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2021-2022 Book-in-Common Teaching Guide

Marta Moore

Collin College, mmoore@collin.edu

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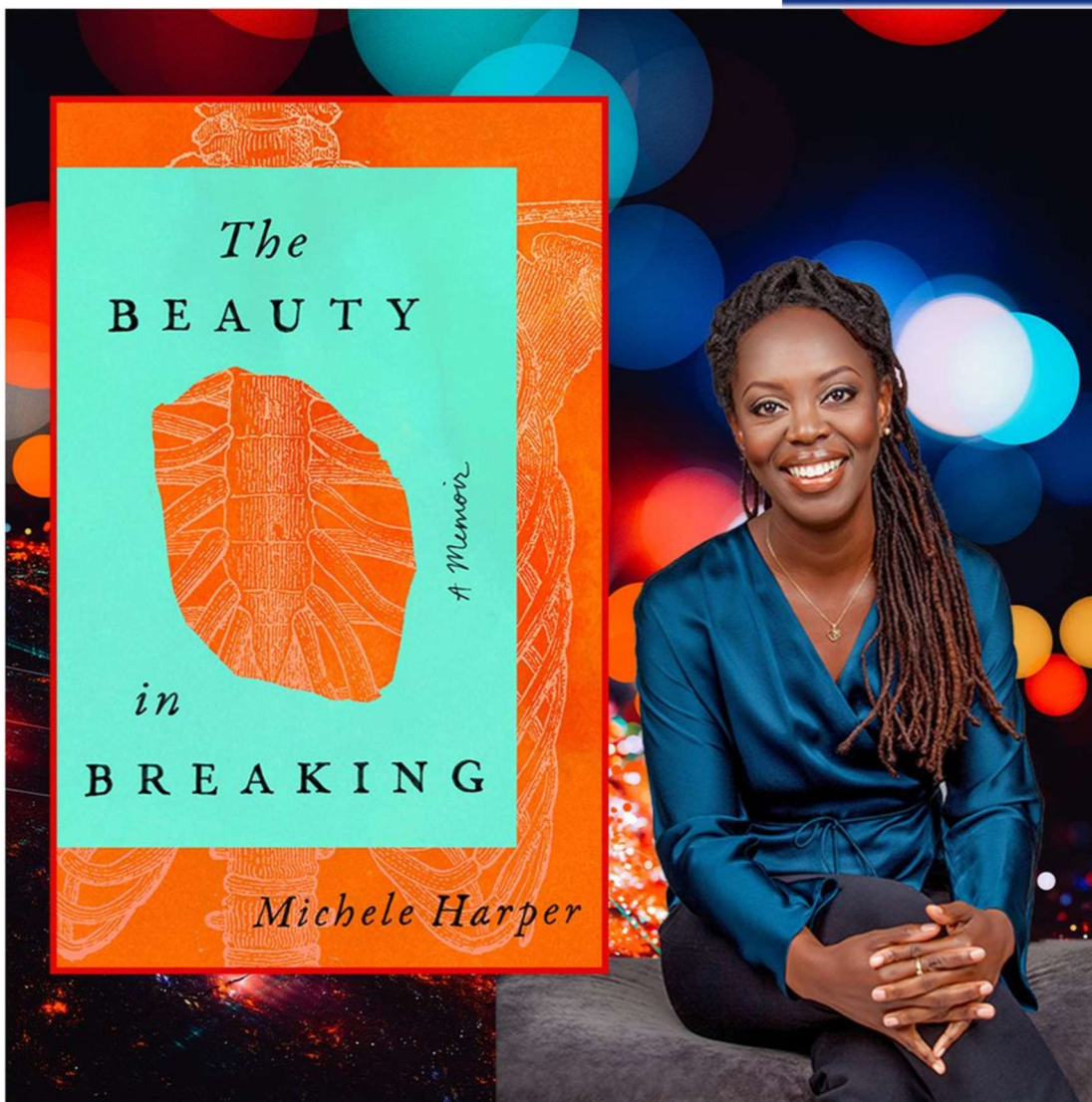
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BOOK-IN-COMMON TEACHING GUIDE

2021-2022

Collin College Book-in-Common Committee



2021 – 2022 Book-in-Common

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Casey Carter	Khimen Cooper	Julie Sears
Linda Sears	John Glass	Stephanie Abramoske-Austin
Gary Wilson	Barbara Stern	Linda Kapocsi
Charlene Houston	Kerry Dickerson	Lindsay Moore
Gloria Cockerell	Dulce de Castro	Latoya Watkins
Ryan Fletcher	William Brannon	Kay Mizell
Debra St. John	Melissa Johnson	Melissa Blackmore

TEACHING GUIDE EDITOR

Marta Moore

BOOK-IN-COMMON CONTACTS

For more information about the Book-in-Common Program please see the website www.collin.edu/academics/bookincommon or contact one of our coordinators:

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INTRODUCING THIS YEAR'S BOOK-IN-COMMON

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Michelle Harper's memoir takes us into the world of a female, African American emergency room physician that is overwhelmingly male and white. She also takes us through her journey from a complicated childhood, attending Harvard, and a short-lived marriage and shows us how a life of service to others taught her how to heal herself.

The Beauty in Breaking invites engagement from across the Collin College Community.

As Collin librarian Beth D. Atkins points out, research topics suggested by the book include systemic racism, racial/ethnic disparity, implicit bias in healthcare, domestic violence, childhood trauma, emergency medicine, community medicine, and memoirs. The book encompasses several social issues, including relationships, family dynamics, medical education, patient-doctor communication. In short, it gives a lot of flexibility in how it might be used in classes.

As always, the *2021-2022 Teaching Guide* exemplifies the Collin College Book-in-Common Committee's commitment to the goal of a year-long, college-wide engagement with an important book and its author. Highlights of this year's Guide include:

- Classroom and library resources
- Perspectives from multiple disciplines including English, Humanities, Social Science, and Music
- Support for a variety of teaching modalities including class discussion, journaling and reflection, extended student research, essay and research paper assignments, annotated bibliographies, and creative assignments.

The materials contained here will deepen our thinking and strengthen our teaching. Please join me in thanking the contributors who have generously made this year's *Guide* a reality.

--Marta Moore

FROM THE PUBLISHER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele Harper has worked as an emergency room physician for more than a decade at various institutions, including as chief resident at Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx and in the emergency department at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Philadelphia. She is a graduate of Harvard University and the Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University. *The Beauty in Breaking* is her first book.



BOOK SUMMARY

The Beauty in Breaking is the poignant true story of Harper's journey toward self-healing. Each of the patients Harper writes about taught her something important about recuperation and recovery. How to let go of fear even when the future is murky: How to tell the truth when it's simpler to overlook it. How to understand that compassion isn't the same as justice. As she shines a light on the systemic disenfranchisement of the patients she treats as they struggle to maintain their health and dignity, Harper comes to understand the importance of allowing ourselves to make peace with the past as we draw support from the present. In this hopeful, moving, and beautiful book, she passes along the precious, necessary lessons that she has learned as a daughter, a woman, and a physician.

PROMPTS, QUESTIONS, REFLECTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

CASEY L CARTER – HEALING HARMONIES



“Letting go gives us freedom, and freedom is the only condition for happiness.”

- Michelle Harper

healing harmonies

Prof. Casey L. Carter | Professor of Music

In times of brokenness, can music play an important role in healing much like the practice of meditation mentioned in Chapter Ten?

Throughout history we find links to music and healing properties. The Chinese character for medicine includes the character for music. Chants are an essential part of the healing rituals of the Native Americans. The human brain can magically discern the music playing in the park over the noise of traffic and honking horns. It is almost as if we are so attuned to music that we can't but respond to rhythm, repeated tones, and tunes. In fact, the University of California proved the “Mozart effect” in studies where candidates took an IQ test after listening to either 10-minutes of Mozart, silence, or meditation tracks. Time and again, the participants that listening to Mozart boosted test scores, improved short-term memory, and increased spatial reasoning in the panel.

The Greeks used music to alleviate pain, promote sleep and to ease stress. Apollo is well known for being the god of the sun. Did you know that the ancient Greeks put Apollo in charge of both healing and music, too? The early myth tells us that a four day old Apollo crept in the cave of a Python on Mount Parnassus, took a golden arrow and shot the Python in the forehead. The scream of pain echoed throughout all of Greece, and Apollo reached for his lyre to play a song of victory. Lauded as singing the perfect song, the young god would master the lyre earning a space with the Muses throughout history.

At its' core, music is built on a series of notes and rhythms. You've seen that video on YouTube when a toddler catches hold of a rhythmic beat and quickly begins to dance bringing joy to her household. Recalling an old familiar tune, those very patterns of musical notes and rhythms reactivate parts of the brain that allow a grandparent who struggles with memories to retrieve long forgotten memories. Play that meditative track on your playlist and soon you will discover that your heart rate and breathing slow down to match the tempo as you discover a bit of wellbeing for the day.

When we dare to let ourselves get lost in the music we can discover that blissful state of thoughtlessness, stillness and peace Michelle discovers after taming her flood of thoughts as she attempts to meditate. As she discovers the way to silence the chaos she unleashes a torrent of joy. Take a look at your list of songs on your smartphone. What songs cause your breathing to slow down a bit as you discover a moment of peace in your day?

