigsberg depicts the traumatic experience of being raped and the inner conflict of being a male rape survivor with harsh immediacy by implementing internal focalisation in his young adult novel *The Music of What Happens* (2019). Additionally, the essay argues that the novel is a useful teaching resource in the Swedish EFL classroom by discussing the pedagogical implementations. This essay conducts an analysis from a trauma theory perspective, allowing a closer scrutiny of how the protagonist is affected by trauma. Lastly, it is concluded that although broaching sexualized trauma in the EFL classroom can be triggering, the novel can in fact vicariously represent students who have undergone traumatic events and therefore validate their feelings.

Key words

Trauma Theory, EFL Classroom, *The Music of What Happens*, Rape, Internal Focalisation, Survivor, Trauma Narrative, Upper Secondary School.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to my classmates who have throughout this process provided feedback in order to perfect this thesis. Also, a thank you to my supervisor, Anna Thyberg, for your invaluable support during this work.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

The depiction of rape and the following traumatic aftermath in literature is often from a perspective where a female is the subject of sexual violence. Aliraza Javaid writes that throughout history, rape has been framed as an issue for females only (284). One reason for the male rape exclusion might be that the female rape has been a heart issue of the feminist movement and therefore been investigated by feminist researchers, which is what Sandesh Sivakumaran and Javaid suggest, respectively (1281;284). While victim-blaming is recurring concerning rape, Javaid compares female and male rape and concludes that the stereotypical perception of maleness contradicts the idea that men can be raped. Since men are supposed to attain certain qualities that are labelled manly (i.e. physically strong, tough and self-reliant), they are often blamed for not facing their abuser and labelled as less of a man. As a result of the socially constructed male norm, this problematic view on male rape has persisted (Javaid 288-89). It is worth noting that the term rape survivor is not gendered, because survivors of rape can be either female, male or non-binary.

In the young adult novel, *The Music of What Happens* (2019) by Bill Konigsberg, the protagonist Max deals with the issue of having been raped. However, the motif of male rape in literature is not only about how the norms and the stereotypical masculinity ideals are depicted but also a matter of trauma portrayal. A person who has been subjected to rape is categorised as either a survivor or a victim. Monica Thompson's research shows that the term victim is perceived "negatively and ascribed characteristics such as being weak, powerless, vulnerable and still affected by the rape". Whilst a survivor had more positive connotations "such as strength, recovery and someone who was 'over' the rape" (328). Throughout the thesis, in lieu of the word victim, the word survivor will be used. I do so to confirm survivors and not attribute them with a negative epithet.

In a classroom setting, specifically an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, literature can serve as a starting point to deal with sensitive topics. Teaching literature with a trauma

theme requires knowledge since it might result in what Shoshana Felman calls the ”unpredictable vicissitude of teaching”, which may occur if the teacher is not prepared for students' reactions (67). Amber Moore and Deborah Begoray argue that literature has ”powerful potential to express pain and can be used for healing” (175). They also claim that by utilising literature as a testimony of survival, it can aid survivors to overcome trauma. Moreover, it is also almost a guarantee that in any classroom, there will be students who have suffered traumatic experiences (Moore and Begoray 175). Mark Jackett writes that teachers might be uncomfortable bringing up themes such as sexual assault in their teaching. However, he remarks that not only can trauma novels be a method to extend pupils' literary knowledge, but they are also a way for students to become aware of their perilous surroundings and become witnesses to stories that demand them (Jackett 103). Therefore, it can be said that literature may be used as a starting point to offer survivors witnesses to their stories, as well as it may aid teachers in the process of validating students who have survived a traumatic event.

In regards to the Swedish context, it is written that students should widen their knowledge regarding social issues in the syllabus for English in upper secondary school. Regarding specific courses, both English 5 and English 6 state that students should encounter different themes within the literature. English 5 specifies it and mentions that the core content should cover ”experiences and feelings” (*Syllabus* 3). The course English 7 requires that teaching should cover more complex subject areas related to different topics (Natl. Ag. f. Ed., *Syllabus* 1-12). Not only does the inclusion of the novel meet the criteria of the English courses in upper secondary school, but it also meets the requirements of sexual education. The National Agency of Education states that sexual education should be interdisciplinary and even suggests that the education could be incorporated in fiction in order to provide students with a different perspective of sex and cohabitation (*Sex Ed* 12, 18, 20-21). In Konigsberg's novel *The Music of What Happens* (2019), two male teenagers' life is depicted through dual narration. The story's overall theme is a boy's process about being raped and how male norms and male rape survivor are opposites. The main character represses his thoughts and throughout

Konigsberg expresses the traumatic aftermath of being a rape victim. Since this study aims to investigate how trauma is depicted in the novel and the possibilities of incorporating this novel in the EFL classroom, the analysis will mainly focus on the character named Max's chapters, since he is the one being raped. First and foremost, this essay argues that Konigsberg's *The Music of What Happens* depicts traumatic experiences, the following aftermath and the inner conflict of being a male rape survivor by implementing internal focalisation. Secondly, this essay also argues that the novel could serve as a useful resource in the EFL classroom as it could validate trauma survivors among the students and contribute to raising awareness of how trauma affects people on an individual and collective level.

2 Overview of Trauma Theory

In this section, the theoretical and pedagogical aspects of trauma used in the analysis are presented. In the first subsection, the origin of trauma and trauma theory as well as different criteria for trauma theory will be outlined. Following trauma theory, a subsection on male rape and its problematics in society will be presented. The following subsection discusses trauma pedagogy and discusses how trauma pedagogy can be applied to the novel *The Music of What Happens*.

2.1 Trauma Theory

In its earliest forms, trauma was used to describe physical trauma where the traumatised person would show a wound, Mónica G. Ayuso writes (49). Psychological trauma is a more recent connotation where the effects of a traumatic experience may be followed by nightmares, flashbacks and other signs of post-traumatic syndrome disorder (PTSD) (Ayuso 49-50). Jessica Gildersleeve stresses that ”trauma is a kind of psychological wounding caused by an event so extreme that it cannot be immediately assimilated” (3). Since there is ambiguity surrounding the definition of trauma, this thesis will therefore favour Michelle Balaev’s definition of trauma: ”[Trauma] refers to a person's emotional response to an overwhelming event that disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self” (150).

