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# ***WOMEN WRITING TRAUMA***

An analysis of psychological trauma in  
Ingeborg Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza*,  
Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*,  
Patricia Grace's *Cousins*,  
and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's  
*Ruahine – Mythic Women*

Tanya Lee Allport

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature and  
German.

The University of Auckland, 2009.

I hereby certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

# ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explore how women express psychological trauma through the writing of fiction. By analysing the historical context of what psychological trauma has meant to women, and how they have represented it, the thesis proposes a model which is based on the recurrent sources of trauma for women, the ‘triple trauma’ of othering, violence, and voicelessness. By using cross-cultural examples from the writing of Austrian Ingeborg Bachmann, German writer Christa Wolf, and the New Zealand Māori writers Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, questions are asked about the similarities and differences of how psychological trauma is represented through fiction, and what this means for the female protagonists of the texts, the female writers, readers and the cultures and societies out of which these writings originate. In analysing these relations, this thesis finds that the fictional writing about the sources and experiences of trauma can expose a range of ideological connections, and that the writing and reading about these connections constitutes a valid trauma discourse. This trauma discourse supports the aim of contemporary feminist traumatology which is to make women’s trauma visible, give meaning to it, and ultimately create frameworks that promote the healing (and prevention) of trauma.

*For Zarah and Ana-Lucia*

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## Introduction

This thesis is about discoveries. It is about the journey undertaken when “a human consciousness, integrated into its own culture, is faced with another work born of another culture which it expresses.”<sup>1</sup> It is about pluralities, which means not culture, but cultures, not certainties, but possibilities, or a range of representing and interpreting. This thesis looks comparatively at cross-cultural literary representation of a particular experience, which is women’s experience of psychological trauma, in the writings of New Zealand Māori writers Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann and the German writer Christa Wolf.

This thesis is an expression of a literary encounter, accompanied by an analysis of the nature of this encounter. As a feminist comparatist writing a thesis on cross-cultural representations of female psychological trauma, I firstly need to locate the nature of this encounter as being marked by three distinct and leading themes, which influence text and theory choices. These themes concern the *hybridity* of readers, critics and myself (as both a reader and a critic); the *métissage* of analytical approaches; and the *juxtaposition* of particular literary texts.

The concept of hybridity as encompassing the writer, reader and theorist is borne out of the emphasis on pluralities as opposed to binaries in comparative literary analysis. Within comparative literature it is fundamental that in order to outline cross-cultural representations, the comparatist herself has to recognize her own placement at the crossroads of the literatures she is engaging with. Snaider Lanser states that:

[...] in order to resist inscribing dominance [comparative literature] would locate both its practices and its practitioners within their own cultural space.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the acknowledgement of the critic’s own multi-cultural hybridity that is advocated by current comparatist thinking, means that the question posed by James

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<sup>1</sup> Yves Chevrel, *Comparative Literature Today: Methods and Perspectives* (Kirkville: The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1995). 1.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Snaider Lanser, "Compared to What? Global Feminism, Comparatism, and the Master's Tools," in *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). 292.



Clifford “where are you between,” as opposed to “where are you from,”<sup>3</sup> is significant in the choices made in this thesis. As a hybrid with German ancestry from my mother’s side, and Te Ati Awa Māori ancestry from my father’s side, the interaction with the texts chosen for this thesis contains elements of “the story of the traces of cultural otherness discovered within and of ambivalent interactions with otherness confronted without.”<sup>4</sup>

The recognition of my own hybridity underscores what critics have highlighted as the value of comparative literary analysis: that it is a personal *reading journey* which moves towards ‘otherness,’ thereby crafting connections between seemingly essentially differing literary expressions. In this thesis this journey is undertaken by juxtaposing not just texts, but also by using analytical tools from separate sources. The consideration of my own hybridity and the subsequent selection of literary material that deals with women’s trauma are, like the writing of this material, a political and cultural act. The idea of linking interpretive discourses through the identification of pluralities is described by Margaret Higonnet as a:

[...] weav[ing] together [of] multiple disciplines in a reading practice that may be called *métissage*, a practice which recognizes that representation cuts across the boundaries of juridical, political, anthropological, and artistic discourses.<sup>5</sup>

In this thesis *métissage* means the joining of two specific disciplines, feminist comparatism and feminist traumatology. These are the main discourses guiding the construction of my own framework of analysis (the “triple trauma”),<sup>6</sup> and leading the choice and applications of the many analytical strands that are combined throughout the thesis.

The search for analytical tools within comparative literature practices that enable the bridging of the gap between the European and the indigenous, Polynesian texts, has called for a sorting through of the complex history of comparative literature as a

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<sup>3</sup> James Clifford quoted in Charles Bernheimer, "The Anxieties of Comparison," in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995). 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Higonnet, "Introduction," in *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). 2.

<sup>6</sup> The concept of “triple trauma” as an analytical framework is explored in chapter one of this thesis.

discipline. The starting point for this sorting has been the aim to open up silences within literary interpretation, the search for reading practices which, as Homi Bhabha states, are a way of getting to new “places to which theory alone would not take him.”<sup>7</sup> The current state of comparative literature has been fostered by what Charles Bernheimer, more than ten years ago, declared as essential to the discipline, which is that it has the distinction of being an “unstable, shifting, insecure and self-critical field.”<sup>8</sup> This makes it very suitable for a *métissage* of theory and aspects of theory, which reaches across borders.

Recent challenges to comparative literature as a discipline have come from the evaluations of its Eurocentric past, or as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak states, the need to “undermine and undo” the practice of dominant cultures marginalisation and othering of emergent cultures.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary impacts of multiculturalism, post-colonialism, globalisation, and feminism have shaped comparative reading theories to being, as described by Haun Saussy ten years post-Bernheimer, “metadisciplinary,” in its “openness to new objects and forms of inquiry.”<sup>10</sup> To acquire this openness, Saussy stresses that the comparatist reads “*literarily* (with intense textual scrutiny, defiance, and metatheoretical awareness).”<sup>11</sup>

Comparative literature’s fundamental premise of opening a gateway to the ‘different’ therefore advocates reading against the grain, which is also inherent in feminist literary criticism. The comparative act of reading defiantly, or as Gail Finney describes, in order to “question traditional boundaries, to open up literary genres and traditions, to test conventional definitions,” is in accord with feminist literary theories.<sup>12</sup> Spivak describes feminism “as the movement with the greatest radical potential within literary criticism,”<sup>13</sup> and as such, its influence on comparative literature has been significant.

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<sup>7</sup> Homi Bhabha in Emily Apter, "Comparative Exile: Competing Margins in the History of Comparative Literature," in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995). 92.

<sup>8</sup> Bernheimer, "The Anxieties of Comparison." 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia Press, 2003). 100.

<sup>10</sup> Haun Saussy, "Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives and Selfish Genes," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006). 23.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Gail Finney, "Whats Happened to Feminism?," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006). 117.

<sup>13</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in Sarah Harasym, ed., *The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (New York: Routledge, 1990). 118.

Comparative literature's evolution towards the crossing of ever greater and more complex borders is, as Margaret Higonnet, states a connection that is on a par with:

[...] feminist theories of code switching and of double-voiced writing contest[ing] older notions of linguistic purity and coherence within national boundaries.<sup>14</sup>

The politics of power in regards to the writing, reading and judging of literature have become fundamental issues of comparative feminist analysis, as the questions of *who* writes, reads and analyses *whom*, and from which viewpoint, have become imperative. The awareness and challenging of gender dominance in this literary sphere have fostered questioning of “processes of marginalisation that exclude texts produced by minority groups and devalue ‘minor’ genres or movements.”<sup>15</sup>

Comparative literary practices that have employed or supported such processes are confronted not just by feminist principles, but also by the developments of globalisation, democratisation and decolonisation.<sup>16</sup> This has led to the deconstruction of the notion of universality in regards to women's writing and reading, leading to the emphasis on ‘difference’ as a way to avoid the “homogenizing, westernising, monistic tendencies of comparative literature as an academic discipline.”<sup>17</sup> Acknowledging the Eurocentric roots of comparative literature, theorists required new ways of interpreting without Eurocentricity being the standard for comparisons. The call for new theories reflecting this shift highlighted that while post-colonial feminist comparative literature was attempting to listen to silences within women's literature, it must, “with equal enthusiasm, listen to the silences imposed by theory.”<sup>18</sup>

More recent developments in feminist comparative literature have moved away from focusing on dividing and differentiating, instead moving towards employing Spivak's

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<sup>14</sup> Higonnet, "Introduction." 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Comparative Literature and Global Citizenship," in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995). 61.

<sup>17</sup> Higonnet, "Introduction." 3.

<sup>18</sup> Obioma Nnaemeka, "Bringing African Women into the Classroom: Rethinking Pedagogy and Epistemology," in *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). 303

notion of polyphony, or “plurivocality,”<sup>19</sup> as a way to emphasise *diversity* as opposed to *difference*. Plurivocality means allowing the individualities of compared texts to stand on their own, while simultaneously establishing connections across texts, readers, theories and cultures. Theorizing diversity means that there is potential for developments to take place outside what Spivak calls the “totalising interpretative acts” that are forms of “critical violation.”<sup>20</sup>

Obioma Nnaemeka describes a way of reading across women’s ‘differing’ writings as a process that needs to underscore *connections*. She calls for a “theology of nearness”<sup>21</sup> as a way to liberate the theories of comparative reading by establishing and celebrating associations:

[...] the possibility and/or reality of connection reminds me of a quilt. The quilt, separate patches revealing different and connected geographies and histories, suggests a lesson in possibilities, particularly the possibility of creating harmony out of contradictions. The quilt’s beauty transcends aesthetics; the quilt is beautiful because it is also a powerful political act and art.<sup>22</sup>

The *métissage* that is undertaken in this thesis aims to use aspects of already established feminist theory to construct a new theoretical model that can bring out such connections. The two main approaches used in this thesis, feminist comparatism and feminist traumatology, embody this kind of *métissage* as they, although distinctive in their specificity of discipline, have evolved from a similar history leading to the current challenges of post-colonial feminism.<sup>23</sup> Leading feminist traumatologists, such as Maria P.P. Root, echo feminist comparatism’s recognition of and celebrating of diversity:

Because of the role that feminist theory has played in attempting to validate the experience of persons with “other” status by sexual orientation, religious/ethnic identity etc., it seems that feminist

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<sup>19</sup> Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*.

<sup>20</sup> Spivak quoted in Higonet, "Introduction." 13.

<sup>21</sup> Nnaemeka, "Bringing African Women into the Classroom: Rethinking Pedagogy and Epistemology." 303.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 304.

<sup>23</sup> The history of feminist traumatology as a discipline and its relevance to this thesis are extensively explored in chapter one of this thesis.

theorists and therapists may be the persons most able to develop flexible models of mental health that may allow for diversity.<sup>24</sup>

Post-colonial feminist theories challenging the presumptions of universality and theory-based dominance over the 'Other' have expanded the parameters of traumatology. As in comparative literature this has shifted the focus onto silences within Eurocentric based traditions of analysis and practice. The joining of these two disciplines, comparative literature and feminist traumatology, creates a métissage in which the central similarity is based on the analysis and challenging of power structures with the goal of "creating a relational space where intersubjectivity and reciprocity become possible."<sup>25</sup>

It is the aim of this thesis to establish such a space, and to experiment with how these two disciplines can be used to craft Nnaemeka's "quilt of possibilities" through the analysis of two seemingly distinct literatures. The juxtaposition of the texts chosen for this thesis offers a testing ground for the hypothesis of creating a connection between what is a universal occurrence (the traumatising of women), and the individualised contextual creative, literary response to it.

This juxtaposition is built on the history of comparative literature, in which the establishment of grounds for comparison has been called "the permanent crisis of comparative literature."<sup>26</sup> Such a 'crisis' has been confronted by the move away from binary comparisons involving one language, continent or empire,<sup>27</sup> and has required drawing up new meeting places of cultures, languages and themes. Edward Said comments on the necessity of juxtaposing the discrepant, as it is extremely challenging to Eurocentric traditions and inclinations of comparison. In the choice of 'what to compare' Said sees the need to "move beyond insularity and provincialism...[as] an antidote to

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<sup>24</sup> Maria P.P. Root, "Resolving "Other" Status: Identity Development of Biracial Individuals," in *Diversity and Complexity in Feminist Therapy*, ed. Laura S. Brown and Maria P.P. Root (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1990). 202.

<sup>25</sup> Francoise Lionnet, "Dissymmetry Embodied: Feminism Universalism, and the Practice of Excision," in *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). 41.

<sup>26</sup> Ulrich Weisstein, "Lasciate Ogni Speranza: Comparative Literature in Search of Lost Definitions," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 37 (1989). 99.

<sup>27</sup> Such binary comparisons "obscure all the complex interweavings of cultural processes by masking the cultural and linguistic hybrids that emerge at their own limits." See Higonnet, "Introduction." 2.

reduce nationalism and uncritical dogma.”<sup>28</sup> Higonnet also asserts that the broadening of comparisons is essential as

[...] schemes that single out a language, a continent, or an empire all obscure the complex interweavings of cultural processes by masking the cultural and linguistic hybrids that emerge at their own limits.<sup>29</sup>

Badiou’s notion of *astuce*, which describes that comparativity “with the least relation guarantees the maximum of poetic universalism,”<sup>30</sup> also challenges traditional notions of what is comparable. The choices of the literary representations analysed in this thesis, one German-speaking author from Austria and one from former East Germany, and two New Zealand Māori women writing in English, have used these notions of the value that is gained from juxtaposing “seemingly disparate entities.”<sup>31</sup>

This thesis’s hypothesis, which is that the experiences of women’s psychological traumatisations contain universal aspects detectable through the comparative analysis of literary representations, is, as Haun Saussy states, an “experiment” which seeks to answer the “peremptory challenge: Why should we be interested in this encounter?”<sup>32</sup> We should be interested as the reality of psychological trauma and the struggle to conceptualise it are becoming increasingly visible in a world where local and global conflicts can be reported on and, through the means of an international media, be witnessed by people far removed from the actual site of the event. We know that horrible things happen to a great range of people, and are gradually more aware of the long-term effects on the survivors of such encounters. In this sense, psychological trauma is becoming a contemporary condition, as there is now unprecedented evidence of its contemporary and historical occurrence in large numbers of places, cultures and spheres.

Yet, while there may be this increased visibility of some types of violations that cause trauma and the consequences these have for the afflicted, there is also still a largely

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993). 43.

<sup>29</sup> Higonnet, "Introduction." 2.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Culler, "Comparative Literature, at Last," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006). 55.

<sup>31</sup> Françoise Lionnet, "Cultivating Mere Gardens? Comparative *Francophonies*, Postcolonial Studies, and Transnational Feminisms," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006). 105.

<sup>32</sup> Saussy, "Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives and Selfish Genes." 24.

undeveloped and silenced aspect in regards to the underlying mechanisms or structures that are traumatising, and the durability or replication of these in a global, historical context. Furthermore, the history of psychological investigation into trauma shows that there has been an ongoing power struggle over what constitutes trauma, both in experience, manifestation, representation and treatment. These aspects have contributed to the ongoing silencing of trauma experiences.

This is especially true in regards to people who even before encountering specific traumatic incidents have experienced silencing through oppression and marginalisation. Being already voiceless within a given culture or society, coupled with the additional burden of experiencing psychological trauma, which by its nature is the ‘unspeakable’ story, creates a strong conflict in which the challenge to express trauma becomes central. Finding a means to communicate the experience of trauma is therefore of vital importance to the person who has sustained traumatic events first-hand, or the person who has witnessed trauma.

As a reader myself I have long been affected, disturbed and intrigued by the many instances and the great range of trauma in fictional representations of women’s experiences by women writers. What has especially interested me is that traumatic experiences do not seem bound to a historical, social or cultural context, in the sense that writers from a great variety of historical and geographical locations and racial backgrounds have written, and continue to write about, women’s trauma. The questions that these extensive examples of trauma literature generate are centred around historical continuity of women’s trauma, identifiable similarities and/or differences in the representations, and the overall purpose, or meaning that these trauma stories convey in regards to the fictional, female protagonist, the female author, and the female reader.

This thesis questions the *function* of trauma fiction by women. How do the writing, reading, and the *analytical* writing about trauma, interact with the general discourse on women’s trauma in the societies contextualising the writings? Does writing fictional trauma have any kind of impact or interface with real- life trauma conceptualisation, expression and resolution, or in other words: can it contribute to a better understanding of both the things that traumatise, and the way that trauma affects women, or is fiction merely an abstract entity that has no bearing on how trauma issues are perceived? In this

regard, the questioning of the impact of reading is part of a much larger discourse of analytical theory, which poses questions about human and social learning.

The composite layers of readers' and writers' *hybridity*, the *métissage* of analytical approaches, and the *juxtaposition* of particular literary texts foregrounds the multiple interactions and kinds of polyphony which Nnaemeka calls a "powerful political act and art." What this thesis is aiming to do, foremost and principally, is to create the quilt of connections that can serve to illuminate the many facets mentioned above, but also to find a framework which explores this on a thorough and re-producible level. It thereby seeks to establish an approach that

[...] allows us to link the cultures of decolonisation, immigration, and globalization within a framework that seeks common denominators...[which] can help us go a long way toward a rethinking of the place and nature of theoretical investigation within our [comparative] discipline.<sup>33</sup>

In the first chapter of this thesis, *Women and Trauma*, the concept of psychological trauma is investigated from a socio/historical framework in order to ascertain how women's trauma experiences have been, and are, defined in historical and contemporary social discourses. The chapter analyses the sources of trauma for women, examining them through the framework concept of the 'triple trauma.' The triple trauma model focuses on three processes that are crucial to trauma: the creation and experience of the Other; the use of violence as an enforcer of difference; and the trauma of voicelessness. This chapter specifies the wounding of trauma, and links women's trauma to representational practices of writing about trauma. The last part of this chapter establishes the subject of women writing fiction about trauma, introducing the historical contexts of Ingeborg Bachmann, Christa Wolf, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Patricia Grace.

Chapter two analyses trauma in Ingeborg Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza*, and Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*, and Chapter three explores trauma in Patricia Grace's *Cousins*, and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's *Ruahine- Mythic Women*. In both chapters the framework of

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<sup>33</sup> Lionnet, "Cultivating Mere Gardens? Comparative *Francophonies*, Postcolonial Studies, and Transnational Feminisms." 105.



the triple trauma is applied against the fictional representations, as the processes of othering, the experiences of violence and the depictions of voicelessness are analysed in each text. The chapters end by linking trauma to the specific depictions of the *wounding* of trauma, comparing these to feminist theories of trauma manifestation.

Chapter four, *Transforming Trauma*, is concerned with investigating the value of writing and reading the fictional women's trauma story. The chapter engages in a comparison of representational literary strategies used by Te Awekotuku, Grace, Bachmann and Wolf, and the extent to which each work suggests the resolution of trauma, or the healing from trauma, for the female protagonists. The questions of whether and how such resolutions apply to the process of writing fictional trauma *and* reading about fictional trauma are posed by comparatively analysing the issues of trauma resolutions for the writers, readers and societal context of each narrative. The chapter ends with a hypothesis about how these fictional trauma representations fit in with and/or support feminist traumatology's aim of using an expansive conceptualisation of women's trauma to express, heal, and ultimately change, the traumatisation of women.

It is hoped that this thesis in itself can contribute towards these aims of feminist traumatology, by providing some answers in regards to the representation of women and trauma. Furthermore, it is hoped that this thesis will help to raise some of the necessary questions which surround the reality of the perpetuation of trauma and the many, predominantly silenced and unheard, experiences of women. Any questioning of trauma, not just from the contexts that I have chosen for this thesis, but in a wider, global framework, can work towards challenging the mechanisms that underlie the actuality of trauma, and thereby become an involvement in a discourse that is crucial to human life and development in the twenty-first century.

## Chapter 1 – Women and Trauma

The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the word *unspeakable*.<sup>1</sup>

Judith Lewis Herman

### *The Concept of Psychological Trauma*

The word trauma, deriving from the Greek word for wound, represents a concept of great complexity. Originally used to describe an external injury, over time the use shifted to include the kind of injuries that remain unseen: wounds of the internal kind, wounds sustained by the psyche. As such, psychological wounding became defined as both caused by a trauma and as being trauma itself.

Wounding of any type can be fatal, yet if it is external it is easily identified and can be addressed openly, since it is obvious to anyone who has sight. Wounding on the inside is rarely referred to or seen as clearly, and never as easily addressed. The internal wounding caused and represented by trauma is indeed characterised as being the unspoken or unspeakable. It is marked as an individualistic incident that ranges outside the safe confines of most societal norms, challenging not just the afflicted but the social constructs that surround them. The experience, analysis, treatment and representation of trauma are entwined with the overarching social context. Therefore meaning of trauma has been constructed throughout history in a dual role that both reflects and shapes the frameworks that cause *and* heal trauma. This complexity is reflected in the engagement with trauma, as it is marked by elusiveness throughout the study of the human psyche, vacillating between intense analysis and complete disregard within the changing socio-political context of discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (London: Basic Books, 1992).1.

What does it mean to experience trauma, to carry it, to diagnose it and ultimately to heal it? The naming or defining of the trauma experience by people who are outside that encounter has predominantly marked the evolution of traumatology. The creation of Western medical specialists from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century fostered the development of a wide range of methods, hypotheses and conclusions, with the common denominator being the avoidance of acknowledging the role which social structure itself plays in traumatising large sections of society. The roles of power, race and gender in defining these experiences have only lately been acknowledged in the study of the psyche.<sup>2</sup> This has resulted in a history of analysing women's experiences of trauma through the ideology that constructs the Other and defines difference through a hierarchical, Euro-centric, patriarchal discourse. As such, the history of traumatology is closely linked to women's history as Other within patriarchal societies.

The naming of the wound that is trauma has therefore been a contested area throughout human history. The definition of trauma experience has been driven by the central question of how an internal wound becomes both localised and externalised. In the *ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders*, the World Health Organization recognizes trauma within the diagnostic classification of "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder", as a:

stressful event or situation (either short -or long -lasting) of exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which would be likely to cause pervasive stress in almost anyone.<sup>3</sup>

In this definition trauma is the initial (external) stressor that promulgates the onset of one specific disorder. Maria P. Root offers a broader definition of trauma that displays the double role of it as a catalyst as well as a state of mental distress, by affirming trauma to:

represent destruction of basic organizing principles by which we come to know self, others, and the environment: traumas wound deeply in a way that challenges the meaning of life.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Root declares the most "striking and integral" issue in regards to feminist critique of trauma theory "is that the initial trauma studies, from which the theory was developed, focused largely on white men." See Maria P.P. Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality," in *Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals*, ed. Laura S. Brown and Mary Ballou (New York: The Guildford Press, 1992). 231. Also Denise Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization, *The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders - Diagnostic Criteria for Research* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1993).99.

Analysis of historical and contemporary explanations for trauma occurrence, impact and treatment shows they are informed by existing hegemonic structures. As “psychiatric explanations and theories reflect the spirit of the age,”<sup>5</sup> they represent the social framework of the dominant gender, race and class. The discourse bestowed by Western medicalisation of psychology and the subsequent engagement with psychic trauma revolves around issues of power, specifically the power to give voice to the studied objects’ experience. The act of naming another’s experience has the potential to appropriate that experience, thereby moulding it into a controlled discourse of knowledge and effectively silencing, or overriding the voice of the object of study.

Within the history of trauma analysis, the voice of women naming the unspeakable has been obliterated by the voice of patriarchal knowledge. The Western development of views around mental health has utilised women as a testing ground for theories, treatment and conceptualisation of the Other, meaning the gender that is not male.

Early Medieval Western concepts of madness offer an early historical opportunity to examine this gender bias in regards to women as Other. Influenced by the dichotomy of good and evil, many people displaying psychologically “abnormal” behaviour were regarded as tainted by evil spirits and associated with the supernatural. Christian religious doctrine entrenched the development of this belief, so that by the fourteenth century madness was synonymous with evil, and women, having been declared as most susceptible to evil, were considered as being in league with the devil:

By the end of the fourteenth century a link was forged in European popular imagination between the mad, heretics (those who rejected dominant beliefs, especially dominant religious beliefs), magicians, sorcerers, women who as midwives assisted at the delivery of stillborn infants, alchemists and astrologers. These people were grouped together, as they were thought to be possessed by evil spirits, and their works were regarded as works of the devil.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality."229.

<sup>5</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, Lars Weisaeth, and Otto van der Hart, "History of Trauma in Psychiatry," in *Traumatic Stress - the Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*, ed. Bessel van der Kolk, Alexander Mc Farlane, and Lars Weisaeth (New York: The Guildford Press, 1996). 66.

<sup>6</sup> Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine*. 5.

The justification for declaring this group of people evil did not just rest on religious paradigms, but was increasingly driven by the escalating changes within the professionalisation of healing. Traditional concepts of health care were derived from models and practices that had a long history in folk-medicine, and in which women as midwives and healers played an active part. With the shifting focus of healing towards a new model centred on rationality and science, the need to take patriarchal control of this area increased. The large-scale “witch hunts”, lasting approximately from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, killing more than 60,000 people,<sup>7</sup> are an example of the most radical assertions of this control. These killings eliminated not just the women who were already displaying signs of traumatisation expressed in supposed madness, but also their potential healers, while creating a vast multitude of traumatised women, children, men and entire communities.

The escalating dominance of science and rationality fostered the extension of dichotomous models to categorise knowledge and experience such as health versus illness, insane versus sane, science versus superstition, male versus female, white versus black, and norm versus Other. Women, progressively more relegated to non-participation in the new discoveries of science and medicine, became the embodiment of what these sciences had surpassed, as stated by Darwin:

Woman seems to differ from man in mental disposition... It is generally admitted that with women the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization.<sup>8</sup>

This new, “scientific” view sought to classify mental ability in terms of the white, patriarchal hierarchy, and the above quote is telling in regards to what this meant for the non-white “lower races.” The development of scientific racism was based on the supposed rationalisation of binaries, and rested in the notion that biology is the justification for ascribed genetic inferiority and superiority. As Turner and Collinson describe, this othering in the name of science

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<sup>7</sup> The total figure of deaths has been estimated from 60,000 people to 200,000. A minimum of 75% of the victims was female. See Sigrid Brauner, *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews - the Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Press, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good - 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).19.

[...] has a long history, and it is a history with which the profession of medicine has had an intimate and influential relationship, to the extent that by the end of the nineteenth century, *race*, which is neither a science nor a disease, had become both.<sup>9</sup>

The intricate relationship involving politics, social science and biology, that was to become central to Western medicine's encounter with New Zealand Māori, and the other numerous European "race" studies of the late nineteenth century,<sup>10</sup> was therefore already becoming deeply entrenched in regards to Western science's construction of women. As the members of a "lower race," women were perceived not only as less evolved than men, but also as intrinsically different to men. Being different from the norm was imbued with negative connotations, and as part of the rationalised discourse of "exploring" and "fixing," women became a focus of attention.

With an increasing move away from religion as the dominant moral administrator, the science of medicine provided the justification of defining women as inherently flawed. By the nineteenth century the concept of the dualism between mind and body was consequential for women, as it reinforced how their "faulty" bodies influenced their "faulty" minds. The experience and expression of trauma was linked to women's bodies on every level of their being:

...menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause were important causes of mental derangement. Menstruation in all women is supposed to give rise to mental instability which may lead on to acute mania. Pregnancy gives rise to melancholia and sometimes moral perversion, perhaps an uncontrollable craving for stimulants...<sup>11</sup>

Women's natural organic processes were regarded as diseases and dysfunctions. Thus the experience of psychological distress was unavoidable for women, as was the impetus behind modes of treatment that employed the premise of such theory. Cures for these types of psychological disorders ranged from the amputation of the clitoris, recommended

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<sup>9</sup> Trevor Turner and Susan Collinson, "From Enlightenment to Eugenics: Empire, Race, and Medicine 1780-C1950," in *Main Issues in Mental Health and Race*, ed. David Ndegwa and Dele Olajide (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 1.

<sup>10</sup> From the 1870s on the study of race and racially based difference had become 'race science.' Studies on indigenous peoples in colonised countries around the world were done with a duty to "carry light and civilisation to the dark places of the world; to touch the mind of Asia and of Africa with the ethical ideas of Europe." Quote from Victorian periodical *The Nineteenth Century* in Ibid. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine*.20.

by influential German doctor Gustav Braun,<sup>12</sup> to the removal of the ovaries and the cervix.<sup>13</sup>

Central to both the construction of theory and clinical methods of intervention is the notion of control that was needed to implement and perpetuate expanding patriarchal ideologies of science and rationality, as well as of economic capitalist development and the enforcement of a vigorously gendered moral code. The creation of “woman as inherently ill” supported an economic industry that allowed the medical profession to profit from the multitude of “sick” women from the middle and upper classes.

The theory that female sexual organs and functions triggered psychological irregularities was inextricable from the need to regulate and safeguard those functions. Women’s sexuality was the backbone of the socialisation process that focused on women’s place within the home as wife and mother. The medical profession’s authority over women’s sexuality became a powerful mode of patriarchal control. Domination over reproduction was essential within the context of Western industrialisation and the extension of empirical global ideology, as expansion and socialisation of population became a key to these processes. The construction of women’s sexuality as diseased and out of their own control meant that women’s suffering, which arose from rigidly constrained social roles, became effaced by the voice of the male medical profession. The assumption that women were diseased by their biological pre-determination effectively concealed the fact that they were traumatised by their role within patriarchal society and by the medical profession itself. The assumption of an inherent pre-disposition to mental infirmity in women was a strong negator of any external sources and implications of trauma.

The history of women’s expressions of trauma is also the history of the construction of ‘woman as a problem.’ As the embodiment of imperfection, woman represented a site for ongoing masculine exploration, exemplified by Freud in his declaration that:

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<sup>12</sup> Braun invented this cure for the occurrence of “vaginismus” a condition associated with female masturbation resulting from the development of “hyperexcitability” of the uterus. See Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> These “cures” were advocated by doctors such as James Israel and Paul Flechsig, who employed the allegation of hypochondria for the women who remained unhealed by such procedures. See Ibid.

Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of femininity...Nor will *you* have escaped worrying over this problem – those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply – you are yourselves the problem.<sup>14</sup>

Freud was one of the most influential practitioners dealing with problematic manifestations of women's trauma, especially the concept of female "hysteria". Hysteria, deriving from the Greek word "Hystero," meaning womb, was used to categorise the disorders of the mind that were supposedly associated with dysfunctions of the uterus. The reluctance of many practitioners to assign this diagnosis to psychological disturbances exhibited by *men* was based on the highly gendered biological explanation for hysterical disorders, the manifestations of which ranged from paralysis to convulsions, anorexia and hallucinations.<sup>15</sup> Pre-Freudian analysis of the female hysteric predominantly revolved around the female as a spectacle, the sight of which in itself seemed to be enough to formulate psychological conclusions. Organised lectures on the subject of hysteria by doctors such as Charcot<sup>16</sup> were frequently accompanied by actual displays of women in the midst of a "hysterical fit" of one kind or another.

Sigmund Freud's initial major engagement with hysteria took the form not of a visual freak show, but the relatively extensive account of patients' dreams, memories and experiences. *Studies in Hysteria*,<sup>17</sup> co-written with Breuer and published in 1895 provided an unusual amount of contextual material of the female patients' lives, shifting the pathological emphasis away from internal biological predisposition and dysfunction, and towards external life stressors. This was a crucial development in the relationship between women's expression of trauma and the medical/psychological model, as it acknowledged the female patient's experience, and gave some credence to the impact of external sources in the development of trauma. This also established the link between an experienced trauma and consequential re-experience of it, thereby defining the importance of memory within trauma theory. The expansion of psychoanalytic theory enabled the conceptualisation of the subconscious, alongside new methods of treatment that included

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<sup>14</sup>Sigmund Freud, quoted in Ehrenreich and English, *For Her Own Good - 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*.15.

<sup>15</sup> Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine*.21.

<sup>16</sup> Late 19<sup>th</sup> century French neurologist, who used the female patients of the Salpêtrière hospital to investigate the nature of hysteria. See Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*.10.

<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer, *Studies in Hysteria*, trans. Nicola Luckhurst (London: Penguin Books, 2004).



hypnosis and actually listening to patients' life stories. The association between the telling and the hearing, or the narration of the patients' story was fostered in this process, as Freud declared this association to be important to recovery.

The other critical development arising from Freud and Breuer's initial theory was the connection between traumatised female patients and the experience of sexual abuse. Investigation into a vast number of patients' childhood memories uncovered the occurrence of sexual trauma, something Freud explored in depth in *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, where the connection between child sexual abuse and subsequent adult psychological dysfunction is made explicit. In the historical development of trauma theory this could have become an important turning point, allowing for women's experiences of patriarchal brutality and oppression to be heard and acknowledged. However, by 1897 Freud, discouraged by the disapproval of the medical community, repudiated his sexual abuse theory, stating that he now believed patients had been either untruthful, or describing their sexual fantasies.<sup>18</sup> The latter served as the basis for his subsequent theory of the "Oedipus Complex." The traumatising reality of women's lives and the existence of external sources of trauma were once again obliterated, this time by supposed subconscious dramas:

Focusing on intrapsychic reality and subjective experience crowded out interest in external reality. Psychiatry as a discipline came to follow Freud in his explorations of how the normal human psyche functioned: Real life trauma was ignored in favour of fantasy.<sup>19</sup>

Women who had been traumatised by encounters with violence and abuse were counselled that their mental distress originated from unquestionable, complex and innate processes of their own psyche, as well as that it was a subconscious desire/fantasy about abuse and violence which had occurred, rather than an actual event. The implication of this theory, that patients embodied and expressed subconscious "perverse" desires, provoked the reluctance of women to speak of traumatising abuse to the medical profession, or to even admit it to themselves. The stories about women's traumatic experiences became the

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<sup>18</sup> Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine*.23.

<sup>19</sup> van der Kolk, Weisaeth, and van der Hart, "History of Trauma in Psychiatry."55.

stories of the men who through their theorising and interpretations determined what constituted trauma and treatment for the aim of the advancement of psychiatry.

With the enduring legacy of women's somatic and psychological difference the twentieth century provided the context for evolving theories, research methodologies and treatments, alongside a steady disparity between women's and men's mental health status. Trauma sustained by women became increasingly trivialised or ignored as the definition of what constitutes trauma was shaped by the collectivised experience of the male soldiers during the First and Second World Wars, the Holocaust experience of World War Two, or the American experience of the Vietnam War Veterans. The mass involvement in violent conflict on the grand scales of World Wars One and Two led the study of trauma towards the male experience of war, gradually acknowledging the external origin of trauma for men through diagnoses such as "shell shock,"<sup>20</sup> and later on "war sailor syndrome," or "Vietnam veterans' syndrome."<sup>21</sup> The definition of male trauma, while marked by ideology about masculine physical and emotional strength, complicating diagnoses through the notion of "invulnerability" (in stark opposition to women's "natural" vulnerability), nevertheless became based around the acceptance of external sources long before women's trauma.

Post-World War Two ideology of rebuilding economic and social bases within the USA, United Kingdom and much of Europe, was founded on strictly gender-segregated labour activities and the ascendance of the nuclear family. Women's role in fostering the healing of war-torn nations resided in the production and bringing-up of children, while elevating the occupation of housework to a new level of efficiency. In this scheme there was no room for female complaints, physical or mental:

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<sup>20</sup> In 1915, British military psychologist Charles Samuel Myers linked psychological disturbances in soldiers to external experiences of war, such as the exposure to shelling, by calling the disorder "shell shock." Discarding organic factors as explanations, he declared emotional wounding from external violent experiences to be the sole cause of the disturbances. See Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

She would be bound to the home just as securely as the invalid had been – not because she was too weak to do anything else, but because she had so much to do there. Bustling, efficient – intellectually as well as emotionally engaged in her tasks – the housewife could stand as a model for all women, not just the wealthier ones.<sup>22</sup>

Supervised by male experts on child bearing, child rearing and housework, the accepted definition of mental wellbeing for women became inextricable from the picture of the happy mother and housewife. Social integration and the application of principles of management based on male expertise, experts like Dr Spock assured, would guarantee personal fulfilment for women.

Despite such an easy formula for achieving contentment, post-World War Two women became increasingly over-represented in mental health treatment and institution admission numbers.<sup>23</sup> Women were treated by mental health services and admitted to mental health institutions on the basis of suffering from a wide variety of disorders. The statistics accompanying these observations testify to women's state of mental health being much lower than men, not just in the eyes of the mental health providers, but in women's own self-assessment of their health.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that this trend has left a distinct legacy in the current western mainstream medical climate, regardless of the apparent advances in diagnosis and treatment. In this sense the historical relationship between trauma and women has meant that women are still living with the psychological and physical effects of the inheritance of being considered "unhealthy" as the official definition of health is based on the male counterpart, or based on a constructed stereotype of what a woman ought to be like.

This western history of the development of trauma concepts is relevant to indigenous Māori women, as the British colonisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand was accompanied by these medical ideologies, which subsumed and overrode any local traditions of mental health and healing. A pre-European system of Māori health was based on being holistic

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<sup>22</sup> Ehrenreich and English, *For Her Own Good - 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*.142.

<sup>23</sup> Gove & Tudor ascertained gender imbalances (1973) within admission and treatment rates in all areas of mental health care. See Pauline M. Prior, *Gender and Mental Health* (London: Macmillan, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> The gendering of mental health is supported by research establishing that women and men define their own mental health very differently, with women more likely to consider their distress an 'illness' and mental health practitioners "medicalising" women's problems more than men's. See Ibid.

and integrated, which meant that the health of the mind was not seen as separate from the rest of the body.<sup>25</sup> States of mental disorder were ascribed to imbalances of the whole person and their environment, or actions within their environment,<sup>26</sup> as well as relating to the corporeal and the spiritual, and were treated as such. The healers of the mind and body were the *tohunga*, who “derived their healing power from the gods and were endowed with the ability to mediate between the supernatural and human behaviour.”<sup>27</sup> The classifications of mental distress were not gender specific, but distinguished as constituting a reaction to an event.<sup>28</sup> It was the role of the *tohunga* to diagnose and heal the afflicted person, which rather than focusing on symptoms looked at the cause of the distress, reiterating the centrality of the equilibrium of soul and body:

The psyche must be in balance with the overall make-up of a person. When a person is doing something wrong *mauri* [life principle] depletes in them and the body, as an expression of the *wairua* [spirit/soul], declines in health.<sup>29</sup>

The history of an indigenous “psychology” was initially ignored by the colonial powers, and then, later on seen as a threat in its lack of “scientific” vigour. The “Tohunga Suppression Act” of 1907 made practising traditional Māori healing against the law; forcing healing underground while trying to assimilate Māori into a Western based health system.<sup>30</sup> Similar to what happened within the Western context early on, in regards to the denigration of holistic and traditional manners of healing and the people who specialised in

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<sup>25</sup> Mason Durie, "Mental Health Patterns for the New Zealand Māori," in *Handbook of Culture and Mental Illness: An International Perspective*, ed. Ihsan Al-Issa (Connecticut: International Universities Press, 1995). 332.

<sup>26</sup> Central to Māori theories of human well-being is the concept of *tapu* and *noa*. Durie describes *tapu* in relation to health: “A person, article, building or area was regarded *tapu* if it had been declared “special,” requiring respect, often avoidance, and a cautious approach. It was an effective social sanction which guided not only interpersonal interactions but also relationships with the environment. A breach of *tapu*, in which a person wittingly or unwittingly failed to treat a *tapu* person or object with sufficient respect, invariably led to misery, and sometimes to death. A violation of these laws of *tapu* was considered a major cause of illness.” Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Tereki Stewart, "Historical Interfaces between Māori and Psychology," in *Mai I Rangiatea*, ed. Pania Te Whaiti, Marie McCarthy, and Arohia Durie (Auckland: Auckland University Press: Bridget Williams Books, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Stewart describes the classification between “abnormal” (such as *pōhauhau*, *pōrangi* and *wairangi*) and “normal” reactions to a stressful event. (Stewart, 77) These will be explained further in relation to representations by Grace and Te Awēkotuku in chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Timoti Robinson, *Tohunga the Revival - Ancient Knowledge for the Modern Era* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2005). 229.

<sup>30</sup> The cited justification for outlawing *tohunga* was the high mortality rates from the tuberculosis epidemic. The result of this was to “totally denigrate Māori views of health and mental illness.” Durie, "Mental Health Patterns for the New Zealand Māori." 334.

it, Māori were now exposed to new and traumatic influences on their mental health through the process of colonisation, while simultaneously being deprived of their skilled healers.

The formalised beginnings of Western psychology were institutionalised in an academic sense with the opening of the Otago University's chair in Mental and Moral Philosophy in 1871.<sup>31</sup> With the initial emphasis on experimental and academic research, Western psychology had marginal impingement on Māori communities, until New Zealand psychology developed an interest in social psychology in the 1930s.<sup>32</sup> It is from this period on that Māori became objects of research, which ascribed a host of "abnormalities" to their studied behaviour. Furthermore, these academic assumptions took an important role in "informing colonial administrators as to the handling of 'native' peoples."<sup>33</sup>

The earliest observational study done within a Māori community (Beaglehole 1946) cited as its aim to analyse "Māori character structure," with the view to informing social policy. The results of this study are telling by its absence of cultural knowledge and its inscription of "abnormal" behaviours, which are directly linked to "deficits in character/personality."<sup>34</sup> Further studies that followed (e.g. Malcolm 1951, Ritchie et al, 1956-1957) were based on these ideas of specific lack in Māori, with the view that the assimilation of Māori to a Pākehā culture would fix the problem.<sup>35</sup> As with the history that has already been explored in which Western psychology is based on the othering of the object of study, the twentieth century application of it to Māori had a detrimental, rather than a healing effect.

Far from contributing to the enhancement of Māori community or psychological wellbeing, the 'Rakau' studies were in part responsible for the perpetuation of a cycle of victim-blaming and cultural deprivation initiatives over which Māori had minimal control.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Stewart, "Historical Interfaces between Māori and Psychology." 75.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 76.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 80.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 84.

<sup>35</sup> Malcolm concluded that Māori would be better off without their cultural structures and practices and adopting a Pākehā lifestyle, as her study "seems to indicate that under certain conditions the Māori do not need to retain...the marae, the meeting house...as an active institutions in his culture." See Malcolm quoted in Ibid. 86.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 88.

The colonial import of psychology was detrimental for Māori women in that it retained its history of seeing women as an Other, while also being objects of “abnormality” based on race and culture. This background has led to a contemporary over-representation of Māori in certain psychological diagnostic categories,<sup>37</sup> which contrasts to earlier low rates of mental illness in Māori. It is noteworthy that this mirrors the international experience of indigenous peoples with psychological institutions and research, where the “overdiagnosis of severe mental illness and the perception of more impairment” is a contemporary feature in Europe, Great Britain and North America.<sup>38</sup>

The acknowledgement of psychological trauma via evolved diagnostic tools such as the *DSM4 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)* has arguably provided a vehicle to legitimately voice the trauma experience through the diagnoses of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The *DSM4* also attempts to take into account cultural factors (e.g. the appendix dealing with culture specific syndromes and cultural distinctions), yet despite this the “failure to appreciate the impact of culture” has informed the definition and treatment of trauma.<sup>39</sup> What rigid diagnostic classifications like this have not provided is a true recognition of the personal, political, socio-cultural and historical discourses that shape the occurrence, expression and treatment of trauma. The narrowness of what is considered a traumatic event, justifying the expression of symptoms concurrent with the diagnosis of PTSD, is distinguishable in the description of the victim who:

...experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Studies of admission rates to psychiatric facilities show that prior to 1970s Māori were under represented, while converging with non- Māori from 1970-74, and from 1975 onwards exceeding non- Māori from some age groups and categories, such as schizophrenia, affective disorders and other psychotic disorders. See Mason Durie, *Mauri Ora - the Dynamics of Māori Health* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001). 18-20.

<sup>38</sup> Ihsan Al-Issa, "Culture and Mental Illness in an International Perspective," in *Handbook of Culture and Mental Illness: An International Perspective*, ed. Ihsan Al-Issa (Connecticut: International Universities Press, 1995). 33.

<sup>39</sup> See Durie, *Mauri Ora - the Dynamics of Māori Health*. 22-23.

<sup>40</sup> Mark Zimmerman, *Interview Guide for Evaluating DSM-IV Psychiatric Disorders and the Mental Status Examination* (Philadelphia: Psych Press Products, 1994).50.

The emphasis on physical harm, in the form of an acute “life and death” situation, excludes all types of traumatising experiences of a more insidious and indirect nature, such as those inflicted by gender, race or political oppression and stereotyping. The stories told by sufferers of mental distress are once again categorised and contained within the language of pathology.

Post-nineteen-seventies evolutions of feminist theory and, more recently, post-colonial theories within psychology<sup>41</sup> posed a challenge to trauma studies, highlighting the bias of the predominantly white, male-centred history of scientific conceptualisation. New approaches have reconstructed theory, research methodology and treatment in line with the acknowledgement of socio-political frameworks. Central to this is the recognition of trauma as a particularly subjective knowledge, and therefore impossible to divorce from environmental contexts.

Seeking to de-pathologise women’s experience and expression of trauma, feminist psychology reinforces the ‘normality’ of post-traumatic stress responses, emphasising that a multitude of symptoms are in fact reasonable survival tactics, allowing the victim to function within society.<sup>42</sup> Widening the notion of what is traumatic, while acknowledging the contributing role of ideology to the sustaining of trauma and the subsequent expression and treatment of it, has effectively opened the doors to previously unheard voices of traumatised women:

Feminist theory allows for the validity of “stories” other than the American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) story of trauma, which was primarily created by men and is about men’s experiences.<sup>43</sup>

By working towards ensuring that all women’s experiences of trauma are considered as important and as legitimate as the trauma sustained by males (e.g. soldiers), feminist psychology allows traumatised women to express their trauma openly, instead of encoding it in somatic manifestations of illness and dysfunction. The recognition that trauma is

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<sup>41</sup> Culture-based idioms of mental distress have started to be articulated by a burgeoning participation of Māori in psychology within the past twenty years. With this has come some acknowledgement of the loss of traditional knowledge and applications of healing, and a revival and incorporation of this into new structures being developed in regards to Māori mental health. As stated by Stewart: “The 1990s have taken these developments further and there appears to be a more concerted effort to develop what some have termed a ‘kaupapa Māori psychology’; that is a psychology of interest and relevance to Māori people.” Stewart, “Historical Interfaces between Māori and Psychology.” 91.