Reflect & Respond

Create a playlist of songs that bring you a bit of peace. Discover a new Mozart sonata and add it your list. Ask your best friend for two recommendations. Then your mom, your brother, and grandma, too. Compile those songs into a playlist and spend 10-minutes a day simply listening to those pieces. Jot down how you feel each day after your listening. What healing are you discovering in the harmonies? How has a bit of music changed your days for the better?

KHIMEN COOPER – PROMPTS

In Michele Harper's text, *The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir*, Harper's surrounding contexts (academic, family/marriage, professional, geographical, etc.) clearly drive the narrative. For this two-part assignment, you will consider the significance of the contexts that surround us and practice composing something that takes this into account.

PART 1: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

3 sources (150–200-word annotations each)

For this assignment you will first do a little research of your own. Consider how the medical field surrounding Harper throughout her memoir greatly impacts her story. From being a student to working in the field, her personal growth and life are greatly influenced by her surroundings. Not only do aspects of the medical profession factor in, but gender, race, sexuality, and other lived experiences as well.

For this project, you will research a specific professional field (this could be medical or anything else) and dig into how the field itself can be significant to the lives of those who work or participate within in. Once you've decided on a field of profession, you will find three sources that discuss it so you can better contextualize it for the second part of your assignment.

For Part 1 of your assignment, you will compose an annotated bibliography. You will annotate each of the three sources you found in approximately 150-200 words. Each annotation will:

- 1) Introduce the source (Why is it a reliable and useful source?)
- 2) Explain the purpose of the source (What argument does it make?)
- 3) Detail the methodology (How did it make that argument?)
- 4) Connect it to your own project (How will it help you write your story?)

PART 2: CREATIVE COMPOSITION

Length- 1500 words

Now that you've done your research and you feel confidently knowledgeable about the professional field that you chose to discuss, you will write a fictional narrative that details one day in the life of a character of your creation. Just as the medical field and everything that came with it influenced Harper's life, the field you chose to research and write about will do the same for the character in your own narrative.

Your piece will make use of the solid research you did for your annotated bibliography so, while the character you've created will be the focal point of the narrative, the field surrounding that character will greatly impact that character's single day. Have fun with this story and be as creative as you'd like!

JULIE SEARS – RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How common is domestic abuse (or intimate partner violence) in America? What are the demographics of domestic abuse (that is, the statistics for the likelihood of domestic abuse/intimate partner violence occurring in particular income groups and racial groups)?
2. What are the most common reasons why abusers victimize their partners and/or family members?
3. What are the most effective ways for communities to help reduce violence in relationships or families? What are the best ways to intervene? For example, what roles do politicians, educators, law enforcement, first-responders, medical professionals, counselors, and social workers have?
4. What are the most common reasons why people remain in abusive relationships?
5. What are some of the potential long-term effects of growing up in a family in which abuse is present?
6. What is the history behind residency programs in the medical profession?
7. Are there any efforts to improve residency?
8. What roles do administrators play in hospitals?
9. How common is it for people of color and/or women to reach positions as hospital administrators, particularly at the highest levels? What accounts for these numbers?
10. What makes a “teaching institution” hospital different or unique?
11. Is it important for medical care practitioners to be representative of the communities they serve?

12. What personal qualities are needed for one to be a good medical care professional (qualities beyond skills and knowledge)?
13. What are the attitudes of medical professionals towards resuscitations? Why do many doctors have a "do not resuscitate" order?
14. What is the percentage of threatening or harassing behavior by patients towards medical care providers? Who are most often victimized? What are some of the reasons that these violent events or acts of sexual harassment occur? Are there attempts in the medical community to address these problems?
15. What are some of the dynamics that occur between medical care providers and law enforcement? In what ways can they collaborate effectively? What are some of the ethical dilemmas that can occur for medical professionals when their patients are under suspicion for a crime?
16. What do hospital ethics boards or committees do?
17. What is the history of the field of gynecology and how does it relate to racism? What happened during the Tuskegee syphilis experiment? What happened during the Kligman experiments on prisoners? How might the history of these experiments have influenced the attitudes of black and brown communities towards the medical professional and why might this be significant? Is medical racism still a problem?
18. What are the common reasons people use the emergency room? What percentage of ER patients are uninsured? Underinsured?
19. What are differences between private and public hospitals?
20. What roles do ER or hospital social workers play?
21. What is the history behind the United States Department of Veterans Affairs? When were veteran's health benefits first provided?
22. What are some issues that the VA healthcare system faces? What are some reforms that have been made or suggested to ensure quality care?
23. What are some of the unique challenges that veterans face as patients?

24. How common is sexual abuse, assault, and or harassment in the military? What reasons have been given for these high numbers? What are some of the ways these are being addressed? What changes are being suggested to make these less likely?
25. What is complementary medicine? What are some of the attitudes of medical professionals towards complementary medicine? How common is it for medical doctors to suggest complementary medicine in addition to conventional care? In lieu of conventional care?
26. How common is it for cancer patients to choose to forgo chemotherapy and radiation or other medical treatments and instead choose to die without intervention? What are some of the reasons patients refuse these treatments? What are ways that medical professionals can manage these cases?
27. In what ways does stress contribute to negative health outcomes? How can stress be lowered if it is negatively impacting one's health? Are doctors trained to discuss the negative effects of stress and how to decrease stress?
28. How common is workplace "burnout" in healthcare workers? What steps, if any, have been taken to address this problem?
29. How common is it for child abuse to be discovered by medical care professionals? How do they make these determinations?

KAY MIZELL -- THREE TYPES OF PROMPTS

PROMPTS FOR LONGER SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF THEMES

1. Dr. Michele Harper portrays a theme of dream verses reality throughout her memoir. Explain this contrast using several examples to show that she strives for truth even though she is prone to longing for a different reality than her own (23, 24-25, 66-67, 120, 199, 277, 279). Mention, perhaps, that in her demand for truth, she identifies and rejects lies in her giving diagnoses, in extracting patient information, in relating to family and friends, and in gaining self-awareness (276).

2. In speaking of her childhood, the author confesses, "**Security** was perhaps the only thing I ever wanted, and up to that point it had remained a long-ungranted wish" (Harper 3). Because of this deep desire, discuss how the angel's messages to her "*Michele, you are okay. You will be okay. You will be safe. Your mother will be safe. Your brother and sister will be safe*" and "*You will grow to see that you will help many people. You will grow to do great service. You must*" (3) buttressed her for the next two decades of her life (27).

3. Early in the book, Harper offers an argument she will make through various patients and friends she presents. "**Speak** these truths aloud, for it is only in **silence** that horror can persist" (9). Her family lived in silence (especially after her failed attempt at calling the police) because they constructed other versions of their dysfunctional lives (6), they "sealed the secrets inside (6), they avoided the risk of a "crack in the fragile facade that fronted" their legitimacy (10), and they endured the realization that there was "no law here, No help" that would protect or serve them (13-14). This need for speaking is driven in by her phrases, "I only knew that the other part of the atrocity was the silencing" (151), and "It is only **speaking** of abuses that we can address them (151, 265).

4. The theme of brokenness or breaking, seen in the title of the book *The Beauty in the Breaking*, is clearly presented throughout the memoir, but the reader must draw out the beauty (276). Mention three or four examples of her being broken both in her family and in her other relationships, and her recognition of brokenness in her patients. **Discuss the beauty that is in that breaking** (16, 44, 110-111, 229-230, 256). You may want to mention the necessity of seeing the ugly and the brutal (110-111) in order

to respect and to heal the human beneath the superficial. Also, the notions of self-care and “owning” our own mistakes figure into her narrative (232).

5. Harper struggles with **forgiveness** in different episodes of her life with her husband, Collin, and her patients. Discuss the burden and the benefits of forgiveness for her (206-207). The narrative speaks to the power of forgiving and the process of it (228-229, 233, 237).

6. According to Dr. Gary Harris, a seasoned ER physician, to practice “the art of medicine,” doctors should look the patient directly in the eyes, show them that they genuinely care about them, and treat them all with respect no matter their size, color, cleanliness, addictions, economic level, or anything else “PERIOD.” **Healing** is more than medicine, a recognition the author mentions in various ways within the text. Besides her medical school education and her experience in various ERs, explain the other factors at work in patching up, mending, fixing the problem (133, 215, 253, 255, 279, 280), in what she also calls “the art of medicine” (259). Discuss this view of augmenting medicine with care.

PROMPTS FOR SHORTER ESSAYS

7. Explain why Dr. Harper became an Emergency Room physician, supporting your points with quotations from the text (18-19, 111, 142, 266, 276). Elaborate by addressing her admission, “My calling is to heal; that is my truth” (141).

8. Although Dr. Harper establishes that she is an African American, she does not probe this identity marker until chapter five when she discusses minorities, demographics, and “the privilege of self-determination” (96-97, 103, 109-110, 124). What does she argue that **America** needs to examine? (97, 104). What does her coat symbolize (97-98).