Equivalent to Ayuso's text, Cathy Caruth emphasises Sigmund Freud's[1] significance within trauma theory. Caruth's work explains that Freud was perplexed by the uncanny ways his patients dealt with trauma and especially the prevalence of compulsive repetition. Furthermore, it is noted that Freud's patients did not initiate the repetition of the traumatic experiences on purpose. Instead, it was out of their control (*Unclaimed Experience* 1-3). Moving forward, it is of high relevance to understand that the following paragraphs about narrative devices are all evidence of PTSD in the novel.

It is a necessity to separate mental trauma from physical trauma since a wound on the body will heal, but a mental trauma will persist (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 4). Henceforth, trauma will refer to the latter description. James Berger and Gildersleeve, respectively, state that trauma is a concept which is followed by repression of a grim event (570:3). The psychological wounding is induced by an experience so traumatic that ”it cannot be immediately assimilated” (Gildersleeve 3) and may return as somatic symptoms or anxiety (Berger 571). Also, Caruth argues that the occurrence of the trauma memory results from an unprocessed traumatic experience (*Recapturing* 152-53). This thesis will favour the view that trauma is the aftermath of a traumatic event, for instance, being raped, and therefore investigate how the trauma affects the protagonist's mind in the novel.

Literary studies of trauma narratives can be narrowed down into three maxims or dicta. The first dictum advocates that when critically analysing trauma texts, it is vital that the critic focuses on the text itself rather than the structure, as Joshua Pederson writes (338). If the focus narrows down to what is said and the language used, texts can have healing power. It is essential to understand that different narratives use different language. Therefore, readers who are willing to see the restorative power of the language used in trauma literature are likely to see its use as a form of rehabilitation. Thus, trauma literature could be an essential healing method (Pederson 338-39). However, Jo Collins highlights that many critics especially note the story’s structure since it embodies the traumatic crisis.

[1] Sigmund Freud was pensive regarding the effects WWI had on soldiers who returned from the war. He compared the psychological aftermath soldiers experienced with women diagnosed with hysteria and found several common denominators.

The combination of both fragmented forms, including repetition and temporal disjuncture, and the content, contributes to characterising the trauma narrative (Collins 7). Balaev claims that one of trauma novels' requirements is to have a nonlinear plotline or have a disruptive plotline with flashbacks. It is used to emphasise the mental dysfunction that the protagonist in the story is experiencing. She even suggests that narrative ellipsis is a rhetorical device that discloses the diverse interpretations of the novel (159) Moving forward, the first analytic part of the paper will focus more towards the latter definition of the first dictum.

The second dictum favours a critical view of trauma theory as a triggering tool. Pederson asserts that the problematics with trauma literature is that the narrative might enhance the memory rather than process it. Trauma literature might trigger readers because it is often portrayed as vivid and with in-depth details (Pederson 339). David Purnell argues that trauma literature that includes personal disclosure is preferable:

> When these narratives are further silenced by the shame culture that created them in the first place, it places limitations on the development of one's identity, creating a self-imposed need to stay silent and hidden. This sharing of narratives that help continue needed conversations is the strength of autoethnographic narratives (232).

Purnell suggests that the vivid descriptions in narration are a must in order to aid readers in approaching taboo subjects (232). Nicola Gavey and Johanna Schmidt establish in their study that certain suppressed mental scars will reopen if survivors encounter various triggers. Thus, they state that there is an inflicted mental wound "that forecasts the ever-present possibility of psychological disruption" (Gavey and Schmidt 443). The stories depicted in trauma texts may be described with excessive use of words for the effects to be justly represented, suggests Pederson (340). The events depicted in the story might incite readers to recollect trauma, and therefore, trauma narratives should be approached with caution.

The last and third dictum that is presented in trauma theory focuses on the depiction of the event. For instance, a recurring phenomenon in trauma literature is the out-of-body experience (OBE) where the survivors sense themselves slipping out of their bodies. Another phenomenon is the loss of time perception (Pederson 339-40). OBE is not only a narrative device. Thomas Rabeyron and Samuel Caussie's research shows that OBE is a mental self-defence mechanism created by individuals undergoing trauma (55). By distancing themselves from the traumatic element, it may be easier for trauma survivors to withstand it (Rabeyron and Caussie 60). Therefore, it can be deduced that OBE should not be seen as solely a literary fantasy instead as a reflection of reality.

In order to comprehend Konigsberg's protagonists Max's internal monologue during the rape, it is essential to understand why he is not leaving. In the clinical study conducted by Anna Möller, Hans Peter Söndergaard and Lotti Hellström, it is investigated and concluded that becoming immobile during rape was a common reaction among rape victims. An immense fright caused the tonic immobility. Furthermore, they conclude also that resistance is the desired reaction when it comes to being raped. Their study also showed that more than two thirds of assaulted survivors showed some sign of involuntary paralysis during rape. A correlation between tonic immobility during the rape and a higher risk of having PTSD was also discovered (Möller et al. 932-35). Little research has been conducted targeting male rape survivors and their experience of rape. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether or not male rape survivors will have PTSD. However, Sharon M. Wasco reasons that male rape survivors are as likely to suffer from PTSD as female rape survivors (317). Moving forward, this thesis will not categorise reactions to trauma as female or male.

In correlation with the novel, there is not only one type of trauma. Therefore, as a foundation for the literary analysis, this paragraph will distinguish between two types of trauma theories. The two trauma theories will be called the transhistorical trauma theory and the intergenerational trauma theory further on. The two theories have some features in common. Balaev states that the transhistorical trauma theory supports an idea that trauma can be experienced by individuals who share the same, or

similar attributes as the original oppressed person (151-52). Transhistorical trauma has no set time limit or a limit on who can claim to be suffering from it. In intergenerational trauma theory, trauma is also claimed to be inheritable and something that can be passed intergenerationally.