<sup>42</sup> Root, “Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality.”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.230.

collective and widespread, as well as subjective and personal, is inherently inclusive, thereby challenging the notion of a female and racial Other.

The centrality of this approach is that it attacks trauma at the core, which is silence. By highlighting the forgotten history of women's trauma, by voicing the experience of trauma for the voiceless othered, an inclusive, feminist approach to reading the stories of trauma provides a framework from which to consider the sources, nature and forms of representation of women's trauma. Readdressing the need to verbalize experiences that have no language in the mainstream of Western social structure, analysing the discourses that have shaped the creation of 'the mad,' 'the insane,' and 'the hysteric,' asserts the "central dialect of psychological trauma," which means, as Lewis-Herman states: "Murder will out."<sup>44</sup>

### *Sources of Trauma for Women*

The analysis of the history of trauma and women provokes the questioning of the sources of pain, the events, mechanisms or issues that historically and currently inflict or at least influence the trauma experience for women. As the previous investigation into the historical manifestations of trauma has indicated, the complexity of invisible wounds sustained by humankind make an analysis of the sources of trauma complex. In the trauma encounter there are multitudes of experiences, various psychological and physiological ramifications that can possibly be grouped together in their origination from a wounding to the 'self,' but only perilously grouped together as a cohesive 'whole.' Women are not merely traumatised by singular incidents or experiences, but rather by a series of events and circumstances that are both personal and political, and individualised and collectivised.

The exploration of how women experience and express trauma needs to consider the varying impact of social, political, cultural and ideological factors. While these influences are diverse and dependent on variable factors, this model proposes that there are three overarching forces within women's experiences of patriarchal systems that contribute towards psychological trauma. These are: the experience of patriarchal construction of the Other; the experience of violence as enforcer of patriarchal ideology;

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<sup>44</sup> Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*.1.



and the experience of being rendered voiceless. The use of these overarching discourses aims to broaden the concept of trauma (in terms of what is considered traumatic), while presenting a framework that situates wounding for women in patriarchal societies. This model of a 'triple trauma' involves discourses that are distinct, yet overlapping, as they shape the experience of trauma for women. They are distinct in the sense that each represents a concept that is abstract and ideological, yet forms and informs the actuality of experience. Othering, violence, and prohibition of expression, are discourses that stand alone, yet are inseparable from each other in the macrocosm of humanity. As such, they represent broad categories within a large host of the external sources of trauma.

### *The Creation of the Other*

A mere glimpse into history, or the examples already cited in regards to mental health, will highlight the legacy of patriarchal ideology's construction of a hierarchy that determines categories for inclusion and exclusion. Inclusion in the top rungs of this hierarchy is based foremost on gender, race and a range of variables including economic status, religion, sexual orientation etc. As already discussed in the history of the concept of trauma for women, the construction and perpetuation of hierarchical categories has created division of the 'standard' (white male) and the Other. The notion of the Other is based on divergence located foremost in the body (as in gender and race) and secondly in individual or social transgressions.

The construction of difference is foundational to women's experiences of trauma as it is embedded in every fibre of experience, choice, and most importantly within the sense of a primary self through the female body. Difference means a deficiency of the body (and consequently the mind) in the sense that to be fully efficient the body has to be male and white. The explanation of femaleness as fundamentally negative, or as Aristotle states "by virtue of a certain *lack* of qualities, we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness,"<sup>45</sup> is one of the elementary sources of wounding for women as it constitutes our history and shapes the contemporary. Or as Sandra Harding asserts:

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<sup>45</sup> Dorothy L. Sayers, "Are Women Human," in *The Gender Reader*, ed. Evelyn Ashton-Jones, Gary A. Olson, and Merry G. Perry (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000).53.

...gender difference is the most ancient, most universal, and most powerful origin of many morally valued conceptualisations of everything in the world around us...As far back in history as we can see, we have organized our social and natural worlds in terms of gender meanings within which historically specific racial, class, and cultural institutions and meanings have been constructed.<sup>46</sup>

Using the body to locate difference as a foundation of meaning has resulted in the process of othering coming to seem “as primordial as consciousness itself.”<sup>47</sup> Categories of ‘human worth’ within the white patriarchal hierarchy assert a naturalised order, in which race plays a crucial role as it either naturally conforms to the norms of the hierarchy, by being ‘the same,’ or otherwise is automatically the Other. For the non-white female this means that she is doubly othered, based on her difference from the male norm and her difference from the white norm through this discourse of creating an inferior. The trauma that is central to the socialisation based on gender and race is what Maria P. Root calls “insidious trauma,” meaning the trauma that is “associated with the status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power.”<sup>48</sup>

The discourse of power is central to the process that determines what the female body (and mind) is or is not, as the notion of control underscores the control of the Other. With the power to name, to classify and contain comes the power to regulate essential aspects of the female body, in particular control of sexuality. Some examples of such control have already been discussed in the history of trauma, and, while some of the *mechanisms* for control situated in patriarchal violence will be discussed in the next section, there is a strong component of othering that occurs in the instances where female sexuality goes beyond patriarchal control, such as in the case of non-heterosexual sexuality. The need to confine women’s sexuality results in transgression as an open challenge to the constructs of patriarchy; a challenge that is answered again by the discourse that constructs difference and abnormality: “To grant women sexual agency

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<sup>46</sup> Sandra Harding quoted in Rhonda Hammer, "Colonization, Dialectics, and Borderland Feminisms," in *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism - a Critical Feminist Perspective, Culture and Politics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002). 168.

<sup>47</sup> Sayers, "Are Women Human." 54.

<sup>48</sup> Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality." 241.

would be to threaten not merely socially constructed gender norms but the discursive matrix of power itself.”<sup>49</sup>

The “discursive matrix” of power therefore relies on a complex process of allocating power based on the notion of same versus different. Being defined as Other based on uncontrollable, biological attributes constitutes a foundational source of insidious psychological trauma that interacts with the physical, psychological and interpersonal ‘enforcing systems’ that seek to control patriarchal hierarchical ideology.

### *The Enforcer of “Difference:” Violence*

As a source of trauma the role of violence has become pivotal to the development of traumatology. The practice of violence as implementing an overriding ideology of a hierarchy dependent on the construction of Others, is a practice that can be found within the history of many cultures and social systems. While mechanisms of othering are numerous, the use of violent force is central in ensuring that ideology becomes enacted within social structures. Any ideology based on hierarchy involves not only the construction and subjugation of Others, but also the essential fear of the Other’s ability to disturb or usurp the hierarchy. By constituting a major source of trauma for women, violence as an enforcer of othering centres on a range of justifications that seek to allow and explain violence against women as part of the social structure. Throughout the various manifestations of violence against women there are recurrent themes used as validation or motivation for violence, themes that are inextricably bound to the ideologies from which they occur. These themes encompass the obligation of violence to control the social order, employing the rhetoric of protecting women from themselves, and the necessity of using punishment against women for supposed social transgressions.

Justifications of violence also rely on rigid gender construction, as in the process of enforcing women’s creation as Other, men are able to construct their own prescribed masculinity and role within patriarchal hierarchy. The concept of women as economic chattels, property that is ‘owned’ by patriarchy in a symbolic way, and individual men in an actual way, is central to this notion of control. The baseline of fear of the Other is the

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<sup>49</sup> Tamsin Wilton quoted in Gabriele Griffin, *Heavenly Love? Lesbian Images in Twentieth-Century Women's Writing* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993).2.

subversive motivation for using violence in a way that emphasises and locates difference within the female body.

In this sense, where violence enforces a hierarchy that seeks to exclude women there is a near universality of the mechanisms of violence, which is evidenced by contemporary figures that “globally, one in three women will be raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.”<sup>50</sup> While the social, cultural, and political contexts of the occurrence of violence marks the experience, violence plays a key role as a source of trauma in all social systems that are dependent on the oppression of an Other. Any social system that organises on the basis of the notions of power and strength, with a hierarchical structure determining who is the strongest, becomes implicated in executing this ideology through violence. As such, violence against women transcends time frames, geographical regions or cultures – it is expressed again and again, whether it is within the age-old practice of African/Middle Eastern ‘clitorodectomy,’ Chinese foot-binding, India’s widow burning ‘Sati,’ the mass of women and girls raped and sexually abused every year, the many Iraqi women killed during just one month of war, or the growing number of domestically and sexually abused Māori women and girls.<sup>51</sup> The outcome is, as Liz Kelley states, “a difference in degree and not in kind.”<sup>52</sup>

The expression of violence against women is embedded in the artificially created and culture - specific notion of the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ in regards to gender spheres. In Western culture for instance, the evolving construction of women’s sphere as being essentially domestic and private in contrast to the male-dominated public sphere, has meant that the justifications for certain types of abuse are entrenched in the notion of ‘women’s place.’ This distinction has been particularly influential in the classification of the importance, severity and occurrence of certain types of violence, which in turn has had much impact on how the trauma derived from this has been acknowledged and treated. As a source of trauma the occurrence of violence is situated in this spectrum ranging between the private and the public. This is not a claim that the experiences within this range are universally the same, however, by incidence and relevance to women’s trauma there are several discernible modes or faces that constitute violence

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<sup>50</sup> Gloria Jacobs, "Not a Minute More - Ending Violence against Women," (New York: United Nations Development Fund For Women, 2003).6.

<sup>51</sup> Kathie Irwin, " Māori Feminism," in *Te Ao Marama: Regaining Aotearoa - Māori Writers Speak Out*, ed. Witi Ihimaera (Auckland: Reed, 1993). 302.

<sup>52</sup> Jayne Mooney, *Gender, Violence and the Social Order* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000).95

against women, namely: 'domestic' or partner-violence, sexual abuse, torture, and war-violence.

Contemporary statistics show that generally violence is an "endemic problem extensively affecting and involving the majority of the population,"<sup>53</sup> meaning that no one is exempt from at least indirectly being involved/engaged with violence of some form, even if it is merely by existing within the same framework of social organisation. In the case of violence against women it is currently described as a "major cause of death and disability for women" and "a public health emergency."<sup>54</sup> For women the situation is determined by the social construction of the Other, which has created a target and hence vulnerability for women. What has made women more susceptible to being on the receiving end of certain types of violence is not merely the differing levels of participation within the physical enactments of violence, but a gamut of gender related conditions. These include physical and figurative vulnerability, compounding effects of violence and social concealment of risk.<sup>55</sup> This overall vulnerability therefore does not just affect women within obvious conflicts, such as war-zones, but instead runs through all levels of existence and societies.

On the continuum of violence against women, one of the manifestations of private violence occurs from the abuse of women by their male partners. The naming of this abuse as domestic violence places it distinctly inside the sphere traditionally most associated with being a woman. Every age brings with it the multiple changes that influence the kind of social interactions and reactions that determine public and private manifestations of violence. While early twentieth-century research tended to focus on public violence, particularly combative, political and criminal violence, more contemporary research has focused on the private occurrences of violence. The analyses of violence as a source of trauma therefore take place within the wider context of theorising on humans and violence during history.

Evolving feminist discourse and social theory have contributed to the increasing visibility of the incidence of violence that is perpetrated in a domestic sphere, discussing

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<sup>53</sup> Violence therefore can be defined as one of the most substantial contributor towards problems in Western society. See Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Jacobs, "Not a Minute More - Ending Violence against Women." 8.

<sup>55</sup> Young quoted in Mooney, *Gender, Violence and the Social Order*. 33.

it as a symptom or by-product of an overarching ideological system that involves the oppression of women. These analyses have highlighted not merely the contemporary ideological context of abuse, but have situated domestic violence as a consistent feature of societies throughout the ages. Despite the ‘behind-doors’ dynamics of domestic violence, in the search for explanations of contemporary society, historical and feminist researchers alike have been able to locate domestic violence through the vast social, economical, religious and political changes defining history.

The ideology on which partner abuse has rested is the same ideology that constructs difference, in the notion of women needing to be controlled. Instances of this type of control demonstrate the link between the occurrence of this kind of violence against women, and the physical and symbolic mechanisms that support it. In an early example of Western legislative support of ‘wife-beating,’ Roman law granted husbands the legal right to kill their wives for various reasons, such as adultery.<sup>56</sup> Similar legislative protocol can be seen again in an example centuries later, in the writings of influential twelfth-century Italian theologian and legal scholar Gratian, who declared:

A man may chastise his wife and beat her for her own correction; for she is of his household and therefore the lord may chastise his own...<sup>57</sup>

In the modern-day analyses of domestic violence, researchers have found that this social rhetoric of wife-abuse justification often translated into action by the institutions of social structure, citing these early cases to highlight an important issue in domestic violence against women: namely the socially constructed and institutionalised silencing of abuse. Salisbury provides examples of medieval punishments for women who spoke out against being brutalized, such as the sentencing to the cucking stool, “a chair situated in a public place upon which a woman held to be a nag would sit in shame with her feet bare and her hair down,”<sup>58</sup> while Ruff reports on 17<sup>th</sup> Century court-ordered imprisonment of women complaining of abusive husbands in order to set “an example to wives who question their husband’s authority.”<sup>59</sup> The physical and symbolic shaming of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.133.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Eve Salisbury, Georgiana Donavin, and Merrall Llewelyn Price, eds., *Domestic Violence in Medieval Texts* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).7.

<sup>59</sup> Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500-18000*, ed. William Beik and T.C. W. Blanning, *New Approaches to European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).134.

women who were victims of domestic violence served to perpetuate the private and unheard nature of abused women, something that is important to the contemporary analyses of the relationship between trauma and this type of violence.

The justification of the use of domestic violence that exists within the legislative rhetoric and practices, as well as cultural modes of meaning-making, is based on the belief of the woman being inherently at fault or unsocialised in behaviour appropriate for a woman. This means the control methods used by males are portrayed as essentially natural. The rationalization of husbands abusing their wives is based on the premise of patriarchal hierarchy that places the male in a role of superiority and governance. Both elements of this hierarchy imply the right, and in fact, the responsibility of the male to educate and correct the members of his household in a bid to maintain social order. This authority/responsibility is akin to the hierarchy inherent in the state, where a monarch governs his subjects. Another early example of this parallel is stated in thirteenth-Century English law, where a woman killing her husband commits “petty treason” for attacking the monarch of the household.<sup>60</sup>

The maintenance of social order was the responsibility of every man on all levels of social existence, and domestic abuse as a tool for maintaining social order could thereby be legally, morally and socially warranted on that basis. The social bond of upholding patriarchal order via this hierarchy relied on the interplay between the head of household and the social structures, including religious constitution. Religious ideas of household governance set up another parallel between the head of the household and authority by aligning him with the ultimate of moral authority, God Himself: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord...”<sup>61</sup>

Not only was it “masculine” to assume the role of governance over women through violence, but it was also considered a most desirable attribute for women to accept this violence in the spirit of a virtuous wife and “Christlike soul.”<sup>62</sup> Women were conditioned to be as accepting of violence as Christ was in his martyrdom. This notion of women’s acceptance of domestic violence as a virtue remains deeply entrenched within many cultures, as much as the idea of ownership and governance pertains to the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.10.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted from Saint Paul in his letters to the Ephesians in Ibid.132.

<sup>62</sup> Salisbury, Donavin, and Price, eds., *Domestic Violence in Medieval Texts*.13.

male role in relation to women. To this day, men who abuse their partners seek absolution of responsibility by claiming justification within a concept of masculinity that allows men to be violent in order to educate and chastise women. Many modern-day stories told by abused women are reminiscent of the stories told in the legislative, literary and social documentation of domestic violence from hundreds of years ago. The incidence, milieu and sanctioning of this violence remain closely linked and connected to historical records. Domestic violence continues:

Violence against wives will remain commonplace until we muster the will to examine how closely it is bound up with some of the most cherished values and most powerful cultural traits. The wife beater is not out there somewhere on the margins of society and history. He is instead our close companion. He is at the centre of our culture. He is at the centre of our past.<sup>63</sup>

On the continuum of violence against women, the incidence of sexual abuse can be considered ‘semi-private,’ in that it occurs both inside the domestic realm and outside it. Complicated by this ambiguity and the social and cultural ideologies around women’s sexuality, the sexual abuse of women, much like the partner-abuse, has been a constant feature throughout history. However, while the issue of sexual abuse can be found within a vast array of sources throughout history, it has only been within the past thirty years that feminist analysis has recognised the history of rape and addressed it accordingly. Susan Brownmiller imagines a re-creation of the time in history when man recognised his physical ability to force woman to have sexual intercourse:

Man’s discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe. From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical social function.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> David Peterson Del Mar, *What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence against Wives* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996).174.

<sup>64</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986).5.



The ‘critical social function’ of rape centres around the concepts of social control, economic ownership, and male/female gender construction. The importance of women’s bodies to all these notions is that women do not own it, and that female sexuality is a pawn in the game of securing power. An example of this can be found in the history of the many cultures that use women’s sexual status (meaning virginity) as a commodity that secures position and wealth for families as a whole. The practice of ‘selling’ virgin daughters into marriage makes an important connection between women’s sexuality and economics. This concept of women as an economic item for exchange extended beyond the marriage contract, enabling the use of rape as a ‘payment’ for social, political or moral debt or retribution.

The concept of owning women and their bodies that shapes the legal discourse of domestic violence is also detectable in the Western legal discourse around rape. Central to this is the relationship between crime and punishment, which in the case of the history of rape has very much relied on the marital or pre-marital status of the victim. For instance, Brownmiller cites the punishment found in the Hebrew bible for raping an unbetrothed virgin away from the confines of patriarchal protection (outside the city walls) was to pay the girl’s father the equivalent of her ‘bridal price’ and wed the victim; whereas the rape of a *betrothed* virgin resulted in the stoning to death of the rapist, on account of the spoiling of economic goods and loss of honour of the victim’s family.<sup>65</sup> Women’s relationship status as one of the prime determinants for dealing with rape spans the centuries throughout the evolution of social attitudes and social institutions,<sup>66</sup> as the often socially prevailing beliefs in women’s inherent complicity in and responsibility for being raped resulted in legalised persecution of the rape victims, either on their own, or alongside the punished rapist. The implication of fault is moved from the offender to the sexually assaulted woman, an example of which can be found in a seventeenth-century English jurisprudence manual, which stated that:

...[if] a woman at the time of the supposed rape do conceive with child by the Ravisher, this is no Rape, for a woman cannot conceive with child except she doth consent.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid..

<sup>66</sup> For instance in 1532 the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, the “law code of the Holy Roman Empire” continued to declare the rape of a woman as a “property offence”. See Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500-18000*.146.

<sup>67</sup> Merrill D. Smith, ed., *Sex without Consent - Rape and Sexual Coercion in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).28.

The importance of consent in regards to the justifications of rape have been consistently significant, as even within contemporary abuse the evaluation of the raped woman's age, class, marital status, race or location of the assault are used to determine how much at fault the victim is. This social and legal process of implicating the woman constitutes what Nancy E. Snow calls a "second rape" for victims.<sup>68</sup>

Throughout the history of rape the social and cultural constructions of women, whether depicting them as meek and helpless or as charged with sexual provocation, have been directly related to the multiple constructions of the rapist's masculinity and reason for raping. The age-old construction of woman as "lustful daughter of Eve,"<sup>69</sup> whose every move and action is imbued with sexual meaning, is central to the male assertion that rape is not rape, but rather something that the woman, by her sexuality encoded in signals ranging from dress-sense to behaviour, has 'asked for.' Men's reaction to this presumed provocation is inexplicably reflective of his manhood, as masculinity is measured by sexual performance as much as sexual chastening of the opposite sex.

The concept of forced sex as fashioning masculinity is a gendered statement about what it means to be male, such as in the "public" display of this during gang rape, where masculinity is affirmed and shared as a way of male bonding. Gang rape as a "rite of passage" can be found in a variety of cultures and times,<sup>70</sup> such as in anthropologist Margaret Mead's studies of the 'Plains Indians' of the United States where gang rape was used as a socially accepted practice for dealing with 'bad' women, while Robert F. Murphy's research into the Mundurucu Indians of Brazil found that women's violations of the extremely segregated gender roles resulted in being "immediately punished by dragging the offender into the underbush and submitting her to gang rape by all the village men."<sup>71</sup> The display of sexual domination and the social control validate masculinity through a witnessed 'performance' within gang rape, surviving well into the

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<sup>68</sup> Nancy E. Snow, "Evaluation of Rape Shields," in *A Most Detestable Crime: New Philosophical Essays on Rape*, ed. Keith Burgess-Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>69</sup> Else L. Hambleton, "'Playing the Rogue" - Rape and the Issue of Consent in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," in *Sex without Consent - Rape and Sexual Coercion in America*, ed. Merril D. Smith (New York: New York University Press, 2001).28.

<sup>70</sup> For example in sixteenth-Century Spain and Italy, where groups "often composed of journeymen and artisans' sons" who broke into women's houses and raped them; or in fifteenth-Century Dijon, France, where it was estimated that as many of half of the young men of that city partook in a gang rape at least "once in their lives". Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800*.142.

<sup>71</sup> Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*.316.

present context among ‘gangs’ and other bonded groups of men. Picking women, who have socially transgressed, are on the fringes of society, are especially othered or merely without male ‘protection,’ has consistently been used as validation of gang rape by providing punishment in front of an audience of other men, if not society as a whole. The ideology behind rape is here very similar to the rhetoric that declares wife beating as a justified punishment for bad behaviour of women.

The overlapping intricacies of the formation/reinforcement of male and female gender roles are always present in the rhetoric justifying rape, and in the history of sexual violence. The construction of the rapist as a social controller, violating women for ‘their own good,’ brings in the construct of the ‘heroic’ within this exhibition of highly valued attributes of masculinity. The heroic construction of the rapist relies on the idea of women’s sexuality as being defined by the duality of the virgin/whore concept. Women exhibiting what are considered to be explicitly sexual traits are seen as ‘wanting’ to be raped, while the opposite characteristics elicit the justification that women must be ‘enjoying it against their will,’ a notion that has done much to foster the idea of the ‘rape fantasy’ within the construction of the heroic rapist as sexual liberator.

The myth of the heroic rapist is implicated in the use of rape during the overtly violent context of war. The construction of the warrior as a hero fighting for a cause intermingles with the before - mentioned features central to sexual violence, such as rape as an economic transaction, rape as a punishment, and moreover, rape as a weapon of territorial and symbolic conquest. The strategic mass raping in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda are contemporary examples of this. Sexual violation of women as a strategic injury to the enemy reinforces rape as another ‘heroic’ act, alongside killing etc, which is executed under orders and for the larger aim of victory. As such, rape has accompanied organised conflict of any kind, whether it is religious, territorial or ideological, thereby being deeply embedded within the culture of war. What has remained constant are the multi-faceted justifications that are based on the ‘necessity’ of certain actions, such as killing and raping, to ensure the ultimate aim of war: to win. Therefore, despite contemporary legal interventions, rape in war remains “a familiar act with a familiar excuse,”<sup>72</sup> which, unlike many of the other after effects of war, has a much less visible presence. What is significant in regards to rape or any of the other forms of violence that

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

occur within war for women is that they set the scene for further manifestations of violence, which play themselves out in a post-war arena.<sup>73</sup>

Sexual assault in history and in the contemporary context knows no boundaries based on women's age, physical attributes or external circumstances. If, as Brownmiller states, "any female may become a victim of rape,"<sup>74</sup> and while historical and contemporary statistics support this, then the public face of rape goes hand in hand with the private fear of women across all spheres of societies. In this sense, the violence of sexual assault is charged with the potential to be ever-present, a clear threat that women live with at least sub-consciously. It is an enforcer of othering that is played out partly in the public spheres of ideology and social institutions, and privately in the psyche of victims and non-victims alike.

A further manifestation of violence against women that has had a different level of engagement within the public/private dichotomy is the violence of torture and persecution. Torture encompasses both the public and the private, as the political situation in which torture and persecution occur are the public contexts of torture. As such, aspects of torture are often deliberately made public as this serves a punitive function and a means of social control. The private component of torture is contained in the female-specific violence strategically committed against women, and the silencing of those experiences. While torture and persecution are not exclusive to women, there is a definitive genderisation of torture, which uses the ideology of othering as its basis, as it employs a range of violence against women. Genderisation occurs in two ways: firstly by specifically targeting *women* as objects of torture, and secondly by making the torture specific to the female body.

Examples of contemporary experiences of gender-specific torture are the military dictatorships of Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, and during the 'national liberation' process of Guatemala and El Salvador, where vast numbers of women were imprisoned, tortured and killed. The mechanisms of othering are integral to the incidence of torture as the terrorist patriarchal state "strengthens male-dominated institutions and intensifies

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<sup>73</sup> "Violence and the threat of violence against women do not end when the peace accords are signed. The violence of a regime begets a general culture of violence." See Meredith Turshen, "Women's War Stories," in *What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa*, ed. Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1998).8.

<sup>74</sup> Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*.316.

misogynist ideology, resulting in an increase in the discrepancy between female and male emotional states and interpersonal behaviour.”<sup>75</sup> While the torture experiences of women are similar to men’s in the sense that they rely on calculated psychological and physical domination, the specificity arises from torture related to rape, sexual abuse and impregnation. Contemporary instances of this are the mass raping of women in former Yugoslavia, an essential strategy in ‘ethnic cleansing.’ The torture of women here relates to and amplifies the violence that is already inherent in society: the attack on the female body and its reproductive functions:

Rape in this context receives overt political sanction and thus moves beyond the image of an isolated criminal act to one of a normative act of social control carried out on behalf of a collective goal.<sup>76</sup>

A historical example of Western and Christianity-based targeting a gender specific group for torture and persecution are the centuries of ‘witch-hunting.’ This, on the surface religiously driven, organised persecution lasted approximately 300 years (from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries) within the Western world.<sup>77</sup> One of the elements connecting these occurrences varying throughout time and place is that the ideological framework behind the elimination of ‘witches’ was acted on not just by agencies of official structures (the church, the government etc), but also by the people from the communities themselves. The public element of this violence is therefore contained in the visibility of the punishment and torture of accused witches, as well as by the level of public participation. Though it can be argued that the public spectacle of the witch-hunts is comparable to the historical context where punishment was perceived as a public event of entertainment, the public collaboration in witch hunting is extremely telling in terms of the ideology of fear and the Other.

The fear of the Other and the concept of women and their bodies occupying the binary role of representing sexuality and innocence was a central component of the creation of the witch. Christianity’s association of evil with women based on their insatiable

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<sup>75</sup> Nancy Caro Hollander, "The Gendering of Human Rights: Women and the Latin American Terrorist State," *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996). 3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>77</sup> Margaret Denike, "The Devil's Insatiable Sex: A Genealogy of Evil Incarnate," *Hyapatia* 18, no. 1 (2003).11.

sexuality, coupled with the common view of women's inferior, feeble mind and body made them the perfect target for the devil to recruit:

The reason is easie: for as that sexe is frailer then men is, so is it easier to be intrapped in the gross snares of the Devil, as was ever well proved to be true, by the Serpents deceiving of Eve at the beginning, which makes him the homlier with that sexe ever since.<sup>78</sup>

Fifteenth-century witchcraft inquisitors Kramer and Spencer make a very obvious statement about women's sexuality when they declare: "all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which in women is insatiable."<sup>79</sup> The assumption of women's inherent badness, which needs to be punished, is the same assumption that provides justification for the other forms of violence committed upon women. Witch-hunting and punishment was highly regulated beyond the legislative sense, reaching as far as church and state approved manuals on torture of witches, such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486). This guide features particular torture methods which were guaranteed to uncover a witch, placing the justification for using torture within the framework of the 'public good' by declaring that torture is necessary since "...the safety of the community may lawfully allow a smaller evil that a greater may be avoided."<sup>80</sup> While the example of witch-hunting is culture and time specific, this type of statement asserting that the means justifies the outcome represents a common theme to all the incidents of violence covered throughout this chapter: which is the fear and anxiety of women as Other, and the multiple manifestations of patriarchy seeking to gain control of this anxiety.

The types of violence on the continuum of public to private and the examples of experiences provided in this chapter are just the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of the history and social function of violence against women. What unites these often-diverse experiences, plucked from disparate cultures and times is that the violence is gender-specific (women are violated *because* they are women and in ways which are physically and psychologically particular) and detectable throughout human history, as we know it.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> J. & M. Rodker, ed., *Malleus Maleficarum* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1969).233.

The overlapping nature of violent experiences for women means that women do not experience violence exclusively in just one or the other sphere, but encounter exposure on multiple levels. Theorising about violence against women has shown that it is the change in significance and visibility that has altered throughout the times, rather than the actual incidence.<sup>81</sup> The shift from the initial feminist acknowledgement of violence which involved ‘hands-on’ care for affected women and grassroots activities, to the 1970’s academic linking of power and violence, to the more contemporary theoretical interest in masculinity and violence, have all contributed to the increasingly multi-faceted visibility of violence against women. While this has gone a long way to assist understanding as to the power mechanisms of violence in relationship to masculine identity in a patriarchal social structure, the theorisation of violence, as Gill Allwood declares, remains underdeveloped.<sup>82</sup> The lack of development seems to be particularly noticeable in the treatment of, and theoretical framework around the intersecting occurrences of violence against women, and the recurrent, overlapping justifications of it. The framework of a paternal hierarchy and the associated functions of ‘educating women’ and ‘defending women’ are instrumental in shifting the responsibility of violence to women, asserting that the above patriarchal responses are necessary because women represent the Other. This makes for an uncomfortable synonymy between women and violence that has profound influence on the wounding of trauma.

### *The Trauma of Voicelessness*

The ability to have a voice, meaning the socially constructed process of having the power to speak literally or symbolically, to engage in discourse and be heard, is central to human experience as a vital component shaping our innermost being:

Voice is part of the physical world, and its psychological power comes from this fact: that it transposes what has no physical manifestation – the psyche, the soul, ourselves...<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.73.

<sup>82</sup> Gil Allwood, *French Feminisms Gender and Violence in Contemporary Theory* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

<sup>83</sup> Carol Gilligan, "Wild Voices: Fiction, Feminism, and the Perennial Flowering of Truth," in *Analyzing the Different Voice - Feminist Psychological Theory and Literary Texts*, ed. Jerilyn Fisher and Ellen S. Silber (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998). x.

When we look at voice in regards to women and trauma, the symbolic and actual disenfranchising of the Other's voice is a fundamental result of the experiences that have been covered in this chapter. The circumstance of being rendered voiceless is a twofold condition, in that the occurrence of voicelessness through othering and violence is both a *source* of trauma, and a *symptom* of the wounding process. The trauma of voicelessness is built on the foundation of the other two elements of the model, which provide a basis of experience that require expression, while simultaneously rendering expression impossible.

The previous discussion of the wounding inherent in the naturalisation process of othering has highlighted the extent to which the patriarchal declaration of 'truths' about women and their place in society is destructive and damaging to the soul. In order to speak for the Other, the Other has to be silenced. This is where voicelessness constitutes a source of trauma as the Other is excluded from the patriarchal processes that "have constituted the production of knowledge and became arbitrators of the truth."<sup>84</sup> To be excluded from the telling of the truth of one's life and experience, to instead have it told from an 'outside' perspective, is wounding to the psyche which, according to Julia Kristeva, "represents the bond between the speaking being and the other, a bond that endows it with moral and therapeutic value."<sup>85</sup> If patriarchal violence and the construction of the Other are part of a dialectic that creates and appropriates a specific, non-inclusive truth, then the telling of all other truths becomes close to impossible. Women are wounded by this exclusion that seeks to speak for them, as they forego the process of articulated and acknowledged self-definition and self-discovery.

Voicelessness as a symptom of traumatic wounding originates from the enforcing actions of othering, namely the experience of violence. To live through one or multiple encounters with violence is to face what Lewis Herman in the opening quote of this chapter describes as the *unspeakable*. What complicates the expression of the wounding of violence is not merely that the psychological pain renders one wordless, or that there is no common language to describe what has happened, but also that the Other's exclusion from structures of meaning-making has literally resulted in being without a language that can tell of these things. While the Other exists outside language, in the

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<sup>84</sup> Pamela Abbott and Claire Wallace, *Gender, Power and Sexuality* (London: Macmillan, 1991).xiii.

<sup>85</sup> Julia Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).4.



sense of being located within the definitions of overarching the power structures, there is no language that readily gives voice to oppression, as in terms of the dominant ideology *it does not exist*. The language that describes the world is not the language of women's making – hence the finding of a voice to relay experiences that officially do not exist has been a historically ongoing struggle for the Other. If the wounding of trauma is derived from the structures that define and create boundaries of meaning making, then women have no access to tell the stories of their experiences in that language:

When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child)[non-white], she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable.<sup>86</sup>

The implications of this two-fold position of voicelessness as part of the formation and manifestation of psychological trauma are extremely significant, as the ability to articulate trauma experience is the factor that initiates a transformation that asserts a level of control over one's own narrative, and paves the way towards the healing of that trauma.<sup>87</sup> Voicelessness as a source of trauma is inextricable from the other two sources elicited by the practices of othering and violence. As such, the analyses of voicelessness within the model of the triple trauma attests to the importance of expression in that:

... finding a voice that has been lost, meaning swallowed, buried deep within oneself, held in silence; finding a way to say what could never be said because there were no words or no possibility of being heard, or because speaking was too risky, too dangerous... Both literally and metaphorically, finding a voice brings one into relationship.<sup>88</sup>

### ***The Nature of Trauma: The Wound***

As already indicated in the previous sections, trauma wounds by destroying safety, structures of meaning and structures of the self, thereby permanently altering “one's

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<sup>86</sup> Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. 8.

<sup>87</sup> “When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery.” See *Ibid.* 1.

<sup>88</sup> Gilligan, “Wild Voices: Fiction, Feminism, and the Perennial Flowering of Truth.” xi

personal construction of reality.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore the wound that is trauma is one that potentially attacks the very core of the self, resulting in confusion about the ‘world-order’ as well as to the order of the self. This wounding, based on the three major trauma sources of othering, violence, and voicelessness, manifests itself through various and differing means and levels. These manifestations depend on individual and social circumstances, and once again highlight the complexities of determining, or measuring internal wounding in a consistent or unifying manner. What we do know is that for women the wounds of trauma come in many forms:

Anxiety, panic, depression, multiple personalities, paranoia, anger, and sleep problems; tendencies towards suicidality, irritability, mood swings, and odd rituals; difficulty trusting people and difficult relationships; and general despair, aimlessness, and hopelessness.<sup>90</sup>

What we also know is that women in general have a higher incidence of the expressions of psychological wounding, historically, as we have already discussed, but also currently, where women’s health worldwide features as affected in many areas:

With the modern understanding of epidemiology it is well established that women have a higher prevalence of depression, dysthemia, deliberate self-harm, seasonal affective disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic attacks, social phobias and eating disorders...than men.<sup>91</sup>

The wounding sustained through the process of being othered is a fundamental wounding that can create a psychological split, demarcating the conflict between what one is told about oneself, and what one knows to be an innermost truth. If the genderised/racialised body defines essential difference and determines practices of social control and regulation, then the impact of body-constructed othering is imbued with both explicit and implicit ramifications. To be told, by a “*naturalised* knowledge based on a

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<sup>89</sup> Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality." 229.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Dora Kohen, "Introduction," in *Women and Mental Health*, ed. Dora Kohen (London: Routledge, 2001). 3.

series of cultural inferences,”<sup>92</sup> that our being is defective, poses a very real risk to mental health.

The process of internalising what it means to be Other occurs when the lie about deficiency and powerlessness becomes the truth within us. The life-long conditioning of gender and race specific negative messages creates a deep and sometimes irreconcilable conflict between those messages and the self. In order to accept and integrate imposed social constructions a denial of self, or of truth about self, is unavoidable. For the mind that has been oppressed by tales of negative difference based on the body, it is that very same body, which enacts the conflict. As Judith Butler states, “ part of what is so oppressive about social forms of gender [othering] is the psychic difficulties they produce,”<sup>93</sup> while Frantz Fanon describes the internalised “whitening” of a black person as creating a “massive psychoexistential complex.”<sup>94</sup> To turn on the self is to produce life and soul-destroying hatred against oneself, which in effect mirrors what the oppressors do:

Men have committed the greatest crime against women. Insidiously, violently, they have led them to hate women, to be their own enemies, to mobilize their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of their virile needs.<sup>95</sup>

The psychological wounding that arises from the ideological enforcer of violence also involves the process of internalisation. This means that the fear elicited by violence becomes internalised and enacted through the body in a variety of ways. Living with fear alters a person’s life experience permanently. Contemporary research has focused on the effect of the experience of violence in the enduring microstructural neuronal modifications, influencing the central nervous system and guiding the victim’s response to subsequent life experiences, such as minor stresses.<sup>96</sup> The state of vigilance that accompanies the life of fear precludes safety, trust or normality of experience.

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<sup>92</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).xxii.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.xxv

<sup>94</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Markman (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1968).14.

<sup>95</sup> Helen Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *Feminisms - an Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1975). 349.

<sup>96</sup> Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality."233, 246.

Disempowerment and disconnection are two of the basic feelings expressed by survivors of trauma.<sup>97</sup> The issue of disempowerment felt after violence is impacted on and complicated by the experience of powerlessness in regards to being othered, thereby constituting the cumulative effect of trauma for women.

Powerlessness becomes amplified by voicelessness, as the inability to articulate “lies at the heart of psychological trauma, creating a sense of utter terror.”<sup>98</sup> The terror of being silenced comes from having no recourse to engage in the processing of trauma, or of any experience for that matter – one is trapped in the silence without escape. The wounding that arises from the effects of voicelessness is central to the nature of trauma as the state of being silenced comprises the ‘backbone’ of the manifestations of wounding, or as Kristeva states, “Whatever their difference, all the symptomatology share a common denominator – the inability to represent.”<sup>99</sup> The nature of trauma is that the wounds, just like the stories behind the wounds, will make themselves known, will attempt to articulate themselves through the body if the voice cannot or is not allowed to tell the story of trauma. The wounding of trauma comes full circle here as the three major sources of trauma merge with one another to reside in women’s minds, acted out in the body in the ways which have been charted by the analysis of women’s ‘insanities’ discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The wounding of trauma is hidden within the litany of pathologized symptoms, that are expressed when the traumatised voice cannot speak.

### ***Women, Trauma and Representation***

The story of traumatology, thus far outlined, can also be interpreted as the account of humans, male and female, trying to articulate their stories. The stories inherent in the history of psychological suffering are as diverse as the people communicating them, yet the theme of the destruction of security<sup>100</sup> is connected to the core of all expressions. The

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<sup>97</sup> Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*.133

<sup>98</sup> Gilligan, "Wild Voices: Fiction, Feminism, and the Perennial Flowering of Truth." xii.

<sup>99</sup> Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul*. 9.

<sup>100</sup> Maria P. Root defines ‘security’ as encompassing the dimensions of the physical, psychological and interpersonal realm, all of which are vital to a person’s mental wellbeing. See Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality."

most important, and possibly the most innate aspect of trauma, is the motivation of the sufferer to:

... find meaning in the experience so that she or he can reorganize the experience and integrate it into her or his perception of self, and self in relationship to others and the world. The greater the number of dimensions of security that are shattered, the bigger the task of reorganization.<sup>101</sup>

Re-organising through telling the story of trauma involves the mental processes that create a structure or a context to the trauma, allowing the storyteller to make sense out of chaos and disorganisation. To achieve this, all the layers of life have to be laid bare, thereby exposing the mechanisms of othering, violence and voicelessness. Furthermore, the telling of trauma results in an audience, or listeners of some kind, which act as the witness to the trauma and the uncovering of it, shattering the victim's position as silenced and isolated. Re-organisation after trauma always constitutes the re-reading, or re-interpretation of social and personal contexts, determining the re-telling. This re-telling is vital in that it requires the "translat[ion of] intense emotions and perceptions related to the trauma into communicable language,"<sup>102</sup> meaning that from voicelessness language has to be created to express the unspeakable. It also means that the re-shaping of the experience is in the hands of the storyteller, thereby subverting the powerlessness of their trauma experience.

The emphasis on making trauma stories heard facilitates the healing intrinsic to such visibility. Expanding on psychodynamic principles that it is "necessary to reexperience cognitive and affective memories associated with the original trauma,"<sup>103</sup> telling one's story, and having it heard are determined as critical factors to the trauma healing process. The hearing of the shared trauma story provides the essential need for external validation within the context of human relationships. If disconnection is a fundamental consequence of trauma, then the connection that is made through the teller/listener dynamic is vital. In the contemporary, Western milieu this need is addressed by the psychological counselling relationships of therapists and their clients, survivor groups, and other therapeutic relationships where 'testimony' is central. Throughout history and cultures the expression

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.260.

<sup>102</sup> Alexander Mc Farlane and Bessel van der Kolk, "Trauma and Its Challenge to Society," in *Traumatic Stress - the Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*, ed. Bessel van der Kolk, Alexander Mc Farlane, and Lars Weisaeth (New York: The Guildford Press, 1996). 27.

<sup>103</sup> Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality." 234.

of traumatic experience has been conveyed in a multitude of ways, through song, ritual, art and other meaning-making practices and ways of accessing voice.

Writing is one of the many tools that have been used to communicate the trauma experience. For the re-shaping of ‘organising principles’ writing, meaning the act of constructing a narrative to work through trauma, has been particularly useful as:

...the declarative memory we use to impart order to temporally distributed experiences is fundamentally narrative, consisting of scripts, event structures or story schemas.<sup>104</sup>

The intrinsic act of ordering a story into narrative, a connected sequence of events with characters, timeline, and plot, constitutes the act of creating new order, interpretation and meaning. Using writing to find a voice has resulted in numerous autobiographical or testimonial narratives in which the trauma survivor relives her experience and finds her voice. Another manifestation of the trauma narrative has been the act of fictional writing as a means of representation. The role of ‘creative writing’ has not been to produce strictly autobiographical re-construction of trauma, but rather as a means to organise trauma through the representational context of literary constructs. As such, it is the fusion of inner consciousness, outer experience and a search for self-definition supporting the creative process, and enabling such representation. Creativity is therefore a tool for reorganising an experience to take on a form that externalises the internal ordeal. In order to externalise internal knowledge, the process of ‘meeting’ the trauma, occurring both consciously and sub-consciously, has to be undertaken by the creator. This means that the role of the psyche in creativity is one that can be seen to bridge the path between the known and the unknown, as well as between the acceptable (in both, social and personal sense) and the disruptive. Telling one’s story has the potential to articulate and give validity to the things within us that are excluded from expression via ‘ordinary’ discourse and language. Creative storytelling can convey the stories of trauma not otherwise expressible.

Creative literary trauma representation does not necessarily undertake the telling of one’s own story, as throughout history writers have depicted traumas that they have not directly experienced themselves. This second-hand representation of trauma can result in a change

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<sup>104</sup> Robert A. Neimeyer and Heidi M. Levitt, "What's Narrative Got to Do with It? Construction and Coherence in Accounts of Loss," in *Loss and Trauma - General and Close Relationship Perspectives*, ed. John H. Harvey and Eric D Miller (Philadelphia: Brunner - Routledge, 2000). 402.

to the underlying power implications of the voicing of trauma. Representation of trauma, just like the conceptualising and the experience of trauma, is therefore imbued with a multitude of social and political ramifications, or as Kalí Tal states: “Representation of traumatic experience is ultimately a tool in the hands of those who shape public perception and national myth.”<sup>105</sup>

The development of the self-authored trauma story runs parallel to the history of psychology and women’s trauma in the sense that the importance of women giving voice to their own trauma, thereby liberating many non-fictional writings, has been a fairly contemporary acknowledgement. For women writing about women’s trauma in a fictional arena the path to representing these experiences has been long and complex, due to women writers’ own status as being considered as a voiceless Other. What is central to this complexity is that women disclosing women’s trauma are essentially transgressing into a taboo area, as the act of representing trauma throws light on the social processes of othering and the violent mechanisms that enforce them. This means that the literary trauma narrative can access and subvert some of the foundational ideological systems that need to remain covered in order to be sustained. In terms of feminist analysis, the prospect for disruption of patriarchal social norms through writing about trauma is immense. As an act of resistance, fictional writing can enable marginalised voices to participate in discourse, or as bell hooks states in regards to the Other and creative expression: “Story-telling becomes a process of historicization. It does not remove women from history but enables us to see ourselves as part of history.”<sup>106</sup>

As voicelessness, or the Other’s non-participation in historical discourse, is essential for the process of othering to remain unchallenged, the obstacles to such creative telling by women have been considerable. Exclusion from socially accepted forms of meaning-making through artistic construction is a principal feature in the history of women and literature. Women seeking to connect to the experiences of women through expression in writing have been limited throughout the ages by the same patriarchal ideology that has enabled the constructed social role found in the study of trauma. Here again, the concept of biological determinism has been instrumental in excluding women from participation in discourse. Women’s primary role as reproducers, with ‘faulty bodies’ and ‘faulty minds,’

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<sup>105</sup> Kalí Tal, *Worlds of Hurt - Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, ed. Eric Sundquist, *Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). 19.

<sup>106</sup> bell hooks, "Feminist Politicization: A Comment," in *Toward a New Psychology of Gender*, ed. Mary M. Gergen and Sara N. Davies (New York: Routledge, 1997).538.

facilitated the exclusion from education and hence the official knowledge industry, of which literature evolved to become a part of. As well as a creative outlet, literature developed politically as an institution which “is embodied primarily in education and publishing [also] ‘literature’ is a cultural practice involving the writing, reading, evaluation, teaching and so on of the literary canon.”<sup>107</sup> As such, literature functions as a social and cultural apparatus that is part of reproducing the ideology of creating the Other.

Historically, women were not granted an official part in the practice of constructing meaning through literature, or analysing meaning through authorised, evaluative reading. Women’s (and especially non-white women’s) traditional exclusion from higher, or desirable patriarchal education provided the impetus for exclusion from creative ventures such as literature, since if women did not know anything worth knowing, then how could they possibly contribute to transmitting cultural knowledge through writing? The role of knowledge as a specific, white, masculine domain empowered the genesis of art to become the epitome of patriarchal interaction with their own knowledge. Patriarchal appropriation of representational systems has had implications not just on who is allowed to express, and in which way, but also on how the consumers of representational compositions read literature.