9. The author states, “We always remember that beneath the most superficial layer of our skin, we are all the same. In that sameness is our common entitlement to respect, our **human entitlement** to love” (111). Explain the way this philosophy undergirds her practice of medicine, perhaps using one or two of the cases to illustrate it (216).

10 Explain the complexity of Dr. Harper's experience at **Harvard Medical School** and why she only briefly mentions it (29-31).

11. Discuss the nexus of the choices we make and the **final moments of life**, when we come to a recognition alone (136-137).

12. In a chapter entitled "Joshua Under Contract" the author introduces the concept of a **contract** to signify commitments we make to ourselves and to others. Explain this view of a contract and how we enter into and carry out these contracts (200-201, 203).

13. Describe the process a caterpillar undergoes to become a butterfly and apply that metamorphosis to Dr. Harper's story, especially the importance of goo (256).

PROMPTS REGARDING LANGUAGE AND RHETORICAL DEVICES

14. . Cite examples of fresh **language** usage in metaphors, alliteration, or a fresh image as in "It is better to be left with a ghost than a ghoul" (32), "children house spiritual pain inside, where it sloshes around vital organs" (117), "We all nurse that same Achilles' heel of cleaving to the damaged" (168).

15. One literary technique is the use of **rhetorical questions** that often cause the reader to pause for reflection or to indicate that the author has done so. What deeper concern do these questions in the aggregate suggest?

a. Is this truly necessary? (95, 229)

b. How many shortcomings of this modern health care system am I willing to put up with? (180)

c. Would my healing mission be better served in other ways? (180).

d. How hard is detox? (250)

e. Isn't that how healing usually happens [letting go in their own way as they move toward health]? (255)

- f. Should I add that I felt it had to be a message to love more no matter what, to be happy now no matter what? (276).

16. We each have a story. Some episodes are written for us, but at various points in the plot, we can choose the next turn or even the way the story will change its trajectory. Tell your story, including a juncture when your choice changed the course of your life (203, 252).

DEBRA ST. JOHN – ESSAY PROMPTS AND SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

The author's narrative goes beyond her story telling and demonstrates the skill of tolerance with tenderness. Dr. Harper takes her daily reality and shows how she dealt with it and how it provided the opportunity for self-expression.

ESSAY

1. Select three stories told form scenes and conversation in the emergency room that taught lesson to Dr. Harper. Explain how such lessons could be adapted to your life.
2. An important statement in the authors' discussion of forgiveness after treating Mr. Williams accused murder in chapter begins with "Forgiveness condones nothing, but it does cast off the chains of... In the chapter the way we expose our military men and women to danger. Explain what the doctor is trying to convey to the reader and herself?

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:

1. In Chapter 1, Harper discusses domestic violence experienced in her parent's home. Go to <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence> What is the definition of domestic violence according to the Department of Justice? Next, scroll down the Domestic Violence Resources. According to the National Institute of Justice link, what are the types of Intimate Partner Violence? Now, click on the link to Center for Disease Control, scroll down and click on Fast Facts. What do the statistic report?
2. In chapter 4, according to the 2003-2007 Workplace Safety Survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistic, what workers are five time more likely to be the victim of non-fatal assault than workers in all other industries?
3. In Chapter 5, the author writes, "we are not yet at a time in American when the attributed or perceived actions of a brown or black or queer or Muslim "wrongdoer" are considered singular. Such accusations are seen as emblematic of an entire demographic, "guilty before charged."" She notes what about the U.S. history of white men in the context of the conversation?
4. Again in Chapter 5, Dr. Harper discuss the treatment of enclaved women, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, Dr. Klingman's experiments on imprisoned men in Philadelphia and the death of Emmitt Till. Provided a paragraph of the events relate to each and why you think the author brought up these occurrences.

5. In Chapter 7, a patient called Vicki underwent a horrible experience in the military. What happened to her?

Click on [The Facts on the Military and Violence Against Women Summarize the facts.](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)
<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org>

6. In the Epilogue, Dr. Harper states "Brokenness can be a remarkable gift." Explain what she means by that statement.

WILLIAM BRANNON – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Identify a career of interest to you. What appeals to you about the career?
What do you think are some of the most significant benefits associated with the career? What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges associated with the career?
2. Consider a decision you have made in your life. What contributed to you making the decision? Would you still make the same decision today? Why or why not?
3. Identify a job you have had or one you current have. What do you consider the most rewarding aspect of the job? What are examples of the rewards you associate with the job?
4. What are examples of assumptions that people make about certain jobs? What is the basis for these assumptions? How accurate are these assumptions?
5. To what extent do you feel that people can be affected by experiences? What are examples in your life where a past experience impacted a future action? What are effective strategies for coping with negative experiences?

RYAN FLETCHER – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For the follow questions, please write at least 1-paragraph with examples from the text for support.

1. Harper describes her personal life in detail. How have Harper's personal experiences prepared her for a medical career?
2. Every chapter seems to be teaching a lesson. Which chapter strikes you as the most important to Harper's story? Why?
3. After reading *The Beauty in Breaking*, what is Harper's overall message? What does the reader learn?
4. Which of the following themes did you learn the most about while reading: race, gender, class, healthcare, legal system, abuse, or medicine? Why?
5. There are several moments of realization for Harper throughout the reading. Pick one and discuss its relevance and importance.

LINDA SEARS – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Harper mean when she writes that the title of father “had to be earned” on page 31? Do you agree with her view? Why or why not?
2. Harper reveals that she finally breaks down for the first time in the chapter “Baby Doe: Born Perfect.” Why do you think she broke down crying then? Why was she unable to cry earlier? Do you think her own childhood keep her from being able to cry? How so?
3. “Dominic: Body of Evidence” shows Harper going against the status quo of submitting Dominic to an examination. What reasons does she give for not examining him? Had she been a nurse and not the doctor in charge, do you think she may have acted differently? Why or why not?
4. How does Harper help Victoria Honor through their conversation? What does Vickie learn about herself?
5. Throughout the book, Harper writes about the struggles she faces with patients who are disrespectful and/or who disregard her and her co-workers’ advice on how to best take care of themselves. Why do you think she faces these kinds of people? What may be motivating them? Have you ever worked in a job or profession where you dealt with difficult people? How did you cope? How does Harper cope? What does she do about the “Mr. Spanos of the world?” (200)
6. What gift does Joshua give Harper in “Joshua: Under Contract?”
7. When she thinks over what may have brought Mr. Williams to his psychotic break with reality, Harper realizes that his trauma “was ours, too,” (227) What does she mean by that?
8. At different points, Harper writes about being single and childless. Did it surprise you that she grew up not being interested in getting married and having children? Why or why not? Does it surprise you that she decides to let go of the need to have a life partner and children?
9. On pages 256-255 Harper writes that the health profession involves treating the whole person and not just physical illnesses or emergency situations. Does

knowing this change your view of what medical professionals really do? How so? What other professions involve treating the whole person?

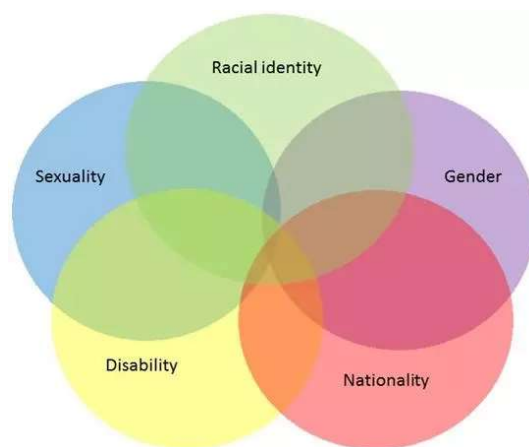
10. Did reading this book help you empathize with doctors, nurses, and others in healing professions better? How so? Did you wonder about how Harper dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic?

JOHN GLASS – QUESTIONS AND RESOURCES FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASSROOM

1. Was Dr. Harper affected by racial [trauma](#). If so, how did it manifest in her life?
2. What role did [intersectionality](#) play in Dr. Harper's personal development?
3. Dr. Harper was raised in a [community](#) beset by trauma; how might she have been different had she not been raised in that environment?

RESOURCES

1. Mental Health America article on trauma:
<https://www.mhanational.org/racial-trauma>
2. [Intersectionality 101: what is it and why is it important? - Womankind Worldwide](#)



3. "Adverse Community Events and Resilience"
<https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Adverse%20Community%20Experiences%20and%20Resilience.pdf>

STEPHANIE ABRAMOSKE-AUSTIN – SOCIAL SCIENCE ESSAY PROMPT

Identify, evaluate and apply at least one criminological theory from Michelle Harper's book. Provide contextual evidence of the theory.

GARY WILSON - INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES FOR APPRECIATING AND TEACHING

The Instructor's Challenge: One important challenge facing you will be to instruct this memoir in ways that make your students understand and sense the courage and transparency of the author's narrative and, at times, more subtle sub-narratives. Some memoirs are stylized so that their authors appear to be transparently candid in their perspectives about themselves, about their relationships, and situations they are experiencing. Often these memoirs posture their author's lives so that they can elicit desired reactions by their audiences. In paraphrasing Mark Twain, "the truth can sometimes be very pliable." Not so is Harper's narrative. She writes in ways that present herself as frightened, discouraged, hopeful, doubtful, depressed, and upbeat. In short, she is a person seeking to fully understand the truths and values that best guide us in life and connect us with others.