In contrast, intergenerational trauma distinguishes between individual trauma and collective trauma, according to Balaev (152-53). Individual trauma does not affect generations to come. However, if the trauma is transmitted to other generations, then it becomes a collective trauma. Trauma can expose and emboss individuals from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Intergenerational trauma focuses therefore on a narrative that represents both individual trauma and collective trauma (Balaev 151-55). Wasco stresses the importance of an insidious trauma theory within intergenerational trauma. The theory explains how collective trauma affects individual trauma. More precisely, the concept insidious trauma allows for a perspective where an individual's social status is devaluated solely based on their characteristics such as race and sexual orientation. Individuals might be exposed to insidious trauma from birth. What makes insidious trauma so hazardous is that it "may lead individuals to conclude that an unchangeable aspect of their identity justifies their unequal worth and lack of protection from danger" (Root, qtd. in Wasco 315). All the trauma theory varieties mentioned above intervene and display how individuals are affected by trauma. Based on the above mentioned, it can be stated that trauma can either be inherited across generations or something that is formed collectively. In the analysis all three types will be applied onto the novel.

What is more, it is concluded by Balaev that protagonists can depict and represent either individual experiences or collective traumas. The author uses the wounded protagonist to depict the coping mechanism that trauma survivors go through. Novels that circuit around trauma are often created to show how trauma disrupts the protagonist and their eventual relations. It is not only the characteristics of the protagonist that are important, but culture and place are also in focus (Balaev 155-60). Culture and place become crucial when connecting the fragmented forms in trauma narratives. Ayuso writes that the fragmented form in trauma narratives "mimic the effects of trauma"

(58). The fragmented form can be seen as an authorial design where the author omits information. Thereof, a concept of high relevance to the present study is the rhetorical technique the unspeakable. According to Balaev, the unspeakable is a rhetorical technique used to indicate that the protagonists cannot communicate what has happened to them. By using the technique, the unspeakable, the author maintains agency since the readers are withheld from the information, forcing them to imagine the worst traumatic experience (Balaev 158-160). Henceforth, the unspeakable will relate to the trauma that causes narrative ellipsis within the primary text.

Since the 1990s, literary analyses with applied trauma theory have increased and resulted in more revising of the theory, Collins writes (1). In focus is the reader's ethical commitment towards the text. By reading a trauma text, the reader becomes a witness to the traumatic aftermath. Simultaneously, trauma texts demand and disregard readers as witnesses, such texts must also be written with a language that both claims readers' empathy and understanding as it defies them (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5). Commenting on Caruth's text, Tom Toremans states that literary texts portraying trauma requires an approach and a particular language to confront trauma literacy (337). Reading trauma texts is not equated with escaping reality. Instead, it is the writer's way of portraying suffering so that others may bear witness and understand the impact of crises (Caruth *Unclaimed* 5-7). Collins describes another take on trauma theory in which the relationship between the reader and the text is challenged. The reader is no longer seen as a witness. Rather, the purpose of reading is to practice ethical thinking where readers' prejudices about rape survivors can be challenged (Collins 7). The concept of bearing witness will be further discussed from an EFL perspective where students are witnesses.

2.1.1 Masculinity and Male Rape in Contradiction

Male rape has historically been silenced and not been seen as a social issue. As Scott M. Walfield expresses it, "rape had largely been conceptualised as involving male offenders and female victims" (2) which also is mentioned by Javaid (284). The term rape should rather be seen as an umbrella term

for the four types of rape[2] as suggested by Sivakumaran (1279). However, female rape survivors have also struggled with being persona non grata in the public's eyes (Sivakumaran 1276). Therefore, it can be inferred that female rape is nowadays considered a social issue while male rape is on the verge of becoming one.

Sivakumaran argues that one of the main reasons male rape is not discussed and seen as an issue is that feministic movements do not carry the message. However, Sivakumaran argues that male on male rape should be included in the feminist agenda that carries the rape question since power and dominance also play a part in male on male rape (1281). Purnell discusses that one reason for him not to acknowledge that he was raped was because he voluntarily went into the situation. Furthermore, Purnell writes that it is difficult to know how a sexual act is supposed to be, if one has never been in one. Thus, the risk of being assaulted increases (231).

When men are being raped, they are often "stripped of their social status as men" (MacKinnon 18-9 qtd. in Sivakumaran 1282). Equivalent to MacKinnon, Javaid writes that men might be emasculated after being raped. Hegemonic masculinity denounces male rape survivors since men are supposed to be physically strong and confront a perpetrator (Javaid 288). The conflicting idea of being a male rape survivor will be further analysed and related to victim-blaming in section 3.1 and 3.2.

2.2 Trauma Pedagogy

Regarding trauma theory, it is essential to equip students with tools on how to interpret trauma novels. Trauma is a complex theory to comprehend as it requires the cognitive schemata to be able to encode the message conveyed (Balaev 151). In recent years, the testimonies of survivors have increased demanding witnesses to them according to Felman. However, when reading a trauma novel, the students' reactions will often need to be handled with care. Felman's article shows that the framework planned for a session on the topic of trauma might fall through since it is impossible to plan for

[2] Male/Female, Male/Male, Female/Male, Female/Female

students' reactions. Consequently, if the teacher is not prepared to meet troublesome reactions, it will most likely result in vicissitude (Felman 13-14, 68-71). Moore and Begoray note that many scholars have written about the importance of adolescents engaging with trauma narratives. Accordingly, one of the two main reasons provided by Moore and Begoray is that protagonists in trauma narratives embody both unique traumas and express collective trauma (173). The second reason for including trauma novels in the classroom is according to scholars that "adolescents will likely face these issues in the role(s) of survivor, perpetrator, or ally or perhaps as a friend or family member of someone in these roles" (Kernsmith and HernandezJosefowicz qtd. in Moore and Begoray 173). Besides, the English syllabus states that students should be given the opportunity to further widen their knowledge about social issues (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 1). The young adult novel *The Music of What Happens* matches the requirement about topics regarding social issues, since the novel approaches sexual assault, homophobia, racism, friendship and other topics that all fall under the social issues umbrella.

Within classrooms, there will most likely exist a power disparity. Julie Kubala contends that while discussing topics like trauma, there is a possibility that there will be students who will acknowledge systems in which some will seem superior to classmates (185-86). Such systems might be related to privilege or experienced trauma. Moreover, Stephanie M. Crumpton cautions that it might be damaging "for students who have experienced the abusive exercise of power that characterises sexual assault" to participate in a classroom setting where there is a visible power disparity when working with trauma (138). Kubala suggests that it is only by fully recognising how interpersonal and structural oppression are intertwined that the classroom can become a space suitable for dealing with emotional topics (185-86).