This means that women writers have had a long history of ‘working around’ their own otherness and voicelessness. This resulted in the suppression of traumatising experiences, either because the acknowledgement of the unspeakable was truly impossible in terms of remaining sane while living in the patriarchal social order, or as a necessity to being published, having a readership and participating in the discourse of literature. Women writing about trauma throughout history have often done so by creating ways to embed, or bury the Other’s stories within a palimpsest of socially accepted literary narratives. Literary trauma engagement holds the same tensions that shape trauma for women in general, which is the simultaneous struggle to accept the given ideology and to protest against it. This is also the struggle between concealing and disclosing the sources of trauma.

The development of women writing about trauma in literature has in many ways paralleled the development of feminist traumatology, in that the issue of women’s articulated experience has become the essential element that not only facilitates the path towards healing, but also holds the potential for individual and social change:

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<sup>107</sup> Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).6.



...the age-old signal of psychological liberation, the wellspring of art and political resistance, has become the centrepiece of feminist psychological theory...with the realization that freeing the human voice unsettles the foundation of patriarchy.<sup>108</sup>

The connection between the 'freeing of the human voice' and the ideologically disruptive element has affected literature in that it has increasingly shaped twentieth-century writing and reading by women. For women writing about trauma, this freeing of voice is central, whether the female author is writing about first-hand experiences, or encasing the many, or just one, specific witnessed female trauma into a fictional narrative. The uncovering by contemporary feminist analysis of the hidden trauma narratives in the history of women's writing and the burgeoning of contemporary women writing about trauma has provided an entry into the historical perspective on women and trauma experiences. It has enabled insight into the mechanisms of othering *and* the strategies that fictional woman writers have used and continue to use to get beyond their own othering through the voice.

The longstanding attempts of women to construct forms to convey their own or their collective trauma highlight the question of the *impact* of creative trauma narratives by women. What can be said for certain is not that the 'telling of truth' is generic, simple or easily generalised into what constitutes 'women' in regards to the experience of trauma, but instead, that analyses of the trauma story, the storytelling process, *and* what that process means in terms of liberating the Other opens up the possibility of:

... interpreting the way in which, within discourse, the feminine finds itself defined as a lack, deficiency, or as imitation and negative image of the subject, [this] should signify that with respect to this logic a *disruptive excess* is possible on the feminine side.<sup>109</sup>

The possibility of a disruptive excess inherent in women's trauma literature is an important notion, as it addresses the trauma of being an Other, the trauma of being constructed as voiceless in terms of creating literature, alongside specific traumas of patriarchally structured violence and hierarchy, experienced by individual and/or groups of women. The disruptive excess is the voice of storytelling women, attempting to give voice to all that is unspeakable, in all of those areas. The concept of the disruptive excess is also

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<sup>108</sup> Gilligan, "Wild Voices: Fiction, Feminism, and the Perennial Flowering of Truth." ix.

<sup>109</sup> Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine," in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1995). 126.

a starting point for analysis of the meaning and impact of women's trauma narratives. If the telling of the sources and experiences of trauma for women negates one of the prime features of trauma, the aspect of voicelessness, and if this act is potentially healing as well as subversive of traumatising mechanisms, then what does that mean in terms of the different ways women represent their (and other) trauma in fiction, or the relationship between writer/writing and reader/reading? Is it, as John Harvey proposes, that:

...the storytelling approach to dealing with major loss highlights the idea that *loss becomes gain* as we heal and particularly as we use our losses and what we learn from them to contribute to others who also suffer...<sup>110</sup>

And does this mean that this gain is applicable to both writer and reader of *fictional* trauma, and if so, to what extent respectively? Furthermore, what is the relationship between exposing, integrating and perhaps preventing trauma that is represented in literature by women, and what are the variants of this in regards to differing cultural and social contexts? Is the "commitment to truth telling and thus the first step in any process of self recovery"<sup>111</sup> the basis of fictional trauma stories by women, which can be applied to writer, fictional characters and reader?

The relevance of the fictional trauma narrative to the trauma experience is an issue of importance, as the incidence of trauma and the representation of it have stood alongside each other throughout time, place and history. Trauma is a subject that is impossible to ignore in either the development of feminist psychology or the analyses of women's writing. The search for answers to the above questions is an ongoing process, which will liberate women's trauma from the realm of the unspeakable and utilise it for what bell hooks calls "collective unmasking."<sup>112</sup> A way of resistance and the telling of personal truths.

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<sup>110</sup> John H. Harvey, *Perspectives on Loss and Trauma - Assaults on the Self* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002).257.

<sup>111</sup> bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005).11.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 17.

## *Women Writing Trauma*

This thesis will contribute to the process of answering questions about trauma by analysing how four women writers represent trauma in fictional writing during the latter half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century. The writers and their works are case studies, selected from a vast number which could be explored across many cultures, times and places. They have been chosen because they have as much in common as they are different from each other, raising questions of whether there is a continuum of *how* women write about trauma, and in which way this is visible across time and culture. All of the authors write from inside social and cultural contexts in which at least one, if not several major sources of trauma frame the author's own life experience and become reflected within their writing. The authors are also writing during periods of significant social changes as results of particular histories of trauma, times when the addressing and negating of these traumas became unavoidable.

The Austrian author Ingeborg Bachmann's novel *Das Buch Franza*, which she began writing in 1966, will be analysed alongside another German speaking writer, Christa Wolf, from the former German Democratic Republic, whose novel *Kassandra* was first published in West Germany in 1982. On the other end of the spectrum, in regards to time and place, are two Māori authors from Aotearoa/New Zealand writing in English: Patricia Grace, whose novel *Cousins* was published in 1992, and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, who published her collection of stories titled *Ruahine – Mythic Women* in 2003.

For the German-speaking authors the history of repeated wars, especially the German Nationalist Socialist led World War Two and its social, political and economic consequences is one of the most significant trauma frameworks, or contexts. In Ingeborg Bachmann's Austria, the history of Austria as one of Germany's closest allies from World War One onwards, meant that national identity was shaped by "violent actions against groups defined as outside the national, racial or ideological collective." Austria's "Anschluss," or collaboration with the German Nationalist Socialist state from 1938, shaped Austrian fascism and anti-Semitism,<sup>113</sup> leading to Austria's major involvement with the violence committed by the Third Reich holocaust and war. The killing of European civilians, around six million Jews and five million non-Jews,<sup>114</sup> during combat,

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<sup>113</sup> Post World War one, "Austrian fascism and anti-Semitism was at the heart of national life, led by young men but abetted by much of the population." See Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).214.

<sup>114</sup> Rita Steinhardt Botwinick, *A History of the Holocaust - from Ideology to Annihilation* (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004).xxi.

in death and concentration camps and through other initiatives of the National Socialist regime, involved Austria in many significant ways. The overthrow of the Nazis by the Allies in 1945 made it necessary for Austria to distance itself from Germany, and to develop a separate national consciousness. In terms of post-war life in Austria, while the impact of the war was enormous and painful for the country, the official rhetoric, which suggested that Austria had been a victim of German National Socialism, rather than a co-perpetrator, meant that the process of social “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” (coming to terms with the past) was marked by repression and denial:

Austria, however, depicted by the politicians of the world as one of Hitler’s victims, is faced with the intolerable necessity to absolutely deny itself.<sup>115</sup>

Many Austrians, for whom the denial of the truth about their country’s past impeded the ability for trauma to be addressed, let alone be resolved or healed, carried this intolerability. Coming to terms with a past that in official rhetoric did not exist made it intolerable not merely on the basis of this denial, but furthermore on the basis that many of the ideologies and social practices from this past were not required to change. Trauma from this context of Ingeborg Bachmann’s history is marked by its position as unvoiced, disclaimed and/or justified.

Living in Germany as a child during the Second World War, Christa Wolf grew up in the context of the Nazi ideology that relied on the “terror against the other (pacifists, feminists, homosexuals, Jehovahs Witnesses and above all Gypsies and Jews) [which] started immediately after the Nazis had come to power.”<sup>116</sup> From the background of the atrocities and the German defeat of the Second World War, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the place where Christa Wolf chose to live after the war, emerged as a socialist state. The German Democratic Republic sought to create a new history for itself. The idea of differentiation existed not just between the GDR and the post-war Federal Republic of Germany, but also between the histories of these two newly separated countries. In this case the public rhetoric of a long-standing resistance and anti-fascism

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<sup>115</sup> “Österreich jedoch, von seinen Politikern der Welt als ein Opfer Hitler’s vorgestellt, steht vor der unerträglichen Nötigung, sich selbst ganz und gar zu verleugnen.” Jean Améry quoted in Stephanie Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).25.

<sup>116</sup> Stefan Berger, "Inventing the Nation - Germany," in *Inventing the Nation*, ed. Keith Robbins (London: Arnold, 2004). 114.

on which the German Democratic Republic was founded, can also be interpreted as the creation of a 'separate history' for the Germans of the GDR in that the state:

...never accepted responsibility, or felt a need for its government and citizenry to atone, for the holocaust. Following Marxist theory, the GDR presented fascism as the last phase of a degenerate capitalism from which the Communist Party had liberated the German "masses," who were now engaged in building a socialist-society with a perfectly clear conscience.<sup>117</sup>

Trauma became framed by highly constricted and regulated state rhetoric and mechanisms, to which the construction of an Other, meaning non-GDR Germans and their history, was central. The denial of truth in this immediate post-war period equates the denial of trauma, and again, as in the Austrian context, allows for the mechanism of violence and othering to continue into the future. The German-speaking writers Bachmann and Wolf both originated from social systems in which the sources of trauma are undeniable, yet the speaking of the truth of experience is not encouraged. The experience of trauma is marked by the characteristics of othering and voicelessness; a voicelessness that is significant in terms of how the future is shaped by the expression (or lack of expression) of trauma.

For the indigenous New Zealand writers Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awakotuku, the history of the colonisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand constitutes the most important context of the trauma experience. Māori history in Aotearoa began with Polynesian sea navigation primarily from the East Polynesian Islands leading to the early settlement of New Zealand/Aotearoa during the thirteenth century.<sup>118</sup> Habitation of Aotearoa became widespread, covering both north and south islands, expanding its population to approximately 110,000 people by the eighteenth century, the time during which Māori would have their first contact with European colonisers. 1769 marked the arrival of the British ship Endeavour under Captain James Cook, following on from the brief visit of the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman in 1642. The discovery and reporting of the valuable land and sea resources of Aotearoa encouraged the expanding British colonisation

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<sup>117</sup> Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction : War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).168.

<sup>118</sup> 800 AD has been cited as the date for Māori settlement in some literature, yet more recent carbon dating has disputed this date and " a decision to trace such settlement from the 1200s is more soundly based on the evidence currently verifiable." See Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003).48.

process that took place with the arrival of sealers, foresters, traders, missionaries and other settlers. This increased the Pākehā (non- indigenous) population from 2000 in 1840 to 470,000 in 1881, hugely outnumbering the dwindling indigenous Māori population of 46,000.<sup>119</sup>

The 1839 Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) was drawn up by the British and signed by many of the Māori Chiefs, which guarantees Māori “the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands, villages and treasures,” and giving Māori “Tino Rangatiratanga”<sup>120</sup> (sovereignty) in exchange for exclusive land sale rights to the British Queen and her representatives. Nevertheless, Māori, affected by violent British land confiscations, wars, inter-tribal land disputes, cultural erosion and strong susceptibility to Pākehā diseases<sup>121</sup> continued to decline in population numbers and land ownership. By 1891, only 120 years after the start of European colonisation, the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa made up only 10% of the population, while their land ownership was reduced to 17%<sup>122</sup> of the whole country, prompting Archdeacon Walsh to comment on the inevitability of Māori extinction:

The Māori has lost heart and abandoned hope....when once the vital force has fallen below a certain point he died from the sheer want of an effort to live; so it is with the race. It is sick unto death, and it is already potentially dead.<sup>123</sup>

The decreasing social structure, access to resources and increasing mortality of Māori in some sense suited the ideological process of British colonisation, as it had the coloniser

...delude himself into thinking he had created a unified nation state of one people whereby amalgamation of the races would resolve once and for all the problem of the Māori.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.231.

<sup>120</sup> Māori version of Treaty of Waitangi. See Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle without End* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990). 90-97.

<sup>121</sup> The absence of diseases such as chickenpox, measles, rubella, scarlet fever and influenza in Aotearoa resulted in severe epidemics with high mortality rates among Māori. See Ibid. 80.

<sup>122</sup> King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. 258.

<sup>123</sup> Archdeacon Walsh “The Passing of the Māori”, in *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* quoted in Ibid. 258.

<sup>124</sup> Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle without End*.10.

However, the “problem” of the Māori did not go away, nor did the indigenous population of New Zealand die out as predicted by Walsh. The Māori continued to live, never again to be the majority population of their homelands, or to own even a quarter of the lands and resources that were once theirs as tangata whenua (local people). Living through the twentieth century presented additional challenges of two World Wars, urbanisation and a nearly complete loss of te reo Māori, the Māori language. The voicelessness associated with the trauma of colonisation was therefore literal for Māori, as social and governmental resistance to acknowledging and articulating the impact of colonisation continued well into the twentieth century.

As with the Austrian context, denial and/or justification of trauma played a key role in Aotearoa, where the public myth of ‘sameness’ (“we are all New Zealanders”) was used to cover up the reality of a violent history resulting in the ongoing difference of Māori, experienced in every sphere of life. For both Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, the personal context of trauma is situated within a legacy of colonial trauma, the consequences of which became increasingly harder to ignore, yet it was largely silenced by the very structures that constituted the source of the trauma. As with the German-speaking writers, trauma as a contextual experience of the authors’ history is deeply embedded by the mechanisms of othering, violence and voicelessness.

The historical and social backgrounds of the four writers, whose work will be explored in the following chapters, provides a general context that allows an entry point into the study of trauma within their fiction. Writing from within these contexts about fictional experiences of trauma provides a canvas for the application of the questions that have been raised throughout this chapter. In examining the fictional trauma of Ingeborg Bachmann, Christa Wolf, Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, the focus will be on the links between these diverse representations as to how othering, violence and voicelessness are connected to the depictions of trauma. These texts are analysed as examples of whether the fictional engagement with trauma can indeed become an intrinsic, and structurally challenging, freeing of the female voice.

## Chapter 2 - “With the narrative I make my way into death”<sup>1</sup>

### Trauma in Ingeborg Bachmann’s *Das Buch Franza* and Christa Wolf’s *Kassandra*

I have thought about it before, where does Fascism begin? It does not start with the initial throwing of bombs, nor with the terror, which one can report in any newspaper. It begins with the relationship between a man and a woman. Here in this society there is always war.<sup>2</sup>

Ingeborg Bachmann

#### *Introduction to the Texts*

The above quotation from the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann provides an entry into the study of trauma as it conveys a specific view of trauma, which takes it away from traditional notions of war-time activity, and into the area of gender specificity. With this view, Bachmann highlights what came to emerge as one of the major themes throughout her career as poet and novelist, namely the search for the ‘Ursprung’ (origin) of fascism and violence through the engagement with women’s trauma.

Bachmann, born in 1926 in Klagenfurt, Austria, had her first short-story “Die Fähre” published in 1946. Her writing developed to range from poetry and “Hörspiele” (Radio Plays) to social and political reportages. In 1963 Bachmann announced her intention to produce a series of interrelated stories called “Todesarten” (Ways of Dying). Bachmann introduced one novel initially, the concept of which evolved into a series of connected literary works that she described as “studying and charting the ways of dying” during a reading in Berlin in 1966:

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<sup>1</sup> “Mit der Erzählung geh ich in den Tod.” Own translation. Christa Wolf, *Kassandra* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001). 5.

<sup>2</sup> “Ich habe schon vorher darüber nachgedacht wo fängt der Faschismus an. Er fängt nicht an mit den ersten Bomben, die geworfen werden, er fängt nicht an mit dem Terror, über den man schreiben kann, in jeder Zeitung. Er fängt an in den Beziehungen zwischen einem Mann und einer Frau. Hier in dieser Gesellschaft ist immer Krieg.” Own translation. Ingeborg Bachmann, *Wir Müssen Wahre Sätze Finden. Gespräche Und Interviews* (München: Piper, 1991). 144.



[They are] narrating the crimes that are being perpetrated today. About the virus of crime which after twenty years is no less operative than during the time in which murder was the order of the day, commanded and permitted.<sup>3</sup>

The first text of the project that was made public by Bachmann in 1966 was a reading from the work in progress that became *Das Buch Franza*. Although thematically much of Bachmann's poetry and narrative writing was connected to the project, it was not until 1971 that the first completed novel of the Todesarten project was published in the form of *Malina*, which carries the project's Leitmotiv of crimes committed against women. *Malina* is a complex narrative that, although achieving high sales within German-speaking countries, received relatively uncomprehending and unsympathetic evaluations from the contemporary literary critics,<sup>4</sup> as it presented a "challenge to the almost exclusively male canon of traditional Germanistik."<sup>5</sup> It was not until later in the 1970s that *Malina* came to be re-analysed with particular emphasis on a feminist critique,<sup>6</sup> by literary critics such as Sigrid Weigel, who have emphasized the novel's standing within the Todesarten project as "nam[ing] women's oppression through linguistic erasure."<sup>7</sup> In *Malina* the female subject is destroyed after a prolonged struggle by disappearing through a crack in the wall, exiting the narrative with the final judgement which reiterates the theme of the Todesarten project: "It was murder."<sup>8</sup>

The other narratives that were meant to be part of the project which Bachmann worked on at various times until her sudden death in 1973 were unpublished and unfinished. *Das Buch Franza* remained in a state of incompleteness, with several differing versions of

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<sup>3</sup> "... erzählen von den Verbrechen, die heute begangen werden. Vom Virus Verbrechen, der nach zwanzig Jahren nicht weniger wirksam ist als zu der Zeit, in der Mord and der Tagesordnung war, befohlen und erlaubt." Bachmann, Ingeborg in Joachim Hoell, *Ingeborg Bachmann* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001). 129.

<sup>4</sup> *Malina* is reduced to being a "black love-story," thereby trivialising the wider themes of social criticism of violence that Bachmann has articulated as her intention. "The lack of comprehension by the critics that is applied to her last two publications [*Malina* and *Simultan*], stands in contrast to the favourable reception by the public, as *Malina* is selling well, and is already being translated into various different languages." Own translation. See Ibid. 148.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Boa, "Women Writing About Women Writing and Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina*," in *New Ways in Germanistik*, ed. Richard Sheppard (New York: Berg, 1990). 128.

<sup>6</sup> *Malina* has been described as being a novel that "carries cult status" in the field of post-war German language literature. See Kristin Kopp, "The Discourse of Trauma - the Trauma of Discourse: Conquering Memory in Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina*" (paper presented at the Conquering Women, University of California at Berkeley, 2000 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Ingeborg Majer O'Sickey, "Rereading Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina*: Towards a Transformative Reading Praxis," *Modern Austrian Literature* 28, no. 1 (1995). 65.

<sup>8</sup> "Es war Mord". Ingeborg Bachmann, *Malina* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980). 356.

written chapters and parts of chapters. Although Bachmann's outline of the project at one point situated Franza's story as the first narrative of Todesarten, it is interesting to note that despite much re-working the novel was left by Bachmann in a state of limbo: "Moreover, the Book of Franza has disappeared into a drawer, and for various reasons I will not publish it in the near future, if at all, I don't know yet."<sup>9</sup>

Instead, the fragments were edited and published posthumously, initially as *Der Fall Franza* in an edition that included another incomplete work, *Requiem für Fanny Goldmann*, and within the four-volumed *Werke* in 1978. Contemporary re-editing of the various drafts of Bachmann's papers has resulted in the distinction between these earlier versions of the text and the critical edition of *Das Buch Franza*, which uses the Hauptfassung (primary version) of three chapters as base text, while supplying all additional material by Bachmann as supplementary study notes.<sup>10</sup> These editorial differences in the "Franza" material highlight the nature of *Das Buch Franza* as one of the "interpretations of the many possible versions that could be assembled from the numerous fragments the author was working on from the nineteen-fifties until her death,"<sup>11</sup> and any analysis of *Das Buch Franza* needs to keep this particularity in mind.<sup>12</sup>

While Bachmann's authorial intentions for *Das Buch Franza* as part of the Todesarten series were ambiguous, and despite (or because) of the textual uncertainties, *Das Buch Franza* has become the subject of much and varied literary analysis. Post-Bachmann theories of interpretation such as feminist, psychoanalytic or post-colonial analysis have been able to highlight that *Das Buch Franza* is an early engagement with many of the themes and issues that these analyses are concerned with. Contrasting earlier criticism of Bachmann that was often reliant on using Bachmann's authorial private life as a basis of analysis, feminist critics, such as Anna Kuhn, have emphasised that *Das Buch Franza* offers not just a re-reading of Austro-German history, but a "major contribution to the

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<sup>9</sup> "Das Buch Franza ist zudem in einer Schublade verschwunden und wird von mir, aus verschiedenen Gründen, noch lange nicht oder überhaupt nicht veröffentlicht werden, ich weiß es selber noch nicht." Bachmann, Ingeborg in Stephanie Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 14.

<sup>10</sup> See Editorial Notes in Ingeborg Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza* (Munich: Piper, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Kirsten Krick-Aigner, *Ingeborg Bachmann's Telling Stories - from Fairy Tale Beginnings and Holocaust Endings* (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 2002). 13.

<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of this analysis I will be using the Hauptfassung of *Das Buch Franza* (Piper, München, 1998) as primary text, with occasional material from that publication's "Entwürfen" and Suhrkamp's 1983 edition of *Der Fall Franza*.

feminist project of inscribing women into history.”<sup>13</sup> As such, *Das Buch Franza* has opened the doors to a variety of interpretation on “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” (coming to terms with the past), with critics such as Gisela Brinker-Gabler applying theories by Foucault and Spivak to draw out Bachmann’s association of World War Two history to contemporary emerging concepts of colonial oppression.<sup>14</sup> New feminist conceptualisation of psychology has allowed interpretation of *Das Buch Franza* as “an allegory of psychological processing of history,”<sup>15</sup> which situates Bachmann’s depiction of the “case study” of Franza within the wider context of the inherently ill female patient, described by Freud and other male psychological experts.<sup>16</sup> Criticism informed by the emphasis that French feminists Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray put on the importance of language as a site of power, has analysed *Das Buch Franza* focusing, as Elizabeth Boa states, on “the entry into language as the threshold to gendered subjectivity...see[ing] language as the prime terrain of struggle.”<sup>17</sup> The most important element that is reiterated by many of these analyses of *Das Buch Franza* is that Bachmann’s themes are, as Juliet Wigmore defines them, “pre-feminist”<sup>18</sup> in the sense of an early articulation of issues that have become pivotal to the subsequent women’s movement.

Most recent critical engagements with *Franza* have included Elke Brüns’s investigation into the “psychosexual” dimensions of the female author,<sup>19</sup> Stephanie Bird’s analysis of the text in light of national identity,<sup>20</sup> and Kirsten Krick-Aigner’s insight into Bachmann’s rewriting of the fairy-tale.<sup>21</sup> What unifies the majority of these different critical approaches is that they underline the strategic position that *Das Buch Franza*

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<sup>13</sup> Anna Kuhn, "Ingeborg Bachmann's Der Fall Franza: Myth, History, Utopia," *History of European Ideas* 16, no. 4 (1993). 615.

<sup>14</sup> See Gisela Brinker - Gabler, "Andere Begegnung: Begegnungen Mit Dem Anderen Zwischen Aneignung Und Enteignung," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 29, no. 2 (1993).

<sup>15</sup> Angelika Rauch, "Die Über(Be)Setzung Der Vergangenheit: Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman Der Fall Franza," *The German Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1992). 43.

<sup>16</sup> See Marie-Luise Gattens, "Die Rekonstruktion Der Geschichte: Der Nationalsozialismus in Drei Romanen Der Siebziger Jahre," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik* 29 (1989).

<sup>17</sup> See Elizabeth Boa, "Reading Ingeborg Bachmann," in *Post-War Women's Writing in German: Feminist Critical Approaches*, ed. Chris Weedon (Providence: Bergahn, 1997). 275.

<sup>18</sup> Juliet Wigmore, "Ingeborg Bachmann," in *The Modern German Novel*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> Elke Brüns, *Außenstehend, Ungelenk, Kopfüber Weiblich - Psychosexuelle Autorpositionen Bei Marlen Haushofer, Marie Luise Fleißer Und Ingeborg Bachmann* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity*.

<sup>21</sup> Krick-Aigner, *Ingeborg Bachmann's Telling Stories - from Fairy Tale Beginnings and Holocaust Endings*.

occupies within the Todesarten project, while emphasising that this novel, like *Malina*, is distinctive in its “lack of single interpretation creat[ing] an insoluble ambiguity for the reader that mirrors the narrator’s own situation.”<sup>22</sup>

The organization of *Das Buch Franza* has remained constant over the editing processes in the division of the novel into three distinct chapters: “Heimkehr nach Galicien” (Homecoming to Galicien), “Jordanische Zeit” (Time with Jordan), and “Die Ägyptische Finsternis” (The Egyptian Darkness). In the first chapter we see Franza through the eyes of her brother Martin, who searches for her after he receives a mysterious telegram and finds his sister absent from both her home in Vienna and the clinic where she was supposed to be recuperating from an unnamed condition. Martin locates Franza at their childhood home in Galicia and has to struggle with the impact of her apparent mental and physical illness. In chapter two Franza tells of her life through her interaction with Martin and a series of retrospective monologues. She elaborates on her marriage to the psychiatrist Jordan, with whom she had been working on a book about Nazi medical experimentations on women during World War Two. The origin of Franza’s mental distress is revealed to be Jordan’s abusive treatment of her as his own, psychological personal ‘case study’ on torture and cruelty. Chapter three describes the siblings’ journey to Egypt, where Martin has reluctantly let Franza accompany him after her resolve that she will not go back to Vienna. In the desert Franza discovers within herself a small possibility of healing, something that gives her the strength to confront an ex-Nazi euthanasia doctor whom she encounters in Cairo. Her hope of getting better is overthrown when she is sexually assaulted at the Pyramids of Giza, whereupon she dies of a self-inflicted head injury.

Franza’s exit from her life and the narrative, like the exit of the protagonist in *Malina*, is a theme of women being extinguished, something that came to be expressed in 1966 by the writer Christa Wolf. In a review of Bachmann’s poetry Wolf commented a decade before the publication of *Das Buch Franza* on Ingeborg Bachmann’s treatment of death as an “exit-strategy” from the trauma of a dysfunctional society:

...she [Ingeborg Bachmann] tends to exit from society – or lets her characters exit from it, to learn in despairing isolation the terms which

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<sup>22</sup> Kathleen Komar, ““Es War Mord”: The Murder of Ingeborg Bachmann at the Hands of an Alter Ego,” *Modern Austrian Literature* 27, no. 2 (1994). 92.

their society dictates to the individual, to find out the price of just staying alive, which has to be paid a million times over.<sup>23</sup>

This exit-strategy became something that Bachmann's reviewer, Christa Wolf, eventually echoed within her own writing almost ten years after the death of Bachmann. In Wolf's 1983 novel *Kassandra* the female protagonist announces her exit at the very outset of the story when she states: "with the narrative I make my way into death." More than a casual link to Bachmann's writing, Wolf makes a defined and pronounced connection between the earlier Todesarten Project and its themes, and her own novel<sup>24</sup> *Kassandra*.

Born three years after Ingeborg Bachmann in 1929, in Landsberg, Germany (today Poland), Christa Wolf joined the Socialist Unity Party after the war in 1949, choosing her alliance to the newly forming German Democratic Republic. Her initial involvement with literature started as an editor to various publishing houses and journals. Wolf's first novel, *Moskauer Novelle*, published in 1961 was received well by the East German readers and earned her a Prize for the Arts of the City of Halle.<sup>25</sup> In 1982 Wolf followed her literary predecessor Bachmann as a guest lecturer to the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University in Frankfurt. In 1959 Bachmann had been the first speaker invited to Frankfurt by the University, where she presented five lectures on "Probleme zeitgenössischer Dichtung" (Problems in contemporary poetry). In these lectures Bachmann approached central issues about writing in a way that is "non-academic, moving slowly towards her objects of analysis, and raising questions without providing clear answers."<sup>26</sup> Throughout her own Frankfurt lectures, Christa Wolf makes a specific and deliberate link to Bachmann by drawing on central questions about writing. Wolf composed her lectures in the forms of a travel diary, a work diary, a letter and the draft of her work in progress *Kassandra*, a re-write of Greek mythology's story of the Trojan princess Kassandra.

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<sup>23</sup> Christa Wolf, *The Author's Dimension*, trans. Jan Van Heurck (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993). 108.

<sup>24</sup> In German, Wolf describes *Kassandra* as a "Erzählung" (story) rather than the English Translation's use of "A novel."

<sup>25</sup> Margit Resch, "Understanding Christa Wolf - Returning Home to a Foreign Land," in *Understanding Modern European and Latin American Literature*, ed. James Hardin (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997). xv.

<sup>26</sup> Hoell, *Ingeborg Bachmann*. 100.

In Wolf's fourth lecture, entitled "A letter about unequivocal meaning, definiteness and indefiniteness; about ancient conditions and new view-scopes; about objectivity,"<sup>27</sup> she begins with a quote from Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza*. She then goes on to analyse Bachmann's poem "Erklär mir, Liebe" (Explain to me, Love), and after a discussion about Goethe, Aristotle and the forgotten history of matriarchy returns again to Bachmann, situating her next to Sappho as Wolf states:

I claim that every woman in this century and in our culture and sphere who has ventured into male dominated institutions – "literature" and "aesthetics" are such institutions – must have experienced the desire for self-destruction... For women there have been three thousand years of muteness or, at best, sporadic speech. Then along comes a woman who says: "I will collect only the stories which do not come to public notice, and only stories with a lethal outcome." – Todesarten - "Types of Death."<sup>28</sup>

The issues of exploring Todesarten and female voicelessness are at the centre of the preceding three lectures also, but it is in this lecture, just prior to the reading of her fifth and final lecture, which was the reading of a draft of *Kassandra*, that Wolf makes Bachmann's themes from Todesarten and her own connection to them explicit. This is emphasised by Wolf's declaration that she (and the unnamed female writer to whom Wolf's letter is addressed) must be the one to lift the curse that Bachmann's character Franza puts on "the whites," and that the only way to achieve this is by re-writing and articulating women's trauma.<sup>29</sup> Wolf states that it is through writing that the curse can be lifted, but at the same time echoes Franza in her questioning of how one is to write in a

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<sup>27</sup> "Ein Brief über Eindeutigkeit und Mehrdeutigkeit, Bestimmtheit und Unbestimmtheit; über sehr alte Zustände und neue Seh-Raster; über Objektivität." Christa Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Kassandra* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1986).126. Translation Christa Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*, trans. Jan Van Heurck (London: Virago Press, 1984). 272.

<sup>28</sup> "Ich behaupte, daß jede Frau, die sich in diesem Jahrhundert und in unserem Kulturkreis in die vom männlichen Selbstverständnis geprägten Institutionen gewagt hat – "die Literatur", "die Äesthetick" sind solche Institutionen – den Selbstvernichtungswunsch kennenlernen mußte... Da kommt, nach diesen beinahe dreitausend Jahren Stummsein, sporadisches Sprechen höchstens, eine Frau um zu sagen: Ich sammle nur die Geschichten, die nicht bekanntwerden, und nur die Geschichten mit letalem Ausgang. – "Todesarten." Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Kassandra*. 149-150. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 299-300.

<sup>29</sup> "Let the whites be cursed: Those are Franza's last words, and I, dear A., and no doubt you too, believe in the efficacy of such a curse, and we must do everything we can to see that it is lifted." Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*.305. "Die Weißen, sie sollen verflucht sein, das sind Franza's letzte Worte, und ich, liebe A., und Du wohl auch, wir glauben an die Wirkung solchen Fluchs und müssen alles tun, daß er aufgehoben werde." Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Kassandra*. 154.

“deciphered landscape, robbed of our possessions, including words.”<sup>30</sup> The lecture’s final statement is one that cements Wolf’s intention to pick up where Bachmann left off in terms of working through those issues. Especially significant is Wolf’s linking of Bachmann’s protagonist Franza with her own protagonist Cassandra, by making their voices intertwine when she has Cassandra state Franza’s own words about “the whites.”<sup>31</sup>

What is Cassandra’s message today, when of course she is mocked, unheard, described as abnormal, exposed, consigned to death? She says: *The whites are coming. The whites are landing. And if they are repulsed again, they will return once more. No revolution and no resolution and no foreign currency statute will help; they will come in spirit if they can no longer come in any other way. And they will be resurrected in a brown and a black brain; it will always be the whites, even then. They will continue to own the world in this roundabout way.*<sup>32</sup>

Wolf thereby creates another manifestation of the character of Bachmann’s Franza and her traumatisation by the ‘the whites,’ or the ideology, mechanisms and people who enforce the othering central to Bachmann’s text. By doing so, Wolf anchors the female Todesarten trauma in the ancient mythology that created the initial conception of Cassandra of Troy, as well as in her contemporary context out of which she re-writes the myth. Like Bachmann, Wolf considers the historical spectrum of female experience that Bachmann evokes through her analysis of Egypt and women’s suffering in the last section of *Das Buch Franza*. Wolf goes back to the ‘cradle’ of Western civilization to question the role of women’s trauma in that context. And like Bachmann a decade before her, Wolf makes it clear that this is also a contemporary story, a story that shapes the here and now.

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<sup>30</sup> “Schreibend, ja, aber wie denn unter dieser glühenden Vernunft-Sonne, in diesem rigoros bewirtschafteten, vermässenen und enträtselnden Gelände, unsrer Güter beraubt, darunter unserer Worte, die bannen können.” Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Cassandra*. 154.

<sup>31</sup> See Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 109.

<sup>32</sup> “Was sagt Cassandra heute, verspottet natürlich, ungehört, für unnormale erklärt, ausgesetzt, dem Tod überantwortet? Sie sagt: *Die Weißen kommen. Die Weißen gehen an Land. Und wenn sie wieder zurückgeworfen werden, dann werden sie noch einmal wiederkommen, da hilft keine Revolution und kein Resolution und kein Devisengesetz, sie werden mit ihrem Geist wiederkommen, wenn sie anders nicht mehr kommen können. Und auferstehen in einem braunen oder schwarzen Gehirn, es werden noch immer die Weißen sein, auch dann noch. Sie werden die Welt weiter besitzen, auf diesem Umweg.*” Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Cassandra*. 154-155. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 305.

Kassandra the protagonist and the novel do not stand on their own, rather they are framed by the preceding lectures, the “Conditions of a Narrative,” which allow the reader to witness the literal and metaphorical journey that the author makes from her initial interest in the character of Kassandra of the Trojan myth to her creation of *Kassandra* the novel. Furthermore, this journey involves a physical and philosophical return to the times of the ancients: Greece and the male writers and philosophers who are considered to be foundational to Western conceptions of ancient society. Wolf takes us through her readings of a range of mainly male-authored texts, starting with her reading of Aeschylus’s *The Oresteia*, Homer and the Greek mythologies, to the commentators on and ‘shapers’ of contemporary ideas about ancient culture, historians and archaeologists, such as Sir Arthur Evans and Robert Graves, and to contemporary authors Thomas Mann or Max Frisch. She also includes contemporary news items and television documentaries. This intertextuality is imperative as Wolf is strategically re-writing not just the story of Troy, but to some extent, all of the material she is engaging with, by critically re-framing it through the continuum of time.

The character of Kassandra is part of the ancient story of the war between Greece and Troy, which began with the abduction of Helen, the wife of Menelaos, King of Sparta, by Paris, one of the Trojan king’s sons. The response to this abduction was the mounting of a war expedition of Greek leaders including Agamemnon, Achilles and Odysseus and their troops to Troy, where Troy’s ability to fortify itself resulted in a ten-year siege. This siege ended only once the Greek constructed a hollow, wooden horse, concealing Greek warriors, which was brought inside the Trojan city by the Trojans, leading to their ultimate defeat.<sup>33</sup>

The fall of Troy, dated around 1200 B.C.E quickly became immortalised as an event that resonated through the ages, occupying the imagination of poets and dramatists and representing “the centre of a galaxy of myths, a cycle in which the present tense is in a continual process of becoming (which is the language of poetry), in which the past becomes the future.”<sup>34</sup> As such, the story would evolve again and again to be written and re-written throughout time in epic poetry and drama, epitomising contemporary Western notions of great and foundational literature. What Wolf picks up on through her engagement with the legacy of the character of Kassandra, is that the evolution of the

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955).

<sup>34</sup> Horace Gregory in H.D., *Helen in Egypt* (New York: New Directions, 1974). viii.



ancient story captures the central otherness of Cassandra, the ‘madwoman,’ the feared soothsayer whom no one listens to. It is through Wolf’s search for manifestations of othering that the connection to Bachmann and her protagonist Franza, who is also instilled with otherness and seen as a madwoman whose prophecies are not listened to, is highlighted. Both of the characters’ stories are steeped in traumatic experiences, ending in tragedy: the search for the origin of the tragedy leads both Bachmann and Wolf to the exploration of the sources of trauma, in which othering, and the experiences of violence and voicelessness play a pivotal role.

### *The Process of Othering in the Texts*

*Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra* represent their female protagonists’ ‘difference’ through the structures of plot and narrative, using narrative devices that capture the characters’ otherness as being inscribed in their bodies and minds. This difference is represented distinctly in each novel, with the connection that each process of othering is a traumatising by-product of the overriding patriarchal social structures’ enforcement (justifications) of a violent hierarchy based on female ‘deficiencies.’

In *Das Buch Franza* the character Franza is depicted as Other to her environment throughout the narrative. In the first chapter of the novel the narration is from her brother Martin’s point of view, which is torn between his desire to accept Franza as part of him, to seek within her something of the “Gitsche” (young girl) whom he grew up with, and his simultaneous abhorrence, incomprehension and rejection of her. Through Martin’s narrative we see Franza depicted as akin to a child and a madwoman, and contrasted with the more conventional models of femininity such as his girlfriend, Fräulein Nemeč. Because of the siblings’ age difference it becomes clear that Martin considers Franza to be from another time, a time that Martin has little knowledge of and would prefer to know little of. Through her unpredictable bodily and mental reactions and actions Franza disturbs Martin’s environment, his arrangement for his affair with Fräulein Nemeč, and his solitary trip to Egypt, as much as she disturbs his composure and his conscience. Although Martin acknowledges his deep dislike for her husband Jordan, he still looks to him as the husband to take responsibility for his unpredictable wife. Martin is concerned about Franza’s obvious traumatisation, yet in his need to distance himself from her uncontrollable Wahnsinn (madness) he has to make her into the abnormal, the Other. While he thinks of her as

the Other he is able to control the situation, in as far as he is not part of it and can absolve himself of responsibility.

In chapter two the narrative voice changes to Franza's narrative of her life with her husband, where she is also clearly in the position of being the Other. Franza is not only Other to herself, as she has experienced systematic obfuscation and obliteration of her self, but moreover she is Other in the world she inhabits in Vienna, and particularly in her marriage to Jordan. Franza is Other in the sense of social hierarchy, in that she does not fit into the "higher echelons" of Jordan's society. She is without a prominent name or standing in society, and wonders why Jordan chose to conduct his "experiment" on an "insignificant house, when he could set fire to the house of law, why any person, rather than a renowned person."<sup>35</sup> Jordan uses her social origins as material for derision, while her friend Alda unwittingly describes Franza's marriage as a "grandiose experiment" based on social differences.<sup>36</sup>

Jordan's othering of Franza goes beyond the issue of social standing as he constructs her as an anomaly, an aberration, and a foreign object that is of value only as a case study for patriarchal knowledge. In this process of othering Franza is not singled out, as she herself connects the misogyny in Jordan's dealings with her, his past wives, and women in general:

Why was I so hated? No, not myself, [but] the other within me...He did not like women, and he always had to have a woman to provide for himself the object of his hatred.<sup>37</sup>

Like the nameless, dead or mentally ill wives and other women before her that are in the background of the narrative, Franza is actively traumatised because she is female. Bachmann demonstrates the role of gender functions as the underlying determinant for the trauma experienced by Franza and extends this to Jordan's ex-wives, the

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<sup>35</sup> "Warum zerstört jemand ein belangloses Haus, wenn er den Justizpalast anzünden kann, warum bloß irgendeine Person, anstatt einer berühmten Person..." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 89.

<sup>36</sup> "...meine Güte, sagte Alda, natürlich sind Sie nicht krank, aber wissen Sie, ich mach mir so meine Gedanken, zwei Leute wie Sie, ein so großartiger Versuch, ein bedeutender Mann und Sie..." Ingeborg Bachmann, *Der Fall Franza* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983). 79.

<sup>37</sup> "Warum bin ich so gehaßt worden? Nein, nicht ich, das andere in mir...Er mochte die Frauen nicht, und er mußte immer eine Frau haben, um sich den Gegenstand seines Hasses zu verschaffen." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 56, 80.

‘madwoman’ Franza encounters at the Cairo railway station, the women who died through Nazi medical experimentation in Franza and Jordan’s research, and the multitude of inter-textual mythological and historical women who are represented throughout the narrative. These present far-reaching and cross-cultural analogies as Bachmann’s assesses and re-conceptualises these women’s stories of trauma.

Like Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut, whose temple inspires Franza to think about the history of the Other, Franza has been forcibly eradicated from history; like the woman at the railway station, Franza is symbolically “on her knees, trussed up with rope, her hands interlocked behind her back;”<sup>38</sup> and like the Jewish, Gypsy and other undesirable women as defined by the Nazis, Franza has been the victim of a sadistic medical experiment, driven by hatred and in the pursuit of patriarchal knowledge. Bachmann’s allusion to the story of *Bluebeard* in *Das Buch Franza* does more than “[reflecting] her conscious continuance of the German literary tradition.”<sup>39</sup> it acknowledges this particular story, existing in many different cultures with the leitmotif of violence against women, as a universal archetype that depicts a patriarch’s attempt at destroying women. This archetypal story is crucial to Franza’s narrative as it helps her to articulate, to find an explanation and meaning, and to find a kind of community of traumatised women within cultural and historical narratives, tied together by the “Bluebeard – marriages” (Blaubartehe).<sup>40</sup>

The setting of chapter three, “the Egyptian Darkness,” provides a sharp contrast to the world of Vienna and Europe and Franza’s experiences there. The theme of the ‘great experiment’ in terms of Jordan’s medical/psychological experimentation with Franza is extended through the depiction of the Egyptian desert to demonstrate the function of white, patriarchal knowledge in the subjugation of the Other, as experienced by women, people and countries. Bachmann portrays the whites in Egypt (including Martin) as deeply embedded within their own worldview, derived from the West, while imposing themselves on the country in a quest for academic and cultural appropriation in what

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<sup>38</sup> “Die Frau war auf den Knien gelegen, mit Stricken gefesselt, die Hände auf dem Rücken verschränkt...” Ibid. 127.

<sup>39</sup> Krick-Aigner, *Ingeborg Bachmann’s Telling Stories - from Fairy Tale Beginnings and Holocaust Endings*. 8.

<sup>40</sup> It is also noteworthy that Grimm’s fairytales were specifically used as an educational and propaganda tool during the Nazi period, Bachmann’s childhood, “in the socialisation process of children and adolescents to highlight the Nordic tradition of Germany and to portray specific gender roles.” See Ibid. 25

Edward Said has termed “Orientalism.”<sup>41</sup> The variety of tourists and the scientist and explorers, such as the French historians in Hurghada, relate to the country and the ‘natives’ with a “positional superiority,”<sup>42</sup> allowing for multiple relationships to the exoticism of Egypt assuring white domination. In *Das Buch Franza* the otherness of Egypt and its culture provides the impetus and justification for white, patriarchal inquiry; an inquiry that is based on the inferiority associated with difference. Franza sits uncomfortably in this white hegemony, as she relates to the ‘dark land’ in a way that sets her apart from the other, self-assured whites, while at the same time emphasising her status as yet another white who uses the orient as a tool for self-definition. There is ambiguity in Franza’s portrayal, in which Bachmann, while very deliberately aligning Franza with the Others of colonial and racial ideology, nevertheless does not allow for complete immersion or identification. This works to highlight the complex nature and the many strata of the processes of othering.

Franza’s affinity for the Egyptian desert is based on her recognition of similar experience. The metaphoric engagement with the processes of othering broadens to depict Franza’s increasing conception of aspects of colonisation and her identification of herself as colonised. In her search for meaning and a precedent and kinship of trauma experience, Franza describes the story of the colonised as the dying-out of the Australian Aborigines, the destruction of the Incas, and the suffering of the Murutes of North Borneo. Anna Kuhn states that Franza “identifies and empathises with the individual victims to such a degree that their suffering is inscribed onto her body.”<sup>43</sup> As such, Franza articulates the “deadly doubt that infests the Papuans, a kind of suicide since they believe that the whites have stolen all of their goods by magical means,”<sup>44</sup> as resonating with her own experience when she states that she herself is “a Papuan.” Just like the natives of Papua New Guinea, Franza has had her ‘goods’ stolen, by the patriarchal domination processes that disguise themselves as ‘magic.’

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<sup>41</sup> “Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.” See Edward Said, “Orientalism,” in *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).68.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 74.

<sup>43</sup> Kuhn, “Ingeborg Bachmann's Der Fall Franza: Myth, History, Utopia.” 615.

<sup>44</sup> “...und die klinischen Untersuchungen sind nicht imstande, die organischen Ursachen zu finden, es ist eine tödliche Verzweiflung bei den Papuas, eine Art des Selbstmordes, weil sie glauben, die Weißen hätten sich aller ihrer Güter auf magische Weise bemächtigt...” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*.76. English translation Ingeborg Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*, trans. Peter Filkins (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999). 79.

The narrative is also able to connect Franza's metaphoric colonisation in Vienna to the past of World War Two, a grand attempt at colonisation. The novel explores how colonisation occurs in a variety of forms, by drawing parallels between the 'friedliche Eroberung' (peaceful conquest) of Austria during the 1960's by the Germans through the purchase of real-estate, and the archaeologists that have dissected Egypt through the centuries (the "grave robbers"), and the contemporary tourists, whom Franza describes as "Leichenschänder" (defilers of corpses) in Egypt. Bachmann here draws on Frantz Fanon's 1952 concept of colonial racism that explores the mechanisms of racial oppression and the psychological consequences for the oppressed, which are a "massive psychoexistential complex."<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the concept of the network of oppression of women that is depicted in Franza's narrative mirrors Fanon's belief that "it is utopian to try to ascertain in what ways one kind of inhuman behaviour differs from another kind of inhuman behaviour."<sup>46</sup> In *Das Buch Franza* the analogy between colonisation and gender oppression highlights the similarities in regards to the mechanisms of othering, and the kind of trauma they create for the Othered.