I argue that the much of the novel's current popularity is based on how the author shares (while withholding very little) her life's journey from private-schooled student to an Ivy-league educated M.D. who now practices her life-saving ER skills in the inner-city areas of New York and Philadelphia. She applies her medical skills with those patients who need medical attention and, just as importantly, *human compassion*. As an ER physician, she is not a staff member of a prestigious hospital, but works in the overworked, understaffed, low-paying, and bureaucratized Veterans' Administration (VA) healthcare system. She is a gifted-healer-African-American-woman whose compassion conquers the gender and racial biases she encounters from superiors and patients alike. "No greater love has this" might be an appropriately applied mantra for Dr. Harper.

For me, it will be a real privilege and pleasure to teach this thoughtful narrative to our students. My objective will be to guide them in discussions so that they can realize the importance of Dr. Harper's journey and how the life journey conveyed in her book might also radiate and touch us with some glimmer of understanding and hope about our culture and lives.

I. MULTIPLE NARRATIVES: META-NARRATIVE AND SUB-NARRATIVES

Dr. Harper's main narrative is one that *concurrently* presents a backdrop narrative of her past struggles and angst while growing up in a dysfunctional family with an abusive physician father, a protective older brother, and a co-enabling, yet loving mother—portrayed against her meta-narratives that recount her roles as physician and healthcare administrator in each chapter of her book.

While there are multiple narratives (some more foregrounded and some latent) in the book, it might well be rewarding for students to study these narratives as strategies to better appreciate the values and perspectives the author describes. Following are several key narratives to help you engage your students in meaningful discussions and focus their writing assignments. I am sure your own analyses of the novel will generate more insightful narratives that you will share in your own discussions.

A. SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The author conveys in this narrative how her life's journey—past and present--has brought into sharp relief a sense of Self—an **empathetic and moral conscience** that often contends with the daily realities of her ER practices and the pressures this duality creates in her life.

B. MEDICAL HEALING VERSUS HUMAN HEALING

As the author diagnoses and treats her ER patients, she "knows" about them in a medical sense as much as she also learns about them and herself in a more psychical sense. For her, these episodic interactions provide mutual healing of body, mind, and spirit.

C. SELF-AWARENESS

Dr. Harper's encounters with the people in her life (her family, her colleagues, and her patients) progressively provide insight and a sensitivity that create meaningful mental, spiritual, and emotional growth. She becomes more aware of her intrinsic gifts and how to use them to treat and support her patients as she deals with her patients and colleagues. She also becomes aware of learning how to use one's talents and adapt her spiritual and physical energies to fulfill her as a person and help her better help people. This learning and adaption process is also a **theme** in the novel that frames how Harper is both a healer and student of events and occurrences with people in her life.

D. THE IRONY OF BROKENNESS

As she writes about experiences of psychological *brokenness*, both in her own life and in the lives of her patients, Harper transforms the usual negative connotation of the notion of brokenness to one with positive virtues of healing both physically and psychically, as well as learning about herself and her patients as people, not just "patient encounters."

The author starts her meta-narrative from a psychological place of brokenness after the end of her marriage. Over the course of the several narratives in the novel, she proceeds to learn and empathize with others as she treats them as truly human beings. Harper uses the metaphor of the Japanese art of *Kintsukuroi* that consists of repairing broken pottery by filling in the cracks with precious and exquisite gold, silver, or platinum. This art form beautifies and highlights these breaks with precious metals. It not only repairs these breaks, but also in a metaphorical sense honors the vessel that has been torn apart by the volatility and uncertainty of life.

Harper's abiding personal life goal is to heal others and respect them as fellow human beings. As she discovers through her involvement with her patients, this psychological place of brokenness functions through healing and human empathy so she can overcome adversity, anxiety, and insecurity. This metaphor alludes to the novel's main thesis: **there is beauty in brokenness**. In the author's overall portrayal, a person must first experience the brokenness of life; the resulting triumph over this brokenness is the inherent *beauty* of insight, forgiveness, love, and healing that one receives from this experience.

II. THEMES

Themes are overarching concepts, ideals, and patterns that connect the plot and characterizations of a novel. As such, it is important that our students discuss these themes as literary elements helping them to more completely appreciate the values, meanings, and narratives in Harper's book.

There are often main and minor themes in a literary work—and they serve to help instructors frame our student's appreciation of the many valuable aspects we appreciate in a novel. The following are offered to help increase your students' appreciation of the novel and complement additional themes you may wish to discuss in class and assign as critical elements in written assignments.

A. BUREAUCRACY AND THE DE-PERSONALIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

This theme encompasses the functioning of a large government bureaucracy over the needs of the individual (such as the expansive VA healthcare system and its inability to fully address the healthcare needs of our veterans).

B. PERSONAL SUCCESS VERSUS THE PERSONAL SACRIFICES TO BETTER HELP AND SERVE PEOPLE

This theme highlights the dynamic tension inherent in Harper's life journey portrayed through her words in the novel. This theme highlights the struggles she faces to "get

ahead” and achieve success against a backdrop of “knowing” in her spirit what she should do to better relate to and better serve her patients and fellow human beings.

C. SELF-SACRIFICE

In this novel, the author describes situations in her life where she engages in acts of the will that are necessary to making one's life more spiritually fulfilling by living, loving, giving, forgiving, and connecting with humanity outside the norms of society's time-worn codes of materialistic success, achievement, and self-validation.

This theme complements all the other themes listed here. Harper's embracing of the attributes describing this theme attests to the virtuous nature of her personal character, her spirituality, and her humanitarianism.

D. DOING WHAT IS RIGHT AND JUST

This theme circumscribes Harper's character and conveys how the author has learned through life experiences she must be true and affirm her moral code, which is to dignify others and treat them as people and not just patients. Harper has charted a course in her life that privileges the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human spirit.

E. SOCIETAL, BUREAUCRATIC, AND RACIAL BIASES

This theme should elicit responsive class discussion among students since it addresses contemporary issues affecting America and also foregrounds how the author deals with these issues in her own life.

III. QUOTATIONS FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WRITING PROMPTS

Having students discuss in class the meaning, values, and ideas presented in quotations stimulates discussion and can elevate their interest.

Using writing prompts for written essays that require students to interpret and explain these quoted passages helps them practice their critical reading and critical analysis skills. Research proves that students improve their critical thinking skills as they apply the elements of critical thinking in persuasive essays.

Following is a recommended list of key passages for students to critique:

A. "Brokenness can be a remarkable gift. If we allow it, it can expand our space to transform - this potential space that is slight, humble, and unassuming. It may seem counterintuitive to claim the benefits of having been broken, but it is precisely when cracks appear in the bedrock of what we thought we knew that the gravity of what has fallen away becomes evident. When that bedrock is blown up by illness, a death, a breakup, a breakdown of any kind, we get the chance to look beyond the rubble to see a whole new way of life."

B. "In practicing the Japanese art of Kintsukuroi, one repairs broken pottery by filling in the cracks with gold, silver, or platinum. The choice to highlight the breaks with precious metals not only acknowledges them, but also pays tribute to the vessel that has been torn apart by the mutability of life. The previously broken object is considered more beautiful for its imperfections. In life, too, even greater brilliance can be found after mending."

C. "We had all been broken in that moment - broken open by shock and grief and anger and fear. I didn't know how or when, but this opening could lead to healing. After all, only an empty vessel can be filled by grace; but to get there, we had to help each other rise while we shed the same tears. We had to get up and start again."

D. "That's why I was there. The VA hospital had a reputation as the place where old doctors went to die. As medicine has evolved over time—or, more accurately, as the business of medicine has devolved over time—many physicians have thought of the VA as their medical home. True, some of the providers at the VA aren't competent enough to practice elsewhere, but that's not the case for all of us. The rest of us come here not out of necessity, but out of choice, to care for those who gave everything with the intention of service to our country and received so little in return. We come here to encounter again that lost heart of medicine. We come here, too, knowing the entrenched legacy of corruption of the VA hospital and still hoping to be at least a small agent of change anyway."

E. "What we have, in all its glory, to hug and hold, to caress and learn, to feel and grow, is simply right here and right now. If we are lucky, the bond holds in the moment—and the experience of it shines and breathes and expands. Then our story can change in an instant, and we may never be given the gift of why."