Therefore, when teaching, teachers may need to rethink if trigger warnings should be applied before pondering collectively in class. On the one hand, trigger warnings might ease the approach for students, on the other hand, trigger warnings "prohibit important conversations" and students might opt out from said teaching (Crumpton 140). Kubala also problematises trigger warnings by discussing

the breaking point of where to start and stop trigger warning in a teaching setting. She writes that teachers do not want to depreciate students' perceived emotions by assessing one traumatic experience as "more real" (Kubala 185). In order to work with trauma narratives in a classroom setting, space and time for discussion must be available. The teacher will not know how the students will react nor their relationship with trauma (Moore and Begoray 173-75). Not only do teachers have to consider if students will be triggered, but they may also consider if trauma novels are suitable in an EFL classroom.

Another significant factor to take into consideration is the ethics of using trauma narrative as teaching material. Janie Carello and Lisa D. Butler discuss that using personal experiences such as sexual assault can be seen as ruthless and unsympathetic if brought up in a non-clinical setting. Thompson states that one reason to focus on trauma is to emphasise the "positive aspects of dealing with trauma *not* positive aspects of being raped" (326). Nevertheless, there are more risks of not bringing trauma into the classroom as it perpetuates a stigma around, for example, rape and racism. The important part is that teachers do it. Carello and Butler write that "educators should aim to reduce rather than increase the risk of retraumatization and secondary traumatization for students exposed to this material" (155) suggesting that teacher must approach the topic and not avoid it. Students are a sensitive group since they are targeted by education and cannot escape what the teachers are deciding to teach. Students in the ages 16-20 (equalling upper secondary school) are at a high risk of having suffered from a traumatic event. Carello and Butler write that there is a possibility that teachers push their students too far while working with trauma (155-58). Thus it can be concluded that including trauma novels in the teaching may bring forward suppressed trauma memories.

Considering what is mentioned above, from a pedagogical standpoint the young adult novel *The Music of What Happens* could still be seen as suitable teaching material since it fulfils several topic requirements of the course English 5, 6 and 7. Reading and analysing the novel from a trauma theory aspect may increase the students' understanding of the protagonist and fellow human beings

who are experiencing what the protagonist is experiencing. In the novel, Max is raped and the novel circuits around how the trauma impacts his life. It is through flashbacks and narrative ellipses that the impact of the rape is depicted. Due to the disruptive plotline, students may be provided with analytical tools to ease their reading and aid them in interpreting the novel.

3 Trauma Represented through Internal Focalisation

The following part of this paper is a literary analysis of *The Music of What Happens* based on trauma theory. Following the literary analysis is a pedagogical section in which the possibilities and the challenges of including trauma narratives and *The Music of What Happens* in an EFL context are analysed.

3.1 Trauma in *The Music of What Happens*

Throughout the novel, Konigsberg employs internal focalisation to depict how being raped affects Max. The internal focalisation aids readers to a revised understanding of the mental scars that are created by the rape. The focalisation also renders the thought processes of the characters visible to the readers. For example, the assault is repeated through flashbacks triggered by small things, or at some moments, they appear without being triggered, as in a nightmare for example (Konigsberg 34, 187). The traumatic event happens to Max once, but the trauma he gains from the assault affects him continuously throughout the novel. Konigsberg's triggering in the novel might not only retraumatise Max but also the reader. Pederson states that trauma literature is especially triggering since it can arouse suppressed memories (339). Thus, when implying internal focalisation on a trauma novel, the assault becomes more applicable to the reader.

Konigsberg’s use of flashbacks and narrative ellipsis emphasises how the protagonist Max is continuously reliving the night he was raped. At one moment in the novel, Max is swimming in his pool with his friends, and as he is pushed underwater the memory of the night is brought upon him. Through internal focalisation, Konigsberg reminds the reader of what Max has been through:

“I’m gonna jet,” I say. Kevin’s dorm room.

He smirks, and he sits on my legs “Nah” he says. …

And suddenly I’m at the bottom of the pool and I cannot move. Time slows. I feel like nothing can touch me. Like if I screamed, no one would hear (Konigsberg 90).

Flashbacks, such as this is, according to Ayuso, a common phenomenon of PTSD (49-50). Also, flashbacks are common in trauma novels as they depict the complexity of trauma. Collins also believes that repetition, temporal disjuncture and the fragmented form contribute to what is defined as a trauma narrative (7). In fact, Balaev writes that the narrative ellipsis is a rhetorical device and that it adds depth to the novel (159). Because narrative ellipsis is such a prominent narrative device in the novel, it becomes evident that Konigsberg deliberately withholds certain information from the readers. At the beginning of the novel, readers are not aware of precisely what trauma Max has been exposed to, just that it is something “unspeakable” (Balaev 151). The unspeakable is only unspeakable until the traumatised person has spoken about it (Balaev 154). In the story, Konigsberg’s usage of the unspeakable creates the narrative ellipsis which complicates the deciphering of the core of the trauma.

In addition to flashbacks, OBE and tonic immobility are prevalent to be experienced by trauma survivors. In the novel, Max is in conflict with his body, wanting it desperately to move (Konigsberg 185). Max’s OBE is visualised when he recalls the night in which he was raped:

> *And then, its’s like I do leave my body, but only in my brain. My body stays put, frozen and I float to the top of the room. I see the rest from up there. I do. … as I watch the thing happen, from above, as I watch and feel nothing, nothing I should feel.*
>
> *I’m not here. I’m not here. I’m not here.* (Konigsberg 186 italics in original).

Here, Konigsberg illustrates Max's thought process when he is being raped. In the study by Möller and colleagues, it is stated that extreme fear hindering speech and movement occurs in 80% of survivors who are assaulted. This tonic immobility Max experiences is a representation of real survivors'

reactions. Because of the realistic aspects implemented by Konigsberg, it can be assumed that the novel might arouse oppressed trauma memories for readers. The implementation of realistic elements may also be of value for readers who are unaware of this type of reaction to rape.