Alongside the thematic inversion of fascism, Bachmann depicts a, for her time, still largely unexplored and unarticulated concept of white colonisation and appropriation,<sup>47</sup> which she then links to gender othering as constituting a similar process and experience. This parallel makes it clear that colonisation, relying on the classification and subjugation of the Other, is a historically and culturally ancient as well as a contemporary practice, and that it extends beyond the actions of Jordan to the overarching social and cultural ideology:

Why did you call him the Fossil? Oh no, you're wrong, for he's more contemporary than I am, for I, I, I am from a lower race, and I have known since it began that it's one that has wiped itself out. That's what I am, and he is the type that rules today, that succeeds today, that attacks

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<sup>45</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Markman (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1968). 14.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 86.

<sup>47</sup> Stephanie Bird comments that through the character of Franza, Bachmann "attempts to expose the fact that racist imperialistic fantasies are constitutive elements of the European psyche." See Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity*. 36.

and lives to do so...for what I have realised is that I am from a lower race.<sup>48</sup>

As a member of a lower race,<sup>49</sup> Franza's vision of herself is skewed, as it is defined through the lenses of the powerful, patriarchal colonisers. While the novel is a kind of 'mystery,' it also contains recognisable elements of the Bildungsroman, where the protagonist undertakes a journey to overcome challenges and finds herself, or in Franza's case, a way to express the nature of colonisation in general, and her own experience specifically. It is clear from the moment the reader meets Franza that she is estranged from herself, that she is as Other to herself as she is to her brother or her husband. Franza's othering is defined through the lack of a language of her own, and this allows her to be initially defined by the men in her life and by the structures that are in collusion with her traumatisation.

In *Kassandra* Christa Wolf's engagement with the central process of othering is initiated long before the narrative of the novel itself begins, namely with the analysis of historical representations of the character of Cassandra of Troy. Wolf tracks Cassandra's various manifestations through the literature by male authors, searching for authenticity of character. Wolf finds that she has to look beyond the authors' representations and the context of the patriarchal legacy of justification of othering women, in order to find the 'real' women of the Trojan story.

The representation of the women of Trojan legend has been firmly in the domain of the male poets for much of the history that Christa Wolf consults. The earliest surviving account of the story of Troy was chronicled in the epic poem the *Cypria*,<sup>50</sup> though it is probably best known through the representations in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* ascribed to Homer from the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E, which depicted the experiences of the male warriors. While the Trojan women feature on a very limited scale in Homer's narratives, approximately 300 years after Homer Aeschylus wrote the drama in which Christa Wolf

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<sup>48</sup> "...warum has du von ihm gesagt Fossil, o nein, wie irrst du dich, er ist heutiger als ich, ich, ich bin von niedriger Rasse, seit das geschen ist, weiß ich, daß sich das selbst vernichtet, ich bin es, er ist das Exemplar, das heute regiert, das heute Erfolg hat...ich bin von niedriger Rasse." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 75. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 79.

<sup>49</sup> This is also relevant in regards to the Darwinian concept of women as being "characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization" explored in chapter one of this thesis. See footnote 8, Chapter 1.

<sup>50</sup> The *Cypria* narrates the story's events up to the time covered by the later *Iliad*. Other early accounts of the Trojan story are in the epics the *Aithipis*, the *Little Iliad (Ilias Mikra)*, the *Sack of Troy (Ilupersis)*, and *Returns (Nostoi)*. See Robin Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology* (New York: Routledge, 2004). 6.

finds a point of engagement with the character of Cassandra, the “sole surviving Greek tragic trilogy”<sup>51</sup> *The Oresteia*. This trilogy, first performed in Athens in 458 B.C.E introduces Cassandra as the main character in *Agamemnon*.

The play begins after the fall of Troy as Cassandra<sup>52</sup> arrives in Argos as part of Agamemnon’s war bounty. Aeschylus tells the story of Agamemnon’s homecoming and his subsequent murder by his wife Klytaimnestra, who has reigned with her lover since his departure and is revenging herself for Agamemnon’s sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenie. Cassandra plays a vital role as she predicts the future murders to the chorus, while also narrating some of her own story as seer and Trojan princess. Wolf describes her reading of the first words Cassandra speaks in *Agamemnon* and comments on the powerful impression that they have on her (Wolf’s) impression of this character:

Cassandra. I saw her at once. She, the captive, took me captive; herself made an object by others, she took possession of me... Three thousand years – melted away. So the gift of prophecy, conferred on her by the god, stood the test of time.<sup>53</sup>

Struck by Cassandra’s initial voice, Wolf encounters some of the main attributes that have been awarded to the character of Cassandra throughout her various depictions, such as being the “chief agent of disaster,”<sup>54</sup> and as “uncontrollable” in her oratorical outbursts, marked by madness. Wolf, although impressed by the power of the representation of Cassandra’s message, nevertheless critically deconstructs Aeschylus’s depiction of Cassandra, picking up on the limitations of his male perspective by analysing his construction of the female characters as embedded in patriarchal stereotypes of women:

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<sup>51</sup> Alan Shapiro in Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, trans. Allan Shapiro and Peter Burian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 3.

<sup>52</sup> For consistency the names of the characters of the Trojan myths used in analysis throughout this chapter are the ones used by Christa Wolf in the German versions of *Kassandra* and *Voraussetzungen einer Erzählung*, apart from quotes in the text which have been translated and published in English: Cassandra (Cassandra); Klytaimnestra (Clytemnestra); Iphigenie (Iphigenia); Achill (Achilles), Priamos (Priam); Hekabe (Hecuba); Helena (Helen); Aineias (Aeneas).

<sup>53</sup> “Kassandra. Ich sah sie gleich. Sie, die Gefangene, nahm mich gefangen, sie, selbst Objekt fremder Zwecke, besetze mich...Dreitausend Jahre – weggeschmolzen. So bewährte sich die Sehergabe, die ihr der Gott verlieh.” Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Kassandra*. 10. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 144.

<sup>54</sup> Sherman Plato Young, *The Women of Greek Tragedy* (New York: Exposition Press, 1953). 110.

...Aeschylus reveals his prejudice in the detestation which the two women, Cassandra and Clytemnestra, show for each other... This is how the male poet chooses to see these women: vindictive, jealous, petty towards each other...<sup>55</sup>

This depiction evokes the sense that Cassandra “takes the side of patriarchy”<sup>56</sup> by reducing Klytaimnestra to an evil adulterer, while she herself is submissive to Agamemnon. What is remarkable about Cassandra’s characterisation in this play is that she holds the oversight and knowledge of the situation. She speaks of her experience and her truth, she commands the main voice in the play, contrasted against the chorus, and she definitely narrates Agamemnon’s story for him. It is this force of voice that resonates for Christa Wolf in her reading.

Wolf uses this analysis of othering as a starting point for her own narrative about Cassandra. Early on in her Cassandra project Wolf points to the history of othering and objectification, before proceeding to use the re-write as a way to expand on the actual methods and intricacies of it. This is significant, as Wolf’s re-write of one of the foundational myths of Western history impinges on a terrain of cultural meaning-making which constitute, as Alicia Ostriker states, the “treasuries where our meanings for ‘male’ and ‘female’ are themselves preserved,”<sup>57</sup> namely mythology with all its associations of high culture and historical, life-explaining ‘truths.’ These truths are based on the suppression of the *construction* of myths and archetypes, making them seemingly self-renewing through a process that Roland Barthes describes as transforming history (a construction) into nature (an un-manipulated state).<sup>58</sup> This reiterates the mechanisms involved in the creation of the Other, where through an obscured process ideologically constructed meaning becomes the natural truth. Wolf highlights this connection by naming the othering based in the history she engages with, and by articulating her own process of interaction with the characters, thereby throwing light on her own mythology making.

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<sup>55</sup> “Die Voreingenommenheit des Aischylos, sage ich, sähe ich in der Abscheu der beiden Frauen, Cassandra und Klytaimnestra gegeneinander... So will der männliche Dichter diese Frauen sehen: haßvoll, eifersüchtig, kleinlich gegeneinander...” Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Cassandra*. 41. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 179.

<sup>56</sup> Alan Shapiro in Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*. 23.

<sup>57</sup> Alicia Ostriker, "The Thieves of Language - Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking," in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon, 1985). 315.

<sup>58</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957).



Wolf fully understands and expresses both the power and the challenge of deconstructing and reconstructing one of the stories emblematic to Western culture's definition of itself and its history. Mythology's ability to define cultural ancestry means that it is an area where cultural assumptions can be most strongly challenged:

Whenever a poet employs a figure or story previously accepted and defined by a culture, the poet is using myth, and the potential is always present that the use will be revisionist: that is the figure or tale will be appropriated for altered ends, the old vessel filled with new wine, initially satisfying the thirst of the individual poet but ultimately making cultural change possible.<sup>59</sup>

Wolf's explores this possibility throughout *Conditions of a Narrative*. She also recognises the way in which mythology addresses the human psyche on a compelling level, and how this contributes to the continuation of the myths and the connection they have to cultural and social formation. For Wolf, the myth of Cassandra and Troy represents a site of questions rather than answers, and her project of defining those questions and taking into account over two thousand years of male answers, results in the novel *Kassandra*, and later on in her 1996 novel *Medea*.

The process of othering represented in the novel *Kassandra* is unlike that depicted in *Das Buch Franza*, as in Troy Cassandra tells of a time when women were not othered based on their gender. Cassandra's recollection of the old social system, in which women had power and a voice, creates the contrast that is needed to reveal the naturalness of patriarchal othering as an illusion, thereby once again shedding light on what is usually left in the dark. Through the evolving Trojan war and the overarching system of patriarchy Wolf depicts the creation of a range of Others, such as the enemy as the Other, and anyone outside the patriarchal system as Other, in particular the women of the narrative. With the Trojan shift to a patriarchal system of war ideology, the women are represented as collectively and individually traumatised by their increasing, gendered othering through the emerging social structures. Wolf defines objectification as the core element of women's oppression, as she depicts how the patriarchal structure has to create women as symbols that stand in opposition to the men, symbols that can be

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<sup>59</sup> Ostriker, "The Thieves of Language - Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking." 317.

appropriated to support their ideology as necessary. This is the basis of formation of a line of “sacrifice”<sup>60</sup> that *Kassandra* the narrative represents, and *Kassandra* the character embodies. In order to enact the masculine ideologies at work in *Troy*, the women have to be sacrificed as Others, as Kathleen Komar states:

The innocent female must be sacrificed; the powerful female must be eliminated; and the male must be exonerated from both crimes in order to found the patriarchal order of law.<sup>61</sup>

In the narrative of heroic warfare, with all its noble and ‘right’ reasons, the first female that becomes a supreme example of objectified othering is a character that is never seen in the novel, in fact, never seen in *Troy*. Trojans and Greeks alike exploit the appropriation of *Helena* as the prime motivation for war, constructing her as a symbol of masculine honour. Entirely without a voice of her own, *Helena* is a pawn in the game of retaliation, a thinly disguised excuse for the war that is to follow. She is a male-constructed phantom that allows the Greeks and the Trojans to disguise their real agendas revolving around power and domination. The use of women as pawns continues with the trade of women like *Polyxena* who is used as sexual bait for *Achill*, or *Briseis*, who is ‘given’ from the Trojans to the Greeks where she is passed on between *Achill* and *Agamemnon*. *Kassandra* herself, while fighting against her own objectification, is forced to marry *Euryalos* on order of King *Priamos*, who is seeking to secure *Euryalos*’ alliance in the war.

Even the women who embrace patriarchal attributes become oppressed and objectified as part of the war. The Amazon women are depicted as embodying some of the patriarchal war mentality and thereby acting in a comparable way to the men, while still being regarded by the men, and some women, as aberrations. *Penthesilea* who takes on male thinking and action in regards to violence is nevertheless still an object to *Achill*, even on the battlefield. *Klytemnestra*, the wife of *Agamemnon* who has been ruling in his absence and who murders her husband and *Kassandra*, is regarded as a monster throughout traditional representations. *Kassandra* understands and sympathises with the

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<sup>60</sup> The idea of the Trojan story as revolving around a line of female sacrifice is featured in H.D.’s rewrite of the story of *Helen of Troy*. The poem tells of the slaying and sacrifice of the female characters of *Troy*: “It was not only *Iphigenia* (you told me the story), there was always another and another and another.” H.D., *Helen in Egypt*.219.

<sup>61</sup> Kathleen Komar, *Reclaiming Klytemnestra - Revenge or Reconciliation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003). 178.

seemingly powerful Klytaimnestra, but is unable to intervene in Klytaimnestra's fate that through the loss of her daughter and through her eventual murder by her son also reduces her to a link in the chain of female sacrifices of objectification.

As long as the patriarchs can obscure the truth behind their actions, even to themselves, then the objectification of Others can continue. This obfuscation is particularly enforced in the case of Cassandra as she, in her role as a seer who increasingly refuses to be silent about her visions of doom, represents a threat to the patriarchy of Troy. Cassandra is othered by being turned into a sexual object, as well as by judging her to be 'out of her mind.' Like Franza, Cassandra enacts her trauma through her body, reacting to insights that she cannot reconcile. Cassandra's madness is that "its 'sign language' functions as a substitute for what she is not willing to say consciously."<sup>62</sup> Instead, her body acts out the conflict:

Tottering, limbs shaking, I clung to him; each of my fingers followed its own inclinations, gripped and tore at his clothing; my mouth, as it expelled the cry, also produced a foam that settled on my lips and chin; and my legs, which were as much out of control as all my other limbs, jerked and danced with a disreputable, unseemly delight that I myself did not feel in the least.<sup>53</sup>

As a spectacle out of control Cassandra is contrasted against the emerging tightly controlled rationality of the patriarchy. While she is constructed as an element of nonconforming chaos, with a body that is Other based on gender, and Other based on her 'abnormality,' it is easy for the Trojan rulers to dismiss her undesirable prophecies as madness. As with the history of psychology, the reduction of the female to an irrational, hysterical and inherently mentally weak object enables patriarchal dismissal of trauma stories.

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<sup>62</sup> Odile Jansen, "Women as Storekeepers of Memory: Christa Wolf's Cassandra Project," in *Gendered Memories*, ed. John Neubauer and Helga Geyer-Ryan, *Studies in Comparative Literature* 28 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000). 42.

<sup>53</sup> "Schlotternd, gliederschüttelnd hing ich an ihm, jeder meiner Finger tat was er wollte, klammerte sich in seine Kleider, riß an ihnen; mein Mund, außer das er den Schrei hervorstieß, erzeugte diese Art von Schaum, der sich uf Lippen und Kinn absetzte, und meine Beine, die ich so wenig in der Gewalt hätte wie irgendein anderes Glied, zuckten und tanzten in einer anrühigen unpassenden Lust, die ich gar nicht empfand." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 43. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 39.

The othering of the women depicted in *Kassandra* reduces them to sexual objects, to 'monstrous' and unnatural women, or to mad women. The marginalisation of the women is driven by these specific stereotypes used by the Greeks and Trojans to 'colonise' the women. The notion of colonising the female gender as used by Bachmann in *Das Buch Franza* is picked up by Wolf in her construction of a narrative where she is explicit about the various levels of colonisation, and the colonising ideology that is in operation throughout war. The patriarchal juxtaposition of male versus female and Trojans versus Greeks is comparable to the colonising mentality that is seeking to create and then dominate an inferior.<sup>63</sup> The Trojan process of gaining authority over the matriarchal social structures is the creation of a cultural domination, effected through violence and based on notions of superiority and power. These notions are akin to the ideology and process of colonisation that Wolf ponders throughout the *Conditions of a Narrative* as one culture forcefully subordinates another through the ages. Kassandra's realisation of this process means that she can see Aineias's escape in search of a utopian life as resulting in yet another colonisation and creation of "the next major military patriarchy."<sup>64</sup> That it is Aineias, the main male figure in the novel whom Kassandra has mentally and physically entrusted herself to, who goes on to enact the cycle of colonisation, is an important statement about the power and perpetuation of this patriarchal process. The timeline of Wolf's narrative highlights the inevitability of the succession of colonisers, just as it frames the line of female sacrifices bound to the colonisations described in *Kassandra*. The process of othering, this timeline proposes, is an ancient and perpetuating cycle that is inextricable from women's experience of trauma.

### *The Experience of Violence in the Texts*

The narratives of *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra* both explore the use of violence as a source of trauma. The female characters of both novels are depicted in the contexts of different types of violence, ranging from domestic to war violence, or from private to public manifestations of this control mechanism. Both novels explore the patriarchal justifications of violence, as the authors attempt to peel back the layers of the ideologies out of which the violence arises.

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<sup>63</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. 93.

<sup>64</sup> Virgil's *Aeneid* portrays Aeneas as a hero who flees Troy and eventually, after many battles settles in Italy, where he establishes the city of Lavinium and plays an ancestral role in the founding of Rome and the Roman Empire. For quote: Komar, *Reclaiming Klytemnestra - Revenge or Reconciliation*. 115.

In *Das Buch Franza* the protagonist encounters violence in a cumulative manner, as the violence of the past of her country frames the narrative and is coupled with the specific domestic violence, sexual abuse and torture that she experiences. Franza's enforced othering by her husband is enacted through ideological, symbolic and psychological means, as well as through the use of specific and calculated physical violence. Franza relives her experiences of domestic violence by her husband, Leopold Jordan, during her narrative in chapter two, "Time with Jordan." In her halting, chronologically unordered narrative, Franza tells of Jordan's repeated, night-time strangling of her, his intimidation of her through derision, and throwing household objects at her:

Jordan grasped the glass, which Martin had placed on the console, and threw it at Franziska. Then we will keep it to ourselves, he said, and while she bent down to pick up the shattered glass: so, now once more the humble sweeping up of shards, now one keeps ones mouth shut. Madam keeps silent and collects the shards with her martyr mask.<sup>65</sup>

Franza's experiences of sexual violence are pivotal to the narrative and the destruction of Franza. Keeping to the overall theme of violence, the threat of sexual assault is symbolically thematic long before any event actually occurs. In chapter one, Martin's recollection of his and Franza's childhood in Galicien describes the young Franza's literal attempt to comprehend the notion of rape by the allied British troops in Galicien:

And "rape," that was another word that caused Franza to imagine things capable of taking away the spring, and since there was no one she could speak to, rape and armies turned into longed for heroes and troops who were on the march, which was for the good, since nothing ever happened in Galicien, absolutely nothing, only the village dying out and belonging to her alone, as she waited for a miracle and for something miraculous to occur.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> "Jordan packte das Glas, das Martin auf die Konsole gestellt hatte, und warf es nach Franziska. Dann bleibt das eben unter uns, sagte er, und als sie sich bückte nach den Scherben: so, jetzt werden wieder demütig Scherben gekehrt, jetzt bringt man den Mund nicht mehr auf. Die Dame schweigt und sammelt mit Duldermiene die Scherben ein." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 68

<sup>66</sup> "Und Vergewaltigen, das war ein anderes Wort, unter dem Franza sich frühlingstraubende Dinge vorstellte, und da sie mit niemand sprechen konnte, wurden Vergewaltigung und Streitmächte zu ersehnten Idolen und Ereignissen, die im Kommen waren, das umso mehr, als in Galicien nichts geschah, schlechterding nichts, nur das Dorf starb aus und

The development of the concept of rape from Franza's naïve perception of the event as something mythical rather than actual, something that is outside the scope of her understanding as a fifteen-year old, emphasises the brutal reality of what Franza experiences in her later life. Because rape is referred to in the context of the 'miracles' that are hinted at in connection with the Allied liberation of Austria from Germany and the end of the war, Franza is conflicted by the association of what is rumoured to be a bad thing (rape) with something that she feels is a good thing (liberation). It becomes clear that Franza is developing some concept of what Rauch describes as "the price for peace," which is to become an occupied and owned object.<sup>67</sup> What foreshadows Franza's thought process here is the historical reality of post-war events of rape that occurred on a large scale throughout the occupation of Austrian and other territories,<sup>68</sup> which, even as late as Bachmann's time of writing, were still predominantly not mentioned within public discourse. While this choice of thematic engagement establishes the atmosphere of patriarchal violence in which the narrative is situated, it is significant that Franza is in fact *not* sexually assaulted at this time in her life, distinguishing the supposed peace times, but many years later when such a crime does occur outside the semi-sanctioning of war ideology.

Franza experiences sexual assault for the first time during her marriage to Jordan, who uses rape as another one of his methods for systematically destroying his young wife. The narrative makes it clear that the rape signifies an ultimate objectification of Franza by Jordan, where Franza is robbed of her self as Franziska Jordan, and robbed of her teenage impressions about the context and meaning of rape:

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gehörte ihr allein, für ihr Warten in einem Wunder und auf Wunder allein." Ibid. P36. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 38.

<sup>67</sup> Rauch, "Die Über(Be)Setzung Der Vergangenheit: Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman Der Fall Franza." 45.

<sup>68</sup> Although accurate figures of rape during the Russian military occupation are hard to establish due to "social silence and acceptance" and bureaucratic failure to collect data, it has been estimated that rape of women in Vienna by the Red Army was wide-spread, while in other places such as Budapest a minimum of 10% of the female population was affected, while in Berlin during April 1945 "mass rapes...were an integral part of the final bitter battle for Berlin." See Atina Grossman, "Trauma, Memory, and Motherhood - Germans and Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-Nazi Germany, 1945-1949," in *Life after Death - Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, *Publications of the German Historical Institute of Washington, D.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

...when she wanted to escape he had shoved her against the hard edges of the shelves and done it, not in order to embrace the Franziska who, there in Vienna, was his wife.<sup>69</sup>

In this brief passage, the narrative manages to convey that Jordan's rape of Franza is not about sex or marital 'embracing,' but about power, subjugation and objectification. The theme of power and violence against women is thereby positioned into the author's contemporary social context where discussions about rape, if articulated at all, were still heavily intertwined with the belief that rape was about sex, rather than power. For Bachmann to situate the depiction of rape within the 'sanctity of marriage' intensifies the questioning of patriarchal violence. Moreover, critical inquiry of marriage is achieved by highlighting the irony that one of the most feared by-products of war, which occurs when women are literally and symbolically 'under siege' and without protection, occurs to Franza when she is married, a state that by social consensus is supposed to be the embodiment of protection for women.

The catalyst for Franza's remembrance of Jordan's rape and her eventual choice to physically die, is the sexual assault she experiences at the hand of "einem Weißen" (a white) at the Pyramids of Giza. The scene of this sexual assault is the point at which all underlying narrative themes converge within action and language. The pervading threat of violence and destruction that impact on Franza in her post-Jordan environment, her memory and her bodily reactions are all awakened and coincide with each other, confirming the presence and the power of the forces of destruction that have been analysed throughout the preceding narrative. Furthermore, Franza's survival mechanism of denial and dissociation, which she herself has deconstructed and acknowledged during the journey with Martin, and her subsequent anxiety about complicity, impact heavily on her experience of this sexual trauma:

Perhaps she should yell for help. She only had to let loose a scream, but why call for help? He was already at the corner. What was the point of screaming, why do it? The poor devils, they need to do it, to frighten someone. She smoothed flat the linen dress behind her. It's nothing,

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<sup>69</sup> "...und er hatte sie, als sie sich lösen wollte, wieder an die Bibliothek mit den harten Kanten gestoßen und das getan, nicht um diese Franziska zu umarmen, sie die dort in Wien seine Frau war..."Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 133. Translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 139.

nothing happened, and even if it did, what did it matter? It doesn't matter.<sup>70</sup>

With this, Bachmann succeeds in conveying Franza's attempts to justify the rapist and to show the internalisation of what she regards as her own fault for events in the past and the present, thereby highlighting the complexities of 'victim guilt' in regards to patriarchal notions of women's complicity with sexual abuse. This provides an important representation of the internalisation of patriarchal justifications of sexual abuse, whereby the Other tries to make sense of trauma by blaming themselves.

Furthermore, Bachmann engages with the contemporary European (and international) post-World-War Two intellectual discourses, which drew on complicity and victim guilt, in the search for justifications of the events during World War Two. Debates about the responsibility for the atrocities of the war included the blaming of National Socialism's victims for their weakness of resistance, alongside the increasing questioning of the roles of the 'ordinary' German (and Austrian) citizens within the war.<sup>71</sup> Franza's tendency towards denial and silence in the face of her abuse, her internal justification for the abuser's behaviour, linking it to her own complicity of silence while her body is enacting the memory of her first rape, echoes the painful process of memory retrieval and sense-making in Austria's struggle to procure a unified memory that acknowledges all truths. This includes the truth of Austria's substantial role in the perpetration of the crimes committed by the Third Reich.<sup>72</sup> Franza's embodiment of these issues through the act of rape is one of the ways in which Bachmann depicts the conflict inherent in the search for meaning by Austria and other Nazi-affiliated countries, a search to make sense of the violence that happened in Europe from 1938 to 1945.

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<sup>70</sup> "Sie mußte nur einen Schrei herausbringen aber warum jemand zuhulfe rufen, er kam schon fast zur Biegung, und wozu schreien, warum denn, ein armer Teufel, die brauchen das, nur erschrecken, sich strich das Leinenkleid hinten glatt. Es ist nichts, nichts ist geschehen, und wenn auch. Es ist gleichgültig" Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 134. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 139.

<sup>71</sup> "Because, indeed, they [Germans] wanted to *not* know... In this way the typical German citizen won and defended his ignorance, which seemed to him sufficient justification of his adherence to Nazism. Shutting his mouth, his eyes and his ears, he built for himself the illusion of not knowing, hence not being an accomplice to the things taking place in front of his very door." Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man and the Truce*, trans. Stuart Woolf (Suffolk: Sphere Books Ltd, 1987).

<sup>72</sup> Austria was one of the countries that saw a big rise of the fascist movement, particularly emulating Hitler's ideologies. As Michael Mann states "...Austrians then contributed substantially to the German war effort and especially to the Final solution, whose perpetrators were disproportionately Austrian..." See Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). 207. Austria also hosted a number of Nazi euthanasia centres during the Second World War. See Dieter Kuntz, ed., *Deadly Medicine - Creating the Master Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). 137.



The creation of this analogy is particularly present in the depiction of the trauma Franza sustains from torture. The definition of torture can be applied to the whole of Jordan's relationship with Franza. Along the lines of the analysis in chapter one of this thesis, where torture is specifically targeting the female as objects of torture as well as making the torture specific to the female body, Jordan's torture of Franza encompasses all of the modes of violence. Moreover, while the various methods of torture take place within their marriage, they are kept as a private event that has no place in the public world of bourgeois Vienna, which Franza and Jordan inhabit. Unlike some political torture victims, Franza has no public agency in or outside of her society that may recognise her plight or intervene on her behalf; nor does she have a political framework of counter-agency that she can use to give reasons for and meaning to her torture. Jordan's principles of torture are both subtle and overt, using a variety of methods of violence and aiming to manipulate Franza's mind.

Jordan's torture of Franza is undertaken with the overall aim of a medical/psychological experiment. As a prominent Viennese psychiatrist, Jordan is depicted as employing empirical methodology of patriarchal medical investigations, what Franza calls "Zerlegung" (decomposition), within his professional and private life. As such, his torture methods, although at the time they appear to Franza illogical and without reason, are recognised in hindsight by Franza to be expressly premeditated and methodical:

How terribly he tortured me, but not spontaneously, or even occasionally, no, with deliberation, everything was worked out, tactic, tactic, how can one be so calculating?<sup>73</sup>

Jordan's psychological torture is particularly calculated to employ the element of unpredictability in his dealings with Franza. While Franza searches for ways in which to anticipate Jordan's strategies, ways to deflect and cope with them, Jordan accuses her, switches his moods erratically, blames her and analyses her behaviour throughout their marriage. The techniques used by Jordan to keep Franza in an ever-increasing atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety include the analysis of her childhood experiences as being perverse and psychotic, strategic criticism and derision, as well as threats of

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<sup>73</sup> "Wie furchtbar hat [er] mich gequält, aber nicht spontan, oder nur selten, nein, mit Überlegung, alles war berechnet, Taktik, Taktik, wie kann man so rechnen?" Bachmann, *Der Fall Franza*. 74

senseless violence such as: “I will cut off your ear and throw it into the river.”<sup>74</sup> His torture is gender-specific in that he dissects and destroys all elements of her ‘femaleness,’ including her sexuality, as depicted in his observational notes about her, which he leaves deliberately for Franza to discover:

F.’s preference for French kissing, stop, lust not sensuality, stop I think I’m choking with laughter, F. overheard while talking on the phone. F. most likely lesbian.<sup>75</sup>

The unpredictability of Jordan’s verbal, physical and psychological torture creates a constant tension and threat in Franza’s environment, where there is no sense of safety. The overall effect of this accumulated psychological torture is that Franza is held in a constant state of fear, furtively seeking answers to explain her experience. The narrative thereby depicts an intricate and effective atmosphere of pathological fear, which is fundamental to the practices of torture. Considering the context of Bachmann’s post-war society, it also brings to the forefront the way in which psychological torture played a crucial role in the victimisation process of ‘undesirables’ by the Nazis, both in ideology and in practice in concentration and extermination camps. The power of instilling fear comes from the incapacitating effect that a constant state of terror has on the victim. Franza is debilitated by this state, and links her experience of fear to a wider legacy of terror:

Out of fear. Earlier I was only afraid, now I feel fear, hold me tight. Fear is not what we learn it is something else entirely. It’s in the body, nothing otherworldly, and it’s not an idea, it is the terror. It is terror. The sickness of our time, oh don’t make me laugh.<sup>76</sup>

While Jordan is an example of Europe’s history of male psychologists, psychiatrists and medical doctors who experiment on women, his experimentation is further complicated and further linked to a Nazi past by the fact that at the same time as Jordan is using

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<sup>74</sup> “Heute erinnere ich mich, daß er sagte, als wir die Salzach entlanggingen, ich werde dir dein Ohr abschneiden und es in den Fluß werfen.” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 61.

<sup>75</sup> “Fs Vorliebe für Zungenkuß, stop Gier nicht Sinnlichkeit stop, ich glaube, ich ersticke noch vor Lachen, F. bei Telefongespräch beobachtet. F. vermutlich Lesbisch.” Ibid. 63 Translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 71.

<sup>76</sup> “In der Angst. Früher habe ich mich nur gefürchtet, jetzt habe ich Angst, halt mich fest, die Angst ist nicht, was wir gelernt haben, sie ist das ganz andere, sie ist im Körper, nichts Fabelhaftes und kein Begriff, sie ist der Terror. Es ist Terror. Die Krankheit unserer Zeit, o daß ich nicht lache.” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 64.

fascist tactics to construct a case out of Franza, he and Franza are publishing their research on Nazi medical experimentation on women. This research is reminiscent of Alexander Mitscherlich's 1949 publication *Medizin ohne Menschlichkeit*, a vivid account of the Nazi medical experiments and extermination campaign conducted on prisoners and concentration camp inmates.<sup>77</sup> Scientific experimentation on the victims of the holocaust included the testing of:

various types of male and female sterilization techniques... They sought the limits of human endurance to heat and cold and deprivation of oxygen... Infections were artificially introduced to discover when the disease would kill the subject. New mothers had their breasts bound to observe how soon they would die of deadly fever. Doctors supervised forms of torture to learn what breaks a man and finally destroys him.<sup>78</sup>

The research that Franza describes in her narrative is particularly concerned with the gender-specific experimentation that was undertaken in places such as the women's only camp Ravensbrück, where women were subjected to experimentation including the transplanting of human bones.<sup>79</sup> Jordan himself is represented in the image of the psychiatrists, geneticists and anthropologists, who during their research maimed and killed multitudes of innocent victims. Kuntz describes this research as:

[...] dangerous [...] scientifically framed versions of racism and anti-Semitism presented by medically trained experts who helped develop and promote Nazi policies and gave them legitimacy in the eyes of the German public.<sup>80</sup>

It is remarkable that although Jordan is able to research and disseminate the horrors of Third Reich fascism in a scientific narrative, this process does not inhibit him from re-enacting the same horror in his private life with Franza. This further explores the notion that the methods of what Bachmann calls fascism do not represent a one-time aberration

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<sup>77</sup> A. Mitscherlich and F. Mielke, *The Death Doctors*, trans. James Cleugh (London: Elek Books, 1960).

<sup>78</sup> Rita Steinhardt Botwinick, *A History of the Holocaust - from Ideology to Annihilation* (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 205.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 207.

<sup>80</sup> Kuntz, ed., *Deadly Medicine - Creating the Master Race*. 2.

that ceased with the end of the Third Reich, but rather are deeply ingrained *behaviours* that continue without awareness or analysis of the connections to the past.

The analogy with the medical experimentation and misappropriation of the Nazi era is further ingrained through the depiction of Franza's enforced abortion. Gender-specific torture in this sense relates to reproductive matters, which is illustrated when Jordan uses his medical position to have Franza's pregnancy aborted. Franza has no control over her body, and in a final act of desperation pleads with the surgeon to let her keep the aborted foetus:

You have to let me have something of the child, for then I'll be able to eat it, a piece, and I'll be able to think that it might be his heart. They can't take it all from me, for I would rather eat it if it is not meant to live.<sup>81</sup>

The final say over what happens to Franza and her foetus lies in the hands of her husband and the other male medical experts. Jordan's enforcement of the abortion is part of his overarching framework of experimenting on her sanity, while simultaneously determining her as an unfit candidate for motherhood. The power to declare others unfit for parenthood was part of Nazi ideology, based on the scientific principles of eugenics.<sup>82</sup> The narrative's thematic exploration of how Franza is driven 'mad' by the very practices that define and control madness shows that these practices are derived from firmly entrenched social, medical and cultural contexts, which culminated during the Nazi regime. Like Jordan, the Nazis possessed the power to determine the reproductive ability of others, leading to the forcible sterilisation, abortion and euthanasia of people who were considered 'minderwertig' (less valuable), ranging from Jews to Gypsies to the mentally ill.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "...etwas müssen sie mir trotzdem von ihm lassen, es hätte sein Herz draus werden können, denn ganz dürften sie es mir nicht nehmen, dann will ich es lieber auffressen, wenn es nicht leben soll." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*.94. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 94.

<sup>82</sup> See Kuntz, ed., *Deadly Medicine - Creating the Master Race*.

<sup>83</sup> Although the ideas of eugenics and enforced sterilisation became integrated in many countries, it was in Germany that the greatest number of sterilizations and abortions was enforced by Hitler's regime. Euthanasia on the basis of being an "undesirable" reached unthinkable proportions with the help of medical/psychological justifications: "...the precise features of eugenic "inferiority" – most of all, emotional and mental defects - were increasingly defined and classified by psychiatrists, and psychiatry and medicine were to be transformed from a vehicle of degeneration and counter-selection into an agent to rectify counter-selection." See Ibid. 63

The language of violence and destruction used in *Das Buch Franza* highlights Bachmann's questioning of the concepts war, fascism, violence, and trauma. Throughout the narrative words of brutality function to underpin and emphasise the depicted acts of violence. Ralf Werner describes this as the "building of a violent structure as a way to formulate violence itself," and thereby analyse and criticise it.<sup>84</sup> Words such as "aggression," "hatred," and "fascist" are repeated during the novel and associated with Franza's narrative, in particular her search for reasons behind the overwhelming violence. The imagery of violence and destruction is heightened through the extent of terminology that describes the "killing:" Franza is "wrecked," "tortured," "hit into," and "annihilated." Jordan and the patriarchal system are likened to predators who have no qualms about doing what even wolves and other wild animals won't do: to destroy an enemy by "biting through the throat" of one who has surrendered.<sup>85</sup> Further metaphors of inhumanity describe the "demonising and brutality," the "diabolic experiment" and the "devils."

Bachmann layers the metaphors of destruction, intensifying their impact by re-defining accepted patterns and meaning of the German language through the usage of Holocaust specific terminology. The imagery of Nazi extermination camps, the "Gaskammer" (gas-chambers), features in Franza's dreams where Jordan is gassing her. Franza tells Martin of this dream almost apologetically, making it clear that this ultimate destruction symbol is imbued with a particular taboo in regards to Bachmann's contemporary social context. The depiction of the "Verbrennungsöfen" (incinerators) in regards to Franza's unborn child is another powerful symbol of annihilation, qualifying Franza's description of herself as a "Spätschaden," a person who has long-term, late manifesting psychological problems,<sup>86</sup> traditionally applied to Holocaust survivors. By using these particular terms that have a specific implication within post-war German speaking society Bachmann questions these implications and constructs new meaning, which seeks to recognise inclusiveness in regards to traumatisation.

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<sup>84</sup> "[Bachmann formuliert] die Sprache, die Gewaltstrukturen vermitteln will, daß heißt Gewalt kritisiert, bedient sich mit Sprache gezwungenermaßen einer Gewalttätigen Struktur, um die Gewalt zu formulieren." Ralf Werner, "Die Suche Nach Der Schrecklichen Poesie: Zur Literarischen Programmatik Und Sprachthematik in Ingeborg Bachmann's Der Fall Franza," *Focus in Literature: A Journal for German Language Literature* 3, no. 2 (1996). 107.

<sup>85</sup> "Kein Vieh tut das, die Wölfe töten den sich demütigenden Gegner nicht, er kann ihn nicht töten, hast du das gewußt, er ist nicht fähig, ihm die Kehle durchzubeißen, wenn man sie ihm hinhält." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 62.

<sup>86</sup> Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity*. 30.

Franza's own narrative deconstructs the usage of words of violence, resulting in the disruption of conventional meaning:

You say fascism, but that sounds strange, for I've never heard that word to describe a personal relationship...But that's an interesting idea, for it had to begin somewhere. Why does one only refer to fascism when it has to do with opinions or blatant acts? Yes, he is evil, even if you can't use the word "evil" today, but rather only "sick." Yet what kind of sickness is it when others suffer from it and not the sick one himself?<sup>87</sup>

Jordan's fascism draws on the tactics of German and Austrian Nazi fascist doctrine and practices. But, instead of merely establishing the Jordan-Nazi analogy as a singular comparison, Bachmann goes further, and uses the extension of the concept of fascism as an act of thinking and being in the world that is pervasive rather than contained, and contemporary rather than historical. She thereby surpasses the definition of fascism as a political concept or a historical movement or event in Germany and Austria. Bachmann here echoes the sentiments of the early analysis on the nature of oppression by Aimé Césaire who states:

..when I hear that Negroes have been lynched in America, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; ...when I learn that Jews have been insulted, mistreated, persecuted, I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead; when finally, I turn on my radio and hear that in Africa forced labour has been inaugurated and legalized, I say that we have certainly been lied to: Hitler is not dead.<sup>88</sup>

Bachmann is specific in her analysis by declaring this concept of fascism to be inherent in male/female relations. In this way the topic of fascism, which Bachmann's contemporaries saw partly relegated as a historical, abnormal event from which social

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<sup>87</sup> "Du sagst Faschismus, das ist komisch, ich habe das noch nie gehört als Wort für ein privates Verhalten...Aber das ist gut, denn irgendwo muß es ja anfangen, natürlich, warum redet man davon nur, wenn es um Ansichten und öffentliche Handlungen geht. Ja, er ist böse, auch wenn man heute nicht böse sagen darf, nur krank, aber was ist denn das für eine Krankheit, unter der die anderen leiden und der Kranke nicht." Bachmann, *Der Fall Franza*.74. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 75.

<sup>88</sup> Aimé Césaire quoted in Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. 90.

discourse sought to distance itself as quickly as possible,<sup>89</sup> becomes immediate, powerful and central to ongoing women's trauma.

Jordan's analytical, cryptic language, which is depicted as confusing and dehumanising Franza by denying and appropriating her reality, is akin to Third Reich rhetoric of "killers [who] used language to disguise their work through the use of a deceptive vocabulary."<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, Jordan is associated with the language of violence in the forms of the particular discourses of medicine and patriarchal knowledge, defined by Martin as the language of the "fossils," tainted with associations of the 'old Austria:'

Then the Fossil himself was on the line rattling off his name, aware of his importance, pronouncing it with the slightly nasal tone that only those Viennese of the highest echelons and formerly of the imperial-royal order could still practice, though in the Fossil's case it was a special mixture of a cultured tone and a tone of authority, whereas Martin had settled into a younger, [already] purified form of German...<sup>91</sup>

"The Fossil" Jordan uses his language of old-time power to obfuscate meaning in this exchange with Martin by using his practised, professional rhetoric to treat Martin like a "public patient" (Kassenpatienten),<sup>92</sup> and leaving Martin, like Franza, understanding less than he did before speaking to Jordan. Martin is depicted as needing to separate himself from Jordan and his impression of being fossilised in the past, and it is pertinent to the novel's treatment of the past that language is the site where Martin chooses to differentiate himself. Post-war Austria, with its unacknowledged ties to the Holocaust saw many young intellectuals searching for expressions that were independent of the old

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<sup>89</sup> Although Austria found absolution from their involvement with the Nazis early on in the post-war era through the re-framing of Austria's war participation as being "Germany's first victims", Austrians were affected similarly to the Germans in that their "forced harmonization of inconsistent memories produced a blind spot for what was not remembered... Silence or marginalisation, not denial, became the dominant mode of avoiding an uncomfortable past." See Sabine Behrenbeck, "Between Pain and Silence - Remembering the Victims of Violence in Germany after 1949," in *Life after Death - Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, *Publications of the German Historical Institute of Washington, D.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 42

<sup>90</sup> Steinhardt Botwinick, *A History of the Holocaust - from Ideology to Annihilation*. 157

<sup>91</sup> "...und dann war tatsächlich das Fossil an den Apparat gekommen, das patzig bescheiden seinen Namen ins Telefon warf, im Bewußtsein seiner Bedeutung, mit dieser leicht nasalen Färbung, die nur einige Wiener auf der höchsten Leitersprosse und ehemalige k. und k.-Offiziere noch zu produzieren wußten, aber bei dem Fossil war das eine Spezialmischung aus Bildungsnasal und Autoritätsnasal, während Martin sich auf ein jüngerer, schon gereinigtes Deutsch verlassen mußte..." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 13. Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 11.

<sup>92</sup> Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 13.

language. Bachmann herself articulates this as a complicated contradiction for her as a speaker of the German language when she states: “For a long time I have seen the difficulty in the fact that I write in German, that my relationship to Germany exists only through this language.”<sup>93</sup> The paradox of the idea of purifying Martin’s (and the novel’s) language lies in the uncomfortable association with the concept of ‘purification’ as one of the foundational Nazi ideologies. Martin’s rejection of the past is played out further in his relegation of Franza’s memories of the past as “Wahnsinn” (madness),<sup>94</sup> at the same time as he is deeply tied to engagement with the past through his profession. As a geologist. Martin’s idea of a purified language is shown to be gender-exclusive, in that Franza, by being a woman, does not have access to this purified language. Unlike Franza, Martin has a definite language of his own to use. This is a crucial element in the construction of the narrative, where the events and imagery of violence against Franza are linked to language by themes of illness, madness, body, and memory.

Wolf follows on from Bachmann in her exploration of violence in that she uses the Todesarten theme as a starting point for investigation, a basis that highlights the irrefutability of violence against women. Following Bachmann’s analyses of Todesarten, Wolf delves deeply into the accepted foundations of the Trojan myth to locate a point of origin of violence, conjecturing that if mythology does contain some form of archetypal truth, then the story of Troy will hold a source for the ‘ways of killing.’ Wolf starts with the premise that the figure of Cassandra is emblematic of the fate of all women in that she is made into an object. Furthermore, Wolf makes an important connection between the processes of objectification and violence when she asks “As for turning things into objects: Isn’t that the principal source of violence?”<sup>95</sup> *Kassandra* make this vital point about objectification: that it is the othering of women which allows for a framing and rhetoric of violence justifying it as a necessary sacrifice.

The violence depicted in *Kassandra* is indicative of this as it unfolds the concept of sacrifice as a leitmotif throughout the text. Violence is not incidental or individual, it spans further than the time of events narrated by the character of Cassandra, and it

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<sup>93</sup> Ingeborg Bachmann, quoted in Krick-Aigner, *Ingeborg Bachmann's Telling Stories - from Fairy Tale Beginnings and Holocaust Endings*. 28.

<sup>94</sup> Rauch, "Die Über(Be)Setzung Der Vergangenheit: Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman Der Fall Franza." 45.

<sup>95</sup> “Das Objektmachen: Ist es nicht die Hauptquelle von Gewalt? Die Fetischisierung lebendig-widersprüchlicher Menschen und Prozesse in der öffentlichen Verlautbarungen, bis sie zu Fertigteilen und Kulissen erstarrt sind: selbst tot, andre erschlagend.” Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Kassandra*. 114. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 259.



encompasses a vast community of women in a domino-like effect. Wolf builds on the initial sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenie, sacrificed by her father as an offering for luck in their war voyage to Troy and thereby starting the line of sacrifices of the women who were to follow. Cassandra uses Iphigenie as a representation of the chain of violence against the women, highlighting the manipulation of the language that obscures patriarchal violence:

How often was I compelled to think of Iphigenia all through the war years... He had to sacrifice her, he said. That was not what I wanted to hear: but of course murderers and butchers do not know words like "murder" and "butcher." How far I had removed myself from them even in my speech.<sup>96</sup>

Kassandra's comment on the sacrifice of Iphigenie and Agamemnon's explanation for it renders the patriarchal justifications for violence against women transparent. This subverts traditional myth representations in which the gods demanded the sacrifice, and instead shows that it is done "to pacify the other Greek princes who are jealous of [Agamemnon's] position."<sup>97</sup>

While Bachmann sketches an outline of women traumatised by violence around the main experience of Franza's trauma, Wolf draws fully on the violence against all the women involved in the story of Troy. This establishes a network of connections that highlights the extensive impact of the depicted trauma. The symbol of sacrifice is represented both in a linear and a circular form. It is linear in the sense that violence against women disguised as sacrifice is something that Wolf finds in her *Conditions of a Narrative* as spanning across time from the history of ancient Greece to her contemporary time. The circularity of it is embedded in the structure of the *Kassandra* narrative, which begins with Kassandra's acknowledgement of her impending sacrifice, and ends at the point when her murder is imminent. In the space between these two points, Kassandra narrates a tale of violence that not only extends beyond her own lifetime, but also encompasses

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<sup>96</sup> "Wie oft ich all die Kriegsjahre über an diese Iphigenie denken mußte... Er habe sie opfern müssen. Das war nicht, was ich hören wollte, aber Wörter wie "morden," "schlachten" sind ja den Mördern und Schlächtern unbekannt. Wie weit ich mich, auch in meiner Sprache, von ihnen entfernt hatte." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 57. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 112.