BARBARA STERN – PSYCHOLOGY ASSIGNMENTS

1. Psychologists and sociologists argue that all human beings – regardless of the culture they grow up in – are shaped and molded by their immediate surroundings and the people they encounter. To demonstrate this, they focus on the processes of socialization. Illustrate this main point by examining the self-portrayal of Michele Harper as she develops as a physician and as a human being. How did her acknowledgement of the influences of her early life experiences - her role models, the significant others in her life, her reference groups – contribute to her growth and self-healing? How did her experiences as an emergency room physician also contribute to her development?
2. All people develop a sense of self. To specify the process through which this typically occurs, Charles Horton Cooley introduced the term *looking-glass self*. Cooley was working to develop a theory of self as essentially social, and he used the image of a mirror to capture the idea of people imagining what they look like to others, then incorporating what they imagine into their own self-concept. This concept of self as a product of the individual's interaction with environment, along with and his/her interpretations of those interactions, has come to occupy a pivotal role in both psychology and sociology. Discuss how Michele Harper's evolving sense of self reflects this idea. In addition, include a description of the development of your own self-concept as it relates to Cooley's theory.

PROMPTS FROM THE TEXT:

1. Page xii-- Par. 2--Introduction—Dr. Harper writes that she “[has] no special powers...I reside in the melee that is a hospital emergency room, where I am called upon to be salve, antidote, and sometimes Charon.” Define and explore these three roles that Dr. Harper has to alternately take on as an ER physician. Has there been a time in your life when you had to take on any or all of these same roles? If so, describe your experience and what you learned about yourself from taking on the role of “salve, antidote, and/or Charon.”
2. Page xiii—Par. 1—Introduction—Dr. Harper shares that as a Black woman, she and other women “have to pound tenaciously against the proverbial glass ceiling, which we’ve since discovered is made of palladium, the kind of glass that would sooner bow than shatter.” Define palladium and glass ceiling. Why do you think Dr. Harper chose palladium as a metaphor for the glass ceiling, another metaphor?
3. Page xiii—Par. 2—Introduction—Dr. Harper says that “uncertainty grew opportunity”, that after losses and starting over personally and professionally, that when “everything she counted on had come to an abrupt end”, that she had to “reevaluate her life” and that she found opportunities in doing so. Describe a time in your life that you felt much as Dr. Harper did, when her marriage failed and she moved to begin a new job in a new city and in every aspect of her life, started over. What caused you to start over, and what did you learn about life and yourself from this experience?
4. Page xiii—Par. 3—Introduction—Dr. Harper mentions that “in the Japanese art of Kintsukuroi, one repairs broken pottery by filling in the cracks with gold, silver, or platinum.” Describe a time in your life, or in a relative’s or a friend’s life, when you or someone close to you “has been made more beautiful for [the] imperfections.” What eventual positive results came from the previous hardships?
5. Page xiv—Par. 2—Introduction--Dr. Harper states that her difficult life experiences, including those in hospital emergency rooms, have “shown [her] where the center is, This center is where we find the sturdy roots of insight that can’t be windthrown by passing storms”. Have you found that your most difficult life experiences have made you sturdier? Stronger? More prepared for dealing with subsequent stressful situations.? If so, share a time that was challenging and what insight/s you have gained from the obstacles you have faced.
6. Page 3—Pars. 2-4—Ch. 1—As a young child, Michele Harper had an experience that felt to her like an angel visited and spoke to her, giving her a message of life and hope. Have you ever had an experience with a supernatural or spiritual

essence? If so, what happened and what did you take away from the experience?

7. Page 32—Par.2—Ch. 2--After Dr. Harper's father disappeared from her life, she decided that "It was better to be left with a ghost than a ghoul, so his disappearance from my life was an acceptable outcome". Have you ever had someone disappear from your life, which wound up being for the better? How did freedom from the "ghoul" affect you?
8. Page 44 —Par. 1—Ch. 2--Dr. Harper indicates that she'd "figure out the rest, but now, I just had to be broken. There wasn't energy for much else." Describe a time in your life in which you would consider your condition as broken. Secondly, what contributed to your repairing your life?
9. Pages 45-46—Pars. 1-3—Ch. 3—Dr. Harper examines the benefits of being a "nocturnist". What is a "nocturnist"? What are some appealing benefits of becoming a nocturnist? If you were an ER physician, would you rather be a "nocturnist" or a "diurnist"? Why?
10. Page 47—Par. 1—Ch. 3—Dr. Harper notes that she "has gotten over the need to be liked or feel externally validated" and yet felt, as the director of performance improvement, she felt that she was "received like the in-law you are obligated to speak to at Thanksgiving dinner despite not really wanting to". Have you ever had a role in your family, volunteerism, or job in which you had to have difficult conversations about others improving and had to serve as a leader with a "thick skin"? How did you manage?

VIDEO DISCUSSION AND WRITING PROMPTS:

1. Video: "The Real Risk of Forgiveness and Why It's Worth It" TEDxTalk by Sarah Montana--[The Real Risk of Forgiveness and Why It's Worth It TEDTalk](#)—Mrs. Montana shares her past trauma and her road to forgiveness. She mentions that her connection to her family's murderer was like a tether or a chain that had to be broken. What are some of the steps that the victim must take in order to break the chain connecting himself/herself to a past trauma? What are the three reasons that the speaker mentions that some people try to show forgiveness, and what is the alternative path to forgiveness that she explains? How is vengeance a "twisted form of intimacy", according to Mrs. Montana? How do Mrs. Montana's conclusions relate, compare, or contrast to Dr. Harper's conclusions about life after trauma?
2. "What I Wish I Knew Before Becoming a Doctor—5 Things" by Dr. Cellinii -- [What I Wish I Had Known Before Becoming a Doctor](#)

After watching the video, briefly describe the five things Dr. Cellini suggests people who are considering becoming physicians should know. Which of the five

things surprised you the most? How as watching the video affected how you think of physicians in general? Based on this video, what did you learn about possible character traits Dr. Harper might have as a person and as a physician? Based on Dr. Cellini's five things, what are some challenges that Dr. Harper and Dr. Cellini have both likely faced? Why do you suppose Dr. Cellini has a youtube series?

MEDICAL IDIOMS AND A BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE:

1. "Health Idioms: 30 Useful Health and Medicine Idioms" [30 Useful Health and Medicine Idioms](#)

Read the meanings and example sentences for the 30 useful health and medicine idioms at the link above. Write a two-three page biographical narrative (a story, written in first person, that relates key events in a person's life as if the writer is that person) about Michele Harper's life. You will write in first person voice (I, my, we, our, us) as if you are Dr. Harper and will relate key events from her life in your story or biographical narrative. Incorporate in your narrative 7-8 health and medicine idioms from the list of 30 provided in the website above.

CHARLENE HOUSTON – QUESTIONS AND TWO-PARAGRAPH ESSAY PROMPTS

QUESTIONS

Michele Harper was an abused child, but she came up from where she was to make something of herself and life. Explain how her childhood helped her to get to where she is now.

When she had to deal with the difficulty of the baby's death, what were some of her thoughts about the baby, toward the father and the rest of the family?

In the different patients that she encountered, name 3 she most identified with and why do you feel that she identified with these patients.

PROMPTS

Write a 2-paragraph essay with quotes that relates to your life:

Michele Harper provided many interesting quotes focusing on relationships within her family and her profession throughout her novel. Of the 4 quotes listed below, choose 2 quotes, and give the meaning of the quote and how it relates to your life in a 2-paragraph essay.

"It was worth creating good with the right person at the right time. I am worth being healthy with a person who also chooses health."

— Michele Harper, [The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir](#)

"Even when everyone has the best of intentions, things can go terribly wrong."

— Michele Harper, [The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir](#)

"A human being can never treat another person better than he treats himself."

— Michele Harper, [The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir](#)

"Plagued with doubt, I found myself having to reevaluate my life. Living through such changes was difficult; now I see those junctures, when everything I had counted on came to an abrupt end, as a privilege. They gave me the opportunity to be uncertain. And in that uncertainty grew opportunity"

— Michele Harper, [The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir](#)

KERRY DICKERSON – READING REFLECTIONS AND ESSAY PROMPTS

READING REFLECTION ONE

Each week you will respond to two or three passages from the readings for that week.

Answer one of the following questions. Follow all instructions below.

1. From which perspective (first, second, third) person is the story written? Why do you think this is important?
2. Who is the main character? How old is she? Why is this important?
3. How does the imagined dialogue (written in italics) move the story forward?

Your responses should offer *all* of the following:

- A *brief* summary of the text(s): Do not get caught up in sharing every detail about the text. Instead, provide enough information to lead into why you chose to relate the question to that particular part of the passage you chose to discuss.
- All points of view are valid *so long as you back them up with specific examples*.
- A detailed analysis of the text(s): dive deeper into what the text is doing, what it meant in its historical moment, or character development, what it means to the groups it represents (or fails to represent), where it fits into the larger American grand narrative, etc. If you would like to try out some different literary theoretical lenses, you might check out this [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and take a look at many different ways literary scholars discuss texts.

Literary analysis is not so much about being *right* as it is about understanding something deeper about a text.

Specifics:

- Two pages minimum in MLA format

- Proper citations of two or three sentences in length (absolutely no block quotes except in the case of quoting stanzas of poetry)
- A unique title (*not* Reading Reflection 1 or Reflection on *The Beauty in Breaking*)

Rubric:

1st Full Page - 50 points

2nd Full Page - 50 points

READING REFLECTION TWO

Each week you will respond to two or three passages from the readings for that week. Explore one of the following questions:

1. On page 26, why does the narrator describe herself as being on a hot air balloon?
2. On page 31, the narrator says, "I didn't yet know that I had the power to choose." What is she referring to? Why is this important?
3. On page 44, the narrator says, "I didn't yet recognize anything I saw from that height, but it offered a critical distance, a life-saving perspective" (Harper 44). Why do you think this is important? What does she mean?