The novel problematises the common phenomenon of victim-blaming since Konigsberg shows how Max wrestles with the internal dilemma and could thus be argued to be a real representation of the general view of rape survivors, specifically male rape survivors. Konigsberg's novel applies the internal dilemma Max experiences as a result of him not fighting his abuser. The involuntary immobility is continuously processed and questioned by Max throughout the novel. In the middle of the night after Max has woken up from a nightmare, he thinks: ”If you aren't overpowered, if you could have left but you didn't, you didn't because you were curious, maybe, that's not rape, right?” (Konigsberg 188), questioning if he is entitled to feel raped even though he could have left. When Max confronts his abuser, he is met by a condescending counter-question: ”[i]n what universe could I get you to do anything you didn't want?” (Konigsberg 197) and thus forces Max to once more question if it was rape. Based on Javaid's statement that men are expected to confront and fight their abuser (288), Max's conflict shows how he has internalised the norms of hegemonic masculinity. As the story is narrated using internal focalisation, Konigsberg enables readers to take part in Max's experience. Therefore, they may relate to both the survivor in the novel and survivors in general. Thus, it enables the questioning of victim-blaming and highlights the different reactions to being sexually assaulted.

It is essential to understand that Konigsberg's novel's plot relies upon Max being raped and the following processing of that event. Amid Max trying to understand what happened to him, he calls his father in the middle of the night. Max is questioning if it is rape if one person says no but then does not leave when they could. Max's father answers his questions with laughter, and he states that it is ”garden-variety rape” (189). However, the father never asks if something is bothering Max, which enrages Max's mother when she is told about the conversation (319-20). Because the rape was Max's first sexual encounter, it is plausible to conclude that this complicates the understanding of what is

accepted regarding intimate relations for Max (Purnell 231). Another reason for Max's conflicting thoughts may be that he is not openly gay towards people except his closest relations, such as family and best friends. Therefore, it is likely that he cannot seek support within the gay community and therefore not knowing what is acceptable in a gay relation. A third explanation for Max's constant questioning and wondering about the definition of rape could be due to the status male rape has in society. Walfield theorises that male rape in comparison to female rape is not seen as a real issue since most rape survivors are female (2). The status of male rape is another aspect included in the novel, where Max has a problem grasping the conflicting ideas of being male and being a rape survivor. Therefore, it can be said that many underlying factors complicate the processing of the rape for Konigsberg's protagonist.

With applied intergenerational trauma perspective, it becomes evident that the collective trauma is present at certain moments in the novel, such as the moment in which Max is met by racism at a young age (Konigsberg 36). Collective trauma, such as racism and oppression based on race, is also evident in a conversation in which Jordan, Max's love interest, suggests that they should trespass in order to acquire prickly pears. Jordan, who is portrayed as a white American teenager, sees it as a non-issue while Max refuses by implying that a white American teenager can do so without having as severe consequences as a non-white teenager would have (136-37). Furthermore, towards the end of the novel, Konigsberg has Max reflect upon the differences between Max and his white friends:

> With my white friends, I'm always half-Mexican. They never say I'm half-Irish. Never say I'm half white. Like I'm tainted halfway away from standard. It's like when I was a kid and I thought vanilla ice cream meant no flavor, like it was the base of all the flavors. But vanilla is a bean. Like chocolate is a bean. Like cinnamon is a root. All roots and beans. All flavors. There is no base. No ice cream without a flavour. (290-91)

Konigsberg's above-cited metaphor shows that the epithet "dark-skinned boy" his abuser attributed Max impacts him (34,184). Before this internal monologue, Max concludes that he has been racially

profiled several times and that he does not live with the same bias as his white friends. Konigsberg uses the two protagonists to demonstrate the differences between how a white American teenager resonates compared to a Mexican American teenager regarding committing a breach of rules. The collective trauma perspective allows the conclusion that by sharing social characteristics' individuals may experience the same trauma without being exposed at the same time (Balaev 151-52). Such trauma is prominent in the extract above.

What can also be noted is the clear presence of insidious trauma throughout the novel. Wasco states that insidious trauma may affect people from early on in life (315). Concerning Konigsberg's novel, insidious trauma is detectable in Max's childhood when his friend left Max behind since Max was not invited to come along. However, the next time Max plays with his friend, they "don't talk about it" and Max realises that "when those kids come by, they're gonna go to the park, and I won't" (Konigsberg 36). Max knows from a young age that he is not welcome in some contexts because of his ethnicity. The novel thus displays how, at a very young age, individuals can encounter racism. Therefore, Konigsberg's *The Music of What Happens* can spread awareness in the EFL classroom of how students can be exposed to trauma in various ways.

Thus said, the protagonists of the novel, Max and Jordan are both gay. In that sense, collective trauma is also present in the historical oppression of queer people. However, Konigsberg has chosen to add a positive aspect of being queer in this novel, where being gay is nothing extraordinary. Their families and friends accept both protagonists for their sexuality. However, it is palpable that Max's father is opposed to gay sex. As Max is grasping what he has been exposed to, he remembers his father telling him that "Boys are not supposed to allow things into their bodies. You can be gay, but guys don't do that" (187). Not only does Max have to confront his father's partially homophobic thoughts, but he also must refute Jordan's ideas of how a gay is supposed to behave. Max is a popular athletic teenager, characteristics that do not comply with Jordan's stereotypical ideas of being gay. According to Jordan, "the percentage of gay dude bros has to be proceeding the low side" (82). As concluded

above, collective trauma does not have to be experienced simultaneously or the same place if the individuals suffer from the same experience, it is a collective trauma (Balaev 159). What can also be inferred that Max is oppressed in more than one way; he is a gay part Mexican descent teenager.

3.2 *The Music of What Happens* in the EFL Classroom

The inclusion of the young adult novel *The Music of What Happens* in the EFL classroom is a suitable way of approaching sexual assault and trauma through literature. However, in-service teachers' first reaction might be reluctance and unwillingness towards including trauma narratives and trauma theory within the classroom, a justified feeling considering Moore and Begoray's statement, that teachers can never foresee the reactions of their students' encounters with trauma literature (173-75). Literature is an engaging subject, and often touches upon sensitive topics. With Konigsberg's use of internal focalisation, readers can partake in the complex emotions that arise when individuals are assaulted. This could be both beneficial and detrimental. As mentioned above, students' reactions can never be foreseen. The second dictum of trauma theory advocates a view of trauma narratives as literature that should be approached with caution as it might enhance memories of trauma (Pederson 339). Certain words or descriptions might open up mental scars that students have after experiencing something deeply traumatic (Gavey and Schmidt 443). Although there certainly are risks with incorporating trauma novels, especially ones with internal focalisation, Carello and Butler emphasise that there are more risks with not engaging in trauma literature than ignore it (155-56). A trauma novel that uses storytelling techniques such as internal focalisation, might at first seem like an overwhelming story for teachers to use in education. However, based upon the arguments mentioned above, it is riskier to exclude than include. It is essential to create mitigating measures for students so that trauma narratives may be included in the EFL classroom. Therefore, it may be reasonable to discuss with students what *The Music of What Happens* will circuit around before reading the novel in an EFL classroom. Thus, questions and thoughts about the sensitive topic may therefore be addressed before engaging with the novel which may aid trauma surviving students.