<sup>97</sup> Komar, *Reclaiming Klytemnestra - Revenge or Reconciliation*. 112.

the full spectrum of violence against women (outlined in this thesis), including torture, sexual abuse and violent acts perpetrated in the context of warfare.

Unlike *Das Buch Franza*, in *Kassandra* the narrative describes the acts of violence not just between one perpetrator and one victim but also within a variety of situations involving many perpetrators and victims, where violence is enacted against women both on a private and a public level. Furthermore, this situation is not depicted as a static point within the narrative, but rather as a development, where violence escalates and becomes increasingly immediate as the Trojan story evolves.

The escalation of violence occurs simultaneously alongside the increasing shift towards the ideology of patriarchal power structures and war mentality. Although *Kassandra* grows up in a Troy that is already structurally patriarchal, the remnants of an ancient matriarchal system, which conferred power on women like Queen Hekabe, are intertwined in the women's experiences. The intensification of violence and its associated trauma is one of the tools by which the old system is repressed. Just as the patriarchally organised Greek gods replace the ancient goddess Kybele, so the role of women changes to become objects that can be violated as a means of cementing patriarchal structure.

Sexual violence against women is depicted throughout the narrative, occurring during the ten years of war and after the defeat of Troy, as well as during peacetimes. As a punishment for telling *Kassandra* the truth about the seer Kalchas joining the Greeks, *Kassandra*'s maid Marpessa is sent to the stables as a horsemaid, where her rape is unavoidable as "everyone knew what things were like in the stables."<sup>98</sup> The importance of the depiction of sexual violence as a strategic punishment of women *outside* the context of war, perpetrated not by an enemy but by the men of Troy, is a development of Wolf's theme which shows the links between patriarchal violence during and outside of war. Like Bachmann's depiction of the sexual abuse of *Franza*, Wolf shows that it is not just war itself, which fosters this violence, but an underlying, misogynistic objectification, a way of thinking. As the war with the Greeks evolves the women become increasingly unable to tell friend from foe. The paradox that the war is fought under the guise of protecting women, in particular King Priamo's sister, who was cited

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<sup>98</sup> "Als Pferdemaagd zu den Knechten aus einem Dutzend Völkerschaften. Jedermann kannte die Zustände in den Ställen." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 44. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 40.

as the reason for Paris's abduction of Helena, becomes increasingly obvious as the men, who are meant to be protecting their women, turn against them. The distinction between the warring sides becomes smaller throughout the narrative, and that the Trojan women are a prime target of violence by the Greek *and* their own men, is a truth that Cassandra can only admit to herself in retrospect:

...all of a sudden it was no longer advisable for us women to be out alone. If you saw it properly – only no one ventured to do that – the men of both sides seemed to have joined forces against our women.<sup>99</sup>

An atmosphere of fear frames the women's experiences, and none are spared from the consequences of patriarchal violence. Cassandra herself is raped during the sacking of Troy by "Klein Aias" (Ajax the Lesser), something that she briefly mentions towards the beginning of her narrative. The initial, brief and unelaborated statement at that point situates her rape as just one of the many experiences endured by herself and the women of Troy. It is not until much later in the narrative, after she has told of the many other atrocities, including the rape of whole villages of women by the Greek invaders, that Cassandra returns to her own experience. Like Bachmann's depiction of Franza's final rape at the pyramids, the scene of Cassandra's rape marks a culmination of the female trauma experience and the novel's key themes. Unlike other, heroic narratives of the Trojan defeat, Wolf uses only one paragraph to let Cassandra narrate the events of the final overthrow of Troy. Acknowledging the nature of this novel's re-write of the Trojan tale, the opening line of the paragraph states, "the Greeks will tell their own version of what happened that night," and goes on to speak of Myrines's murder, Polyxena being buried alive with Achill, and Hekabe's despair as she has to watch her daughter Cassandra's rape:

As they dragged her [Polyxena] away, Ajax the lesser was on top of me. And Hecuba, as they held her fast, uttered curses whose like I have never heard before. "A bitch," Ajax the Lesser yelled when he was through with me. "The Queen of the Trojans is a howling bitch."  
Yes. That's how it was.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> "...auf einmal war es nicht mehr ratsam für uns Frauen, alleine unterwegs zu sein. Wenn man es recht betrachtete – nur traute niemand sich, es so zu sehen -, schienen die Männer beider Seiten verbündet gegen unsere Frauen." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 109. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 104.

The women witness each other's violations, together they are distinguished by their vulnerability, something they recognise as they make fervent attempts to help each other in this final stage of chaos. Hekabe and Cassandra are trying to hide Polyxena in the "grave of heroes," Cassandra wishes she had a dagger to kill Polyxena to spare her the abuse by the Greeks, and Marpessa makes a desperate plea to Aias to rape her instead of Cassandra. This establishes a strong contrast between the women and the men. While the men are betraying their own kind, like Andron's betrayal of Polyxena, and using the attack on the women to give them the feeling of total conquest, the women, although frequently divided throughout the narrative, connect through their experience of trauma. It seems noteworthy also that the scene of this violence, the grave of heroes is, as in Franza's rape at the pyramids, an ironic re-take on the symbolism of these patriarchal architectural constructions of 'great cultures.'

Through the depiction of the women's experiences Wolf manages to show several Todesarten that are linked through the contrast between the men and the women. These Todesarten use sexual abuse as an essential tool that helps the men to adhere to their construction of themselves as heroes, according to the patriarchal code of conquest. It echoes Franza's analysis of her rapist and cements what Cassandra increasingly realises about patriarchal structures: "The men, weak, whipped up into victors, needed us as victims in order not to stop feeling altogether."<sup>101</sup> A most powerful depiction of this concept is shown through Wolf's construction of one of the major classical hero archetypes, the figure of Achill. In extreme contrast to the traditional mythology of Achill as a noble, powerful and heroic warrior, *Kassandra's* Achill is the embodiment of "misanthropy, brutality, selfishness and emotional indifference."<sup>102</sup> His actions, far more overtly than any of the other male characters, show the link between sexual violence and the problematic construction of masculine, patriarchal power. Cassandra experiences this while witnessing Achill's brutal murder of her brother Troilus:

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<sup>100</sup> "Als sie sie wegschleiften, war Klein Aias über mir. Und Hekabe, die sie festhielten, stieß Flüche aus, die ich noch nie gehört hatte. Eine Hündin, schrie Klein Aias, als er mit mir fertig war. Die Königin der Troer eine heulende Hündin. Ja. So war es." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 143. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 137.

<sup>101</sup> "Die Männer, schwach, zu Siegern hochgeputzt, brauchen, um sich überhaupt noch zu empfinden, uns als Opfer." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 126. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 120.

<sup>102</sup> "...ist Achill eine Männerfigur mit einer verachtenswerten psychischen Deformiertheit, die falsch verstandenes Heldentum auslebt: Menschenverachtung, Brutalität, Selbstgefälligkeit und emotionale Abgestumpftheit prägen seinen Umgang mit Frauen." Christine Schmidjell, *Erläuterungen Und Dokumente - Christa Wolf Kassandra* (Stuttgard: Philipp Reclam jun., 2003). 26.

In what role was his enemy approaching my brother? As a murderer? As a seducer? Could such a thing be – the voluptuousness of the murderer and the lover in one? Was that allowed to exist among human beings?... My brother's eyes were starting out of their sockets. And the gratification in Achilles' face. The naked hideous male gratification. If that exists, everything is possible.<sup>103</sup>

In the act of being overcome by the enemy, Troilus, like the women in the narrative, has become an object that serves as a definition of a masculinity that realises its "manhood" through the act of violence. Achill, in his search for his masculine self-definition takes this to another level when further on in the narrative he rapes the corpse of the Amazon warrior Queen Penthesilea, an act which Cassandra describes as resounding painfully within every woman:

I can see what happened next as if I had been present. Achilles the Greek hero desecrates the dead woman. The man, incapable of loving the living woman, hurls himself on the dead victim so that he can go on killing her. And I moan. Why? She did not feel it. We felt it, all of us women.<sup>104</sup>

Wolf's rewriting of these events, where in previous canonical literature Achill falls in love with Penthesilea in a sincere and reverent manner that underscores the romantic tragedy of this hero's experience, creates a compellingly destabilising effect on hero construction and the traditional myths. Instead, Cassandra narrates the brutal reality of sexual violence as experienced by the women. This demonstrates the traumatising impact it has on the victims, through Cassandra's first-hand experience of sexual violence and through the insidious trauma that is sustained by the community of women who witness these assaults.

The violence of torture, emblematic as it is of the punishment of an enemy, is experienced first-hand by Cassandra ironically *not* by the foreign adversary of the Greek

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<sup>103</sup> "Wie näherte sich dieser Feind dem Bruder? Als Mörder? Als Verführer? Ja gab es das denn: Mörderlust und Liebeslust in einem Mann? Durfte unter Menschen das geduldet werden?...Des Bruders Augen aus den Höhlen quellend. Und in Achilles Gesicht die Lust. Die nackte gräßliche männliche Lust. Wenn es das gibt, ist alles möglich." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 79. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 74.

<sup>104</sup> "Was dann kam, sie ich vor mir, als ware ich dabei gewesen. Achill der Griechenheld schändet die tote Frau. Der Mann, unfähig, die Lebendige zu Lieben, wirft sich, weiter tötend, auf das Opfer. Und ich stöhne. Warum. Sie hat es nicht gefühlt. Wir fühlten es, wir Frauen alle." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 126. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 120.

army, but instead by her own people, ordered and sanctioned by her father, King Priamos. Like Bachmann's depiction of the many different forms of torture that Jordan employs against Franza, Wolf depicts a variety of methods used to torture Cassandra. Strategy and planning, particularly driven by the figure of Eumelos, chief of the palace guard and the enforcer of an increasingly fascist state, are instrumental to the ways in which the psychological torture of the women take shape. When Cassandra, outraged by the Trojan council's ultimate objectification of her sister Polyxena as a sexual bait to capture Achill, refuses to keep silent, she is incarcerated in the same place she later tries to hide Polyxena, the "grave of the heroes." Cassandra is left in the grave in claustrophobic darkness, deprived of most sensory input and without human contact other than her two cruel warders. The psychological effect of this internment results in one of Cassandra's most painful realisations, namely that the one man who she thought would protect her, her father Priamos, has violated her:

This is pain. It was pain, which I thought I knew. Now I saw that until then it had barely grazed me. You do not distinguish the boulder that buries you beneath it, but only the force of the impact; so my pain at the loss of everything I had called "father" was threatening to crush me with its weight.<sup>105</sup>

The consequence of this torture, devised to silence and kill Cassandra's spirit, is not all negative. Although the torture leaves Cassandra physiologically damaged and psychologically fragile, the realisation of the true workings of a patriarchy that turns the father against the daughter by necessity of adherence to the system, is a realisation that in some sense liberates Cassandra. Eva Kaufman describes Cassandra as experiencing the "fright, which is not merely the end, but instead the beginning of something: especially heightened responsibility."<sup>106</sup> Instead of being crushed, Cassandra takes her knowledge to live a new life with the other women at the caves in Mount Ida, where she experiences some of the most fulfilling years of her life.

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<sup>105</sup> "Das ist der Schmerz. Es war der Schmerz, den ich doch zu kennen glaubte. Jetzt sah ich: Bisher hatte er mich kaum gestreift. Wie man den Felsen nicht erkennt, der einen unter sich begräbt, und nur die Wucht des Anpralls spürt, so drohte mich der Schmerz, um den Verlust all dessen, was ich "Vater" nannte, zu erdrücken." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 135. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 129.

<sup>106</sup> [...] der Schrecken ist nicht nur das Ende, sondern auch der Anfang von etwas: vor allem von verhörter Verantwortlichkeit." Eva Kaufmann, "'Unerschrocken Ins Herz Der Finsternis': Zu Christa Wolf's Störfall," in *Christa Wolf - Ein Arbeitsbuch*, ed. Angela Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1988). 263.

Whereas in *Das Buch Franza* the violence is deliberately depicted as occurring during times of peace, in *Kassandra* the violence of war is fully depicted, explored and linked to women's experiences of trauma. Wolf makes her thematic interest in war clear through the *Conditions of a Narrative*, where in the third lecture "A Work Diary, About the Stuff Life and Dreams are Made of," she explores war within the context of her contemporary situation in a Europe threatened by annihilation through the atomic 'cold war.' The political situation of Wolf's Europe during the early nineteen-eighties reduced that continent to a potential battleground for the east/west conflict, with Germany as a central site for nuclear weapon location and targeting. In her work diary Wolf charts the developments of this situation and records her increasing anxiety, not merely about the unquestionable destruction of Europe if caught in the midst of an atomic war, but about the ideological structures of the USA and the USSR that enable the relentless arming for the purpose of "self defence." Wolf uses her thinking about the story of Troy to connect the ancient event with the contemporary situation. Furthermore, she explains that it is through writing that she had hoped to make sense of an impending war, maybe even influence the situation:

In the news, both sides bombarded us with the need to make preparations for war, which both sides call preparations for self-defense. Emotionally it is unbearable to see the state of the world as it really is. The motivation to write, any hope of "having some effect," is decaying at a breakneck pace that may parallel the speed of missile production on both sides.<sup>107</sup>

For Christa Wolf war is an acute reality, it is described as impacting on her every-day life and thoughts and intersects with her past war experience from World War Two and the continuum of warfare throughout the centuries, stretching back as far as Trojan times. Where Ingeborg Bachmann's treatment of Austria's war past is tied to her exploration of the continuities of fascist thinking in post-war peacetime, suggesting that the 1960s German-speaking countries had not yet engaged in a sufficient *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, Christa Wolf hypothesises that *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has to go a lot further into Western history than the twentieth century. Wolf is

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<sup>107</sup> " Die Nachrichten beider Seiten bombardieren uns mit der Notwendigkeit von Kriegsvorbereitungen, die auf beiden Seiten Verteidigungsvorbereitungen heißen. Sich den wirklichen Zustand der Welt vor Augen zu halten, ist psychisch unerträglich. In rasender Eile, die etwa der Geschwindigkeit der Raketenproduktionen beider Seiten entspricht, verfällt die Schriebmotivation, jede Hoffnung "etwas zu bewirken." Wolf, *Voraussetzungen Einer Erzählung: Kassandra*. 97. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 239

fundamentally concerned with dismantling and demonstrating the continuity of war ideology, highlighting that there is no change in mechanisms or associated rhetoric, but merely in particularities of events, places, winners and losers.

Wolf focuses on this general war mentality rather than the example of fascist Germany as the time and context differ from Bachmann's, but also because Wolf's life in the German Democratic Republic imbued a different concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* than in Austria or West Germany. Seeking an alternative to the ideology of Nazi fascism that Wolf grew up with, and which she saw as continuing in various forms after the end of the war, meant that she was able to align herself with early constructions of the GDR which stressed the new state's "antifascist-democratic reformation."<sup>108</sup> As such, the foundation of Wolf's country was built on a past that acknowledged the socialist, anti-fascist struggle that some of the nations founding members were involved in, forgetting the complexities of the rest of the population's role as having "either actively supported or at least willingly endured the Nazi regime."<sup>109</sup> The process of coming to terms with this was thereby dominated by a state rhetoric that made the distinction between itself and imperial, West Germany, by stressing the different responsibilities, accountabilities and the GDR's break with the combined German past.

Christa Wolf's personal coming to terms with her childhood in fascist Germany is explored in the 1976 novel *Kindheitsmuster* (*Patterns of Childhood*), where the realities of that war are clearly represented through the emotional and physical impact on the young protagonist Nelly and her community. The opening lines of *Kindheitsmuster*, stating "The past is not dead, it is not even past. We distance ourselves from it and become estranged from ourselves,"<sup>110</sup> mirror the theme of war trauma on which Wolf focuses a decade later in *Kassandra*. In *Kassandra* the characters' estrangement from each other and from themselves is comparable to the situation Wolf describes in 1981 Europe, where the past experience of World War Two is not acknowledged except for the purpose of fuelling the current conflict. That the situation of an ancient Troy and a three thousand-year old, European civilization can be so similar, is the point which is made most powerfully by Wolf through the *Kassandra* material. War, no matter during

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<sup>108</sup> The official history of 1945-1949 stressed this concept, "indicating the crucial importance of antifascism in legitimising the existence of the GDR." See Stefan Berger, "Inventing the Nation - Germany," in *Inventing the Nation*, ed. Keith Robbins (London: Arnold, 2004). 200.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>110</sup> Christa Wolf, *Kindheitsmuster* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000). 9.



what time or in which civilisation, remains a violent, traumatising and destructive affair, where self- destruction is as prevalent as destruction by Others.

The previously described idea of ‘truth’ in mythology is located by Wolf in the archetypal truth about war at the point where ideology and action converge in a gratuitous act of violence, marking the beginning of the violence that Wolf believes to continue into her contemporary society. In his combat with Cassandra’s brother Troilus, Achill “the beast” violates all rules of “honourable” fighting. “All rules fell into the dust forever,”<sup>111</sup> as Achill fights with merciless violence, even pursuing and killing Troilus inside the sacred space of the temple. This point marks the beginning of the end for Cassandra, as she is able to foresee the outcome of this war and is traumatised to the point of “feel[ing] nothing for a long time.”<sup>112</sup>

Wolf shows the traumatisation occurring through the violence of war as being multi-layered, in the sense that women experience it directly, indirectly and cumulatively. Cassandra and some of the other female characters’ direct encounter with violence includes the already discussed sexual violence and torture, but is also represented through specific incidents, such as the slaying of Penthisilea, or the near-slaying of Myrine who is reduced to a “bloody heap” without an inch left on her body “where we could touch her without her moaning in pain.”<sup>113</sup> Further acts of direct violence are depicted in the killing of Polyxena as punishment for her part in the betrayal of Achill, or the forced abductions of the Trojan royal household’s women as ‘war bounty’ for the Greeks.

Furthermore, the women are exposed to witnessing many violent acts against other women, as well as the slayings of their male kin, lovers, friends and even the violence against their Greek enemies. This “second hand” violence, accumulating over the war’s time span of ten years, is just as influential on the women as the experience of direct violence through its literal and symbolic killing of the women. In contrast to the men like Achill, who are “re-born by killing...stand[ing] up, re-erect out of something that

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<sup>111</sup> “Für immer fielen alle Regeln in den Staub.” Wolf, *Kassandra*. 78. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 73.

<sup>112</sup> “Ich fühllos lange Zeit.” Wolf, *Kassandra*. 79. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 74.

<sup>113</sup> “...du, Marpessa, warst dabei, als Myrine, ein blutiges Bündel, an die Tür der Hütte kratzte, in die wir uns gerettet hatten...An Myrines Körper gab es keinen Flecken, wo wir sie berühren konnten, ohne daß sie winselte.” Wolf, *Kassandra*. 125. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 119.

dies around them,”<sup>114</sup> the women become effaced by the continuum of violence employed in the name of war, highlighting the irony of the original justifications for the beginning of the war, as being about women. The novel’s thematic overarching engagement with the nature of violence and oppression shows, as Castañeda states from a contemporary background, that

[...] using gender to justify war in the twentieth century-bombing of Afghanistan to “liberate” Afghan women from Afghan men, for example, recodes gendered hierarchies and relations of power that have, since the sixteenth century, sexualized conquest and justified European imperialism.<sup>115</sup>

### *Voicelessness in the Texts*

Ingeborg Bachmann and Christa Wolf depict the issues and impacts of voicelessness in the novels by representing it as both a source of trauma and a wounding effect of trauma. Throughout the narratives the female protagonists are on journeys that show the effects of voicelessness, while expressing the processes that lead towards the finding of voice. In this sense *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra* create important depictions of both the protagonists’ voices, and finding of voice, as well as the finding of the authorial voice that enables the unspeakable to be spoken.

In *Das Buch Franza* the depiction of the othering and the enforcing violence is represented as part of the overarching context of Franza’s voicelessness. Franza in her life in Vienna with Jordan has no ‘official’ voice. Franza’s characterisation as well as Bachmann’s narrative techniques shows that the struggle to articulate in itself presents a traumatising process for Franza, as her search for language is depicted as being physically and mentally painful. From the outset, Franza is defined by her absence of voice; the first introductions of her expressions are the aborted, unfinished and unsent letters from her to Martin, which he finds at her house:

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<sup>114</sup> Klaus Theweleit, "The Bomb's Womb and the Genders of War," in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woolcott (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993). 284.

<sup>115</sup> Antonia Castañeda, "Introduction," in *Gender on the Borderlands*, ed. Antonia Castañeda (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007). i.

Dear Martin, I must write to you. Dear Martin, I don't know where to begin or what I should say. My Dearest Martin, it's so terrible, and yet I fear there is only you, which is why I am writing you. Dear Martin, I am so full of doubt, I must write to you...Dear Martin, yesterday in the café as I sat there with those little packages, suddenly I could say nothing.<sup>116</sup>

Through Martin's narrative we encounter Franza in his retrospective construction of her, particularly the vision of her as a young girl. Franza is like an enigma without a voice of its own. The first actual depiction of Franza emphasises her inability to speak coherently through the depiction of her body malfunctioning beyond her own or Martin's control:

She cried but it was something more than simply shedding tears, for she trembled and her body did something he couldn't ease with his arms, a convulsion whose spasms got stronger and stronger. She trembled and tried to push him away and then grabbed hold of him again as he kept saying Franza, Franza.<sup>117</sup>

Franza's illness is the embodiment of her trauma, and throughout the narrative it is her body that supplies the missing articulation, or clues to the mystery about Franza. Franza traces the beginning of her somatic symptoms back to a particular point in time and associates it metaphorically with the feeling of "ersticken" (suffocating) on the fairy-tale motif of a poisoned apple. Franza is strangled by her inability to voice her fear. The panic attacks that increasingly manifest themselves, the not being able to be in a car, a lift, or to take off a coat, are the expressions of the dread that is embedded within her, the fear that is "the hold-up, the terror, the massive attack on life."<sup>118</sup>

Franza's body and her illness become central to the narrative as the reader witnesses her body performing her trauma in the absence of language. Through the omniscient

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<sup>116</sup> "Lieber Martin, ich muß Dir schreiben. Lieber Martin, ich weiß nicht, wo ich anfangen und wie ich es sagen soll. Mein lieber Martin, es ist so entsetzlich, ich fürchte mich, ich habe ja nur Dich und deswegen schreibe ich Dir. Lieber Martin, ich bin so verzweifelt, ich muß Dir schreiben...Lieber Martin, gestern im Espresso, als ich mit all diesen Päckchen dasaß, da konnte ich plötzlich nichts sagen..." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 17. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 16.

<sup>117</sup> "...und sie weinte nicht nur, es war noch etwas anderes, das von dem Weinen nur die Tränen hatte, sie zitterte und ihr Körper tat etwas mit ihr, was er nicht niederhalten konnte mit den Armen, in einer Konvulsion, in immer stärkeren Zuckungen, sie schlotterte und wollte ihn wegstoßen und krampfte sich dann wider an ihn, und er sagte immerzu, aber Franza, Franza..." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 23. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 23.

<sup>118</sup> "Die Angst ist nicht disputierbar, sie ist der Überfall, sie ist [der] Terror, der massive Angriff auf das Leben." Bachmann, *Der Fall Franza*. 77.

narrator, through Martin and the various ‘spectators,’ Franza’s attacks are stigmatised by the rhetoric of medico/psychology as madness.<sup>119</sup> This label is subverted when Franza herself thinks and speaks about her illness, contrasting it to the systematic acts and structures of violence and destruction around her and aptly raising the question of who is insane: those who destroy or those who are destroyed? Bachmann continues her engagement with post-war issues, particularly the role of the body within the memory of trauma. If the female body within literature functions, as Michaela Grobbel states, as a site of memory, a performance that “[deciphers] cultural inscriptions...reveal[ing] a spatial reconfiguration of the relationship between the past and the present,” then Franza’s somatic language is exposing her triple trauma more succinctly than her literal language. Franza feels the trauma as being deeply embedded in her body, where it takes a shape more discernible than language can: “My body, it is completely violated, violated everywhere.”<sup>120</sup>

Franza’s lack of language is contrasted to the other characters’ command of language, and their command to define who she is. Although Martin’s construction of Franza is disturbed by the ‘new’ Franza he finds in Galicien, he nevertheless has an image of her in his mind that does not correspond to the reality of her experience. Furthermore, where Franza lacks words, Martin has his before mentioned ‘new German,’ and his *Wissenschaftliche* (scientific) terminology of geology that he employs to define the situation. Jordan uses the language of medical *Wissenschaft* as a way of terrorising Franza and defining who she is. He drives the extinction of her by progressing from renaming her “Franziska Jordan,” to reducing her to a bare “F” on the psychiatric records he keeps of her, to completely annihilating her by omitting her name as one of the contributors to their book on Nazi medical experiments on women.<sup>121</sup>

The narrative therefore shifts and multiplies Franza’s constructed identities, and even when Franza chooses her own identity in her forged new passport, it is that of “Franziska Ranner,” a childhood identity that has been lost to her and is not regained within her

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<sup>119</sup> Franza’s brother Martin classifies Franza’s compulsion to “remember” as madness in itself. “Sich zu erinnern wird durch die Worte Martin’s mit Wahnsinn assoziiert” See Rauch, “Die Über(Be)Setzung Der Vergangenheit: Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman Der Fall Franza.” 45.

<sup>120</sup> “...mein Körper, er ist ganz beleidigt, an jeder Stelle beleidigt.” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 106. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 107.

<sup>121</sup> “Er wollte mich auslöschen, mein Name sollte verschwinden, damit ich danach wirklich verschwunden sein konnte.” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 57. “He wanted to erase me. My name should simply disappear in order that I could disappear for real later on.” Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 63.

lifetime. By the third chapter of the novel Franza is able to express her lack of language, her silenced scream, through the association with her metaphoric suffocating and her actual burial in the mud of Assuan:

Franza wriggled in the mud, the sand ran into her mouth, into her eyes, choking her already. One more move and she would really choke. If she screamed the sand would collapse and fill her windpipe... Why didn't you say something, why don't you say something! She staggered into the water with tears in her eyes, spat out the sand, plunged into the Nile. I wanted to scream, I always wanted to scream. But I never could scream.<sup>122</sup>

Franza is conflicted by the need to tell her story and her simultaneous fear and shame urging her to stay invisible and silent. It is this conflict which drives the expression of her trauma through her body against her will, which urges her to remain unseen, "Schau mich nicht an" (Don't look at me), and which directs her narrative in chapter two to appear disjointed, fragmented and inarticulate. Franza's relationship to language is marked by discord. Her search for words develops from her initial state in chapter one where Martin describes her as having to "force each word from the base of her tongue out towards her teeth,"<sup>123</sup> to the second chapter where she finds the words to speak of her time with Jordan. In this chapter it seems that the force of memory is aiding her in her construction of language, interposed with questions and long, enjambment style sentences. Finally, in the last chapter set in Egypt, she finds temporary clarity and directness during her meeting with the doctor Kurt Körner, a doctor responsible for a Nazi euthanasia programme during World War Two. This meeting is pivotal in regards to Franza finding a voice, as she not only articulates to Körner with ever increasing confidence who she is and what she knows, but moreover she confronts the fascist doctor with her knowledge of who *he* is. Although Körner does not comply with Franza's wish to give her the "lethal injection" he does something which no other fascist has done for Franza before, he fears her and runs away from confrontation with her:

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<sup>122</sup> "Franza wand sich im Schlamm, in den Mund rann der Sand, in die Augen, sie erstickte schon. Noch eine Regung, dann würde sie wirklich ersticken. Wenn sie schrie, dann würde der Sand zustoßen und ihr die Luftröhre füllen... Warum hast Du denn nichts gesagt, warum sagst du denn nichts! Sie taumelte ins Wasser mit tränenden Augen, spuckte den Sand aus, tauchte in den Nil. Ich wollte ja schreien, immer wollte ich schreien. Aber ich habe ja nie schreien können." Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 105.

<sup>123</sup> "Franza sprach zusammenhängend, aber sehr langsam, als müßte sie jedes Wort von den Zungenwurzel bis zu den Zähnen schieben." Ibid. 29. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 30.

On the way to Giza she said to Martin in the taxi: He – she corrected herself – Jordan was never afraid of me. He was so sure that I would tell no one, that I would rather die. Even in the end. You couldn't even notice any uneasiness in him. But still, I have taught someone to be afraid. One of them. Yes, that I have done.<sup>124</sup>

Through the fleeing of Dr Körner Franza gains a voice and, importantly, Körner also *hears* her. This means that without using the language of the fascists Franza manages to instil fear in one of “them” and fulfils her earlier feeling that in the desert she will “discover her rights.”<sup>125</sup>

It is at this point in the narrative that Franza experiences her final traumatisation: the sexual assault at the pyramids of Giza. Once again, Franza is rendered wordless and the impact of the violation and the accumulated effect of past trauma threaten to rob her of her fragile acquisition of a “language that tells” once more. Franza’s inability to “utter a sound” (sie brachte keinen Ton heraus)<sup>126</sup> is indicative of the association between trauma and voicelessness, where language is not sufficient to form the truth of the female trauma experience. From what follows it initially appears as though Franza has finally capitulated to the force of patriarchal violence and that her voicelessness will be final this time. Instead, Bachmann inverts the conclusion that once again female trauma will not be heard, and Franza, just before she is about to reach that stage of giving in, makes a deliberate choice to voice her feelings:

Her thoughts raced, and then she hit the wall, smashing her head,  
slamming it with full force against the wall in Vienna and the stone  
cuboid in Giza, and she said out loud, and there was her other voice: No.  
No.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> “Auf der Fahrt nach Gizeh sagte sie Martin im Taxi: Er – sie verbesserte sich – Jordan hat sich nie vor mir gefürchtet. Er war so sicher, daß ich es niemand sage, daß ich eher krepriere. Auch zuletzt. Es war ihm nicht einmal ein Unbehagen anzumerken gewesen. Aber ich habe jemand doch noch das Fürchten beigebracht. Einem von denen. Ja, das habe ich.” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 131. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 137.

<sup>125</sup> “Du siehst, sagt Franza, es darf auch mir hier nichts verweigert werden. Ich komme zu meinem Recht.” Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 101. English translation Bachmann, *The Book of Franza*. 102.

<sup>126</sup> Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*. 113.

<sup>127</sup> “Ihr Denken riß ab, und dann schlug sie, schlug mit ganzer Kraft, ihren Kopf gegen die Wand in Wien und die Steinquader in Gizeh und sagte laut, und da war ihre andere Stimme: Nein. Nein.” Ibid. 134.

Franza's 'Other' voice is the one, for the first time, that can express resistance to patriarchal violence and oppression. In the act of saying 'no' Franza is able to free herself linguistically and mentally in order to realise later on in the day that she is dying. She uses her final expression as another act of resistance, namely the curse that she puts on Jordan and "the whites:"

Martin.

Among a hundred brothers.

...

The whites.

My head.

The whites should.

They should be damned. He should.<sup>128</sup>

Furthermore, she affirms her bond with Martin "among a hundred brothers" through the context of the Egyptian myth of siblings Isis and Osiris,<sup>129</sup> who were bound by trauma. Although Martin remains unable to truly understand her trauma, Franza nevertheless names Martin as an ally to her suffering. This is pivotal to Franza's final defiance as Martin is depicted as comprehending some of Franza's illness in the end, thereby providing her with an important aspect of trauma articulation, which is having a comprehending witness. Franza's choice to die is synonymous with her ability to finally say 'no' and to die with the belief that there is some understanding of her trauma.

What Martin does not understand after Franza's death is that contrary to his wish Franza was lost to him in the desert before her death. While he thought her to be increasingly 'unconscious' throughout their journey she in fact began to awaken, becoming gradually more conscious of herself and her trauma. His hope that Franza died without knowledge of her impending death or realising her surroundings, as well as his ignorance of her condition, are contrasted with the force of Franza's awareness and expression of precisely those things, highlighting the extent and depth of her knowledge.

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<sup>128</sup> "Martin. Unter hundert Brüdern...Die Weißen. Mein Kopf. Die Weißen, sie sollen. Sie sollen verflucht sein. Er soll. Ibid. 135-136

<sup>129</sup> The line "unter hundert Brüdern" (among a hundred brothers) relates to the poem "Isis and Osiris" by Robert Musil, dealing with the Egyptian myth. See Monika Meister, "Der Fall - Der Fall Franza: Machtstruktur Und Sanktioniertes Verbrechen Bei Musil Und Bachmann," in *Kunst, Wissenschaft Und Politik Von Robert Musil Bis Ingeborg Bachmann*, ed. Josef Strutz (München: Fink, 1986).

While Franza's eventual death suggests that there is no lasting articulation of woman's trauma that can survive to tell the tale coherently, there *is* this last act of protest that is delivered verbally as well as symbolically through the act of Franza's choosing death.<sup>130</sup> On one level this act could show that in the end the language available to tell Franza's trauma was not available within Bachmann's contemporary context, and that as such the death of the female subject must occur. Another reading of this act of death is that it is subversive of the 'killing' mechanisms Bachmann critiques, as death follows after disruption has already occurred. The disruption of patriarchal patterns of language functions throughout the novel and is cemented in the final act of denial of participation.

The novel's shifting of narrative voice between the omnipresent narrator, Martin's point of view and the relatively short passages that belong to Franza's voice alone, is a structure which creates an unsettling effect due to its unpredictability and its ambiguousness as to whose voice is privileged. It is therefore imperative that Franza herself narrates her final articulation of her resistance, her curse and her choice to die. Through Franza's deviations from ordinary patterns of language and expression, resulting in a voice that is poetic yet unformed and childlike, the power of her final statement is tangible in its re-working of trauma language. Franza has told her trauma and in the process has highlighted and re-formed numerous patriarchal concepts that are essential to traumatising, yet having done so there is no redemption for the teller, other than being allowed to make the choice to die. Franza is not able to keep living as part of the structures of violence that effected her traumatising. Yet through her death, her body, Franza once more manages to articulate the author's concerns about the post-war, 'peaceful' society that keeps on killing.

Whereas Bachmann's Franza struggles to express her trauma, in Wolf's *Kassandra* the female protagonist uses the first-person voice to highlight how expression is fundamentally important to the traumatising of the women. *Kassandra* herself tells of how the dispossession of voice is a vital tool in the process of othering. Through the depiction of the effect silencing has on herself (and the other women), she communicates the wounding, which is caused by this enforced voicelessness. In *Troy* the taking of voice is depicted in a multitude of ways. The representation of the patriarchal appropriation of matriarchal forms of power, such as religious goddess iconography or

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<sup>130</sup> Kuhn describes Franza's death as an "act of resistance." See Kuhn, "Ingeborg Bachmann's *Der Fall Franza*: Myth, History, Utopia." 617.



ancient customs of rulership, is symbolic of the female voice being usurped and silenced on a structural level. Queen Hekabe, remembered by Cassandra to have once been powerful and influential in the political governing of Troy, becomes increasingly marginalised and silenced by King Priamos and the all-male council, who pay no heed to the ancient custom that the King is ruler only by permission of the Queen, who 'lends' her crown to him. Hekabe's voice is forcibly silenced through the establishment of new rules forbidding women to have a political input during the Trojan council sessions based on the new distinction between men's and women's business, and effected under the guise of protecting women:

None of the men had looked at her when they walked past her into the council. 'Not even my son Hector,' Hecuba said bitterly... 'Try to understand, Mother,' he said. 'We want to spare you. The things we have to talk about in our council, now in wartime, are no longer the concerns of women.'<sup>131</sup>

The prohibition of women's voices revolves around the patriarchal justification for the othering and the violence of the war, which is to protect women from the enemy by protecting them from patriarchal knowledge. The only women who retain their voices against this new patriarchal rhetoric are the women living on the fringes of the patriarchal society in the caves of Mt Ida, women like old Arisbe, or the young slave girl Killa, who articulates the imperative assertion that "between killing and dying there is a third alternative: living."<sup>132</sup> This alternative is not attained by the main characters in *Kassandra*, who are locked into the cycle of Todesarten, a cycle that uses its own language, and uses language as another tool in the game of domination and war.

Throughout her narrative Cassandra realises and deconstructs the power of a propaganda language that obscures meaning and manipulates the people. As in *Das Buch Franza*, where the language of patriarchal science and knowledge shrouds the violence against Franza, the calculated use of language during the Trojan War aims to establish an official narrative that suppresses all opposing voices. The Trojan propaganda

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<sup>131</sup> "...blicklos seien alle Männer an ihr vorbei zum Rat gegangen. Auch mein Sohn Hektor, sagte die bittere Hekabe...Versteh doch, Mutter, sagt er. Man will dich schonen. Was jetzt, im Krieg, in unserem Rat zur Sprache kommen muß, ist keine Frauensache mehr." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 97. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 93.

<sup>132</sup> "Zwischen Töten und Sterben ist ein Drittes: Leben." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 124. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 118.

mechanisms that initially declared Helena as the reason for the war are the same ones that dictate “linguistic regulations”:

Then in spring the war began as expected. We were not allowed to call it ‘war.’ Linguistic regulations prescribed that, correctly speaking, it be called a ‘surprise attack.’<sup>133</sup>

Where the use of a ‘master’ language that seeks to control, depicted in *Das Buch Franza*, has a meaning that is suggestive of Nazi propaganda, in *Kassandra* the representation of structural silencers are reminiscent of the German Democratic bureaucratic system “which emphasises control (through intricate webs of surveillance) and mobilization (through propaganda),” and which uses language as a primary site for establishing “legitimacy.”<sup>134</sup> Christa Wolf wrote from inside such a system,<sup>135</sup> which highly regulated the use of the writer’s language to reflect the official rhetoric. This ‘state manipulation’ of expression is engaged with through the depiction of the Trojan nation. The effect that this may have on contesting the author’s own voicelessness will be examined in the last part of this thesis, through an analysis of the role that fictional trauma has in negotiating trauma for the protagonist, writer and reader of a novel.

Kassandra’s narrative is led by the search for a voice that can speak the truth. Her narration depicts the complexities of voice by acknowledging that she was silenced by the patriarchal structures as much as she silenced herself, by being unable to admit to herself the full truth about her family. It is only at the end of the war, in retrospect, that she is able to let go of the comfort of ‘not knowing,’ which she has afforded herself at various times during her life. Kassandra’s analysis of her own voice begins with the initial questioning as to why she had wanted to be able to see and to articulate her visions:

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<sup>133</sup> “Im Frühjahr, wie erwartet, began dann der Krieg. Krieg durfte er nicht heißen. Die Sprachregelung lautete, zutreffend: Überfall.” Wolf, *Kassandra*. 76. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 71.

<sup>134</sup> See Berger, “Inventing the Nation - Germany.” 210.

<sup>135</sup> “East German authors had to function within a hierarchical, structured and bureaucratic controlled literary system,” in which supervision, direction and censorship were central. See Hajo Drees, *A Comprehensive Interpretation of the Life and Work of Christa Wolf, Twentieth - Century German Writer*, 31 vols., *Studies in German Language and Literature* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002). 6.

Why did I want the gift of prophesy, come what may? To speak with my voice: the ultimate. I did not want anything more, anything different.<sup>136</sup>

Her eagerness to see and to occupy a position of influence based on those visions is not devoid of the search for power that is characteristic of the depicted patriarchy. That she becomes ‘cursed’ by Apollo so that although she can see the future no-one will believe her visions is, although deeply traumatic for Cassandra, a positive gift. It saves her from state manipulation, the corruption through a system that seeks to appropriate this power and use it for their own means, as is experienced by her brother Helenos, and the seers Panthoos and Kalchas. Cassandra resists such an appropriation through her act of re-telling her prophesies, just as Wolf resists the ancient representations of Cassandra and the historical and literary building blocks of such narratives.

The structure of the novel is unlike any of the classical versions of the fall of Troy. There are no chapters under which the narrative is organised; instead it unfolds in one long internal thought process. The narrative organization takes the form of an interior monologue, where Cassandra’s stream of consciousness defies a standard linear timeframe as it weaves in and out of past, present and future. Unlike a traditional plot structure that begins the narrative at the outset of the story, Cassandra begins narrating at the end of her and Troy’s story, starting with the foretelling of her imminent death. The narration moves on to the events of several days before, during her ship voyage to Agamemnon’s kingdom, and Cassandra then proceeds to question herself about the past. Any preconceived notions of the Trojan timeline of events are overturned, as Cassandra’s narrative shifts between analysis and memory, truthfully mirroring a person’s thought-process as it unfolds through topics, deviating into emotions and insights that take the thinker onto ever varying paths, abruptly coming back to the reality of the present at intervals. This is a technique that brings the reader very close to the character of Cassandra as effort is required by the reader to participate in an unfolding of Cassandra’s innermost thoughts and experiences, making this a very personal exposition from which it is hard for the reader to extricate her/himself in the process of following the narrative.

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<sup>136</sup> “Warum wollte ich die Sehergabe unbedingt? Mit meiner Stimme sprechen: das Äußerste. Mehr, andres hab ich nicht gewollt.” Wolf, *Kassandra*. 6. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 4.

Contrasting Bachmann's use of stream of consciousness to convey Franza's tumultuous mind, where punctuation, logic and syntax are jumbled and inversed, in *Kassandra* the sentence structure is more ordered and controlled, mirroring Kassandra's mind. Frequent questioning marks both Franza and Kassandra's stream of consciousness. This fundamental query of the protagonists' self functions ultimately as a questioning which implicates the reader.

Another feature of re-writing the myth is that although the narrating voice is that of Kassandra, there is an inclusion of other voices within the story. Kassandra not only queries herself in a way that changes the monologue to a dialogue, but furthermore engages in dialogue with a vast array of other characters. This dialogue occurs both in past and present, again overturning notions of a sequentially ordered timeline. In this sense, the intertextual relationship that is being formed by Wolf during the *Conditions of a Narrative* is presented in the novel as a set of intertextual and intratextual relationships, which "strive to make competing voices and interpretations of cultural foundations evident and inescapable."<sup>137</sup> Akin to the concept of Bakhtin's "Dialogic"<sup>138</sup> of multiple interactions within a text, Wolf changes the traditional use of the monologic by allowing the other characters' voices to take their own presence within the text.

Wolf subverts the traditional conventions that have told the other versions of Kassandra's story, the Greek drama of Aeschylus and Euripides, or the epic of Homer, by intermingling and changing some of these conventions. As Kassandra's narrative takes place in a single day and at the same place, Wolf can be said to use a form of Aristotle's three unities of time, place and action conventional in Greek drama.<sup>139</sup> However, as this is juxtaposed with the internally unfolding memories, spanning time and place, the conventional narrative is re-written. Moreover, Wolf's story about Kassandra has no chorus that interacts with protagonist or comments on the moral of the story, and unlike the ancient Greek playwrights, who were averse to the depiction of direct violence,<sup>140</sup> Wolf depicts the bloodshed in its realistic gruesomeness.

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<sup>137</sup> Komar, *Reclaiming Klytemnestra - Revenge or Reconciliation*. 14.

<sup>138</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

<sup>139</sup> Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology*.

<sup>140</sup> "The Greeks felt that the portrayal of violence on stage was beneath the dignity of tragedy; horrible events are reported by messengers." See Graham Little, *Approach to Literature* (Sydney: Science Press, 1985). 120.

While Cassandra's act of expression arguably has a cathartic effect on the narrating protagonist, the questioning that is inherent in the novel undermines any straightforward Greek notions of catharsis. Unlike the Homeric epic that deals with the fall of Troy, *Kassandra* is anti-epic in length, resists the linear narrative, and uses deliberate anti-heroic rhetoric. The author's fusion of classic poetic traditions and a modern syntax make a deliberate statement that the female revision of ancient patriarchal myths need to create new conventions in order to make Cassandra's experience audible. Wolf's refusal to conform to just one set of genres and her mixture of what are considered to be 'high brow' poetic devices with traditionally marginalised 'women's genres,' such as the diary, present a linguistic and thematic challenge to traditional storylines and archetypes of the Trojan war.<sup>141</sup> The critical connection between female subjectivity and forms of language is a disruption of the symbolic order of patriarchal discourse, which seeks to articulate the feminine through new linguistic constructs. The use of matriarchal imagery, such as the frequent invocation of the Goddess Kybele, and the symbolism of Wolf's explication of the female body as site of trauma, are strategies that articulate the Kristevan "semiotic,"<sup>142</sup> where subversion occurs through the employment of a discourse closer to the body and emotions.

Compared to *Das Buch Franza*, where the voice of Franza is less frequent, less immediate and less articulate, the re-write of *Kassandra* offers a new way of defining female expression within the language of conventional literature. While Franza's narration is concerned with the same theme of finding a way to state the unspeakable of the traumatic impact of voicelessness, Franza struggles through the process of expression with much less immediate coherence than Cassandra. Although Cassandra's narrative style refuses to conform to an 'easy' or 'simple' standard, it is nevertheless able to convey the complexities of articulating her voicelessness on a deliberate basis that makes it possible for her "to live on to experience the happiness of becoming myself"<sup>143</sup> through her voice.

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<sup>141</sup> "Wolf insists on using these 'personal' genres in which women have historically expressed themselves along with her narrative as part of her denial of a traditional, patriarchal 'poetics'." Komar, *Reclaiming Klytemnestra - Revenge or Reconciliation*. 116.

<sup>142</sup> Julia Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

<sup>143</sup> "Das Glück, ich selbst zu werden und dadurch den anderen nützlicher – ich habe es noch erlebt." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 14. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 12.

Like Franza's final speech about the important man in her life, Martin, Cassandra concludes the telling of her story with the memory of her final conversation with Aineias. As in *Das Buch Franza*, where this final articulation occurs internally and externally, affirming the importance of the bond to the male figure, in *Kassandra* there is also the realisation that these male figures are not able 'save' the women or to prevent their trauma experiences. Cassandra's knowledge of who Aineias will become, that he will be subject to the fact that "the new masters would dictate their law to all the survivors,"<sup>144</sup> and that as such he will not be able to hear and understand her female voice, constitutes a point at which Cassandra makes her choice to defy that trauma process. Like Franza, who knows Martin's limitations, and whose choice to die constitutes her main rebellion against a social structure that cannot allow even the most sympathetic men to understand women's trauma, Cassandra, knowing that she "cannot love a hero,"<sup>145</sup> defies Aineias and the traditional hero narrative and chooses death over the future trauma of being rendered voiceless by the last man she trusts.