Your responses should offer *all* of the following:

- A *brief* summary of the text(s): Do not get caught up in sharing every detail about the text. Instead, provide enough information to lead into why you chose to relate the question to that particular part of the passage you chose to discuss.
- All points of view are valid *so long as you back them up with specific examples*.
- A detailed analysis of the text(s): dive deeper into what the text is doing, what it meant in its historical moment, or character development, what it means to the groups it represents (or fails to represent), where it fits into the larger American grand narrative, etc. If you would like to try out some different literary

theoretical lenses, you might check out this [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and take a look at many different ways literary scholars discuss texts.

Literary analysis is not so much about being *right* as it is about understanding something deeper about a text.

Specifics:

- Two pages minimum in MLA format
- Proper citations of two or three sentences in length (absolutely no block quotes except in the case of quoting stanzas of poetry)
- A unique title (*not* Reading Reflection 1 or Reflection on *Leaves of Grass*)

Rubric:

1st Full Page - 50 points

2nd Full Page - 50 points

READING REFLECTION THREE

Each week you will respond to two or three passages from the readings for that week. Explore one of the following questions:

1. What is the crisis the protagonist describes in Chapter 3?
2. Why do you think this crisis occurs in this chapter and not somewhere else in the book?
3. How does the crisis connect to elements in the previous chapters?

Your responses should offer *all* of the following:

- A *brief* summary of the text(s): Do not get caught up in sharing every detail about the text. Instead, provide enough information to lead into why you chose

to relate the question to that particular part of the passage you chose to discuss.

- All points of view are valid *so long as you back them up with specific examples*.
- A detailed analysis of the text(s): dive deeper into what the text is doing, what it meant in its historical moment, or character development, what it means to the groups it represents (or fails to represent), where it fits into the larger American grand narrative, etc. If you would like to try out some different literary theoretical lenses, you might check out this [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and take a look at many different ways literary scholars discuss texts.

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Specifics:

- Two pages minimum in MLA format
- Proper citations of two or three sentences in length (absolutely no block quotes except in the case of quoting stanzas of poetry)
- A unique title (*not* Reading Reflection 1 or Reflection on *Leaves of Grass*)

Rubric:

1st Full Page - 50 points

2nd Full Page - 50 points

ESSAY PROMPT

Length: 1,500 words

Style: MLA (See Purdue OWL for help)/ You will need to cite the original text, plus 2 scholarly

articles.

Final Draft due: 12/6 by 11:59 PM (midnight); Please submit on Canvas as a .doc or .docx.

Topics: Write an essay about ***The Beauty in Breaking***. Chose only one topic to write about. If you choose to write about another relevant topic, that would be fine. I am giving you examples to draw from below.

Gender: How are women supposed to behave in the world of the story? Do the female characters conform to those expectations? Are there consequences for not conforming? Research two or more scholarly articles on gender or on the story you are interested in analyzing. Please *see* J-Stor through Databases A-Z as a good place to start.

Character Development: How are one or more of the main character's (or other characters') situations pivotal in a character's development? Using the original text and research to substantiate your claim, argue how a scene or two is indicative of the characters' development. **Research two or more scholarly articles** on character development in literature that you can relate to the story; then find a few key scenes and quotes to quote from. Use those scenes and quotes which support your thesis.

Literary Motif/Psychological Analysis: How does a character change over the course of the story? (Have they) Has she or he become self-actualized in the world, if so, how does a situation in the story exemplify this fact? Research two or more scholarly articles on transformational or psychological motifs for the story you are analyzing, (or find a couple on psychological analysis); and, then find a key few scenes and quote from them to prove your point. The Databases J-Stor and Project Muse are good for this.

Helpful Suggestions:

- Find a way to narrow your thesis statement and find evidence in the text (and in scholarly articles) that support your claim

(***quote from one or two scenes***). Don't worry if you get derailed during your first attempt. Keep working until your thesis is concise, so you won't try to pull in too much information. Remember, your thesis is a *claim* not a fact.

- Make sure you use transitions to help your reader follow the logical trajectory.
- Make sure that you order the essay by topic, not by chronological event.
- **Do not summarize the novel (or a chapter).**

Instructions:

- Write an essay, 1,500 words.
- Include a Works Cited (MLA) in which you cite the original text, including any additional information such as scholarly articles or other types of research.
- Source Requirements: The text and 2 scholarly articles
- Turn in Final Draft on 12/06, no later than 11:59pm. Give yourself plenty of time to revise. (see Rubric below)

Remember, "Clear Eyes and Full Hearts, Can't Lose!"

Rubric: Does your essay meet the following requirements?

***Each is worth 20%**

1) Does your essay have an arguable thesis?

2) Does your essay meet the length and style requirements

(works cited and all)?

3) Does your essay show marked improvement from to the first draft (concerning content and grammar/mechanics) due to revision?

4) Does your essay offer valid evidence and support from the novel and research? Was your research relevant to your thesis?

5) Does your essay flow with logical transitions and a sound structure?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ESSAY PROMPTS

- Explain the title, *The Beauty in Breaking* using at least 3 pieces of textual evidence to back-up your answer.
- In her *Introduction*, Harper says, “I have been broken many times.” Using textual evidence, describe three instances you think she is referring to.
- In *Michele: A Wing and a Prayer*, Harper describes the domestic violence in her family. Discuss the different ways her family members (mom, dad, brother, and Michele) react to this violence.
- The story of Baby Doe is a seemingly everyday moment in the life of a physician, yet an entire chapter is devoted to this story. Why do you think Baby Doe has such a big impact on Michele Harper?
- In chapters 1-5, Dr. Harper refers to micro- and macro-aggressions a few times. Define these two terms and identify at least two instances of micro- or macro-aggressions in chapters 1-5.
- In *Dominic: Body of Evidence*, Dr. Harper compares the situation with Dominic Thomas to experimental surgeries performed on enslaved women by Dr. J. Marion Sims, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, and Dr. Albert Kligman’s experiments on imprisoned men in Philadelphia. Describe the situation with Dominic Thomas and explain compare and contrast the 3 historical references Dr. Harper makes in this chapter.
- In *Joshua: Under Contract*, Dr. Harper says of Mr. Spano and his brother, “a human being cannot treat another person better than he treats himself” (200) Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- In *Paul: Murda Murda*, Dr. Harper says of Mr. Williams, who is accused of murder: “Mr. Williams, as in the case of many veterans whose mug shots we see on the news or who sleep invisibly under bridges, had been broken by the combat he waged in our name. So, his trauma was ours, too—our trauma, our pain, our responsibility” (227). What are the implications of this?
 - Further, Dr. Harper says, “when danger is unavoidable, they deserve to be well supported during and then after the trauma they experience. We failed Mr. Williams the way we failed Ms.

Honor. Do you agree with Dr. Harper's take on veterans and mental illness? What might support for these veterans look like? What kinds of programs or treatment might be useful?

- In several chapters of this book, Dr. Harper discusses the difference between health and wellness. Using textual evidence, define these two terms and give examples of Dr. Harper treating each one.
- In several instances, Dr. Harper discusses the many roles physicians play in modern medicine. Citing examples from the text, discuss 3 different roles of physicians we see in this book.

READING QUIZ: INTRODUCTION – CHAPTER 5

_____1. Which of the following is NOT true of Dr. Harper's childhood?

- a. Harper never called the police for help as a child.
- b. Her family moved houses more than 3 times because they wanted to live in exclusive neighborhoods.
- c. They had a tropical fish tank, but the fish would die every few weeks and need to be replaced.
- d. The family never discussed the domestic abuse that occurred in their household.
- e. Her father bit her brother's left thumb when he was being pinned to the floor, causing a deep wound.

_____2. _____ was the one thing Dr. Harper says she ever wanted as a child.

- a. Love
- b. Acceptance
- c. Security
- d. Parents
- e. A cool bedroom

_____3. Which of the following correctly describes Dan's (Dr. Harper's ex-husband)

profession?

- a. Psychologist
- b. ER doctor
- c. Fiction writer
- d. independent filmmaker
- e. music teacher

_____4. Morris Harper attended which of Dr. Harper's graduation ceremonies?

- a. High school
- b. College
- c. Medical school
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

_____5. Which of the following correctly describes the first violence Dr. Harper encounters from a patient?

- a. Punch to the face
- b. Kick in the shin
- c. Broken arm
- d. Hit with a chair
- e. Grabbed by the elbow

_____6. Erik Samuels has a "violent patient alert" note on his chart for which of the following?

- a. Schizophrenic patient who had sudden outbursts of violence
- b. Child who had previously hit a nurse who was trying to give a vaccine
- c. Intoxicated man who had punched a physician
- d. Drug addict who had previously hit a physician who was trying to treat him
- e. Had previously groped a physician during a medical procedure

____7. Erik Samuels is in the ER for which of the following medical issues?

- a. Intoxication and dehydration
- b. Fractured ankle
- c. Strangulated hernia in the groin area
- d. Blunt-force trauma to the head
- e. Pain from Fibromyalgia

____8. Dominic Harper is brought to the ER for which of the following medical issues?

- a. Swallowing bags of PCP
- b. Upper-respiratory pain and pressure
- c. Vomiting blood
- d. Seizure
- e. Severe burn—work injury

____9. The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment was

- a. Not put to an end until 1972
- b. Run by the U.S. Public Health Service
- c. An experiment where black men were denied treatment for syphilis so that government could study the progression of the disease and/or an autopsy when the men died
- d. Deemed unethical after a federal investigation
- e. All of the above
- f. B and C only

____10. **TRUE/ FALSE:** In *Dominic: Body of Evidence*, Dr. Harper's department chair tells her that she was not promoted because of her race.