Konigsberg's novel uses the aforementioned internal focalisation. However, other distinct techniques of storytelling employed by Konigsberg in the novel are narrative ellipsis and flashbacks. From the beginning of the story, readers are not allowed insight into what has happened to Max. Narrative ellipsis as a dictum divides researchers into two fields. Nonetheless, regarding use of the novel in EFL classrooms, it could be advantageous to take Pederson's approach since he claims that readers who overlook the disruptive plotline might see the ”restorative power” of the language used in novels without solely focusing on the narrative ellipsis (339). Countering Pederson's definition of the narrative ellipsis dictum, Collins and Balaev both argue that the narrative ellipsis is necessary to include when analysing trauma narrative (7, 159). Applied in EFL classroom, it could also be beneficial to use trauma narratives that circuit around a nonlinear plot as they reflect reality, where the event is so traumatic that it cannot be immediately processed (Gildersleeve 3). Considering Konigsberg's novel, Collins and Balaev's definition corresponds to the reception aspect of the core content of all three courses. The Swedish National Agency for Education deems the understanding of structure as relevant when reading literature. In the syllabus for English 5, it is stated that the teaching needs to cover how words and phrases constitute time aspects and also how they affect the structure. Similarly, English 6 core contents should comprise how the structure and attitudes are prominent in different genres. Finally, the teaching of English 7 should include how different literary genres are used and ”[h]ow stylistics and rhetorical devices are used for different purposes” (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 3, 7, 11). However, students must be equipped with the right tools for analysis trauma since it is such a complex topic (Balaev 151). In light of the curriculum, it can be concluded that an analysis of *The Music of What Happens* is conceivable if approached with Pederson's definition of the first dictum. If the analysis is more focused towards the rhetorical devices in *The Music of What Happens*, then Collins and Balaev's definition might be more applicable. Therefore, it may also be inferred that depending on the course in which the teaching of the novel takes place, the implementation of the first dictum might differ.

The inclusion of realistic aspects in the novel is visible in Max's temporary immobility, for instance. The fact that the novel depicts the effects survivors could experience while being sexually assaulted could be a counterclaim to using the novel in the classroom. Carello and Butler expound that using sexual assault as a mere entertainment element could be seen as both ruthless and unsympathetic (155). Yet Purnell defends the usage by stating the following about narratives focusing on male rape survivors:

> When these narratives are further silenced by the shame culture that created them in the first place, it places limitations on the development of one's personal identity, creating a self-imposed need to stay silent and hidden. This sharing of narratives that help continue needed conversations is the strength of autoethnographic narratives … (Purnell 232).

Based on Purnell, who is a survivor of male on male rape, it could be said that including *The Music of What Happens* would be valuable since it could strengthen survivors who are often silenced. Furthermore, trauma novels might aid in the creation of a space where topics like sexual assault are discussed.

Through literature, teachers could challenge students' potential preconceived ideas and further challenge the societal assumption of the noxious assignment of blame in rape cases. Konigsberg portrays how Max debates whether he is responsible for being raped or if the abuser is to blame. In the middle of the novel, when the protagonist is still in denial, Max states that it is "[n]ot rape. Just stupidity" (188). Reflecting on Konigsberg's quote in relation to Purnell's, it could be concluded that trauma novels have the potential to challenges students' misconceptions of sexual assault and the possible need for information regarding common reactions to trauma.

Then again, rape is ever-present, and therefore teachers may consider warning students about triggering material before students begin studying trauma novels. In one perspective, it might be helpful to include trigger warnings to not retraumatise the students. In the aimed age span of intended students, most students within the classroom have likely experienced some trauma, some worse than

others (Carello and Butler 157: Moore and Begoray 175). Nevertheless, Crumpton accentuates that the inclusion of trigger warnings might affect the learning outcome negatively. By allowing students to omit certain aspects of teaching, essential conversations can be left uncovered (140). Therefore, it is essential to have time in class for discussion. Not only is it a moment of debriefing for students, but it is also an opportunity for the teacher to evaluate the reception of the novel. One overall teaching objective in English is that students should develop "[t]he ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions [and] social issues … in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used" (Natl. Ag. f. Ed., *Syllabus* 2). Considering the above mentioned *The Music of What Happens* might be beneficial to use as a teaching material since the novel ends positively. Konigsberg's work is consistently light-hearted and depicts an optimistic tale despite the underlying trauma, which seemingly does not create a dull story.

The ever-present controversy of being a man and being raped is not only a fictional theme but rather an issue in society today. As mentioned before, the term rape survivor has been more associated with women since men historically have held a power position (Walfield 2: Javaid 284: Sivakumaran 1281). It might therefore be reasonable to conclude that assumptions that men are not raped exist in the classroom. To once more quote Purnell, it is essential to understand that when ignoring trauma novels and male rape survivors, it is a method for survivors to be "further silenced by the shame culture that created them in the first place" (232). To further problematise trauma novels, Kubala states that when teachers use certain themes, such as rape, students might perceive that the teacher regards one trauma as "more real" than another (185). Nevertheless, the novel could aid those who suffer from trauma since literature has "powerful potential to express pain and can be used for healing" (Moore and Begoray 175). Novels such as *The Music of What Happens* may have the potential to normalise male rape while also having the potential to aid traumatised students.