Kassandra's realisation that she is formulating the untold version of the story of trauma, patriarchy and war is depicted through her last-minute impulse to ask Klytaimnestra for a slave girl to whom she can tell her story to ensure that it is not lost through the ages of patriarchal narrative. Cassandra then disregards this idea, as she already knows that it is her fate to have her voice obliterated within the development of a culture of destruction that implicates everyone:

...we had to recognize that there are no limits to the atrocities people can inflict on one another; that we are capable of rummaging through someone else's entrails and of cracking his skull, trying to find out what causes the most pain. I say "we," and of all the "we's" I eventually said, this is the one that challenges me most.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> "Allen die überlebten, würden die neuen Herren ihr Gesetz diktieren." Wolf, *Kassandra*.144 Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 138.

<sup>145</sup> "Einen Helden kann ich nicht Lieben." Wolf, *Kassandra*.144 Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 138

<sup>146</sup> "...so mußten wir jetzt einsehen, daß es für die Greul, die Menschen einander antun, keine Grenzen gibt; daß wir imstande sind, die Eingeweide des anderen durchwühlen, seine Hirnschale zu knacken, auf der Suche nach dem Gipfelpunkt der Pein. "Wir" sag ich, und von allen Wir, zu denen ich gelangte, bleibt dies dasjenige, das mich am meisten anficht." Wolf, *Kassandra*. 125. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 119.

This 'we' includes the female characters like Penthesilea and Klytaimnestra, and ultimately Cassandra herself, as she dares to recognise her own potential to be an active contributor to the violent othering of patriarchy. That there is no room in this culture for the female narrative is beyond Cassandra's intervention, something that she acknowledges when she makes her choice to die, rather than flee with Aineas to become a part of his eventual perpetuation of the cycle of violence. Through Cassandra's ultimate trauma from her knowledge that voices like hers will not be heard in the future, Wolf makes another link to Ingeborg Bachmann, whom Wolf describes in *The Truth You Can Expect: The Prose of Ingeborg Bachmann* as grieving "for the speechlessness which lies ahead."<sup>147</sup>

However, this speechlessness is challenged by the voice that opens and closes the story of Cassandra, the voice, not belonging to Cassandra, which frames the narrative, bringing past to the present as it states in the beginning: "It was here," changing this statement into the present at the end of the narrative to "here it is." This voice, much like Wolf's voice that 'listens' to the various forms of Cassandra's story in *Conditions of a Narrative*, enables the telling of Cassandra's story. If Cassandra, in her job as seer, is an early example of the female storyteller, then the voice that frames the narrative and Wolf as the author, are her contemporary equivalents. Within her story Cassandra foretells that it is through the pain of trauma that a voice will eventually be shaped to break the voicelessness, a voice that will transgress the discourse of the Todesarten:

Who will find a voice again, and when? It will be one whose skull is split by a pain. And until then, until this coming, nothing will be heard but bellows and commands and whimpers and the "yes, sirs" of those who obey.<sup>148</sup>

Although *Das Buch Franza* does not predict such a future, it is through Christa Wolf's deliberate engagement with Bachmann's representation of trauma and voicelessness that the positioning of a continuum dealing with the articulation of women's experiences is created. This is a continuum that stretches between the timeframes of *Kassandra* and *Das Buch Franza*, an evolving scale that holds the novels' female characters as well as

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<sup>147</sup> Wolf, *The Author's Dimension*. 100.

<sup>148</sup> "Wer wird, und wann, die Sprache wiederfinden. Einer, dem ein Schmerz den Schädel spaltet, wird es sein. Und bis da hin, bis zu ihm hin, nur das Gebrüll und der Befehl und das Gewinsel und das Jawohl der Gehorchenden." Wolf, *Kassandra*.10. Translation Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*. 8.

the female authors, Bachmann and Wolf. The brief glimpse of ‘bringing oneself into relationship’ that is represented by Franza is thereby worked on as the beginning of a new way of writing about voicelessness, the beginning of new possibilities to transcend the unspeakable of the trauma experience for women.

### *The Wound of Trauma in the Texts*

Both Ingeborg Bachmann and Christa Wolf are examples of a continuum that charts the *development* of the ways in which women writers have conveyed the female trauma experience. Through different characterisations, plots and narrative techniques, both authors demonstrate some essential aspects of women’s trauma experiences, which during their time of writing were still largely unarticulated and undeveloped positions, even in psychology. The novels show that the trauma experienced by the women wounds them in profound and lasting ways, and that this wounding is experienced cumulatively and in their bodies and their minds. Furthermore, their representations make a distinct link between the contextual sources *and* the expressions of trauma. Bachmann and Wolf show that the trauma experienced by their characters is a direct result of the mechanisms operating in the societies they write about, societies that create and sustain structurally implemented Todesarten. Both writers chose to situate their narratives in contexts that represent, on the surface, extraordinary circumstances, while simultaneously overturning the notion of extraordinariness, by showing how pervasive and encroaching on women’s experiences these circumstances actually are.

The two texts are framed by the experience of violence and literally or symbolically set during war. Through Wolf’s Trojan war of combat, or Bachmann’s war between men and women, the engagement with war is imperative as “war points to a crucial site where meanings about gender are being produced, reproduced and circulated back into society.”<sup>149</sup> The authors undermine the traditional male-centred war/violence narrative, focusing on the realities of the female protagonists’ experiences, and focusing on describing “events and emotions for which no language seems sufficient.”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Miriam Cooke and Angela Woolacott, "Introduction," in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woolacott (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993). i.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* xi.



These events and emotions are represented in both novels through an extensive spectrum of psychological implications of trauma, which are, particularly in the case of Bachmann, early pre-cursors of the processes of female trauma that have been outlined by feminist trauma analysis only within the past fifteen years. In *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra*, the female protagonists and the wider community of women in the narratives experience trauma on multiple levels. They experience ‘direct’ trauma through violence, and ‘insidious’ trauma through othering, both of which are represented as occurring in a cumulative fashion. In both texts trauma is represented as prevalent across time and culture, as in Wolf’s linking of ancient Troy and 1980s’ Europe, or Bachmann’s connection between the East and the West and the relationship between the 1960s and World War Two. This prevalence of trauma is something that has only lately been acknowledged in psychology, where the widespread occurrence of trauma for women has been obscured by limited concepts of what constitutes a traumatic experience, and by what Maria P. Root believes to be “a long-standing refusal to believe that atrocities initiated by other people indeed occur and do so with alarming frequency.”<sup>151</sup>

The novels’ protagonists are depicted as affected by a multiplicity of stressors, and struggle with issues around their own complicity in their traumatising. The external mechanisms that conceal true meaning and intent, such as Jordan masking his abusiveness against Franza through the rhetoric and methodology of science, or the Trojans and Greeks’ modus operandi of war, foster the development of the female characters’ internal struggle to blame themselves. As the social structures in both novels frame the traumatising events that occur, there is no redeeming structural mechanism that removes the blame from the victim. Both Franza and Kassandra experience the “paradoxical, shameful feeling of being an accessory which can arise in the person whose boundaries have been violated.”<sup>152</sup> The protagonists question themselves and their involvement in their traumatising repeatedly, as their violations are stigmatised by the concept of “unique vulnerability.”<sup>153</sup> Franza, whose violation is perpetrated with deliberate, hateful intent and occurs in isolation, is particularly affected by the

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<sup>151</sup> Maria P.P. Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality," in *Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals*, ed. Laura S. Brown and Mary Ballou (New York: The Guildford Press, 1992). 232.

<sup>152</sup> Inger Agger, *The Blue Room: Trauma and Testimony among Refugee Women; a Psycho-Social Exploration* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1994). 1.

<sup>153</sup> Perloff’s concept of “unique vulnerability” relates to a malicious perpetration of violation, in which the victim is singled out as opposed to an accidental violation. The message contained in “unique vulnerability” is “There is something about you which attracts this kind of trouble.” See Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality." 243.

internalising of guilt and complicity. Cassandra, who has ‘companion victims’ in the community of women in Troy, can see that it is not a person-specific violation that she experiences, but rather a gender-specific attack, which is nevertheless malicious and intentional rather than accidental.

The reactions of the characters in *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra* to their trauma are similarly consistent with contemporary analysis of female trauma. For both protagonists the trauma experience is marked by the disintegration of meaning within their existing cultural systems. Franza and Cassandra are ‘outside’ their culture, in the sense that as their cultural structures are enabling the traumatising events, there is no room for safety in either ancient Troy or 1960’s Austria. This is especially discernible in Wolf’s representation of Cassandra, who witnesses the changing of her social structures and norms, and struggles with her increasing alienation from what she once thought was a secure position within the Trojan household and community.

The trauma response of dissociation, which “leads the victim to create a split inside herself and thus also to feel that she participates in her own disintegration,”<sup>154</sup> is also depicted in both novels. Franza repeatedly articulates the split within herself as a result of the abuse, a split that leads her to deny the realities of her situation for a long time. In *Kassandra* dissociation is represented by several of the female characters, such as Cassandra’s sister Polyxena who actively dissociates from the events of the war by acting out her sexual objectification. Cassandra dissociates through her episodes of ‘madness,’ where she is able to sink into a state of oblivion from which she has to force herself back.

The overall responses to trauma that Bachmann and Wolf depict in their novels are comparable to the reactions that contemporary researchers into women’s trauma have described as:

...fear, pain, grief, guilt, anxiety, revulsion, hatred, loss of dignity and sadness – [that] are associated with the breakdown of social life, the loss of language and cultural meanings, the disruption of experience of family and community.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Agger, *The Blue Room: Trauma and Testimony among Refugee Women; a Psycho-Social Exploration*. 12.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

*Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra* can thus be said to construct trauma representations that broaden the concept of psychological trauma by re-writing the process, impact and reactions from the female experience of trauma – an experience which has been silenced throughout the ages by a psychological discourse that has been directed by men and is about men. An important aspect of the re-writing of trauma is contained in the way in which Wolf and Bachmann re-frame women’s ‘madness.’ By allowing for the depiction of Franza and *Kassandra*’s ‘fits’ to occur as an expression of trauma, rather than an abnormal and pathological illness, madness becomes a valuable language that inscribes the female body into the narrative of psychological pain. This transcends patriarchal binaries between body and mind, and instead acknowledges what is now accepted by feminist trauma analyses, namely that the mental and physical are inextricably connected. Both narratives make it clear that the somatic process acted out by Franza, *Kassandra*, Polyxena and Briseis, is in fact the “madness that is not ours,”<sup>156</sup> as women are left to embody the madness that they see operating within their social contexts.

Julia Kristeva’s concept of the “common denominator” of female symptomatology as being “the inability to represent,”<sup>157</sup> associates the somatic depictions of all the female characters. The depiction of *Kassandra*, who has a fit whenever she is truly unable to integrate and articulate the most important truths and is not believed, or as Franza, overwhelmed by the pain from her past suffering can only communicate through her ‘uncontrolled’ body, is a strong connection between ‘madness’ and voicelessness. Bachmann and Wolf have thereby contributed distinctive and important developments to the way that fictional literary representations are able to convey women’s trauma experience. These depictions confirm Luce Irigaray’s reframing of the ‘hysterical woman,’ where madness is the wish for a new language, as the only language that women are allowed is their bodily pain; “women did not have the verbal means to elaborate their madness but they suffered it directly in their body.”<sup>158</sup>

Ingeborg Bachmann in Austria during the 1960s and Christa Wolf almost twenty years later created literary representations of female trauma that incorporate many of the elements that feminist psychologists have defined as fundamental when dealing with

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<sup>156</sup> Luce Irigaray in Denise Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995). 121.

<sup>157</sup> Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986). 9.

<sup>158</sup> Luce Irigaray in Russell, *Women, Madness and Medicine*. 121.

women and trauma. Just as trauma analysts like Judith Lewis Herman, Maria P. Root and Laura Brown have re-written women's trauma experience, Ingeborg Bachmann and Christa Wolf have re-created a space in women's literature where trauma voices can be articulated. They thereby establish the acknowledgment and the broadening of the concept of women's psychological trauma and unwittingly, perhaps, provide examples to the theory that:

A feminist conceptualisation of trauma moves the analysis of the problem beyond the individual perspective to a larger sociopolitical, systemic framework of conceptualisation.<sup>159</sup>

Whether and how Wolf and Bachmann's literary broadening of trauma responds to the above framework of negotiating trauma through its (literary) articulation, whether it can represent the traumatic story in a way that facilitates healing and thereby acts as what Helen Cixous describes as "the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursor movement of a transformation,"<sup>160</sup> are issues that will be analysed in the last chapter of this thesis.

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<sup>159</sup> Root, "Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality." 238.

<sup>160</sup> Helen Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *Feminisms - an Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1975). 350.

### Chapter 3: - “*He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka*”<sup>1</sup>

#### Patricia Grace’s *Cousins*, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku’s *Ruahine* and trauma in Aotearoa’s “post-colonialism”

##### *Introduction to the Texts*

The legacy of colonisation in Aotearoa, which othered tangata whenua (local people of Aotearoa) through the processes of exoticising, assimilating and marginalizing, created an inheritance of trauma for Māori, in which the “tracking of silences”<sup>2</sup> has become an ongoing process for writers like Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, or as Kathie Irwin describes:

[...] our women and their stories have been buried deeper and deeper in the annals of time by the processes of oppression that seek to render us invisible and keep us out of records.<sup>3</sup>

Colonisation shapes how trauma for wāhine Māori (Māori women) has been experienced and expressed. It is also directly relevant to any contemporary concept or interpretation of trauma in the context of pre-colonial Māori societies.

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<sup>1</sup> “A choppy sea can be navigated.” He whakatauki: Proverb. Ryan, P. M. (1997). *The Reed Dictionary of Modern Maori*. Auckland, Reed. 18.

Unless from direct quotes or otherwise indicated all spelling and translations of Māori words derives from the above source.

<sup>2</sup> Castañeda, A. (2007). Introduction. *Gender on the Borderlands*. A. Castañeda. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Irwin, K. (1992). Towards Theories of Maori Feminism. *Feminist Voices*. R. Du Plessis. Auckland, Oxford University Press. 1.

Patricia Grace, a writer from the iwi Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa, had her first short story published in *Te Ao Hou* in the nineteen-sixties. Grace was the first Māori woman to have her collection of short stories, *Waiariki*, published in 1975, and in 1978 was the first Māori woman to publish a novel, *Mutuwhenua*. In 1987 Grace received the New Zealand Fiction Award for her next novel *Potiki*, which was followed by the novel *Cousins* in 1992.

Patricia Grace grew up in an Aotearoa where, as Reina Whaitiri states, Māori “spent two, perhaps three, generations looking at ourselves through the literature of others.”<sup>4</sup> Trained also as a teacher, Grace was acutely aware of what she has called the “danger of books”<sup>5</sup> to indigenous readers from early childhood on. Her writing therefore aims to create representations of Māori that “employ familiar characters and motifs [familiar to her cultural context] which can reassure as well as challenge.”<sup>6</sup> Grace has responded to critical analysis of her work<sup>7</sup> that stresses the “difference” of her characters and plot by highlighting the bias of Western ideology that regards itself as the definition of a “norm”:

I am writing about ordinary everyday things, things that many Maori people live with everyday. Some people say that *all* the stories are political in one-way or another, because they are about difference. But they are not different to me.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Patricia Grace quoted in Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>7</sup> See “The Language of Patricia Grace’s Fiction” in Battista, J. L. (2004). *Me he korokoro komako - 'With the Throat of a Bellbird' : a Maori Aesthetic in Maori writing in English*. English. Auckland, University of Auckland. 43.

<sup>8</sup> McRae, J. (1992). Patricia Grace. In the Same Room - Conversations with New Zealand Writers. E. Alley and M. Williams. Auckland, Auckland University Press. 295.

If, as Antonia Castañeda states, the act of “claiming” is the way to heal from the trauma of history,<sup>9</sup> then Grace’s claiming of her representations’ ordinariness in a Māori context, is a significant textual engagement with this process.

Patricia Grace’s novel *Cousins* depicts the lives of three cousins and their whānau from the beginning of Aotearoa’s involvement in the Second World War, to the period of the Māori renaissance during the 1970s-1980s. The structure of the novel is a complex layering of voices, timeframes and shifts in the narrative, which underscore and direct the themes of trauma experience and resolution, while posing questions about Māori women within the colonised context and within Māori culture. Although the novel represents a variety of mostly female characters, the main characters are Mata, Missy and Makareta, who while belonging to the same whānau have distinctly different life experiences.

Mata is the daughter of Anihera. Anihera is cut off from her whānau after eloping with Mata’s father, a Pākehā, to Wellington. After Anihera’s early death Mata’s father leaves Mata in a state orphanage, where she grows up estranged from herself and her Māori heritage. As an adult, Mata enters an unhappy and childless marriage, culminating in her mental breakdown.

Mata’s cousin Makareta is the only child of the whānau’s eldest son, Rere, who dies at war. Makareta is the mokopuna (grandchild) who receives the knowledge of tikanga Māori from her grandparents and elders, as she represents their hope for the future. Makareta defies the whānau when she abandons the papa kāinga (home) just before her arranged marriage, and moves to her mother in Wellington where she becomes a nurse.

Missy, the third cousin, is the daughter of another unfavoured union between the whānau’s younger daughter Gloria and Billy, a soldier who returns from the Māori contingent’s involvement in World War Two. Missy grows up in poverty with her major aspiration to one-day escape to the big city. Missy’s life changes when she chooses to step into Makareta’s shoes by taking her place in the pre-arranged marriage. The novel completes a

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<sup>9</sup> Castañeda, A. (2007). Introduction. [Gender on the Borderlands](#). A. Castañeda. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press.

full circle at the end, when all three cousins are reunited on the whānau marae, a point at which each plays a role in assuming a new place and addressing the traumas of the past.

A few years after the publication of *Cousins*, the literary scholar, activist and writer Ngahuia Te Awekotuku commented on wāhine Māori's loss of spiritual, emotional and physical mana (power), such as is depicted in *Cousins*. Te Awekotuku also addresses the mechanisms of difference and othering, when she speaks of the history of wāhine Māori:

There was a tremendous spiritual revolution in which much of our mana wahine, our being a Māori woman, was undermined or somehow reinterpreted. That has to end. We have to reclaim those energies and that knowledge, those deeper wisdoms.<sup>10</sup>

Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, from the iwi Te Arawa, Waikato and Tūhoe, the second Māori woman to gain a doctorate in Aotearoa,<sup>11</sup> went on to “reclaim those energies” by analysing and re-presenting Māori culture and wāhine's roles through the re-writing of Māori mythology.<sup>12</sup> A prolific essayist, Te Awekotuku has maintained an ongoing discourse on the importance of wāhine Māori voices, and engaging in the liberation of wāhine through the re-discovery and re-appropriation of the tools of storytelling.

After the publication of a volume of short stories, *Tahuri*, in 1989, Te Awekotuku consolidated her interest in “retelling and rewriting our old stories”<sup>13</sup> through the collection of mythological Māori stories *Ruahine – Mythic Women*, published in 2003. As with Christa Wolf's rewriting of mythology, Te Awekotuku has been articulate and self-reflective about her Māori women-centred re-construction of the types of culturally powerful stories, which

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<sup>10</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1994). He Ngangahu. Mana Wahine - Women who Show the Way. A. Brown. Auckland, Reed.

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<sup>11</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1993). Trail of the Broken Treaty. Te Ao Marama: Regaining Aotearoa - Maori Writers Speak Out. W. Ihimaera. Auckland, Reed. 233.

<sup>12</sup> Māori mythology in this thesis is defined as being a series of old narratives, oral or literal, which have been an integral part of validating and organising whānau, hapū and iwi experience, and which are foundational to Māori cosmology, and ways of explaining the world.

<sup>13</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1994). He Ngangahu. Mana Wahine - Women who Show the Way. A. Brown. Auckland, Reed.

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had historically been told from the male (Pākehā and Māori) viewpoint and by the male voice. Through a variety of essays and publications Te Awekotuku has expressed her interest that led to the evolution of *Ruahine*. In these, she questions and challenges the meaning of Māori mythology and the previous historic, often Pākehā-led, act of re-writing of the stories.

Like Christa Wolf, Te Awekotuku articulates the impact that some of the female protagonists of mythology have had on her, such as Hinemoa from the myth of Hinemoa and Tutanekai.<sup>14</sup> Te Awkotuku records the process of ‘meeting’ with the mythical heroine, and the consequent questioning of her portrayal within the myths:

As a descendant – one, indeed, of many, many thousands – I grew up with Hinemoa...She has always been part of my life. As a child, I puzzled about how she went to him [Tutanekai]...It seemed unusual in a tribal environment where we were continually reminded that men took the lead, took the initiative, as right. Obviously there was something else going on here.<sup>15</sup>

Te Awekotuku further highlights the nature of re-writing by pitching the ‘traditional’<sup>16</sup> versions of the myths against her interpretations, prefacing each of the stories within *Ruahine* in this way. This has the effect of involving the reader in the process of questioning and analysis of both the old and the new versions, as well as situating the author as a reader of the texts herself. As Alicia Ostriker states about feminist revisioning of mythology, the author “simultaneously deconstructs a prior ‘myth’ or ‘story’ and constructs a new one which includes, instead of excluding, herself.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> In the traditional story Hinemoa, daughter of a chief in Rotorua, falls in love with the “unsuitable” Tutanekei. Against her parents wishes she pursues him by crossing the lake.

<sup>15</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2001). *Hinemoa: Retelling a Famous Romance*. *Lesbian Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. A. J. Laurie. New York, Harrington Park Press. 2.

<sup>16</sup> The definition of “traditional” in this sense is meant to indicate a variety of versions of the myths that Te Awekotuku uses as her starting point for revisioning.

<sup>17</sup> Ostriker, A. (1985). *The Thieves of Language - Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking*. *The New Feminist criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*. E. Showalter. New York, Pantheon: 315-338.

Like Grace's *Cousins, Ruahine – Mythic Women* tells the stories of many Māori women. *Ruahine* is divided into nine short stories, beginning with the story of "Mahinaarangi," who attracts the attention of the stranger Turongo by perfuming herself with the leaves of the Raukawa tree, causing him to fall in love with her and thereby dispelling her insecurities about her 'imperfections.' In the next story, "Rona," the character of Rona is taken around the moon by the aliens Puharangi and Te Ohomairangi, and then has to deal with the consequences of being dropped back into her village many years later among her descendants, who believe her to be mad.

"Haumapuhia" is the next story, in which the same-named protagonist is introduced while she is miscarrying the child that is the product of her rape by her father. Haumapuhia's inability to fetch her father water results in his drowning of her, and her transformation into a taniwha (sea monster), who creates lake Waikaremoana.

In the story "Whakatāne," the character Wairaka is one of the legendary wāhine who saves the waka (canoe) Mātaatua from drifting out to sea. Wairaka is in love with Muriwai, who leaves Wairaka to be with a man and have children, while Wairaka gets tricked by the visitor Maiurenui, who rapes her. Wairaka then enters into a union with Te Rangikitua, and has one child with him. At the end of the story Wairaka decides that she needs to find her own place, whereupon she discovers the maunga (mountain) Owairaka.

"Kurungaituku" rewrites the story of the "bird woman" who lives in a cave with her bird and animal friends. Hatupatu, who kills all her friends in order to steal her treasure, tricks her and initially escapes her vengeance, but is eventually tracked down by Kurungaituku and punished.

The next story, "Huritini" is named after the protagonist who is forced to enter into a marriage with an old, cruel man who mistreats her and sexually abuses her. Huritini remembers her love for the female carver Hieke, and her own wish to carve, and in her despair commits suicide in her favourite hot-pool.

"Hinemoa" is the story of the wāhine who meets Tutanekai, whom she is intrigued with, as he visits her village with his male companion. When the men leave to a close-by island

Hinemoa can hear the sound of their flute and undeterred by her whānau's objection to her plans she finds a way to cross the lake, by tying calabashes around her body. Hinemoa lays claim to Tutanekai by challenging him to a duel.

“Ohinemutu” is a very short tale, which tells of the fate of Kakara and her grieving matua (father), who finds her amputated hand as the only remainder of her body. The final narrative, “Hinengaro” is the story of Hine nui te Pō, the goddess of the underworld. In this narrative she is represented as a shape-shifting, blood-sucking wahine, who remembers the pain of her father's betrayal of rape while she avenges herself on the men of a small village.

Apart from the final story of “Hinengaro” all stories are narrated in the third person and in the past tense. The narratives are connected to each other through the introductory sections of each story, which articulate their common ground, in that they are all stories about women that have existed for a long time within various whānau, hapū and iwi contexts.

The re-writing of these myths creates a ‘double vision’ of the stories and the female protagonist, or a double-look, a retake on the voices of the female characters. Ruahine is the name traditionally given to a woman who acts as an official “negation” of tapu<sup>18</sup> within kaupapa Māori, the one who has the power to uplift tapu based on her condition of being noa.<sup>19</sup> This could put the ruahine in opposition to men who are considered tapu, as well as to important events, activities or states (wāhi tapu, taonga tapu) that are tapu. Her power to change and uplift tapu means that she creates a new state, a second state, from which things move forward. She is therefore often the first person to ‘cross over thresholds,’ leading the way for others.<sup>20</sup> As such, the title of ‘Ruahine’ provides the metaphor of new, wahine-led interpretation, which is the framework of the book from the title to its narrative structure. It also captures the paradox that although women in the history that Te Awekotuku works from may have been relegated to being secondary, the narrative of *Ruahine* makes them

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<sup>18</sup> Tapu denotes the sacred, or forbidden, applying to people, places, states and activities. Together with the concepts of noa and rahui used as a control of social structure in relation to behaviour, health, resource management, spirituality etc. See Walker, R. (1990). *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle Without End*. Auckland, Penguin Books. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Free from tapu; being noa affects tapu.

<sup>20</sup> For instance in the opening ceremony of a new whare, where the ruahine is the first to “walk across the paepae poto.” See Mead, H. M. (2003). *Tikanga Maori - Living by Maori Values*. Wellington, Huia. 75.

primary. This function of women as primary is also a trope that functions within Grace's *Cousins*, where the idea of a new agency and visibility of women emerges as a feature of the plot structure.

Both Patricia Grace, and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku are using their fiction to inscribe Māori women's experiences into a historical context marked by the processes of othering, violence and voicelessness. Their female protagonists are depicted as encountering these processes in differing ways, as trauma moves between the mythical and the real, the contemporary and the ancient. Grace and Te Awekotuku's narratives are linked through the processes of recovering, or unearthing Māori women's experiences, while simultaneously innovating or re-creating representations of wāhine that are in quest of the transformation of traumatic experiences.

### *The Process of Othering in the Texts*

Grace and Te Awekotuku engage in a complex analysis of trauma, which questions the processes and sources of traumatic wounding for wāhine Māori. Both writers confront the various levels of othering from the context of twentieth and twenty-first century European and global influence on indigenous Māori culture. The representations of sources of trauma in Grace's novel are essentially within the realm of late twentieth-century 'post colonial' existence of Māori in Aotearoa. Te Awekotuku investigates othering beyond the colonial context by looking to the, arguably more obscured, pre-colonial context of Māori life. Both authors represent the othering of Māori women as one of the foundational sources of the trauma depicted in the narratives.

The othering of wāhine Māori is inextricably tied to the history and processes of colonisation. The effect of colonisation for wāhine Māori has been the compounding of oppressions, as "oppression by race is not, on the surface, gender specific [it has] different ways of defining the roles to be played out by men and those to be played out by women."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1992). *Maori Women: Discourses, Projects and Mana Wahine Maori*. Women and Education in Aotearoa 2. S. Middleton and A. Jones. Wellington, Bridget Williams Books. 48.

The overlapping and compounding effects of othering experienced by wāhine Māori are the results of the multifaceted interaction between gender, race and class. The impact of the ‘double difference’ has been raised by wāhine Māori seeking answers to the “growing number of Māori women who are raising families alone, the growing incidence of domestic and sexual violence, the lack of pay equity, [which are some of the] examples of physical, cultural, economic and linguistic violence.”<sup>22</sup>

The 1993 lodging of a ‘Mana Wāhine’ (“concerning the status of Māori women”) claim against the Crown with the Waitangi Tribunal highlighted racial and gender othering, by seeking acknowledgement and redress under the principals of the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>23</sup> The politics of ‘difference’ are fundamental to studying and reclaiming mana wāhine, and to constructing frameworks that will enable such discourse. Kathie Irwin states that Māori feminism has to advance “analysis which incorporates the complex relationships between race, gender and class from a central rather than a peripheral position.”<sup>24</sup>

A *central* position in regards to the female protagonists of Grace and Te Awekotuku’s narratives, and the authors themselves, requires an acknowledgement of being at the centre of multiple othering. Both *Cousins* and *Ruahine* represent such an acknowledgement, which explores the intricacies of othering by showing, to varying degrees, racial, gender and sexual orientation attributed difference.

In *Cousins* the processes and consequences of colonisation represent an overarching framework within the representation of the Māori women. The critique of post-coloniality (in the sense of Aotearoa being a country where colonialism has ended) is inherent within

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<sup>22</sup> Irwin, K. (1993). Maori Feminism. *Te Ao Marama: Regaining Aotearoa - Maori Writers Speak Out*. W. Ihimaera. Auckland, Reed. 302.

<sup>23</sup> The claim against the New Zealand Government was based on that the Crown’s “actions and policies have been inconsistent with its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi to protect and ensure the rangatiratanga of Māori women... These actions have resulted in an undermining of Māori women so that their status as rangatira has been expropriated due to the Crown’s failure to accord women status and power within the political, social and economic structures it has created.” See Wai 381, Statement of Claim 21 July 1993, Paragraph (h).

<sup>24</sup> Johnson, P. and L. Pihama (1995). What Counts as Difference and What Differences Count: Gender, Race and the Politics of Difference. *Toi Wahine - The Worlds of Maori Women*. K. Irwin and I. Ramsden. Auckland, Penguin. 86.

*Cousins*. The experiences of the wahine Maori in *Cousins* raises questions about the concept of ‘post-colonialism’ in a country where the colonising power has not left, nor renounced power in any major way. Resistant to the idea that colonialism is over or in the past, Grace’s writing has been able to engage with the history of colonisation and the reality of an ongoing “colonisation of the mind.”<sup>25</sup>

Patricia Grace uses the character of cousin Mata to depict the racially based othering that, while it underscores all of the characters’ experiences, is exacerbated for Mata who has been denied access to her whānau environment and instead has to live fully in a Pākehā social structure. The assimilation of Mata is depicted through a range of traumatising events which impact on her throughout her life.

Grace represents a racist Pākehā educational, religious and welfare system which strongly impacts on Mata, who is oppressed physically, mentally and socially. Mata suffers from her separation from the whānau and her treatment as an orphan. Raised in a children’s home, she is vulnerable to the ongoing negative messages from the Pākehā around her, particularly her Pākehā guardian. Mata is imprisoned in this system, which removes her liberties. The character construction of Mata represents the embodiment of the othering inherent in colonisation. Through Mata’s depiction Grace highlights the domination of a whole people and a whole cultural system as a process that is essentially imbued with the type of violence that becomes institutionalised. As an ‘institution,’ racism, or oppression of the Other, becomes enforced from within the colonising structures, and finally from within the colonised mind. The representation of Mata and her experiences makes colonisation synonymous with violence, a point that is made by Paulo Freire:

Any situation in which ‘A’ objectively exploits ‘B’ or hinders his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with man’s ontological and historical

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<sup>25</sup> Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 59.

vocation to be fully human. With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has *already* begun.<sup>26</sup>

The issue of Māori-Pākehā conflict is significant in Mata's history long before her birth, shown by her Māori mother and Pākehā father's unequal relationship. Mata's Auntie Gloria highlights this, as she describes Mata's parents' relationship as being built on subservience and oppression:

And bloody Albert putting you in that place. Bad to my sister, Albert, only wanted her for a slave for him that's all. Didn't want any brown baby too.<sup>27</sup>

After Mata's mother leaves Albert he puts Mata into a children's home, and following the death of her mother appoints a guardian for her and leaves the country, never to be seen again. The legacy of her mother's oppression continues with Mata, as she is verbally and physically abused for being Māori. While Mata is also from a Pākehā heritage, thereby disrupting the "neatly ordered, mutually exclusive categories on which racial stratification is based,"<sup>28</sup> the black/white binary of the colonised context renders her as 'not white.' Mata's racial otherness prevents the required conformity to a Pākehā norm, which is embedded into the educational and religious doctrine of the orphanage. The nexus of this otherness is situated within Mata's body, her physical appearance. This is targeted by the oppressors throughout her story, and is relevant to every detail of her life, such as caring for her hair:

She brushed her hair, pressing the springy curls down as best as she could – bad curls that had to be cut, cut, cut, Matron snapping with the scissors, pulling down hard with the comb. Bad... When Matron finished cutting

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<sup>26</sup> Paulo Freire quoted in Hammer, R. (2002). *Colonization, Dialectics, and Borderland Feminisms*. *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism - A Critical Feminist Perspective*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield. 174.

<sup>27</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 39.

<sup>28</sup> Glenn, E. N. (1999). *The Social Construction and Institutionalization of Gender and Race*. *Revisioning Gender*. M. M. Ferree, J. Lorber and B. B. Hess. Sage, Thousand Oaks. 29.

her hair she would tell her to get the pan and brush and clean up the mess, so she'd sweep up all the bad curls and carry them down to the incinerator. One day James, the caretaker had been down at the incinerator when she'd taken her hair to burn. "Been shearing the black sheep have they?" he'd said.<sup>29</sup>

The character of Mata carries the novel's prevailing metaphor of 'blackness' into the territory of derogatory racial meaning, which dominates Mata's self beliefs and worldview. The link of the blackness of her self with badness, dirtiness and otherness are the messages given to Mata by her teachers, guardian and the Pākehā children's parents. An example of this is her friend Betty's mother, who chases Mata out of the house as "Betty wasn't allowed to bring dirty, black children into the house,"<sup>30</sup> which deeply impacts on and traumatises the young Mata.

At ten-years old Mata is portrayed as having already internalised her own otherness and inferiority of not being Pākehā. Mata acts out her conditioned fear and hatred of the Other internally. Her hopes and aspirations are entrenched by the subsequent longing to be what she is not, her wish to do what Frantz Fanon describes as to "simply make myself white: that is I will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human."<sup>31</sup> Mata's picture of hope is essentially a Pākehā conception. Her desires constitute her "un-othering" by means of what middle-twentieth-century Pākehā New Zealand perceived as the 'kiwi dream,' revolving around the 'mum, dad and two children' family, their house and modern possessions, such as Mata's longed for "flowers on wallpapers, curtains, floors."<sup>32</sup> The image of this post-war 'nuclear family' dream is the height of achievement for Mata, even more so because she knows that she is fundamentally excluded from this dream.

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<sup>29</sup> Grace, P. (1992). Cousins. Auckland, Penguin. 30.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Fanon, F. (1968). Black Skin, White Masks. London, Macgibbon & Kee. 98.

<sup>32</sup> Grace, P. (1992). Cousins. Auckland, Penguin. 28.



Furthermore, it also represents the complete opposite to the concepts of family and social organization as represented through Mata's cousin Makareta's upbringing, which focuses on the extended family and values that are concerned with cultural survival. Instead, the concepts of self worth that Mata has are based on being what she is not, and living the values of the very ideology and practices that are, as Fanon states, "shattering her psychological mechanisms."<sup>33</sup>

Mata's contradictory world-view becomes deeply affected when she is allowed to visit her whānau for the holidays. It is during this visit that the conflict inherent in her growing self-hatred becomes highlighted, as she struggles to comprehend and accept her Māori family and her own Māori side. Juxtaposed with her wish to belong to a family and her sense of excitement at the discovery of others who are 'like her,' are the messages of racial hatred that she has been given throughout her life and which distort her interpretation of the whānau. What Fanon describes as an "existential deviation,"<sup>34</sup> is already so deeply internalised in Mata that she regards her timid adaptation to the whānau's lifestyle as "learning to be bad."<sup>35</sup>

One of the devices used in *Cousins* is to draw attention to the role of language in the colonisation of Mata's mind, body and spirit. Mata has been schooled in adhering to 'proper Christian Pākehā' ways of life, as well as to the language that creates the dichotomy of 'good and bad.' 'Ugliness' and 'badness' are Pākehā words that she attributes to herself, particularly in regards to her blackness, the dark colour of herself that contrasts against the blonde, white-bodied children at the orphanage and the blue-eyed teachers at her school. This binary of Pākehā language is unsettled by the intrusion of the unfamiliar way in which her Māori whānau speak English,<sup>36</sup> and especially Mata's confrontation with the "strange

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<sup>33</sup> Fanon, F. (1968). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London, Macgibbon & Kee. 97.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 35.

<sup>36</sup> For instance, Chummy's pronunciation of "chogalafish" in contrast to Mata's "chocolate fish," or Uncle Nonny's "did yiz." See Ibid. 40.

language,” te reo Māori, which is the primary language at her grandmother Keita’s house. The significance of language is reiterated also by portraying the further exclusion of Mata, due to her lack of knowledge of te reo Māori<sup>37</sup> and its symbolic manifestations. This is represented through the initial meeting of Mata with the koro and kuia (grandfather and grandmother), where the symbolic and ritualistic acknowledgement of the trauma that has been the separation of Mata and the whānau make Mata scared and uncomfortable:

The women turned towards her and began calling and making high crying sounds that terrified her so much she wanted to run...And the little woman held on to her, crying, wetting her, making strange noises. Didn’t like it. Then the little woman let her go and the other woman took her by the shoulders and pushed her nose onto her nose, keeping it there while she wailed and cried. There were tears falling down all over her. She was wet and scared and wanted to go home.<sup>38</sup>

Mata’s lack of knowledge of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are important devices used by the author to convey Mata’s trauma throughout her life, as they represent the mechanism of rendering Mata voiceless.

Grace effectively portrays the split in Mata’s mind through her internal dialogues. These dialogues are informed by the racist ideology she has been exposed to, depicting not only the painful and complex trauma of the child’s colonisation experience, but also engaging with the process of how colonisation becomes internalised, or as Linda Tuhiwai-Smith states:

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<sup>37</sup> “The Māori language affirms a sense of exclusivity integral to cultural being.” See Battista, J. L. (2004). *Me he korokoro komako - 'With the Throat of a Bellbird' : a Maori Aesthetic in Maori writing in English*. English. Auckland, University of Auckland. 51.

<sup>38</sup> Grace, P. (1992). Cousins. Auckland, Penguin. 44.

The reach of imperialism into ‘our heads’ challenges those who belong to colonized communities to understand how this occurred, partly because we need to decolonize our minds...<sup>39</sup>

Grace highlights that the most traumatising effects of colonisation occur when the colonised internalise and believe the dominant ideology, leading ultimately to a type of collaboration in their own oppression.<sup>40</sup> Like Bachmann’s Franza, whose psychological trauma is embedded in the struggle between the violently enforced picture of herself as Other and lesser, or Wolf’s depiction of Polyxena who enacts her conditioned self-hatred through her body, Mata’s breaking point originates in the violently enforced unconscious acceptance of her otherness. The violence of colonisation against Mata is enacted physically, through the beatings and deprivations enforced by the children’s home and the school, ideologically, through the institutionalised and systematic indoctrination of a Pākehā worldview, and psychologically through Mata’s negative beliefs and feelings about herself and through the split in her mind.

The development of the internalised racism and self-hatred that Grace portrays through the depiction of the young child is crucial to understanding the adult Mata, who is represented in the rest of the novel. This internalisation leads to Mata’s eventual mental breakdown depicted at the beginning of the novel, where her trauma has resulted in the annihilation of any hope and any sense of her self. The representation of Mata conveys the ongoing and cumulative trauma sustained from the systems of colonisation in a society where Mata is othered at every level. Furthermore, the depiction of the serious influence of colonisation from a young age denotes the fundamental and multi-layered violence inherent in this process, and falls within Root’s definition of insidious trauma which “starts early in life before one grasps the full psychological meaning of the maliciousness of the wounds,” and

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<sup>39</sup> Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Hammer, R. (2002). Colonization, Dialectics, and Borderland Feminisms. Antifeminism and Family Terrorism - A Critical Feminist Perspective. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield. 175.

“leaves a distinct threat to psychological safety, security or survival.”<sup>41</sup> Within a Māori framework, such as defined by Rangimarie Rose Pere, this means that Mata’s hinengaro,<sup>42</sup> ranga whatumanawa,<sup>43</sup> and wairua<sup>44</sup> are damaged from childhood on.

Grace represents an intricate picture of othering, as she also depicts othering of the wāhine Māori based on gender. This conveys the layering and compounding of influences on trauma. The notion of gender-based othering raises questions about the gender oppression of Māori women in terms of what is pre-colonial and what is a reaction to colonisation. Feminist traumatology’s aim of acknowledging and validating the multiplicity and diversity of the trauma experience informs the reading of the gender oppression in *Cousins* as part of the complex layering of gender, race, class and ethnicity. This approach also highlights the existing binaries of Māori/Pākehā, and male/female as sited against each other, and deriving their meaning from this opposite positioning. The experience of the colonised Māori woman is doubly othered in the sense that she lives as other both as a Māori and as a woman in a patriarchal society:

Under patriarchal capitalism then, it is quite “normal” for the woman to find her life mediated by what she is not. She is not male [or white], and concurrently, often not represented within socially defined relations of power. She is the *colonise*.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 241.

<sup>42</sup> Hinengaro means the conscious and subconscious mind. It refers to “the mental, intuitive and ‘feeling’.” See Pere, R. R. (1991). Te Wheke - A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom. Gisborne, Ako Akom Global Learning New Zealand Limited. 32.

<sup>43</sup> Relating to the range, experience and expression of emotions. Ibid. 30.

<sup>44</sup> Wairua denotes the spirit: “Everything has a wairua...It is a matter of keeping life balance.” Ibid. 16.

<sup>45</sup> Hammer, R. (2002). Colonization, Dialectics, and Borderland Feminisms. Antifeminism and Family Terrorism - A Critical Feminist Perspective. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield. 175.

The othering based on ethnicity runs parallel to the othering based on gender. Grace's novel depicts gender as being in a state of confusion and upheaval, as the gender roles of the female characters are shaped by the clash between the traditional Māori roles, the traditional Pākehā roles, and the rapid social change that impacts on both throughout the novel. The shifting and negotiation of the multiple experiences of being a wahine highlight gender not as a predetermined or biological 'given,' but rather as a social and cultural product, particular to the historical context.

The rapid change of gender roles is influenced by the undermined ability of Māori men to be leaders in a patriarchal sense, due to the history of colonisation and the effects of the Second World War. Through the context of the clashes between Māori and Pākehā, and old and new cultural manifestations, the protagonists are involved in a complex analysis of gender roles.

Grace depicts changing models of gender in the context of World War Two, as the absence of men creates work opportunities for women that had previously not existed. Due to necessity and the government's push for patriotic support of the war while the men were at the front, the number of Pākehā women working in new occupations increased. The general excitement of this change, and the fact that it spread to the Māori community also, is represented through the character of Polly, who feels angry that it is the men who get to leave. Being expected to be a stay-at-home mother, she envies the involvement of her husband and siblings in the wartime effort:

Don't be jealous of him? I knew that Kui was looking into me to somewhere I hadn't wanted to look, in something in me that was more than sorrow and harder than anger. Rere was going to war. My brother had joined the Navy, and my two older sisters were in the Red Cross learning to drive trucks. Sooner or later they would go to war too – all the ones I loved – while I was staying home to write letters and wait...<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 109.

This mobility of women, both Māori and Pākehā, ends after the war, when the Pākehā model of femininity as a homemaker and mother once again becomes the standard. Rather than allowing emancipation or a permanent change in gender roles, the war served eventually to defend the status quo of patriarchal hierarchy, the defence of traditional values:

While proclaiming that women's roles were being revolutionised, individuals, institutions and policymakers developed strategies to contain the war's radical effect and preserve the gender order.<sup>47</sup>

The models of Pākehā femininity, depicted through characters such as Mata's guardian Mrs Parkinson, or the teacher Miss Jamieson's "pretty dresses, beads, earrings, stockings and high heels,"<sup>48</sup> stand in contrast to the Māori women. All the cousins and their mothers are aware of this contrast and their own otherness throughout the novel. As a child Missy is terrified of the Pākehā Miss Jamieson, while as an adult she yearns to be "living the life of a star" and dreams of being "kissed in moonlight gardens" by someone looking not like a Māori, but like "Elvis or James Dean."<sup>49</sup>

Polly experiences the consequences of otherness as a Māori single mother through the discrimination by landlords. She is rescued by another 'unconventional' woman, the Pākehā "parrot lady" Alma, who articulates the double prejudice against Polly:

They don't like a Maori woman to rent their house, but I've got a place for you and your little girl... Where's your husband? ... They don't like a woman with no husband, but don't you worry...<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Montgomerie, D. (2001). *The Women's War - New Zealand Women 1939-45*. Auckland, Auckland University Press. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 160.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 192.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 117.

Mata is depicted as most affected by Pākehā models of femininity. Mata's awareness of her difference and her inability to conform, or be accepted by the Pākehā women at her work, reinforce her already entrenched sense of otherness. Mata's outsider position is made clear through her interactions with these women, who exhibit the stereotype of the post-war woman:

[They] stared at her clothes, her shoes, her bad hair, her black face, raised their eyebrows at each other and at morning tea and lunchtimes didn't move over at the tables so she could sit down...She liked listening to them talking about money, clothes, dances, parties, quarrels, earrings, stockings and make-up...<sup>51</sup>

As the Māori women of the novel are confronted with these stereotypes, they are also confronted with the models of femininity inherent in their own culture, upheld by the older women like Keita. As in Pākehā society, motherhood and marriage are shown as highly valued by the Māori community, for reasons that are enmeshed in the survival of the whānau in regards to cultural continuity through the relationship between whānau, hapū, iwi and land. The new generation of wāhine in *Cousins* is expected by their whānau and the larger community to play a role in upholding the 'old ways' and in doing what is necessary to ensure the growth and wellbeing of the extended family.

Grace portrays the Māori women's role as having fundamental importance, while at the same time highlighting that the enforcement of this role is the catalyst for change within the wāhine's lives. This is reflected in the representations of Makareta, and her Auntie Anihera before her. Both are being prepared to enter into pre-arranged marriages, which are meant to ensure mana, land and cultural continuity for the family. While the narrative represents and acknowledges the prestige and cultural richness that these characters are endowed with, it simultaneously illustrates the limitations of the expectancies of the whānau for Anihera and Makareta.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 51.