Short answer.

11. What major decision does Dr. Harper make at the end of Chapter 5?
Resigns her position at Andrew Johnson Hospital

12. Describe the conflict between Dr. Harper and Lauren, her second-year resident.

When Dr. Harper refuses to examine Dominic Thomas against his will, Lauren calls Hospital Ethics to question Dr. Harper's decision. She is rude and dismissive of Dr. Harper, who is her superior.

13. List 1 way Dr. Harper tries to “get on with life” after her divorce.
1. online dating
 2. buying fancy cookware from Williams Sonoma to encourage her to cook
 3. yoga
14. Why does Pam blame Dr. Harper for the death of Baby Doe?
- She cannot intubate the baby because the instrument is too large
15. What important lesson does Dr. Harper learn from Dr. Jaiswal, the internal medicine program director of her internship? How does she learn this lesson?
- Dr. Jaiswal helped her become a better doctor because of the value she placed on meticulous preparation and critical thinking; she learned it by being humiliated in front her classmates and a patient when she couldn’t answer questions during a patient presentation

READING QUIZ: CHAPTER 6 - END

- ____1. In *Jeremiah: Cradle and All*, Gabriel comes to the ER after a school bully beats him up and steals his ____.
- a. Backpack
 - b. Cell phone
 - c. Shoes
 - d. Teddy bear
 - e. Watch
- ____3. What does Nurse Gloria mean when she tells Dr. Harper that the hospital has “negative beds”?
- a. A patient is missing from his/her bed
 - b. All hospital rooms are 2-people to a room despite the illness
 - c. The hospital has so many beds available that it is operating at a financial loss
 - d. There are no beds to put new patients coming in from the ER
 - e. A patient is refusing a bed

- _____ 4. Mr. Spano and his brother come to the ER for which of the following reasons?
- a. Gastrointestinal (GI) problems
 - b. Irregular heart beats and chest pain
 - c. PCP addiction
 - d. Acute Appendicitis
 - e. Injecting his leg with a mix of cocaine and heroine
- _____ 5. While in the ER, Mr. Spano and/or his brother do which of the following?
- a. Asks to be transferred to a better hospital
 - b. Weeps inconsolably
 - c. Yells and shrieks about his pain
 - d. Asks to leave with his IV
 - e. Leaves without needed medication or follow-up appointments
 - f. All of the above
 - g. None of the above
- _____ 5. Which of the following is NOT true of Joshua?
- A. He waits patiently in the ER while Dr. Harper takes care of several other patients
 - B. He refused cancer treatment and ate healthy and took supplements instead
 - C. He is vegan and can't eat hospital food
 - D. He leaves the ER without any treatment or further testing
 - E. He had too many
 - F. y tumors to count on his CT

Short answer.

6. Describe what happens when Dr. Harper asks Gabriel if he plans to get even with his bully and describe her brief meeting with Gabriel's parents.

Gabriel promises "to take care of it," and says he has a gun; when Dr. Harper tells the parents this, Gabriel's mother says, "if he has to defend himself, he has to defend himself"

7. What happens to Jeremiah? Explain the connection Dr. Harper makes between Gabriel and Jeremiah.

Gunshot victim; cried out to his mom and Christian

"it occurred to me that maybe Jeremiah was the Gabriel who had picked up a gun" (146)

8. Explain the title of the chapter, *In the Name of Honor*.

- Victoria's last name is Honor;
- She demonstrates a lot of honor and integrity in that she is a survivor and wants to move forward with honor
 - o Visits the veteran hospital to heal and take her life back; wants to go to school; tries to heal emotionally
 - o Vicki and Dr. Harper discuss forgiveness and how it can free the person who forgives

9. What are 2 of the atrocities Victoria suffered while in the military?

she survives verbal and sexual abuse: multiple rapes by her sergeant another private, and has an abortion after becoming pregnant from the rape, she is not allowed to attend her grandmother's funeral (her grandmother raised her), she was suicidal

10. Briefly summarize why Dr. Harper and Colin broke up.

He had no severed ties with his ex-wife (pg 168) and he had "changed...became irritable, withdrawn, and unkind. It wouldn't be fair to stayed that way. He didn't – he got worse. He became someone I couldn't like in a casual way, much less love in a romantic way" (pg 171)

11. What would you say Dr. Harper learns from her interaction with Joshua?

Pgs 202-203

12. After learning the truth about Baby Jenny's injuries, what was surprising about Jenny's parents?

Her father seemed so caring (pg 264); mother was crying when they wheeled Jenny into surgery

13. After the doctor calls time-of-death for Mary Giannetta, what discovery does Nurse Carrenza make?

Mary is still breathing even though her heart stopped

14. Though Mr. Williams initially comes into the ER needing stitches for a cut on his hand, what does the hospital staff find out about him?

He is mentally unstable and suspected of murder

15. Which family member does Dr. Harper reconnect with at the end of the book?

Her father

GLORIA COCKERELL –STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. During her work in various emergency medical facilities, Dr. Harper had disagreements with the policies put into place by administrators. What was at the core of those disagreements, and was Dr. Harper correct or were facility administrators correct? WHY or WHY NOT? In your answer, consider:
 - a. the objectives of Dr. Harper and the objectives of the administrators of the medical facilities.
 - b. the types of interactions that administrators had with patients and their families, as well as the types of interactions that Dr. Harper had with patients and their families.
 - c. the origins of the opinions of Dr. Harper and the origins of the opinion of the administrators.
 - d. the ramifications of following or not following Dr. Harper's suggestions and the ramifications of following or not following the policies of the administrators.
2. Through her interactions with patients and their loved ones, Dr. Harper better understood elements of her own personality and decision-making processes. Which patient in her interactions was most like Dr. Harper and which one was the least like her? Explain why you think as you do. For example, what sorts of decision-making methods did they follow that were most or least like those that she followed, and what makes you think so?
3. What decisions, or types of decisions, that Michele Harper made for her life were strictly common-sense decisions to further her career, and which were based on what she had lived through in her earlier life and her emotional state at the time? Explain why you think as you do about the decisions that you see Harper make in the information that she gave to you. Is her picture of that decision making accurate, or do you think that she shades it so that readers will have a specific view of her?
4. Do you think that Michele Harper would have gone as far in her medical career as she has if her childhood had been more structured, supportive, and nurturing? In what ways do you think it might have differed? Give specifics from the book that support your opinion.

DULCE DE CASTRO – STUDY QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. As an emergency physician, Dr. Harper usually encounters her patients only once and does not follow up with them, so neither her nor the reader knows what happens to the patients after they leave the emergency room.

(a) How do you think this lack of follow-up affects Dr. Harper's work?

(b) What impact does it have on you as a reader?

(c) Which patient made the greatest impression on you? Write a story or vignette about what happened to this person after leaving the emergency room.

2. How does real-life emergency medicine as described by Dr. Harper differ from emergency medicine as depicted on medical TV shows?

3. Which of the stories in the memoir do you think could be adapted into a medical short film or TV drama? Explain why. Create a short film adaptation of the story.

4. What lessons has Dr. Harper learned from her encounters with her patients?

5. What are the ethical implications of writing about patients?

6. If you met the author, what questions would you like to ask her?

7. Watch the Oscar-nominated animated short film "The Lady and the Reaper," which deals with serious themes of life and death in a humorous way. Use the link below to access the short film.

<https://vimeo.com/9985840>

After watching the short film, discuss the following:

(a) How is the issue of patient autonomy addressed in the memoir and the short film?

(b) What do you think Dr. Harper would say about the resuscitation efforts of the physician in the short film?

(c) In the short film, the physician tries to resuscitate an elderly woman who no longer wants to live. Discuss the clinical and ethical judgments involved in the fictional doctor's resuscitation efforts and Dr. Harper's attempts to resuscitate a newborn in the chapter entitled "Baby Doe: Born Perfect."

(d) Discuss the following quotes from the memoir in light of the previous question.

"We know when a lifeless pod is brought through the door, but we're supposed to make heroic efforts at resuscitation as they do on TV, when the body is already stiff and blue, but the family is not ready; when arms that have lost the current of life fall limp to the side rails. Still, we push several rounds of meds into them, just to document to the family, peer review boards, and the courts what we already know to be true."