Jackett writes that teachers might be uncomfortable bringing up themes such as sexual assault in their teaching. However, he remarks that trauma novels cannot only be a resource that extends

pupils' literary knowledge, but it is also a way for students to become aware of their perilous surroundings (Jackett 103). It is also an approach to enlighten students that men can be assaulted as well. Reading trauma fiction does not equal escaping reality; instead, it should be used as an approach for readers to understand the impact of crises (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5-7). It is evident that Konigsberg's novel circuits around several crises, where rape is the most prominent. Whether Max recalls his father's opinions about gay sex (Konigsberg 187) or Jordan tries to comprehend how Max could ever have been raped (Konigsberg 279), the ubiquitous idea of non-existing male rape is consistently undermined in the novel the entire novel. The syllabus of English in the upper secondary school allows for a novel featuring the dilemma between men and rape. The curriculum states that students shall be given the opportunity to further their ability to both discuss and reflect on ”social issues and cultural features” around the English-speaking world (Natl. Ag. f. Ed. 2) Therefore, a way of approaching the novel in the EFL classroom might be to reflect upon the social issue male on male rape, this could be done as a cross-curricular activity with a civics class. The students could reflect on gender norms or rape issues. Another cross-curricular activity might be conducted with a history class where students are encouraged to compare the novel to how male sexual norms have been historical.

As aforementioned, Konigsberg's novel employs several aspects of trauma. Besides the trauma gained from the sexual assault, the protagonist Max is also exposed to racism. Racism is a form of collective trauma, as described by Balaev (158-59). Teachers will most likely need to discuss issues like racism in and outside of the classroom. Thus, when implementing a novel as *The Music of What Happens* where the protagonist is facing racism, it is essential to understand that the novel depicts reality. Kubala stresses that it is crucial to be aware of society's racial power imbalance that may be reflected in the classroom (185-86). Trigger warnings are also something that may increase the ”understanding of oppression as primarily about interpersonal, individual acts, acts that are equally possible across races and genders” (Kubala 190). Furthermore, the trauma theory perspective's analytical tools enable the discussion of how individual traumas are formed based on biased ideas

about certain characteristics of races (Wasco 315). In the overall goals and objectives of the upper secondary school, it says that:

> The school must promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathise. No one in school should be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, ethnicity, … sexual orientation. … Xenophobia and intolerance must be met with knowledge, open discussion and active efforts (Own translation) (Natl. Ag. f. Ed., *Curriculum* 5)

As is stated above, students must be taught about different marginalised groups, this for discrimination to cease, or at least decrease. About the overall knowledge criteria, it is emphasised that students should be able to view fiction "as a source of knowledge, self-awareness and joy" (Own translation)(Natl. Ag. f. Ed., *Curriculum* 5). Thus, it is noticeable that the novel *The Music of What Happens* meets several of the overall goals for upper secondary school as it counters the problematic theme of xenophobia through the intergenerational perspective.

Not only does the novel approach racism from the intergenerational perspective, but it also counters queer stereotypes and homophobia. In the novel, Max is depicted as a half-Mexican, half-Irish teenage boy who is gay and athletic. As his love interest Jordan and his uncle at first sees it, gay and athletic are paradoxical. Two characteristics that cannot co-exist (Konigsberg 50, 74-75). It is essential to challenge preconceptions like Uncle Guillermo's and Jordan's in the classroom. Prejudices could be formed towards any form of group, queer, non-natives, females or even males. The novel could challenge students' prejudices and therefore be a valuable teaching material. As Kubala writes, teachers "must attend to pain and trauma—to see them as crucial to an understanding of oppression that expands beyond the psychological and does not privilege or separate the individual from the structural [injustice]"(185). However, it is a romanticised notion to assume that the only problem that will occur when discussing systematic oppression is that suppressed students will be harmed. That is not the case. However, teachers should not exclude the teaching of discrimination based on sexual orientation. The National Agency for Education states that intolerance towards different sexual

orientations should be met with discussion and methods to confront homophobic thoughts (*Sex Ed* 5). Furthermore, one reason to include *The Music of What Happens* is that sexual education should be interdisciplinary. The education could be incorporated in fiction to provide students with different perspectives of sex and cohabitation (Natl. Ag f. Ed., *Sex Ed* 5,18). Konigsberg's novel counteracts homophobia and includes a supportive family. Therefore, it could be favourable using *The Music of What Happens* since it is positive towards gay issues.

4 Conclusion

This paper has aimed to investigate how trauma is present in Konigsberg's *The Music of What Happens*. More specifically, the paper has argued that *The Music of What Happens* depicts different experiences of trauma as well as a realistic representation of the conflict between being a male and being a rape survivor. The paper has also investigated the possibilities to include the novel in the EFL classroom in Sweden as a resource to validate students who are trauma survivors and raise awareness of how trauma affects people on both individual and collective levels.

The analysis shows that the book is consistently characterised by the different types of trauma that Max encounters and has experienced. It also demonstrates how different stylistic features aid the expression of the suffering and how they are a contributing part in how the rape trauma is depicted. Also, the analysis addresses Max's illusion that athletic men cannot be raped. Thus, the novel may aid readers to develop a revised understanding of societal norms about male rape victims. The analysis also studies how different forms of trauma are evident in the novel. Through the intergenerational trauma concept and its subtype insidious trauma theory, it is reasonable to conclude that the trauma represented in Konigsberg's novel connects the individual to society and vice versa. Thus, it can be deduced that the oppression of individuals based on unchangeable characteristics may cause trauma.

Since Konigsberg's *The Music of What Happens* involves several types of trauma that are not unanimous characteristics of a certain group of people, it is plausible to conclude that it could be

considered inclusive and therefore a well-functioning novel to use in teaching. As Max struggles with finding himself, it can be assumed that students who have experienced the same struggles might find comfort in reading about similar experiences. The novel can be used as a material to vicariously represent characters who have undergone traumatic events and therefore validate students who share similar experiences. Through the novel, students will also be able to partake in discussions of how trauma affects people, both individually and collectively. Although it is a heavy topic that includes sexual violence, it can be approached with caution and with the help of trauma theory which may aid students in understanding the impact of fictional as well as real events.

Further studies of the novel might approach it with a queer perspective and investigate how the two gay protagonists Max and Jordan are depicted. It could also be applicable to study how maleness is depicted in the novel, especially analyse how Max's relationship with his two best friends is affected by hegemonic masculinity. Another interesting approach might be to compare how masculinity and queer are present in the novel and how the two perspectives are intertwined and represented in young adult fiction. A comparison would be especially interesting when applying a pedagogical perspective, to see how students view the two norms and if they are as conflicting as represented by different characters in the novel.