The women's roles occupy a strategic and imperative place in the future of the whānau, which is emphasised through the depiction of the severity with which Keita as matriarch of the whānau punishes divergence from the expectations. When Anihera defies her pre-arranged marriage to a Māori man from a high-status whānau and elopes with a Pākehā, Keita banishes all memory of her eldest daughter, telling Anihera's sister Gloria "There is no sister called Anihera."<sup>52</sup> Gloria's subsequent marriage to the unapproved Bobby does not banish her from the whānau completely, but her punishment has major consequences as she is deprived of economic or material support from the whānau, which destines her and her children to live in poverty. Polly also defies the wishes of the whānau, who want her to marry Rere's younger brother in a bid to keep Makareta in the immediate family, a decision that results in Polly's move to the city without her daughter. Makareta, the 'chosen one' is the last in this line of wāhine who refuses to conform to the role expected of her. Like Anihera, she too rejects the pre-arranged marriage, and instead leaves for the city to be with her mother.

The novel demonstrates the complexities of gender roles and gender expectations as having conflicting impacts on the female characters. The cousins' mothers' generation experiences pressures to conform to socially and culturally desirable whānau expectations, while being challenged by the clash between these expectations and the overarching colonised context. Apart from Polly, none of the women from that generation are able to settle this issue, which has substantial consequences for themselves and, particularly in Anihera's case, for their daughters. The flow-on effect of Anihera's defiance of whānau expectations and her subsequent banishment result in Mata's traumatic estrangement from her whānau and from her turangawaewae.<sup>53</sup>

The conflicts around gender issues are exacerbated for the cousins' generation, as there is more interaction between the Māori and Pākehā world, depicted through the movement

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 106.

<sup>53</sup> Turangawaewae is the place of belonging by birth-right, where "she or he belongs, where roots are deep... a child must know from whence she or he came so she or he will have greater control of her or his life." See Pere, R. R. (1991). Te Wheke - A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom. Gisborne, Ako Akom Global Learning New Zealand Limited. 50.



between rural and urban and old and new. This experience is represented in a cyclical movement, depicting it as inextricable from the wāhine's individual and communal experiences of multiple situational trauma.<sup>54</sup>

Unlike Patricia Grace in *Cousins*, Ngahua Te Awekotuku does not use the framework of twentieth-century experience of colonisation in her exploration of multiple othering. *Ruahine* takes place in a pre-colonial, Māori world, and as such the othering comes from the patriarchal, hierarchical mechanisms of the world the author depicts. Te Awekotuku's exploration of othering questions what constitutes oppression of wāhine Māori in a Māori context, which although set in pre-colonial times, has recognisable features of oppression in the authors' current context. In this sense Te Awekotuku is engaging in a dialogue that is current within Māori feminism, of which Irwin states that: "A standard response to those who asked questions about Māori feminism was that you were anti- Māori for asking them [...] it was an excellent form of social control."<sup>55</sup> The theme of 'social control' is central to the experiences of the wāhine Māori in *Ruahine*. Like Christa Wolf, who in her search for the origins of female trauma through othering, violence and voicelessness goes back as far as the story of Troy, Te Awekotuku returns to the beginning of foundational Māori kōrero pakiwaitara,<sup>56</sup> to find manifestations of the othering of wāhine.

In going back to the beginning, Te Awekotuku goes to the time when Papatūānuku from the creation story became the metaphoric and literal mother of Māori. This acknowledgement of women's foundational mana and subsequent status derive from their position that like Papatūānuku they are 'whare tangata,' the house of the (unborn) people, linking people to the land. Ani Mikaere describes the "female strength [which] formed part of the core of

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<sup>54</sup> Hammer, R. (2002). Colonization, Dialectics, and Borderland Feminisms. *Antifeminism and Family Terrorism - A Critical Feminist Perspective*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield. 175.

<sup>55</sup> Irwin, K. (1993). Maori Feminism. *Te Ao Marama: Regaining Aotearoa - Maori Writers Speak Out*. W. Ihimaera. Auckland, Reed. 301.

<sup>56</sup> Stories

Māori existence and was sourced in the power of female sexual and reproductive systems,<sup>57</sup> inherent in the female element within Māori cosmogony.

Mana in women's roles also resides in the power to take life, contained within the saying "He wahine, he whenua, e ngaro ai te Tangata,"<sup>58</sup> and represented in the story of Maui's death through Hine-nui-te-pō,<sup>59</sup> as the "dual generative and destructive power of the female sex."<sup>60</sup> Te Awēkotuku presents the notion of women's mana as a powerful and complex ideal, and through the depictions of her protagonists' experiences she emphasises that trauma is inherent when social structures rely on oppressive othering as a way of denying this inherent mana by creating and maintaining patriarchal hierarchies.

The female protagonists in the *Ruahine* narratives are considered 'different' in that their identities, their wishes and aspirations are contrary to patriarchal ideology. The protagonists are confronted with gender roles that conflict with their authentic selves. *Ruahine* features heroines who are strong, creative and intelligent. All of the protagonists are represented as being part of a community, a whānau, and discord occurs when the roles prescribed in this context oppress the wāhine Māori. *Ruahine* represents social structures that use patriarchal violence, female collusion with patriarchal ideology, and societal exclusion to reinforce gender disparities. The construction of the women as Other in opposition to the men affects the lives of the wāhine profoundly as to their sexual identification and creative expression, reinforcing the female roles of wife and child bearer.

The trauma arising from enforced heterosexuality features in many of the *Ruahine* stories. Presenting this issue through the rewriting of mythologies addresses a primary issue for the author as a Māori lesbian, who has always publicly challenged homophobias and

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<sup>57</sup> Mikaere, A. (2003). *The Balance Destroyed - Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori*. Auckland, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education. 66.

<sup>58</sup> "By women and land are men lost." See Makareti (1986). *The Old-Time Maori*. Auckland, New Woman's Press. 336.

<sup>59</sup> In the search for immortality Maui, the hero of numerous Māori myths, sought to defeat the death goddess Hine-nui-te-pō by climbing inside her through her vagina, taking out her heart and emerging as an immortal through her mouth. A fantail bird, amused by the sight of this sung out, which woke the goddess who subsequently crushed Maui to death between her legs.

<sup>60</sup> Walker, R. (1990). *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle Without End*. Auckland, Penguin Books. 74.

heterosexist ideology within Pākehā and Māori communities. The author engages in a task of creating and using a framework that is able to analyse and represent same sex relationships from a wahine Māori perspective. The challenge comes from the historical imposition of European, Christian concepts of morality on tikanga Māori, thereby obscuring what the historical reality of same-sex relationships within pre-colonial Māori life may have been. The context from which Te Awekotuku writes about sexual identity is therefore informed not just by the trauma of being othered and excluded by “loathing and fear and disgust and embarrassment”<sup>61</sup> from a colonising social structure, but also by the absence of validation, history and acceptance from within facets of Māori culture. As Gloria Anzaldúa states, for “the lesbian of colour, the ultimate rebellion she can make against her native culture is through her sexual behaviour.”<sup>62</sup> As such, identification as a lesbian *and* a Māori is imbued with the triple othering based on being a woman, a Māori and a lesbian, and the subsequent psychological implications of this.

Claiming or re-claiming a history and a space for same-sex relationships within Māoritanga<sup>63</sup> is therefore of great importance to Te Awekotuku who states:

My challenge is this: to reconstruct tradition, reinterpret the oral history of this land, so skilfully manipulated by the crusading heterosexism of the missionary ethic... The loving of one's own gender is an ancient, even tribal practice, honourable and revered. And yet, the practice, the carrying through, the acting out of one's inner self, even the very acknowledgement of it without the acting out, has meant too often shame, condemnation, dismissal, hatred, ostracism, hopelessness and despair.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1992). *Kia Mau, Kia Manawanui - We Will Never Go Away: Experiences of a Maori Lesbian Feminist. Feminist Voices - Women's Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand*. R. Du Plessis. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

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<sup>62</sup> Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco, Aunt Lute Book Company. 19.

<sup>63</sup> Māori culture

<sup>64</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1992). *Kia Mau, Kia Manawanui - We Will Never Go Away: Experiences of a Maori Lesbian Feminist. Feminist Voices - Women's Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand*. R. Du Plessis. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

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In *Ruahine* Te Awekotuku addresses her own challenge by ‘reading between the lines’ of the ancient myths, and creating female and male characters whose self-identity claim the word takatāpui (intimate same-sex companion): a Māori identity describing Māori experiences. The creation of a literary language to represent this, subverts social and literary silencing, in the sense that lesbian writing, particularly Māori lesbian writing, was “starving for images” and without “a language to express lesbian sexual experience.”<sup>65</sup> Te Awekotuku depicts women who have sexual agency, who celebrate each other’s strength and beauty. The wāhine’s love for each other is depicted as closely tied to nature, as the imagery of the natural beauty of caves, water or the moon interweaves with the depiction of their sexual encounters. This emphasises the importance of these natural elements to a wāhine Māori framework, as well as the naturalness of takatāpui love:

She paused for a moment at the edge of her favourite pool. Its roundness reflected the moon’s beaming, bloated face; spirals formed and fragmented moons, sharp crescents of light, scattered across the blistering surface... Quickly Huritini shrugged of her kākahu, then slipped into the water. Both hands encircled Hieke’s ankle.<sup>66</sup>

The depictions of Huritini, Wairaka and Hinemoa, who choose women as their primary lovers, acknowledge the complexities of the historical and the contemporary experience of othering and enforced heterosexism and homophobia. This is represented through the destruction of some of these character’s same-sex partnerships by the implicit and explicit demands of the community for the protagonists to fulfil the role of mother and wife.

In the story “Whakatāne,” enforced heterosexuality and issues of gender are central to Wairaka’s experience of trauma. While she is portrayed as a strong and creative heroine, who alongside the other women legendarily saves the Mātaatua waka from being swept

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<sup>65</sup> Griffin, G. (1993). Heavenly love? Lesbian Images in Twentieth-Century Women's Writing. New York, Manchester University Press. 146.

<sup>66</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 99.

away by the sea, she is nevertheless uncomfortably aware of being Other, and conflicted by gender roles that dictate behaviour and identification. Wairaka articulates this in the opening line of the story, spoken to her lover Muriwai:

‘I can never be a man for you,’ she whispered into the woman’s tumbling, firebright hair. ‘Not a man. Never. I can only be me.’<sup>67</sup>

Later on in the story gender roles are defined by gender activity, as Wairaka’s strength in saving the waka helps her to identify as that which she is not:

She grabbed that final length of rope, contracted every muscle in her body, focused every cell. She stretched the tendons in her neck, tightened her jaw, lifted her voice, howled for all the world to hear ‘Kia whakatāne au I ahau!

For you Muriwai, Muriwai, this time

Let me make a man of myself

For you!’<sup>68</sup>

But even this act is not enough for Muriwai or the whānau to allow Wairaka’s sexual identity to be fully accommodated within the community. While Wairaka is tolerated as a strong wahine, who becomes renowned for saving the waka and for her skill in tā moko (tattooing), when it comes to sexual commitment she is expected to conform to the role of wife and mother, expected to “do her share”<sup>69</sup> towards increasing the population of this new iwi inhabiting Aotearoa.

While the community is represented as tolerating the young “women acting as men,” this acceptance is curbed by the advent of childbearing maturity and the women’s value to the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 54.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 63.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 65.

community as a tool for trade. Hirini Moko Mead's research on historical responses of Māori culture to tangata whaka-tāne defines this distinction in tolerance:

...tangata whaka-tāne – women who acted like men and preferred to take up masculine occupations such as becoming a warrior and engaging in heavy labouring tasks – were accepted without stigma. They played their roles openly and with the support of the communities. As indicated earlier, same-sex pairings in a marriage-like relationship was a different matter.<sup>70</sup>

The new stories of Wairaka, Huritini and Hinemoa all feature heroines who love women, and who love independence, but have no choice but to submit to the wishes of the whānau for the good of the greater community. Echoing Grace's representation of arranged marriage in *Cousins*, the "good of the whānau/hapū/iwi" revolves around the need for children and alliances with other groups. Some of the protagonists struggle with such social expectations, which require selflessness for the sustainability and power of the whānau and hapū.

Ruahine represents the enforcement of these social values through the direct and indirect violence experienced by the wāhine. The trauma of othering from being used as a 'chattel' is central in these depictions, where men place their "bid"<sup>71</sup> on women, and wāhine like Huritini's co-wife collude with patriarchy to uphold the system of enforced marriage. In the story of Huritini the effect of this is to make her feel "like one of the tethered dogs,"<sup>72</sup> and losing hope and dignity after being raped by her husband she chooses to commit suicide.

Like *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra*, the processes of othering depicted in *Cousins* and *Ruahine* are imbued with a variety of patriarchal justifications. Patricia Grace represents the dominant colonial Pākehā othering of the Māori as a necessary part of assimilating towards

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<sup>70</sup> Mead, H. M. (2003). *Tikanga Maori - Living by Maori Values*. Wellington, Huia. 246.

<sup>71</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 94.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 101.

a 'white' Aotearoa. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku also depicts the othering based on gender that comes from the maintenance of cultural norms, yet ultimately is about patriarchal control of the social situation. In Te Awekotuku's narrative othering is based on the mechanisms of an oppressive patriarchal social structure, seeking to perpetuate itself.

Both texts question the history of othering and the complexities of multi-layered othering, yet it is *Ruahine* that makes a deliberate statement that the history of othering has to be investigated from the 'starting point,' from within Māori culture itself. Te Awekotuku's search for women's voices begins with the premise that processes of multiple othering have concealed these voices and that re-analysis alongside re-construction is necessary. This constitutes a thematic progression from Patricia Grace to Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's narrative, whereby the questioning of othering is expanded to highlight the obscuring of Māori history, and to subsequently engage in questioning the notions and legacies of what is contemporarily perceived as 'tradition.' The analysis of othering thereby shifts from a colonised context, to a Māori-specific context. This is a significant progression, as it allows for the exploration of Māori women's trauma in fiction to be sited in a wāhine Māori context and worldview.

### *The Experience of Violence in the Texts*

*Cousins* and *Ruahine* portray the use of violence as a traumatising enforcer of othering to varying degrees. Unlike *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra*, Patricia Grace's *Cousins*, with the exception of the life of Mata, does not depict the female protagonists' direct experience of violence, whereas in *Ruahine* violence against the wāhine is represented in graphic detail.

In *Cousins* the violence used against Mata in the children's home is a crucial example of how violence is used to reinforce othering. The reiterations of Mata's supposed 'blackness/dirtiness' are used as a justification in this process. In her narrative Mata recounts a beating so severe that she urinates on herself, while the connection between her dirtiness and badness is brutally enforced by the abusing adult:

After the caning she'd peed, so the stick had come hitting down again  
For, Being, A, Dirty, Girl, Now, Clean, Up, This, Mess.<sup>73</sup>

Further on in the novel, Mata's cousin Makareta makes the connection between violence as an enforcer of othering, and the traumatic effect it has on the Othered. She considers the way in which the violence of oppression results in the oppressed acting out their subjugation through the subsequent violence against others, the creation of the cycle of violence. Makareta comments on violence as a result of racial othering, a 'way of life,' when she speaks of the disinherited generation of Māori that she sees around her in the city:

There in the streets groups of men terrorised each other, brutalised the women that lived with them and caused fear wherever they went. They were the beaten, the hollowed-out of our people, the rawakore... And their stories of self-hatred were told in their foulness and self-defacement, their maiming and their havoc. They guarded what was left of themselves with weapons, high walls and dogs.<sup>74</sup>

While none of the female protagonists of *Cousins* responds to their oppression in such a way, the narrative indicates the strong relationship between othering and violence in the sense that violence perpetuates violence in a socio-historic context. The author's representation of the historical event of 'official' violence, in the form of New Zealand's participation in World War Two, has a central function in the linking together of othering and violence. In *Cousins* the representation of Māori characters' experience of World War Two is a retelling in the sense that it is an old story told by new voices, the voices of the wāhine Māori narrating their life stories. The author uses World War Two, already firmly entrenched in New Zealand social memory, to depict the traumatic impact of violence on a part of New Zealand society that has had the least opportunity to express their trauma: Māori women. Unlike Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza*, where the trauma of violence is depicted on all levels of the violence continuum, or Wolf's *Kassandra*, where the violence

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<sup>73</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 17.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 208.



of war is enacted upon and directly witnessed by the traumatised female characters, in *Cousins* war is never directly depicted, yet it traumatises by a legacy of a social destruction that taps into the past and the future, and impacts greatly on the female characters of the novel.

War had been a feature of pre-colonial Māori life, bestowing the kind of trauma that is inherent in violent confrontations where pain, death and domination are key outcomes of conflict. Methods of combat changed rapidly with the arrival of the colonisers. The introduction of weapons such as rifles caused an unprecedented mortality rate, both in wars fought among different iwi, and against the colonising powers, impacting on Māori society on a widespread scale. Māori adapted quickly to the use of new weaponry and studied the military tactics of the Europeans. By the time of the First World War, Aotearoa had been colonised for over one hundred years and the inter-tribal and colonial wars had ceased. Necessity as well as intense lobbying by Māori leaders such as the four Māori members of Parliament meant that Māori men were allowed to be part of representing New Zealand on an international battlefield. 2227 Māori became part of the trench-digging Pioneer Battalion Te Hokowhitu a Tu, almost half of whom were either wounded or died during the Battalion's involvement between 1915-1919.<sup>75</sup>

In *Cousins* the impact of war affects all members of the whānau, beginning with Kui Hinemate's son Anaru's and the cousins' grandfather Wi's participation in the First World War. While Wi comes back from the war, Anaru is killed; thereby marking the first of the young men lost to the Pākehā wars. The trauma of war is depicted as affecting the whānau and the community on many different levels. As the male characters do not narrate with their own voices, the events of war are relayed to the reader mostly through the female characters of the novel, which has the effect of providing a female frame for the men's experiences. This relates the trauma inherent in war back to a female experience, as this expression is allowed to deviate from the traditional male-dominated war narrative. Makareta's mother Polly tells the story of her husband Rere's voluntary enlisting in World War Two's Māori Battalion despite the fact that they are expecting their first baby. Her

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<sup>75</sup> Pugsley, C. (1995). *Te Hokowhitu A Tu - The Maori Pioneer Battalion In The First World War*. Auckland, Reed.

narrative captures the excitement of the men to be part of this war, as well as reinforcing the notion of war as ‘men’s business:’

What was real to me, what I held inside me, was the knowledge that Rere was going to war because there was a war to go to. In the excitement that he felt, in the happiness that I could see in him but could not share, I felt him becoming a stranger to me... We had dreams and plans, but even though I’d pleaded with him he hadn’t waited six months, six weeks or even six days before volunteering. He was starting out on the biggest adventure of his life, that was what I felt and what I knew, and there was hardly a thought in his head that was for me.<sup>76</sup>

This exclusion of the women in the war is another undermining of mana wahine, where in a historical context women have had considerable active influence in war situations:

It is well known that woman accompanied their men folk on warlike expeditions, that they procured and prepared food for the armies, and that some of them fought alongside their men [...] the wives of prominent rangatira also played key leadership roles in the military sphere as they did in other arenas.<sup>77</sup>

Ani Mikaere gives examples of female leadership during war situations, in which the actions of the wāhine like Rangi Topeora, Waitohi and Heni Pore were crucial to the events.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Grace, P. (1992). Cousins. Auckland, Penguin. 108.

<sup>77</sup> Henare, M. (2007). Tribal Landscape Overview. Auckland, Mira Szasy Research Centre. 268.

<sup>78</sup> “It is plain that wahine rangatira also exhibited military strength when the occasion required it. Rangi Toperoa had an extremely war-like aspect to her nature, as evidenced by her composition of the kaioara, or cursing song [...] She and her mother, Waitohi, played an active role in Te Rauparaha’s military activities throughout and following their migration from Kawhia to Kapiti. Heni Pore of Te Arawa epitomizes the adaptability required of Māori leaders during the latter half of the nineteenth century. She fought against the British troops in support of the Kingitanga during the 1860s...” Mikaere, A. (2003). The Balance Destroyed - Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori. Auckland, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education. 55.

The portrayal of Rere and the other Māori men such as Nonny, Hori and Bobby, who volunteer for this war, takes into consideration the value that many young Māori men placed on fighting as an equal alongside the Pākehā and the other European nations involved in World War Two. The legacy of Māori involvement in the First World War, the ongoing political battle by eminent Māori leaders such as Apirana Ngata to ensure that Māori could “exercise the right to raise the war trail,”<sup>79</sup> firmly entrenched gender roles. The cultural traditions of ensuring the mana of the whānau, hapū and iwi through war served as substantial motivation for enlisting.

The subsequent trauma experienced by the men is depicted through the character of Bobby, Missy’s father, who is one of the few men from the whānau to return from the war. Bobby’s initial portrayal is through the eyes of Mata, as she meets him for the first time on her holiday from the orphanage. Mata considers her Uncle Bobby’s drunken behaviour as strange, and witnesses his nightmares, during which he shouts until his wife Gloria wakes him. Later on in the novel, Bobby gets to explain his trauma through the eyes of Missy’s unborn twin. Distressed by the death of his cousin Hori, Bobby tells Gloria of his own wounding in battle and his subsequent rescue by her brother Rere:

Well, getting out of there, keeping in the shelter of the bamboos and the olives, that’s when I got it. Boom. Both legs and a hole in the side. Nothing. Just a hot feeling in the legs but couldn’t get up, couldn’t move.<sup>80</sup>

His narrative is evocative of the fear and destitution of war, depicting aspects of psychological trauma such as “intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and the threat of annihilation.”<sup>81</sup> Bobby’s reaction to this trauma and his guilt about surviving the war when others like Rere or Hori did not, displays some of the typical symptoms of war trauma

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<sup>79</sup> Gardiner, W. (1992). Te Mura o te Ahi - The Story of the Maori Battalion. Auckland, Reed. 29.

<sup>80</sup> Grace, P. (1992). Cousins. Auckland, Penguin. 158.

<sup>81</sup> *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* quoted in Lewis Herman, J. (1992). Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. London, Basic Books. 33.

survivors, such as dissociation, alcoholism and nighttime terrors. The portrayal of Bobby is crucial to Grace's depiction of the traumatising cumulative effect that war has on the women of the narrative, as his wife Gloria and his daughter Missy struggle to keep the household together in the face of his drinking and his apparent irresponsibility. Gloria is largely left to run the household while debilitated by her many pregnancies and her financial difficulties.

This depiction highlights the reality of Māori post-war experience, where inter-racial relations were a far cry from the equality that the Māori soldiers may have experienced or at least hoped for during the war. Apart from the untreated psychological trauma sustained by the majority of soldiers, and the incidence of physical injury and grief for friends and family lost in the war, the Māori soldiers found that they returned to an Aotearoa in which they were still predominantly regarded as second-class citizens. The personal loss of mana in a Māori society that had changed rapidly during the war through urbanisation and the loss of cultural structure, and in the overarching framework of the Pākehā dominated society where their sacrifices for the war were not politically or economically acknowledged, contributed to the development of dysfunctional behaviour, which then in turn contributed to even further social erosion. The establishment of welfare schemes failed, the abuse of alcohol was on the rise and "many wondered what they had fought for."<sup>82</sup>

The wāhine's experiences of war in *Cousins* are represented through their helplessness during the enlistment of their sons and partners, and their ensuing sense of powerlessness. The women are depicted as having little control over the participation of the men in the war, where mana wahine becomes even further diminished. While some of the older women, such as Kui Hinemate, learned "to wait and wait, hope and wait, on and on,"<sup>83</sup> during the experience of the First World War, the women from the following generation, such as Polly, resent this passive status.

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<sup>82</sup> Gardiner, W. (1992). *Te Mura o te Ahi - The Story of the Maori Battalion*. Auckland, Reed. 183.

<sup>83</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 109.

The grief that is felt by the wāhine when Rere, after two and a half years of service, is killed in action also stems from the accumulation of years of powerlessness. Moreover, it is a grief that is personal in terms of the wife Polly grieving for her husband, or Keita the mother grieving for her son, but it is also a public grieving in the sense that the whole community shares in the effect of these personal traumas. The trauma of the community is represented through the destruction of leadership structures, and security for survival of the whānau.

Throughout the novel Grace connects events and characters to highlight the concept of wairua, which links people, land and events across time and space. As part of the cyclical nature of the novel, which shows the interconnectedness of all things, trauma through the violence of war relates from individuals to the community, thereby making an important statement about the cyclical nature of trauma. Whereas in Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza* the trauma of violence occurs in isolation for the female protagonist, in *Cousins* this type of trauma impacts pivotally not just on the individual female characters, but on the structures of the whānau and the future of Māori society, creating change in a domino-like effect throughout the novel. This representation of trauma is in accord with feminist trauma theory, where trauma is analysed as impacting beyond the individual and where the occurrence of trauma is considered as a non-isolated event.<sup>84</sup>

In *Ruahine* Ngahuia Te Awekotuku also portrays the impact of violence as producing a trauma response that persists beyond the individual, where the mythical, timeless status of the stories connects the past and present of wāhine's experiences. Themes and issues that are experienced by wāhine Māori today are inscribed into the myths. Like Wolf in *Kassandra*, Te Awekotuku searches for an ancient point of origin for the present-day, and liberates the old myths from the notion of 'romanticised' violence. In the majority of the stories in *Ruahine* violence is the leitmotif, as it is depicted as the catalyst for the actions within the story. The violence against the wāhine, which encompasses most of the scale of violence against women referred to in chapter one, is thereby the agent for transformation of the female characters. As with Wolf's rewrite of *Kassandra*, patriarchal violence is

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<sup>84</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 238.

uncovered from the traditional heroic male-centred narratives for what it is: brutal, power-driven and traumatising.

In the rewrite of the story “Haumapuhia,” Te Awekotuku highlights and challenges the behaviour of Mahu, a father who turns his sons into stone and drowns his daughter Haumapuhia, whereupon she transforms into a taniwha that creates the lake Waikaremoana. In several well-known versions of this story, Mahu’s violence is justified through the sons’ breach of tapu (by bringing water from a tapu fountain), and by Haumapuhia’s disobedience and laziness. In this version Mahu’s act of violence against his daughter is de-emphasised through its brevity and implication of parental justice:

Haumapuhia remained adamant in her refusal and eventually Mahu took the calabash and went himself. His heart was heavy with disappointment and resentment against his children. After the second rebuff he decided to punish his daughter, and remained by the spring until it was dark... When she loomed in the darkness he seized her and thrust her bodily into the spring, holding her underwater until she ceased to struggle. Mahu then left the place and went far away...<sup>85</sup>

In Te Awekotuku’s interpretation the violence against Haumapuhia is represented in vivid detail, thereby matching the trauma of this act with the intensity of the depiction:

He pushed her. Into the spring, one hand splayed against her shoulder, the other roping the length of her hair around, around her neck. Cutting across her throat, killing her sound. Killing her. Fast, he shoved her head down, and rammed his stirring body against her back. Tightened her hair. Shoved. She writhed and struggled, thrashed and kicked, red streaming, smell reeking. The fabric of her garment came apart. Smell reeking.

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<sup>85</sup> Reed, A. W. (2004). Reed Book of Maori Mythology. Auckland, Reed. 282.

See also Orbell, M. (2003). The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Mythology. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 49.

Smell of rage, of fear, of strength. He tightened his grip on her hair, kept her down.”<sup>86</sup>

In this version there is no covering up or smoothing over of the act of violence and the traumatisation experienced by Haumapuhia. Te Awekotuku’s construction of Mahu, who verbally abuses Haumapuhia, calling her a “Lazy, disobedient bitch,”<sup>87</sup> contrasts significantly to the depiction of Mahu as a wronged father and the victim of his children’s disobedience.

Furthermore, in Te Awekotuku’s version of this story, the violence of the father is depicted within the context of another, previous violence against Haumapuhia and a great affront to tapu. Rather than a random reaction against his daughter’s insolence, this violence begins long before the drowning of his daughter, as the representation of Mahu’s sexual abuse of Haumapuhia sets the overarching context for the events. At the beginning of the story Te Awekotuku introduces Haumapuhia’s physical and mental trauma caused by her father’s sexual abuse through the depiction of her miscarriage of his child:

Red sluiced down her legs, sticky between her thighs, viscous and dark.  
Her knees shook, her whole body trembled; her womb convulsed one more time, and from the tearing pain there poured a weight of slime, drenching her legs, scumming around her feet... The rain came down, runnels of wet softening her tears, streaking her face.<sup>88</sup>

Haumapuhia’s blood becomes a metaphor for the trauma of the father/daughter rape that remains the untold event within other versions of her story. Her bleeding from the womb is the metaphoric representation of the injury done to her by her father, as the stillbirth is symbolic of the breaking of tapu that, in this version of the story, is perpetrated by the

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<sup>86</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 47.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 46.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 45-46.

father, a breach that cannot lead to the birth of new life. The metaphoric depiction of blood, in itself imbued with tapu and symbolising the life/death-giving potential of wāhine, works alongside the metaphor of water, through the rain, the stream and the creation of the lake, which like wahine herself has the quality of noa. These connected metaphors centre the story within the realm of wahine Māori and her role in tikanga Māori.

Blood as a symbolic connection to and indicator of women's trauma recurs throughout several of the *Ruahine* stories, such as the other story of father/daughter rape that is the myth of Hine nui te Pō in the story of "Hinengaro."<sup>89</sup> This retelling is about Hine Titama, daughter of Tāne and Hineahuone and therefore one of the first ancestors of the human line. Unbeknownst to Hine Titama her lover is also her father, and when she finds out she retreats to the underworld to become Hine nui te Pō, the "ancestress to whom all descendants go upon death."<sup>90</sup> In her version of this creation story, Te Awekotuku captures the sense of betrayal and trauma felt by Hine nui te Pō:

I was innocent once. Like her. I trusted, I trusted. Like her, I lay half awake at night beside my snoring, cosy mother... Like her, I waited. I waited.<sup>91</sup>

The metaphor of blood in this story symbolises its connection to the transformative in that the shedding of Hine's maiden blood by her father, the traumatic event, becomes the 'payment' that Hine nui te Pō in the form of the shape shifting vampire extracts from her male victims. Blood in this sense becomes the sign of the trauma, as well as the tool for

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<sup>89</sup> It is noteworthy that Patricia Grace has also re-written Hine Titama's story, in which the emphasis is on the traumatising damage done to the female victims of sexual abuse, the "sickness eating away at all the guilty places." See "Flower Girls" in Grace, P. (1994). The Sky People and other Stories. Auckland, Penguin Books. 22.

<sup>90</sup> Mikaere, A. (2003). The Balance Destroyed - Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori. Auckland, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education. 19.

Rangimarie Pere describes Hinengaro as "the female who is both known and hidden." See Pere, R. R. (1991). Te Wheke - A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom. Gisborne, Ako Akom Global Learning New Zealand Limited. 32.

<sup>91</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 136.



transforming the trauma. Making someone bleed, or taking their blood is thereby connected to the violence against the female protagonists and their attempts to deal with the trauma.

Te Awekotuku emphasises the traumatic reality of father-daughter rape within these mythologies. This depiction resonates with the contemporary incidence and issues of sexual abuse, and highlights the lack of understanding in terms of the occurrence of this violence in historical Māori culture. The author succeeds in addressing the trauma of sexual abuse on the time continuum of past to present. Te Awekotuku uses the essence of the myths to locate the knowledge of sexual abuse from within the oral history of Māori culture, and then takes this out of the realm of the ‘mystical’ and ‘improbable’ by highlighting the brutal impacts on the wāhine. Furthermore, these narratives highlight the infringement on tapu on many levels. These representations scrutinises the violent impact of what Mead calls “he tangata ngau whiore,” the person who commits incest:

It is not clear how cases of incest were dealt with in traditional society and even how they were defined. What we can do is point to the story of Tāne cohabitating with his daughter and the [negative] consequences of this action as a starting point...incest caused a transformation for Hine-Titama, a movement from the world above to the world below, from the dawn and the world of light to the night, and darkness. Incest is a kind of death.<sup>92</sup>

*Ruahine* represents the trauma of sexual abuse as occurring not just between father and daughter but also in the context of dominating and claiming women as marriageable property. Here again blood features as a metaphor to represent the trauma and the breaking of tapu, as well as a strategy of fighting back. In the story “Whakatāne” the rape of the main character Wairaka depicts the relationship between the violent taking of the wāhine’s blood and the taking of the abuser’s blood:

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<sup>92</sup> Mead, H. M. (2003). Tikanga Maori - Living by Maori Values. Wellington, Huia. 241.

Something brittle crunched beneath her knee as he rolled his weight onto her, pushing her between himself and the wall... Wrist almost dislocated, she struck and got him. Slashed a jagged curve from eye to nostril, dug in, chiselled her mark, made him bleed. Like her. Made him bleed.<sup>93</sup>

The representation of sexual violence in these stories is inextricable from the patriarchally centred belief of women's place and function. As in *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra*, violence is employed by the male characters to assert power and keep women in a place of subjugation. This is especially true for unruly and unyielding women, such as in the story of "Huritini," where the husband of an enforced marriage uses marital rape to teach his young wife about power:

He forced her onto her front. Took her like the dogs down at the beach, forcing a fist beneath her belly. Shoved himself in, jerked, grunted, hauled at her hair, scraping it taut from her head. Finished. And rolled off, sated. 'That's all a woman is for,' he sniffed at her in the dark, his small, round eyes smaller still. 'That's all. So don't you ever forget it.'<sup>94</sup>

A far cry from the depiction of Huritini's husband as someone noble, who, in some versions of the story, merely "neglected her,"<sup>95</sup> Te Awekotuku's representation shows a misogynist whose treatment and perception of Huritini as less than human is ironic, given his likeness to an animal through his depiction as "grunting," "hauling" and "sniffing."

It is significant in regards to the importance of balance in tikanga Māori that these male characters use rape as a way to control the wāhine, thereby undermining the internal equilibrium of the whānau unit, or as Moana Jackson explains:

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<sup>93</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 68.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 102.

<sup>95</sup> Reed, A. W. (2004). *Reed Book of Maori Mythology*. Auckland, Reed. 88.

[T]he act of rape... was forbidden because it violated the inherent tapu of woman. It thus in turn upset the spiritual, emotional and physical balance within the victim herself, and within the relationships she had with her community and her tipuna. The act of rape was therefore proscribed to protect that balance and to preserve that tapu.<sup>96</sup>

Te Awekotuku also subverts the popular theme of Māori mythological male heroes, such as Maui Tikitiki a Taranga,<sup>97</sup> who became well-known for their outsmarting and overcoming of women. The re-visions in *Ruahine* reframes such outmanoeuvring of wāhine as violence and misogyny. In the rewrite of the story of the bird-woman “Kurungaituku,” the traditional hero Hatupatu is taken out of the conventional ‘trickster’ narrative. Te Awekotuku challenges interpretations like this, which depicts Hatupatu as the abducted victim of the ‘dreaded bird-woman,’ who keeps him as a starving slave until he tricks her into leaving on an extended journey, giving him the opportunity to kill her pets for food:

Kura-ngaituku went off early in the morning, and as soon as she was out of sight, Hatupatu satisfied his hunger. Taking the ogress’s weapon he killed the birds and lizards, all except one bird which escaped when Hatupatu opened the door.<sup>98</sup>

In the above version, again, patriarchal violence is a justified act in the depiction of the “starved” hero. In another version, after escaping her “imprisoning him in her cave,” Hatupatu leads the bird-woman to her death in the hot springs at Whakarewarewa, and on his return home is recognised as “no longer a boy but a fearsome warrior.”<sup>99</sup> In Te

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<sup>96</sup> Jackson, M. (1990). "Criminality and the Exclusion of Maori." Victoria University of Wellington Law Review 20(2). 28.

<sup>97</sup> For instance in the story of Mahuika the keeper of fire, of whom Maui steals her fingers and therefore the gift of fire. See Erlbeck, H. H. (2000). Maui - The Legend of the Demi-god Maui-Tikitiki-a-Taranga. Auckland, Reed. 44-63.

<sup>98</sup> Reed, A. W. (1997). Legends of Rotorua. Auckland, Reed. 115.

<sup>99</sup> See Orbell, M. (2003). The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Mythology. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 46-47.

Awekotuku's rewrite the focus is on what Hatupatu's killing of Kurungaituku's family actually entails:

He dusted out tired wings, then crushed them to a pale, ashy powder. He smoothed ruffled feathers, then snapped thin bones and tufted necks. He groomed twitchy fur, then hacked through yielding muscle. He peeled off wrinkled skins, then shredded cool, soft flesh. He killed. He maimed. He killed. Again and again. Every one, every one.<sup>100</sup>

The depiction of this violence shows Hatupatu not killing for survival, but out of greed and hatred, seeking to overpower Kurungaituku. The graphic nature of this representation leaves no doubt as to the trauma that is bestowed on the bird-woman when she discovers the killings and sets out to find Hatupatu, with her grief "thin and pointed."<sup>101</sup> In this version Kurungaituku does not perish in the geyser, but escapes to wait until Hatupatu's "fame spread throughout the land,"<sup>102</sup> and then has her revenge on him.

It is interesting to note that in the representations of violence in *Ruahine* the abusers use many of the same justifications as depicted in the narratives of Bachmann and Wolf. Notions of patriarchal hierarchy, owning, chastening and 'teaching women a lesson' underlie the violations of the Māori heroines. This raises questions around culture-specificity of patriarchal modes and justifications of oppressing the Other. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of violence as represented through the twentieth-century 'men's business' of war in *Cousins*, or through marriage and the father/daughter relationship in *Ruahine* also evokes comparisons with *Kassandra* and *Das Buch Franza*. This constitutes a pivotal binding point between the four works analysed in this thesis in the fictional engagement with women's trauma.

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<sup>100</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 79.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 80.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 84.

### *Voicelessness in the Texts*

Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku explore the role of voice in their narratives through the framework of a culture whose voices in the form of the *actual* language (te reo) and the *symbolic*, or representational modes of communication have been silenced by colonisation. As a source and a result of trauma, there is a significant connection between the act of being rendered voiceless, and the ensuing state of voicelessness. Furthermore, the recognition of the importance that is ascribed by the authors to the finding of voice links these two authors to each other, and to Bachmann and Wolf, on the continuum of responses that fictional literature can make to this aspect of women's trauma.

The experiences and challenges of voicelessness are inherent in the themes, structural organization and technical devices used by Patricia Grace in *Cousins*. Like the representation of the compounded modes of othering and violence, voicelessness, and the process of finding voice is an integral part of the experience of the female characters in the novel. Writing from the overarching context of voicelessness within the colonised society and with Grace's act of writing constituting a rupture of this historical voicelessness, it is essential to the novel that it concerns itself with the investigation of wahine reo, the female Māori voice. The treatment of the female voice in *Cousins* is evidence that literature can be a powerful site for engaging with the process of colonisation.

As in *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra*, trauma from voicelessness is represented as impacting on the protagonists alongside a whole community of women. The structure of *Cousins* is organised into six sections with two sections dedicated to each of the cousins' stories. In each of these sections there are multiple narrators and narrative techniques that intersect to tell the stories of the women from an individual point of view, while ultimately adding up to a community of voices telling one story from many angles, and through many spheres and timeframes.

The organization of the novel begins and ends with Mata's story, creating a movement that brings all versions of the story into a circle that regenerates itself through the intersection of

beginning and end. The initial encounter with Mata is not narrated in her own voice, but by a third person who is very close to her stream of consciousness, picking up ‘sound-bites’ of Mata’s state of mind which represent her very limited perception of her surroundings and herself. Mata’s initial depiction captures her in the midst of the psychological effects of the culmination of years of trauma. Without any elaborate revelations the narrative relays what is essentially a dissociative reaction to a trauma, which, although unexplained, is represented through metaphors and language. The metaphoric association of ‘blackness’ and ‘dirtiness’ that has already been mentioned in regards to the young Mata’s traumatisation through othering, characterises the depiction of the adult Mata in the first pages of the novel. Here the description of her toes links her “dirty skin” to the unarticulated internal pain through the association with her blood:

At two big toenails cracked, grooved, blacked, crusted and hoofed. Rusty saws. And at the next-toe toenails fluted and humpy, hooked and clawed, scratch picking at the tarry middle of the road...Next-toe toenails, left and right were underfolded beneath the middle ones, joint bones poking up white, the two bone lumps propping up dirty skin...There was blood and dirt. One could be the other, dirt or blood.<sup>103</sup>

Mata’s dissociation from her self worth and herself as a human being is highlighted through the metaphors of deformity (“humpy, hooked”) and animal-like attributions (“clawed,” “crusted and hoofed”) of her body. The association of the animal attributes of the body, which in Te Awekotuku’s *Ruahine* are ascribed to Huritini’s abusive rapist, are here used by Mata to describe her feelings of not being fully human in her otherness. The split in Mata’s consciousness, which influences her to regard herself as though she is an outside observer, reinforces her belief in her dirtiness and otherness, making her body and its movements “Hers, not hers.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 11

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

In this state the absence of a coherent language mirror the absence of the Māori part of Mata, which has no language either literal or symbolic. Instead, the language that has literally and symbolically colonised Mata's body and mind is the one she engages with, the one that speaks to her: the language of western capitalism and the manifestations of it that Mata has desired to make her life meaningful:

Cross, Wait, Switch...King Bun, Red Hot Specials, Neon Tops, Book Exchange, Open...brass plates, water sets, fruit imitations, crystal balls and bowls and plastic chandeliers.<sup>105</sup>

The chapter's thematic treatment of movement is also important to the representation of Mata's reaction to trauma, as her blind and unconscious walking is symbolic of her life journey, and synonymous with the journey that constitutes the narrative of the novel as a whole. Mata's unconscious movement forward, disconnected from everything including a sense of the past, stands in contrast to the Māori concept of facing the future, which is to face the past while walking backwards into the future. This situates the knowledge of the past ahead in a movement that is encompassing of past, present and future.

While Mata is depicted as 'unconscious' and without aim or articulation, it is significant to note that she does bring with her one taonga (treasure), the value of which becomes obvious further on in the narrative, which is her name: "Just herself and her name, Mata Pairama."<sup>106</sup> While everything else of her real self has fallen away and her voice has been dominated by manifestations of her oppression, her Māori name, and the name that was taken away from her in childhood and replaced with "May Palmer," takes on a new worth. This is also highlighted as the narrative in this section returns to the beginning of Mata's childhood story and her whānau's explanation of her name:

'Called Mata, nothing else,' Keita said... 'Do you hear that Daughter's Daughter, it's Mata, nothing else.'... 'Your own name from your great

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 11-12.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 14.

grandmother that died when Keita was born. Your real name. It's all right, Mata, when you get used to it.'<sup>107</sup>

The significance of Mata's ownership of her name at this stage is that while she walks into the unknown in a fashion that is illogical by both Pākehā and Māori standards, and while it occurs in a linear time sense towards the 'end' of her life, it nevertheless marks the beginning of her real journey as she is shown to walk into her own story from here onwards. Unlike Mata's initial walking in chapter one, the construction of the narrative framework does use the concept of walking backwards into the future to construct Mata's journey into her story and into the story of her voicelessness.

In the next section, the first section to be dedicated to the character Makareta, the narrative is also distinguished through the use of a non-linear timeframe, starting with Makareta's mother Polly's narration in the first person of her own story, and the story of Makareta's childhood. Although we hear some of Makareta's experiences and thoughts through the letters she writes to Polly, her narrative is divided between these letters, Polly's narration of Makareta's story, and an unknown third-person narrator. This creates ambivalence in the sense that Makareta, although favoured, privileged and raised to be the woman in the whānau who is allowed a strong voice in terms of her tikanga Māori and her belonging and knowledge, is nevertheless imbued with a sense of voicelessness which prevents her from narrating her own story at this time. The events depicted support this paradoxical powerlessness, as it becomes apparent how much of the unvoiced intentions and expectations of the whānau, and the speaking 'for her' they engage in. When at the end of the section Makareta realises the extent of her loss of voice she, like Mata in the preceding section, sets out on a journey in which the choosing of how she uses her traditional learning in a contemporary context becomes pivotal to her self-expression.

The third section of the novel tells cousin Missy's story, in which the use of the narrative voice explores voicelessness in a way that acknowledges Māori values and worldview. An ethereal being, which addresses Missy directly, narrates this part, providing a contrast to the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 45.



previous sections. As the unborn twin of Missy the narrator is very close to her, while simultaneously, through his unacknowledged place in the whānau, embodying another position of voicelessness, which ironically finds its ability to speak to express Missy's story.

His narrative is characterised by taha wairua, the link to the spiritual, and the aspect of life that is unvoiced in terms of concepts of western rational ideology, and which plays a vital role in the Māori worldview. The connection to the spirit world makes links to foundational Māori conceptions of the whakapapa of the human race, the ancestry of all the characters in the novel. The heading of these chapters reinforces this with short poems relating to creation stories that feature a female ancestor, such as Hine-nui-te-pō:

Woman with  
Obsidian eye  
Made us mortal<sup>108</sup>

This narration thereby gives voice not just to Missy's experience, but is placed in context of the female voice by anchoring it to the expression of the greater female voices of Māori cosmology, which Mikaere describe as being "all-encompassing."<sup>109</sup> These voices affirm the wāhines' regenerative power, which is fundamental to the physical aspects of tinana (body) and the spiritual aspects of wairua. As such, these voices originate from the space of "te Kore," the original "void"<sup>110</sup> or blackness, which marks the beginning of all creation, and which in its powerful acknowledgement of inherent blackness provides a strong contrast to the negative connotations associated with blackness in Mata's narrative.

The closeness of the narrator to Missy is shown also through the use of a language that seems to be inherently Missy's own speech. The language is characterised by a rhythm and

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 155.

<sup>109</sup> Mikaere, A. (2003). The Balance Destroyed - Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori. Auckland, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education. 17.

<sup>110</sup> Te Kore, while "embracing the notion of emptiness," has been likened to a womb environment, the place where "the seed stuff of the universe and all created things gestate." See Ibid. 14.

childlike quality that privileges Missy's experience, but also characterises the narrative voice as that of her brother, similar to herself, at times teasing her in the way siblings would:

Then listen to you howl, sitting bang on the track, mouth as big as a fire door. 'Mama, Mama. Wanoo go home. Wanoo.' Missy Sissy. Our brother skedaddled, disappeared into the trees.<sup>111</sup>

This narrative is distinguished by its closeness not just to Māori tikanga whakaaro<sup>112</sup> but also to te reo Māori. The narrative has an essential quality of 'Māoriness' to it, using untranslated Māori words throughout the section, which creates a bi-linguality that sets the rhythm within the overarching English language.