"Resuscitations can be brutal: Ribs are broken with chest compressions, skin is contused, mouths bloodied, even teeth knocked out, for God's sake. And then, only *rarely*, after all this medically induced trauma, are people electrocuted back from the dead."

(f) In the memoir, each patient has a name except for the baby in the chapter "Baby Doe: Born Perfect." How significant is the fact that the baby remains nameless in the context of resuscitation efforts intended "just to document to the family, peer review boards, and the courts what we already know to be true"?

8. Below is the link to the video "The Japanese art of fixing broken pottery - BBC REEL" about kintsugi.

The Japanese art of fixing broken pottery - BBC REEL (5:46 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9LMKGte0UU>

After watching the video, discuss the following:

(a) In the video Hiroki Kiyokawa, an expert in the reparation technique of kintsugi, explains the process of repairing broken ceramics. Compare his conception of the power of kintsugi to repair both broken ceramics and broken lives with Dr. Harper's use of kintsugi as a metaphor for brokenness and mending.

(b) How is the title of the memoir related to the art of kintsukuroi?

(c) Hiroki Kiyokawa, says that “All of us develop scars throughout our lives. But these scars should never be hidden.” Do you think Dr. Harper would agree with this assertion? Do you agree with it?

(d) Watch the video “Russian Tattoo Artist Turns Abuse Scars into Butterflies,” which shows how a Russian tattoo artist helps victims of domestic violence heal by hiding their physical scars with beautiful tattoos.

Below is the link to the video:

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/video/russian-tattoo-artist-turns-abuse-scars-butterflies-45356948>

After watching the video, compare the attitudes of the tattoo artist, Hiroki Kiyokawa, and Dr. Harper towards the power of art in helping us to heal our physical, emotional, and psychical scars. Should scars be hidden (as suggested by the tattoo artist) or emphasized (as suggested by Hiroki Kiyokawa, the kintsugi restorer)?

10. Create a cover for *The Beauty in Breaking* based on the kintsugi technique.

LATOYA WATKINS – EXAM QUESTIONS

1. What form of art does Dr. Michele Harper use as an example to illustrate how there's beauty in being broken and making something even more precious out of it?

- the Chinese art of war
- the Japanese art of jiu jitsu
- **the Japanese art of kintsukuroi**

2. Please respond to the following in at least 1 full paragraph (3-5 sentences long).

What happened to Harper's husband? Discuss how this affected Harper and her plans for the future. Use specific examples from the text.

3. Please respond to the following in at least 2 full paragraphs (3-5 sentences each). Respond to each part of the following for full credit. Use examples from the text to support your claim.

Discuss the personal struggles of TWO of Harper's patients. Also discuss what Harper learned from each.

4. Please respond to the following in at least 1 full paragraph (3-5 sentences long).

In *The Beauty in Breaking*, there are stories told where the reward at the end is some type of success (such as completing a detox program or not going to jail). But Dr. Harper seems more interested in stories about managing no matter the outcome. Dr. Harper is more interested in stories that end with the reward of inner peace. What two stories do you think focus more on inner peace than a type of success? Explain how they focus on inner peace.

5. Please respond to the following in at least 2 full paragraphs (3-5 sentences each).

In chapter 5, "Dominic: Body of Evidence," Harper recounts the story of how she refused to examine a patient against his will. What was being demanded of the patient in this chapter? Who was demanding it? And what was Harper's problem with the demand(s)? Make specific references to the text and make sure your response covers all parts of the prompt.

RESOURCES

MELISSA JOHNSON AND HELEN MCCOURT -- VIDEO INTERVIEWS

CONTRIBUTED BY MELISSA JOHNSON

Dr. Michele Harper Shares More Than A Decade Of ER Experience In New Memoir
(Listening to this makes you want to read the book!)

Channel: NPR Weekend Edition Saturday.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/04/887239274/dr-michele-harper-shares-more-than-a-decade-of-er-experience-in-new-memoir>

CONTRIBUTED BY HELEN MCCOURT

Michele Harper (author of The Beauty in Breaking) at the FYE Conference 2021

Length: 11 minutes, 46 seconds. Channel: CommonReads.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0Sy-Tev0o>

The Beauty in Breaking, A Conversation with Dr. Michele Harper

Length: 29 minutes, 54 seconds. Channel: HEC Books.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aofurmgezjgw>

The Beauty in Breaking: A Conversation with Dr. Michele Harper

Length: 54 minutes, 24 seconds. Channel: Mutter Museum of the College of

Physicians of Philadelphia. : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TZwDOm_01A

Dr. Michele Harper – Fighting on the Frontlines of the Pandemic (mainly a discussion of working in an ER during the pandemic but also touches on her memoir)

Length: 7 minutes, 39 seconds. Channel: The Daily Show with Trevor Noah.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPeXUEZ36CU>

MELISSA BLACKMORE – BOOK REVIEWS

SHORT REVIEWS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Egan, Elisabeth. "'The Beauty in Breaking' by Michele Harper." The New York Times Book Review, 12 July 2020, p. 12(L). Gale Literature Resource Center, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A629184628/LitRC?u=txshracd2497&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=2ad3189f>

Dr. Michele Harper Shares More Than A Decade Of ER Experience In New Memoir – Interview on NPR's Weekend Edition Saturday <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/04/887239274/dr-michele-harper-shares-more-than-a-decade-of-er-experience-in-new-memoir>

'The Beauty In Breaking' Chronicles Chaos And Healing In The Emergency Room – Interview on Fresh Air from NPR <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/09/889407267/the-beauty-in-breaking-chronicles-chaos-and-healing-in-the-emergency-room>

AU Values Week: New York Times bestselling author Dr. Michele Harper to discuss racism as a public health crisis – Augusta University <https://jagwire.augusta.edu/au-values-week-new-york-times-bestselling-author-dr-michele-harper-to-discuss-racism-as-a-public-health-crisis/>

Fogarty, Heather John. "A Doctor Takes Us Inside the ER: Michele Harper on Her Journey Toward Healing." *Los Angeles Times*, 17 June 2021, <http://library.collin.edu/login?url=https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6313-70N1-DXXV-3489-00000-00&context=1516831>

Video referenced in above article – Michele Harper in conversation with *Los Angeles Times* reporter Marissa Evans for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Club: <https://youtu.be/VU0eIxILqBU>

Available via Collin Library

Title: The Beauty in Breaking.
Source: New Yorker. 8/17/2020, Vol. 96 Issue 23, p63-63. 1/6p. 1 Color Photograph.
Document Type: Book Review
Subject Terms: *MEMOIRS
*NONFICTION
Reviews & Products: BEAUTY in Breaking: A Memoir, The (Book)
People: HARPER, Michele
ISSN: 0028-792X
Accession Number: 145024143

Persistent link to this record (Permalink): <http://library.collin.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=145024143&site=ehost-live>

Title: The Beauty in Breaking.
Authors: Sawyers, June
Source: Booklist. 6/1/2020-6/15/2020, Vol. 116 Issue 19/20, p20-20. 1/8p.
Document Type: Book Review
Subject Terms: *MARRIAGE
*NEWBORN infants
*NONFICTION
Reviews & Products: BEAUTY in Breaking: A Memoir, The (Book)
People: HARPER, Michele
ISSN: 0006-7385
Accession Number: 143794126

Persistent link to this record (Permalink): <http://library.collin.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=143794126&site=ehost-live>

Title: The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir.
Source: Publishers Weekly. 5/11/2020, Vol. 267 Issue 19, p85-85. 1/3p. 1 Color Photograph.
Document Type: Book Review
Subject Terms: *BIOGRAPHICAL fiction
*DOMESTIC violence
*NONFICTION
Reviews & Products: BEAUTY in Breaking: A Memoir, The (Book)
People: HARPER, Michele
Abstract: A review of the book "The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir," by Michele Harper, is presented.
Full Text Word Count: 262
ISSN: 0000-0019
Accession Number: 143130144

Persistent link to this record (Permalink): <http://library.collin.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=143130144&site=ehost-live>

Title: The Beauty in Breaking: A Memoir.
Authors: McIntyre, Rich
Source: Library Journal. May2020, Vol. 145 Issue 5, p123-123. 1/8p.
Document Type: Book Review
Subject Terms: *MEMOIRS
*NONFICTION
Reviews & Products: BEAUTY in Breaking: A Memoir, The (Book)
People: HARPER, Michele
Full Text Word Count: 181
ISSN: 0363-0277
Accession Number: 142942223

Persistent link to this record (Permalink): <http://library.collin.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=142942223&site=ehost-live>

Title: THE BEAUTY IN BREAKING: A Memoir.
Source: Kirkus Reviews. 4/15/2020, Vol. 88 Issue 8, pN.PAG-N.PAG. 1p.
Document Type: Book Review
Subject Terms: *MEMOIRS
*NONFICTION
Reviews & Products: BEAUTY in Breaking: A Memoir, The (Book)
People: HARPER, Michele
Abstract: An African American emergency room physician reflects on how "the chaos of emergency medicine" helped her come to terms with a painful past and understand the true nature of healing. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]
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Persistent link to this record (Permalink): <http://library.collin.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=142684487&site=ehost-live>