Finally, there needs to be a space where male rape trauma can be discussed, without it stealing focus from female rape. The novel *The Music of What Happens* creates that well-needed space. In this recently published literary piece, male rape and its aftermath are brought up for discussion.

Works Cited

Ayuso, Mónica G. "'How Lucky for You That Your Tongue Can Taste the 'r' in 'Parsley'": Trauma Theory and the Literature of Hispaniola." *Afro-Hispanic Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2011, pp. 47–62. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41350920 Accessed 26 September 2020

Balaev, Michelle. "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2008, pp. 149–166. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/44029500. Accessed 30 October 2020.

Berger, James. "Trauma and Literary Theory." *Contemporary literature*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1997, pp. 569–582. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1208980. Accessed 23 October 2020.

Carello, Janie and Lisa D Butler. "Potentially Perilous Pedagogies: Teaching Trauma Is Not the Same as Trauma-Informed Teaching", *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, vol. 15 no. 2, 2014: pp. 153-168, DOI:10.1080/15299732.2014.867571 Accessed 25. Oct 2020

Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995, pp. 151-157.

---. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Collins, Jo. "The Ethics and Aesthetics of Representing Trauma: The Textual Politics of Edwidge Danticat's The Dew Breaker." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol 14, no. 1, 2011, pp. 5-17. Tandfonline, DOI:10.1080/17449855.2011.533947. Accessed 16 Oct 2020.

Crumpton, Stephanie M. "Trigger Warnings, Covenants of Presence, and More: Cultivating Safe Space for Theological Discussions about Sexual Trauma." *Teaching Theology & Religion*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2017, pp. 137–147. DOI:10.1111/teth.12376 15 December 2020

Felman, Shoshana. “Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching.” *American Imago*, vol. 48, no. 1, 1991, pp. 13–73. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/26304031. Accessed 30 October 2020.

Gavey, Nicola, and Johanna Schmidt. “‘Trauma of Rape’ Discourse: A Double-Edged Template for Everyday Understandings of the Impact of Rape?” *Violence Against Women*, vol. 17, no. 4, Apr. 2011, pp. 433–456, doi:10.1177/1077801211404194. 27 October 2020

Gildersleeve, Jessica. *Elizabeth Bowen and the Writing of Trauma: The Ethics of Survival*. Rodopi, 2014.

Jackett, Mark. ”Something to Speak about: Addressing Sensitive Issues through Literature.” *English Journal*, vol. 96, no. 4, 2007, pp. 102-105. *ProQuest*, http://proxy.lnu.se/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.lnu.se/scholarly-journals/something-speak-about-addressing-sensitive-issues/docview/237317194/se-2?accountid=14827.

Javaid, Aliraza. “Feminism, Masculinity and Male Rape: Bringing Male Rape ‘out of the Closet.’” *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2014, pp. 283–293. DOI:10.1080/09589236.2014.959479. Accessed: 28 September 2020

Konigsberg, Bill. The Music of What happens. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2019.

Kubala, Julie. ”Of Trauma and Triggers: Pedagogy and Affective Circulations in Feminist Classrooms.” *Feminist Formations*, vol. 32 no. 2, 2020, p. 183-206. *Project MUSE*, DOI:10.1353/ff.2020.0030. Accessed 26 September 2020

Moore, Amber, and Deborah Begoray,. “‘The Last Block of Ice’: Trauma Literature in the High School Classroom.” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2017, pp. 173–181. DOI:10.1002/jaal.674 Accessed 26 September 2020

Möller, Anna, et al. “Tonic Immobility during Sexual Assault - a Common Reaction Predicting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Severe Depression.” *Acta Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, vol. 96, no. 8, 2017, pp. 932–938. DOI:10.1111/aogs.13174 Accessed 4 December 2020

National Agency for Education. Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School. Fritez, 2013. https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/styrdokument/2013/curriculum-for-theupper-secondary-school?id=2975 Accessed 29 September 2020

---. Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School (Including relevant syllabus for English teaching). 2011. Norstedts Juridik, 2018. Syllabus for English. https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.4fc05a3f164131a74181056/1535372297288/English-swedish-school.pdf Accessed 29 September 2020

---. Sex Education: Gender Equality, Sexuality and Human Relationships in the Swedish Curricula, 2014.

Pederson, Joshua. ”Speak, Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory.” *Narrative* (Columbus, Ohio) vol. 223, no. 3, 2014, pp. 333-53. *Project MUSE*, DOI:10.1353/nar.2014.0018. Accessed 10. Oct 2020

Purnell, David “#Me(n)Too: Storying a Male-on-Male Sexual Assault” *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, vol. 24 no. 3, 2019, pp. 226-237.DOI:10.1080/15325024.2018.1524487 Accessed 27 October 2020

Rabeyron, Thomas, and Samuel Caussie, “Clinical Aspects of Out-of-Body Experiences: Trauma, Reflexivity and Symbolisation.” *Evolution Psychiatrique*, vol. 81, no. 4, 2016, pp. e53–e71. DOI:10.1016/j.evopsy.2016.09.002 Accessed 9 December 2020

Sivakumaran, Sandesh. “Male/Male Rape and the ‘Taint’ of Homosexuality.” *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2005, pp. 1274–1306. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20069834. Accessed 4 Dec. 2020.

Thompson, Monica. “Life after rape: A chance to speak?” *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, vol. 15 no. 4, pp. 325-343, DOI:10.1080/713697439 Accessed 2 January 2021

Toremans, Tom. “Trauma: Theory - Reading (and) Literary Theory in the Wake of Trauma.” *European Journal of English Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2003, pp. 333–351. DOI:10.1076/ejes.7.3.333.27981 Accessed 30 October 2020

Walfield, Scott M. “‘Men Cannot Be Raped’: Correlates of Male Rape Myth Acceptance.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Dec. 2018, doi:10.1177/0886260518817777. Accessed 3 December 2020

Wasco, Sharon M. “Conceptualizing the Harm Done by Rape.” *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2016, pp. 309–322. DOI:10.1177/1524838003256560 Accessed 12 December 2020