Unlike the preceding sections, this one is narrated in a linear manner, beginning with Missy's birth, then, like the other two narratives, telling the story of Mata's visit and the three cousin's first meeting, and ending after relating the story that carries on after Makareta leaves the whānau, and Missy finds her voice. Missy is initially made voiceless through the whānau's punishment of Gloria for her unapproved marriage to Bobby. This results in Missy's low position in the whānau hierarchy and her immediate family's poverty. She is stifled by a school system where speaking Māori, as she does at home, is punished with the strap, and where she is scared of Pākehā. And although her life in a colonised context creates her conflicting desire to be what she is not, Missy is in some sense the least voiceless of the cousins in the narrative so far, as she has an overseeing kēhua (spirit) who narrates with a voice imbued with the qualities that the novel as a whole demonstrates as essential to self-expression. Through the use of additional ancestral spirits this quality is shown further on in the novel to be a powerful link to identity and articulation for all of the protagonists.

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<sup>111</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 160.

<sup>112</sup> Cultural concepts

The range of narratives convey the varying degrees and experiences of voicelessness. The depiction of the communal trauma of voicelessness provides context to the individual experience and takes it into a realm that is greater than the characters' immediate environment or experience. The multiplicity of storytellers is reminiscent of traditional oral stories, which are told and re-told by many voices and in many contexts. In the novel, the same story is told from varying viewpoints, with the essential characterisation that each of the cousins is a witness to the experiences of the others. This is a pivotal representation, as the witness of psychological trauma plays an important role in this experience. For the cousins, this means that they have 'each other' in a way that won't become clear until the end of the novel.

The 'community of voices' places the cousins within greater Māori kinship, involving the living and the dead, the ancestors and the current generation. The interplay between differing narrative voices and characters integrates the past and present, and the individual and the community, demonstrating an essential relationship of ancestry, land and people. While the novel depicts the importance of this connection to the characters it also shows the variety of experiences associated with trauma and voicelessness, thereby representing what Maria P. Root describes as the transgenerational transmission of trauma:

A related but different type of insidious trauma is the transmission of unresolved trauma and attendant defensive behaviours and/or helplessness that is transmitted transgenerationally as the result of an ancestor's direct trauma...The experiences of the previous generation result in the teaching of a worldview that incorporates the traumatic experience.<sup>113</sup>

The issue of voicelessness is highlighted by the narrative techniques and through the representation of overcoming trauma by the finding a voice, which occurs for the cousins during the last three sections of the novel. In section four the narrative spirals back to Makareta's story that begins with her reunion with Mata, a point at which Makareta is able

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<sup>113</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 241.

to narrate her story directly in her own voice for the first time. Makareta tells of her use of voice in which the metaphor and actuality of language are central. Makareta becomes part of the burgeoning Māori movement of the nineteen-seventies and eighties, seeking the articulation and negotiation of a century of injustices against Māori. It is through this movement that Makareta is able to use the teachings she received as a child, including her knowledge of te reo and the realisation of the trauma that has been perpetuated by the colonial structures' systematic repression of the language:

I could only think of the hollowed out among our people, the disinherited who were truly poor and what we must do to make them whole again...It was painful for me to think that we were asking for official recognition of, equal status for, a language *in its own homeland*. How could that be?<sup>114</sup>

Makareta's recognition of the connection between loss of language and cultural depreciation here express "the irony of using language of colonisers to express colonisation"<sup>115</sup> that applies to Makareta and the author of *Cousins* herself.

In section five Missy tells her story in first person, starting with the finding of her voice through her choice to take Makareta's place in the arranged marriage. This expression gives Missy access to a new level of experience where she becomes an integral part of her whānau, the ancestors and the spiritual realm, marking her entry to being *the one*:

They say that as they watched I grew taller, that my girl's body became the body of a woman, that as I waited the korowai came and placed itself around my shoulders, and that after a long time of standing while visitors waited at the gate, I sang an ancient peace song in the old language. One

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<sup>114</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 210.

<sup>115</sup> Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 36.

of the kuia saw a moko on my chin carved in the same pattern as the one the ancestress wore.<sup>116</sup>

In her narrative Missy acknowledges the limitations of her choice, which tell of the realities of her married life, thereby contradicting her childhood belief in the ‘happy ever after’ romances that she watches in the Pākehā films. She describes this change in herself and reiterates Makareta’s idea of a changing Māori culture as essential to living in a colonised society:

It’s not sticking to the old ways that is important, she said, but it’s us being us, using all the new knowledge our way. Everything new belongs to us too.<sup>117</sup>

Missy’s recognition of choice and control in regards to her own voice is important to the conclusion, when she states “It was up to me before, it’s up to me again.”<sup>118</sup>

In the sixth and final section of the novel Mata’s own voice completes the circle created by the novel’s narrative structure. The contrast of her-first person, articulate voice to the initial third-person, disjointed narrative in the beginning of the novel marks the enormity of the change within Mata. It is through her reunion with Makareta, the ‘witness’ from Mata’s childhood that Mata is able to find her voice and break through her dissociation from her pain:

I talked and talked as I had never talked before, in a way that I didn’t know I could. It was as though the walking, the thinking and the not thinking, had jolted the tongue inside me. I told her all that had ever, or never, happened, wanting to talk on and on. I had come away so as not to

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<sup>116</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 221.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 235.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 237.

want, so as not be sitting waiting, yet here I was reaching, letting all that had waited inside me pour out.<sup>119</sup>

Thematically this chapter depicts the interwoven nature of the narrative and the cousins, as Mata, who physically has always been similar to Makareta, ‘grows into’ Makareta’s role. This is represented by Makareta’s treatment of Mata, which is reminiscent of the treatment Makareta received from the elders while growing up, such as her bathing of Mata. Makareta’s death marks the metaphoric birth of Mata, as it places her in the midst of one of the most sacred Māori rites of passage, the tangi, and facilitates her return to her whānau and her land.

Makareta’s death is also the point at which Mata is able to see the ancestral spirits, starting with the spirit of Kui Hinemate, a sign that Mata is reaching a new level of understanding and healing. The feeling of belonging that is depicted following Mata’s ability to find her voice allows her cathartic reaction to her entering of her marae. Here expression means that she is finally able to voice her grief through tears and tangihanga for herself and her trauma:

My eyes were filling. Water was running from my eyes. Streams of water. Water was running from my nose and dropping onto the ground, streams of water. I had never cried before in all my life and now I felt that I would never stop. We all wept for a long time there. All my tears were falling and I was just letting them run. I had never cried before. Years of tears.<sup>120</sup>

Mata’s ability to express herself stands in stark contrast to her silenced past. At the marae she is able to see her ancestors, including her mother Anihera, creating the sense that Mata is truly ‘at home.’ She describes Missy, Makareta and herself being in the whare nui, a coming together of the three protagonists during a time that is defined in dual terms as death/birth, end/beginning, with death representing the teaching tool for Mata’s new

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 244.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 254.

beginning. It also depicts the kinship of these three women, who have had very different life experiences, which nevertheless bring them all to the same point on the marae. This similarity has been progressively indicated during the last three first-person narratives of the cousins, which are very similar in tone. The coming together at the marae suggests also the metaphoric use of the marae within the overarching structure of the novel, where both the novel and the marae represent the tūrangawaewae (a place to stand), where past and present, individual and community, tinana and wairua intersect in the company of the ancestors.

The presence of the ancestors and the novel's conclusion through Mata's observation that even though she couldn't see them anymore she "knew I would see them again,"<sup>121</sup> supports the narrative structure's sense of anti-linear circularity. This poses a constant movement and linking between past, present and future which has therefore no end, as Mata indicates the never ending quality of her and her ancestors' stories and presence. It is this quality that makes a final, summarising statement about the voices that have been found and will continue to be heard in ways that are central to Māori culture and the articulation of its voices. Or as Grace herself states:

[...] it is important for me and other Maori writers to write about us in all our variousness, our feelings and aspirations and values; attitudes to life and death, affinity for land and land issues, about kinship and social orders and status; about the concept of aroha embracing awhina and manaaki [...] And most especially about the spiritual aspect of all these things.<sup>122</sup>

The expression of wāhine is also topical in the introduction to "the first comprehensive ethnographic account of a Māori scholar,"<sup>123</sup> Makareti's *Old Time Māori*, originally written in 1938 and 're-discovered' in 1986, six years before the publication of *Cousins*. In the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 256.

<sup>122</sup> Grace, P. (1978). *The Maori in Literature. Tihe Mauri Ora - Aspects of Maoritanga*. M. King, Wellington, Methuen. 81.

<sup>123</sup> Makareti (1986). *The Old-Time Maori*. Auckland, New Woman's Press.

introduction, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku asserts the connection between voice, wāhine and the evolution of tradition:

...we have had Māori women's voices but they have seldom, if ever, been heard... We had become what you could call a whare ngaro (a lost house) because there are so many females, and no man to speak for us... We are living at a time, now, when we have to determine and define exactly what tradition is, retrospectively.<sup>124</sup>

In *Ruahine* Te Awekotuku does exactly that, as she uses the past of the myths to transform the present to a state where the female speaking subject is inscribed into the discourse of history, *and* where this inscription allows for a re-evaluation of tradition. Te Awekotuku's rewrites give voice to the traditionally marginalised heroines, and in the process re-claim, as well as re-construct, a new way to write about old stories. The author uses a variety of techniques to transform the stories and the heroines into "a powerful, potentially destructive force or disturbance; a seismic shift in perception, a quivering tremble...[and a] complex subversive act."<sup>125</sup>

Rather than merely re-writing the characterisations, events and meaning of the myths, Te Awekotuku uses new narrative structures for the stories. These structures experiment with a combination of the old and the new, the traditional and the contemporary, thereby making use of all the voices available to her. One of the ways in which this is achieved is the mixing of genres, as in the story "Rona," where the myth of the woman who becomes trapped in the moon for cursing it<sup>126</sup> becomes the story of a heroine who travels through space with the aliens Puhāorangi and Te Ohomairangi, a fusion of fairy tale and science fiction:

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<sup>124</sup> Ngahuia Te Awekotuku in *Ibid.* 292.

<sup>125</sup> Huria, J. (2004). *Publishing Maori Writing. Writing at the Edge of the Universe*. M. Williams. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 248.

<sup>126</sup> The insults Rona used against the moon are "sometimes regarded as the origin of curses and vilification of this world, and a saying warned, 'Remember Rona's mistake' (Kia mahara ki te hē o Rona)" See Orbell, M. (2003). *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Maori Mythology*. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 156.



Suddenly, to the left, loomed a dense nothingness; nothingness without the comets and the fireballs, the sparkling starbursts. Solid, outlined across the window by a dazzling curve of yellow fire, thin, and streaked with red. Teoho sat up, glided closer to the ice remarked, ‘The moon. Marama. We pass her now.’<sup>127</sup>

In the preface to the story “Hinengaro” the author elaborates on her deliberate use of cross-cultural elements. Te Awekotuku combines traditions of mythology with the more contemporary elements of the vampire story to create the retelling of the experience of Hinengaro, the goddess of the underworld:

‘Hinengaro’ is an original story, influenced by Māori, Japanese and central European sources. Shape-shifters have always fascinated me. They haunt the tales of many cultures and the fantasy lives of many people. Similarly, the vampire is a compelling focus of intrigue and curiosity. So I wondered if a Māori vampire story could work; although they do not appear as such in the mythology I grew up with. Could I somehow create a Māori vampire who reflected a confluence of traditions?<sup>128</sup>

This kind of intertextuality is supported through the use of metaphor and language. While the depiction of natural imagery, such as particular mountains, hot pools, lakes and forests, infuse the stories with a fairytale-like quality in connecting the protagonists to nature, it also situates the stories into a real environment; an association between particular places and people that is of elemental importance to Māori culture. It thereby continues to structure the stories as a tool for ‘making sense’ and giving meaning, in a traditional manner where

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<sup>127</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 34.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.125.

[...]the interaction of the tradition and the landmark reinforce belief:  
while the myth explained the existence of the landmark, the presence of  
the landmark confirmed the truth of the myth.<sup>129</sup>

While the stories have a mythical and mystical element to them, the construction of language introduces contemporary and ‘casual’ speech patterns. This has the effect of making the ‘sacred’ profane, thereby fulfilling the role of the ruahine by negating tapu with noa. An example of this is from the story “Mahinaarangi:”

Rongomai giggled: ‘What do you think of the newcomer?’ ... Her cousin, patterning this operation, counted the pale blades into a design of dragon’s teeth, smiled to herself, and said nothing. Just, ‘Mmmhrph. Rrrrrph. A.’ ‘Girl, you sound just like a dog,’ Rongomai said, baiting her.<sup>130</sup>

The ‘casualness’ of the narrative is also infused with essential te reo Māori components, which assume a natural place within the narrative’s English language, and the context of the culture depicted. This expresses that the natural language belonging to the stories is te reo Māori, as well as using te reo as “a living entity [which] possesses, in other words, a mauri or life force.”<sup>131</sup> Through this process the author is reclaiming what has historically been without voice:

Hei aha. He was ready. ‘Ko wai tēra? Kei hea koe?’ he called out, pitched low. ‘Who are you? Where are you? What’s going on here? Show yourself!’<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Orbell, M. (2003). The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Mythology. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press.

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<sup>130</sup> Te Awakotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Battista, J. L. (2004). Me he korokoro komako - ‘With the Throat of a Bellbird’ : a Maori Aesthetic in Maori writing in English. English. Auckland, University of Auckland.51.

<sup>132</sup> Te Awakotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 118.

While the mix of style and genre may infuse the old stories with the contemporary and the cross cultural, there is a definite grounding of language and context that declares these re-writes to be Māori stories; originating from and occurring within te ao Māori, the Māori world. In her introductory sections the author acknowledges the contemporary, ‘well-known’ versions of the stories, often in order to challenge them, but thereby also providing a context for the historical existence and cultural significance of Māori mythology.

Beginning with the creation story that leads to Papatūānuku and Ranginui, then Tāne and the birth of humans, mythology explained the physical and spiritual meaning of Māori life and customs, providing the beginning of whakapapa and the connection between people. These foundation myths featuring the gods, or demi-gods such as Maui, and the stories involving ordinary humans, were transmitted orally among pre-colonial Māori, differing in detail and significance according to individual iwi. The importance of these stories for Māori in regards to the past and the present, and each person’s place within this, is explained by Margaret Orbell:

The myths of the Maori attribute the origins of the world and its inhabitants mostly to the achievements of powerful early ancestors, whose stories were carefully memorised and passed from one generation to the next. The sources of many of these stories can be traced back two thousand years...<sup>133</sup>

With the arrival of the Europeans the myths began to be collected and written down by Pākehā ethnographers using Māori informants.<sup>134</sup> The evolution of these myths was affected by transforming the oral into the written, as well as by the interpretative process that included selection, editing and bias of content. An example of this is from Best’s 1924 collection of Māori mythology and religion:

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<sup>133</sup> Orbell, M. (2003). *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Mythology*. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press.

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<sup>134</sup> Among the early Pākehā collectors of Māori traditions were missionaries, such as Richard Taylor, J.F.H Wohler and first governor of Aotearoa, George Grey, who “was frustrated that he could not read letters written by rangatira who made reference to mythology.” See Ibid. 17.

In studying the religion and myths of a barbaric folk such as the Maori people of these isles it is by no means an easy task to do so in a sympathetic manner.<sup>135</sup>

In the recording of Māori mythology the difficulty of being ‘sympathetic’ with the ‘barbaric’ tales resulted in the tales being re-told and re-packaged to serve different needs and audiences. This resulted in a reworking of the structure and meaning as coherence was required for a new Pākehā (and new generation Māori) audience that did not rely on these stories as their way to explain the world:

The historical misreadings of these narratives became so convoluted and unsatisfactory that interest in them eventually lapsed, and the field was left to the European writers who endlessly produced sentimental, and generally badly written, retellings for children (thereby conveying to all concerned the message that Māori traditions were merely childish tales).<sup>136</sup>

The sanitisation of mythology, fairy and folktales that changed many of the original stories in Europe by collectors such as the Grimm brothers, was also practised during the collection and re-presentation of Māori mythology. Furthermore, the editing of the myths relied on interpretation of them not just from a European point of view, but also from a male point of view. As Māori women were not generally consulted in this process,<sup>137</sup> the representation of women’s roles within these life-explaining stories “relegated them to passive roles, thereby neutralising their power,”<sup>138</sup> and destroyed the balance between the female and

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<sup>135</sup> Best, E. (2005). Maori Religion and Mythology. Wellington, Te Papa Press. 33.

<sup>136</sup> Orbell, M. (1997). Maori Mythology. The Woman's Companion to Mythology. C. Larrington. London, Pandora. 303.

<sup>137</sup> “[...] these Pakeha men were less likely to note the source of information when it had been provided by a woman.” Orbell, M. (2003). The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Mythology. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 18.

<sup>138</sup> Mikaere, A. (2003). The Balance Destroyed - Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori. Auckland, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education. 76.

male elements. The importance of the female power as being “part of the core of Māori existence, sourced in the power of female sexual and reproductive organs,” became extinguished in these new versions.<sup>139</sup>

Te Awekotuku’s questioning of the myths makes the connection between the process of construction, both oral and literary, and the history of Māori mythology. It dispels notions of ‘absolute meaning’ and instead, defines the myths as being in a state of flux. As such, the process of giving voice with which *Ruahine* is concerned, reclaims the stories as repositories of wisdom, stories that teach about Māori women’s life. As ruahine, women who are the first to ‘cross new thresholds,’ and women who shape transformations, the female protagonists of Te Awekotuku’s rewrites occupy the double-position of representing the experience of patriarchal violence and othering trauma, while also representing the voice-gaining process that alters the state of trauma.

The act of transformation is a key symbol in the voicing of trauma. In the stories of “Haumapuhia,” “Huritini” and “Hinengaro” the transformation occurs as an actual metamorphosis of the female body. It is notable that in these stories the female body represents the site of trauma, as each wāhine’s body has been affected by patriarchal violence. The abused young woman in the story of “Haumapuhia” transforms into a taniwha at the point of being drowned by her father. All her fear, grief and rage become the agent of transformation in that instant of terror, representing the culmination of a series of abuses:

Teeth gnashing, eyes swelling, tongue protruding, nails lengthening; the bones split from beneath her skin, wet scales glistening in the red, and her neck stretched, stretched, resisting his weight.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> There was “a discernible shift in emphasis, away from the powerful female influence in the stories and towards the male characters.” See *Ibid.* 78.

<sup>140</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia.47.

This powerful physical imagery depicts the violence against Haumapuhia at the very moment when her unspoken resistance changes her physical shape. This imagery merges the physical reaction to violence with the internal transformation of the taniwha, tying together the stories' prevailing imagery of blood and water. Haumapuhia finds her voice through this transformation, as she is finally more physically powerful than her abuser, who runs "gibbering, senseless into the forest."<sup>141</sup> As part of this process the tangible product of Haumapuhia's sexual abuse, her miscarried child, also becomes metamorphosed:

Across one inlet swirled a mass of winnowing black, threaded with slivers of blood flesh that hardened, changed, hardened, changed, taking almost human shape. Sinking low onto the lake bed, stretched rock, in the morning sunlight. Her father's child, frozen, still, beneath the waves.<sup>142</sup>

Haumapuhia's search for the ocean helps her to find her strength and create a natural taonga, lake Waikaremoana. This creation immortalises her expression of trauma for all to see, as it becomes a revered site of "tears, a place of magic, a lake of tragedy,"<sup>143</sup> in the history of the Tūhoe.

Unlike the final transformation of Haumapuhia to the taniwha, the transformation of Hine Titama in "Hinengaro" is depicted as an ongoing, manifold process. There is an emphasis on Hine's voicing of her trauma of sexual abuse, as she takes her victims' blood in the forms of "a lizard. As a bat. As a shark. As a fantail. As a dog. As a woman..."<sup>144</sup> By changing the traditional depiction of Hine nui te Pō's retreat to the underworld this representation shows her active in the world as a reminder of pain and injustice. Like

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. 49

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 137.

Haumapuhia, Hinengaro's transformations are also linked to the images of water, as she arrives on land via water:

Hardly moving made the shore  
Carried low, wave cradled  
Fell onto the sand  
Wavering, the dog became a woman.<sup>145</sup>

Hinengaro/Hine nui te Pō tells of her history and her trauma through the lyrical poems dispersed throughout the narrative. She is the only character in the collection of rewrites that has been given her own, first person voice. This highlights her position as the ancestress of all of the characters featured in the myths, the first wahine offspring from Tāne's creation story. She is the first to experience patriarchally constructed trauma, and the first woman to represent resistance through her exit from this world and the creation of the underworld. She is also the first and only woman to defeat Maui, thereby establishing the state of human mortality.<sup>146</sup> This makes her a ruahine, as she creates a new state, which is the symbolic act of birthing through death, a concept that is integral to Māori culture. As such, Hine nui te Pō's voice has always been of primary importance to the evolution of whakapapa and tikanga, shaping "traditional thinking about behavioural issues...thus linking actions and resolutions to the realms of the Gods."<sup>147</sup>

Huritini is another character who uses bodily transformation to make a statement about her trauma. Her transformation is not into an otherworldly or non-human creature, but rather from the living to the dead, as she uses suicide as the ultimate protest against her enforced

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid. 126.

<sup>146</sup> Maui wanted to "pass through Hine's body to kill her and do away with death. He was warned but would not listen. He approached the great woman as she lay sleeping, he entered her body, she brought her legs together, and that was the end of Maui. He had tried once too often to reverse the normal order of things. It is because of this defeat that people now die." See Orbell, M. (2003). The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maori Mythology. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 117.

<sup>147</sup> Mead, H. M. (2003). Tikanga Maori - Living by Maori Values. Wellington, Huia. 243.

marriage. Moko Mead describes this kind of suicide as representing a powerful statement against injustices perpetrated by the whānau and community:

[The actions of] He tangata whakamorimori [a person committing suicide]...[were] recognised as the ultimate weapon an individual had if they disagreed with the decision of the elders...It was a clear signal to the elders that they had gone too far in insisting on a course of action that the young woman had not agreed to.<sup>148</sup>

Huritini's action is thus a significant and culturally appropriate expression of her trauma, one that describes her journey from trauma to being 'at home' in the hot-pool where she drowns herself. Like Haumapuhia's association with the natural taonga of the lake, Huritini's voicing of trauma is immortalised by the hot-pool, as it becomes legendary within the landscape of Rotorua and the iwi of the area.<sup>149</sup>

This association between elements of the landscape and the protagonists of the myths is depicted as an integral process in the voicing of the wāhine's stories, as the landscape is inextricably connected not just to their experiences, but also to the people that come after them. This means the land is imbued with meaning that is derived from the ancestress' traumatic experiences. The symbolic finding of voice is thereby also facilitated by the 'finding of place,' an event of great importance to the characters who have been displaced or not allowed space to exist by patriarchal structures of violence and oppression. The expression of trauma is shown to create landmarks of cultural significance in the stories of "Huritini" and "Haumapuhia"; it allows for the expression of grief over Karaka's murder in the story of the "Ohinemutu"; and provides Wairaka with a place of her own, the maunga Owairaka. The creative act of establishing an alternative tūrangawaewae becomes an essential mode of telling and ensuring cultural continuation of the stories, another symbolic 'stepping over thresholds' by the ruahine.

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 241.

<sup>149</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 89.



All articulation of female experience in *Ruahine*, whether represented through symbolic or physical transformation, or the creation of physical presence tied to the land, is supported by the re-construction of the conventional ‘victim’ role of the female characters. Te Awekotuku subverts common representations of the ‘passive feminine’ not just through the physical and mental strength of her characters, but also through their role as active participants in their stories and avengers of patriarchal violations. This means that protagonists like Hine nui te Pō and Kurungaituku play an effective and deliberate role to ensure that their abusers (or representatives) are punished. Wāhine like Rona subvert the traditional quest story, more widely associated with male characters such as Maui, as she goes on an adventure and gains knowledge that is so unbelievable that the community describes her as a “crazy old woman,”<sup>150</sup> to keep her silenced, while the narrative itself liberates her voice.

The rewriting of gender stereotypes allows protagonists like Hinemoa to turn the tables on oppressive gender norms and heterosexuality by actively choosing and pursuing a husband whom she feels is compatible to her, thereby becoming:

...a woman conscious of the many erotic possibilities offered in her world; a woman who chose a man who preferred his own sex just as she preferred hers. A woman who was a warrior and a lover.<sup>151</sup>

As such, protagonists like Hinemoa actively seek and create their own concept of romance, which is a subversion of the social norms in which the heroines operate; while the stories function as a critique of the heterosexual, patriarchal romance that structure many of the contemporary myths. Offering an alternative ending is a powerful critique of the traditional love story, which, “allows woman [only] one end: her ‘end,’ both in the sense of a ‘goal’ and ‘conclusion’ is a man.”<sup>152</sup> In *Ruahine* the representation of the protagonists who go

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>151</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2001). Hinemoa: Retelling a Famous Romance. *Lesbian Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. A. J. Laurie. New York, Harrington Park Press. 3.

<sup>152</sup> Greene, G. (1991). *Changing the Story - Feminist Fiction and the Tradition*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press. 12.

beyond this ending are models of female expression, which, as Luce Irigaray describes, become “speaking subject[s]” and thereby undermine the “discursive mechanism” that the narrative depicts as oppressive to women.<sup>153</sup>

The representation of active participants, who shape their destiny even in the face of adversity by using all the tools available within Māori culture, includes the protagonists’ use of Māori art forms in their voicing of experience. Pre- colonisation Māori transmission of culture was embedded within oral and symbolic systems that told stories among and across generations. Implicit in these systems was the importance of whakapapa (genealogy) and its link to mythology, the division of a person into wairua (spirit), tinana (body) and mauri (life force),<sup>154</sup> and the connection between past, present and future.

Oral storytelling took the forms of reciting whakapapa, or within waiata and karakia (song and chants), whakatauki (proverbs) and karanga (call of welcome), as well as the art of whaikōrero (speechmaking). Symbolic or visual story telling was embodied in the art of moko (tattooing), and whakairo and kaiwhatu (carving and weaving). Especially important to the practice of these types of representation was the setting of the marae whare hui (meeting house), which in itself tells the story of iwi legends and ancestors, acknowledging the primal structure of Papatūānuku and Ranginui. The creation and transmission of stories has, as Witi Ihimaera states:

...always been accessible, to Maori that is, and to those who understand the Maori language; in this sense it has been a “hidden” literature for many years.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Irigaray, L. (1995). The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine. The Irigaray Reader. M. Whitford. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Inc. 76.

<sup>154</sup> Walker, R. (1990). Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle Without End. Auckland, Penguin Books. 68.

<sup>155</sup> Ihimaera, W. and D. S. Long (1982). Contemporary Maori Writing: A Context. Into the World of Light - An Anthology of Maori Writing. W. Ihimaera and D. S. Long. Auckland, Heinemann. 2.

Again, subverting notions of traditionally gender-segregated spheres, the protagonists in *Ruahine* express themselves through their creation of whakairo (carving), ta moko (tattooing), and tukutuku weaving. The representations of the wāhine's engagement with the modes of expression essential to Māori culture are important in terms of the protagonists' own stories, as well as in terms of acknowledging the non-verbal, non-literary, non-Pākehā history of Māori ways of negating trauma. 'Telling the story' within a wahine Māori framework is tied to accessing power through creativity, which is the act of participating in social and cultural discourse:

The frequency with which Māori women use the images of weaving to express matters of ethical import suggests that not only do Māori women believe they have a responsibility to deal with moral issues, but also that they have a distinctively female way of addressing these issues.<sup>156</sup>

While weaving is contemporarily regarded as a 'distinctively female' form of expression, women's creation of ta moko, and especially whakairo, are often considered as less appropriate for wāhine on the basis of the tapu status of such arts. Te Awekotuku joins in the discussion of issues around women's inclusion in these activities, and uses the narrative of the story to support her belief that the female practice of ta moko was once an integral part of Māori culture:

Historical records and living memory have established that in the Māori context female artists did significant work. They were neither demonised nor were they regarded as intruding on a sacred male domain. These attitudes are much more recent, and probably based in the Judaeo-Christian ethos that has undermined and tainted customary and traditional Māori values.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Madden, R. (1997). *Dynamic and Different - Mana Wahine*. Palmerston North, Campus Press. 25.

<sup>157</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2007). *Mau Moko - The Art of Maori Tattoo*. Auckland, Penguin. 139.

Te Awekotuku constructs heroines who are expert creators, *and* who are highly influential in the development of these art forms. An example of this is depicted by Wairaka's discovery of new ta moko tools, dyes and patterns:

Rinsing away the blood beading in scarlet dots upon her thigh, she resolved to find new pigments. She had new blades – though they were brittle. She gave thanks to the discovery – a new stone to cut the patterns of this new land's magic on the skin. Curves. She could make curves.<sup>183</sup>

For Wairaka, ta moko allows her to express her rape by Maiurenuī through the marking of his face, while afterwards it plays the essential role of telling of her own and other people's stories. As such, the articulation of wāhine experience through ta moko stands as a kind of record, a visual narrative in which transformation is linked to trauma as the act of tattooing is represented as a powerful way of

Reclaiming control by transforming one's body, and gaining a new sense of personal power [is a] process of healing and empowerment and now, for many women, taking ink beneath the skin effectively erases, modifies and dilutes the damage of betrayal and pain inflicted by others.<sup>184</sup>

Wairaka's expression of her voice through the practice of ta moko is thereby placed into a line of creators and ta moko wearers, who use the art to communicate experience and self in a culturally appropriate and impacting manner. The narrative constructs and claims Wairaka as an important ancestress of this type of wāhine voice, just as it claims women's inclusion of this voice within history.

Unlike Wairaka, the character of Huritini is not allowed the freedom to express herself through art, as her practice of whakairo is forbidden to her by the same gender restrictions

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<sup>183</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). Ruahine - Mythic Women. Wellington, Huia. 59.

<sup>184</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2007). Mau Moko - The Art of Maori Tattoo. Auckland, Penguin. 139.

that enforce her marriage to the old chief. Huritini's desire to carve is represented as a way for her to bring the hidden to the surface, to uncover what she can see:

Hukere branches became taiaha; lake and river stones turned into sinkers and pendants... She could see them; all she had to do was help get them out. Remove the extraneous stuff, adze and chisel and shape it away. And something wonderful would emerge from its time of waiting.<sup>158</sup>

The connection between whakairo and the telling of a story is made explicit through the construction of the narrative utilising Huritini's passion for carving as a way to tell her story, just as Huritini herself uses the memory of carving and her encounter with the twins to escape being mentally present during her marriage ceremony. Moreover, it is the hei tiki carved by herself as a present to her mother, which Huritini leaves behind as a final, powerful and dissident statement about her trauma and her suicide.

The depiction of the creative female protagonist supports the overarching theme of subversively voicing women's experience through the feminist rewrite of mythology and fairytales, as "communication through art... can be a form of private subversion... Art is often a secret source of courage... It can also be a way of sustaining the individual vision."<sup>159</sup> In *Ruahine* the finding of voice through art not only broadens the concept of how wāhine express themselves, but it also re-creates a history of female participation in the shaping and contribution to vital aspects of tikanga Māori. Reclaiming voice in this context acknowledges and incorporates cultural modes of communication and expression, while simultaneously critiquing, subverting and altering them to allow for a distinct wahine Māori framework of articulation.

The metaphoric function of the ruahine supports this framework, as the dual nature of this metaphor is evoked through the combination of old and new forms of expression. The 'new

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<sup>158</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 94.

<sup>159</sup> Park, C. and C. Heaton (1992). Introduction. *Caught in a Story - Contemporary Fairytales and Fables*. C. Park and C. Heaton. London, Vintage. xvii.

vision' is presented by the combination of cross-cultural elements of expression and time, as the historical context of Māori mythology meets the twenty-first century wāhine Māori's literary voice. As such, *Ruahine* uses contemporary tools of literature to re-create the essence of orality and timelessness inherent in mythology. In the oral transmission of Māori mythology the aspects of change and diversity are inherent to a mode of transmission that is reliant on memory, social context and the relationship between storyteller and audience. The use of oral mythology in Māori culture to make sense of the present by explaining the past is a process that is "at once a validation and a mnemonic device for present relationships."<sup>188</sup> The concept of timelessness is important here in that it situates the stories, and their vital role in ascribing meaning, in both present and past, and reiterates the narrative's inherent fluidity.

In the introduction to the rewrites Te Awekotuku relays the old versions of the stories, emphasising the oral nature of the myths, as she comments on what "some people say" or "others believe" about the myths.<sup>160</sup> The author herself joins the community of interpreters and storytellers who emphasise different strands of the myths, or believe in different significances, as she both deconstructs and symbolically participates in the process of oral myth making, while acknowledging the many different layers and manifestations of the oral myth. Te Awekotuku thereby also gives "mythic validation of culture in Māori writing in English,"<sup>161</sup> specifically the role of wāhine within this culture. Through the potential of the myths to raise voices that have been buried by the process of oral "selectivity" and/or the adaptation into the literal realm, the author herself is able to uncover her own voice. This is the voice that, ruahine-like, engages in the two-fold process of posing questions and constructing answers about how issues of importance to wāhine Māori, issues that the author has identified as contemporary and ancient sources of trauma, such as violence, sexual abuse or the enforcement of heterosexuality, have been dealt with both in

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<sup>188</sup> P. Bohannon cited in Clanchy, M. T. (1970). "Remembering the Past and the Good Old Law." *History* 55: 165-176. 166.

<sup>160</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 45, 89.

<sup>161</sup> Battista, J. L. (2004). Me he korokoro komako - 'With the Throat of a Bellbird' : a Maori Aesthetic in Maori writing in English. *English*. Auckland, University of Auckland. 78.

Māori social terms and in representational terms. Like Christa Wolf in *Kassandra*, Te Awekotuku has managed to establish and place herself into a continuum of female voices that pose questions about trauma from a position that is both timeless (through the female protagonists of the myths) and time specific (through the female author of the myths) and has thereby succeeding in reclaiming the wāhine Māori who have been:

...undermined and certainly damaged, and that is the warrior, the shaman, the initiator, the visionary, the groundbreaker – the women at the front.<sup>162</sup>

### *The Wound of Trauma in the Texts*

The exposition of trauma in *Cousins* and *Ruahine* reclaims women's voices from the historical and the contemporary realms. The depiction of trauma in the two narratives highlights many layers of social, historical, cultural and literary discourses. The expressions and detailed representation of the psychological ramifications of colonisation in *Cousins* in 1992, or of the homophobia in *Ruahine* in 2003, alongside the constructions of Māori literary frameworks that emphasises wahine Māori, are innovative and crucial additions to the representational relationship between women and trauma.

Such depictions of trauma are representative of the “inclusiveness” and “validity of stories”<sup>163</sup> that are devoid of hierarchical categorisations, and which are advocated by feminist traumatology. This is also representative of Māori concepts of ora (health),

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<sup>162</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1994). He Ngangahu. *Mana Wahine - Women who Show the Way*. A. Brown. Auckland, Reed. 30.

<sup>163</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. *Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals*. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 230.

whereby even the seemingly slightest imbalance can have great mental and physical ramifications.<sup>164</sup>

Like Bachmann's symbolic association between Franza's present trauma and the past, and Wolf's *Kassandra*, where mythology and its journey from past to present represent historical continuity within trauma, *Cousins* and *Ruahine* also contextualise women's experience of trauma as located in both past and present. Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku depict the Māori concept of a non-linear version of time that embodies the interconnectedness of history, relationships and trauma in a way that goes "beyond temporal experience."<sup>165</sup> The timescale of the trauma experience is therefore simultaneously contained in past, present and future, as the experience of the past is shown by both Grace and Te Awekotuku to be inseparable from what happens in the present and future. The narratives seem to suggest that trauma is not necessarily contained within a singular or definable point in time, or as an isolated incidence, but instead, underlines cultural evolution for the individual and the kinships of whānau, hapū and iwi. Both *Ruahine* and *Cousins* show that the trauma of an individual is intrinsically connected to the trauma of the wider whānau or community, especially in the depiction of colonial othering and violence against women. And while it is often the community or even women themselves who are complicit in the patriarchal traumatising of the protagonists, it is the kinship group itself, which is depicted as suffering (knowingly or not) because of the traumatising of an individual.

There is an important shift in the depiction of the trauma of colonisation from Patricia Grace to Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's narrative. In *Cousins* the traumatic impact of colonisation is explored from the timeframe of the First World War onwards as it impacts on the whānau, using the character of Mata to convey this in particular. In *Ruahine*, the influence of racism

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<sup>164</sup> For examples of such models see "Te Wheke" Pere, R. R. (1991). *Te Wheke - A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom*. Gisborne, Ako Akom Global Learning New Zealand Limited. Or "Whare Tapa Wha" Durie, M. (2001). *Mauri Ora - The Dynamics of Maori Health*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press.

<sup>165</sup> Durie, M. (2002). *Is there a Distinct Maori Psychology?* Making a Difference - National Maori Graduates of Psychology Symposium 2002, University of Waikato, The Maori and Psychology Research Unit. 24.



and colonisation is at times present within the author's introductory deconstruction of the multiple versions of the myths, but the world that is depicted in her re-writes is a Māori world, which is presented uncompromisingly within the natural setting of Aotearoa and the cultural heritage of particular iwi. This seems to suggest that the engagement with wāhine's trauma has to come from within this Māori world, as the layers of colonisation are shed through the search for traditional representations and meaning of women's experiences in te ao Māori.

The manifestations of trauma, or reactions to trauma, are therefore informed by these differing contexts within *Cousins* and *Ruahine*. In *Cousins*, where the context is that of Māori women struggling in a world that has been taken over by Pākehā ideology and social organization, Mata, not unlike Bachmann's Franza, is depicted as experiencing symptoms of dysphoria,<sup>166</sup> or pōhauhau<sup>167</sup> in a Māori framework, fragmentation of self, and dissociation as reactions to her trauma. In *Ruahine*, and the context of a purely Māori world, traumatised women like Haumapuhia, Hinengaro or Wairaka transform their trauma into a state that allows them an alternative expression almost immediately. The way in which the trauma reaction in *Ruahine* is therefore depicted is, just as the context itself, from within a Māori worldview, whereas in *Cousins*, where the characters have to exist in a colonised country, the expression of trauma occurs in the situation where one culture has been subsumed by another culture.

Both literary treatments of the traumatic experience use a non-European framework of (mental) health, acknowledging the importance of access to cultural identity as a prime factor in determining health, or as Mason Durie states:

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<sup>166</sup>Chronic anxiety and depression. See Lewis Herman, J. (1992). Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. London, Basic Books. 108.

<sup>167</sup> Pōhauhau has many similar expressions as the Western psychology's concept of anxiety and "refers to extreme behaviour where the mind is absent for long periods of time." See Stewart, T. (1997). Historical Interfaces between Maori and Psychology. Mai i Rangiatea. P. T. Whaiti, M. McCarthy and A. Durie. Auckland, Auckland University Press: Bridget Williams Books. 77.

See also Pou, N. (1992). Traditional Concepts in Maori Health. Bicultural Issues in Psychology: Oraei Marae, Tamaki Makaurau, Auckland. Auckland, Psychological Services Division, Department of Justice.

Platforms for Māori health are constructed from land, language, and whānau; from marae and hapū; from Rangī and Papa...being Māori itself is a foundation for health.<sup>168</sup>

In *Cousins* the ability to be fully Māori is initially denied to the characters to varying degrees, while in *Ruahine* the women are not allowed to chart their own course without patriarchal interference or oppression. *Ruahine* essentially turns to the foundations of the definition for health, back to the time and sphere of early life for tangata whenua in Aotearoa, to address some additional issues for Māori women's mental health.

By including kaupapa Māori concepts of mental health, Grace and Te Awēkotuku both depict the notion of damage to te wairua<sup>169</sup> through the experience of othering and violence. In Grace's narrative the long-term effects of war, colonisation and gender oppression are shown to impact on all of the characters' wairua, while it is Mata who is damaged most severely. In *Ruahine* the violence experienced by many of the protagonists, while directed towards their female bodies, impacts on their wairua, as it is shown not only to attack their own self, but as it also violates their birthright as Māori. This birthright is defined by Moko Mead as safety through the spiritual attributes of tapu, mana, mauri, wairua and hau (air). The impact of violence is the disequilibrium of this birthright, especially the damaging of wairua as "the wairua of a person was subject to damage through the bad deeds of other people such as, abuse, neglect, violence..."<sup>170</sup> This acknowledgement of the role of spirit corresponds to the feminist re-visioning of the trauma experience as it emphasises that "one of the prominent wounds of trauma is the crushing of the human spirit...which may indeed be the hardest wound to heal."<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Durie, M. (2001). *Mauri Ora - The Dynamics of Maori Health*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press. 35-36

<sup>169</sup> The spirit. "...just as meaningful and important to the Māori as the 'physical realm'...beliefs, values and traditions ensured that both realm were recognised, sustained and nurtured together as one unit." Pere, R. R. (1994). *Ako - Concepts and Learning in the Maori Tradition*. Wellington, Te Kohanga Reo National Trust Board. 17.

<sup>170</sup> Mead, H. M. (2003). *Tikanga Maori - Living by Maori Values*. Wellington, Huia. 55.

<sup>171</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. *Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals*. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 238.

The disturbance of the spirit is directly related to the internal and external relationship between tapu and noa, a relationship which violence and oppression affect as the “domain of safety,”<sup>172</sup> which is inherent within the principles of tapu and noa, is destroyed. Both *Cousins* and *Ruahine* depict the erosion of safety for the women affected by trauma, as Mata’s lack of safety as a Māori child away from the whānau makes for a life-long lack of safety that is only overcome upon her adult return to her turangawaewae; while the instances of patriarchal and heterosexual violence for some of the protagonists in *Ruahine* destroy safety within the whānau or hapū, violating the principles of the wāhine’s place within these contexts. The role of ‘otherworldly’ or spiritual elements within the novels in both the telling of the trauma and the healing of it are also powerful acknowledgements of te ora Māori, as “in a holistic Māori worldview the supernatural and everyday reality are as ‘real’ as each other.”<sup>173</sup>

The depiction of the portrayal of ‘madness’ and the subsequent questioning of stereotypes of the ‘madwoman,’ occurring in *Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra*, are represented in the Māori narratives only through the character of Rona in *Ruahine* who, like *Kassandra*, is labelled as mad, and unbelievable on account of her alien story. Unlike the representation of *Kassandra*, Rona has no bodily manifestations of her supposed madness, although she has aged considerably. This in itself is symbolic of the author’s condemnation of the community’s label of Rona, as in Māori culture the old kuia is supposed to be listened to as a repository of wisdom. The depiction of the manifestation of trauma without the use of the stereotype of the madwoman highlights the different views of mental health in Māoritanga, compared to the Western health models discussed in chapter one.

The representations of trauma in *Cousins* and *Ruahine* search for and create new Māori voices of women’s experience. Both authors begin their search for new expression from a contemporary colonised experience, in which their own past has been silenced by the

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<sup>172</sup> Durie, M. (2001). *Mauri Ora - The Dynamics of Maori Health*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press. 80.

<sup>173</sup> Battista, J. L. (2004). Me he korokoro komako - ‘With the Throat of a Bellbird’ : a Maori Aesthetic in Maori writing in English. *English*. Auckland, University of Auckland. 40.

historical process of colonisation's othering, and Māori culture's reaction to this. While *Cousins* highlights colonial oppression to insist that the search for new types of expression must begin, *Ruahine* goes one step further by presenting an immediate alternative framework through the rewrite of foundational stories; a framework that uncovers and re-presents the timelessness of trauma for Māori women.

*Das Buch Franza* and *Kassandra* construct trauma representations that broaden the concept of psychological trauma by expressing the long-silenced female experience of trauma from within the Western European context. *Cousins* and *Ruahine*, while using cross-cultural European references, represent non-Western, indigenous Māori-based experience of women and trauma, in which the celebration of women's voices is central. This creation of literary expressions is ground-breaking, in that it presents an engagement of deconstruction and construction of Māori women's experiences. This is, in some sense, ahead of its time in that the discipline of Māori psychology is yet at the beginning of establishing non-Western frameworks that express trauma from a Māori woman's perspective. While women's experiences of trauma have historically been misinterpreted or marginalised, the experiences of non-white, minority women have been even less articulated, internationally and in Aotearoa. *Cousins* and *Ruahine* deal with the expansion of trauma as they locate trauma for women in a vast and previously uncharted territory of experience, thereby challenging the patriarchal, Western models of psychiatry and psychology, which have:

limited contexts and tend to be ahistorical, in a sociopolitical sense, making invisible the experiences of large segments of the population who have been historically oppressed.<sup>174</sup>

The act of making the invisible visible is therefore a highly political act as it sheds light on marginalised women's stories, stories that can serve, as Te Awekotuku states, as a "touchstone for the future."<sup>175</sup> The stories explain where we are by looking at where we

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<sup>174</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. *Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals*. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 258.

<sup>175</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (1993). Trail of the Broken Treaty. *Te Ao Marama: Regaining Aotearoa - Maori Writers Speak Out*. W. Ihimaera. Auckland, Reed. 234.

have come from, and it is this knowledge in tikanga Māori, which empowers the bearer of the mātauranga<sup>176</sup> wāhine Māori towards the transformations achieved by the female protagonists of *Cousins* and *Ruahine*. Whether and how this transformation is inherent to the process of negotiating the traumatic experience for wāhine Māori writers, readers and the community, is an issue that will be explored in the next chapter of this thesis.

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<sup>176</sup> Knowledge

## Chapter 4 – Transforming Trauma

For writers, and at this moment for women writers in particular, there is the challenge and promise of a whole new psychic geography to be explored. But there is also a difficult and dangerous walking on the ice, as we try to find language and images for a consciousness we are just coming into, and with little in the past to support us.<sup>1</sup>

Adrienne Rich

As discussed in chapter one, the process of giving voice to trauma experience is fundamentally an act of re-telling, re-structuring and re-forming, as something internal is moulded into something external through the use of language. The psychological benefits of this action have already been expounded as formidable in the sense that confrontation, organization and the opening up of trauma to an audience are instilled with an attainment of power, which is crucial to the healing of trauma. Re-telling is the freeing of formerly unarticulated material, which the teller of the trauma story then ‘owns’ as a new narrative that has been, as in the case of the four writers analysed in this thesis, constructed *deliberately* from out of the ‘darkness.’

The ability of literature to lift the trauma story out of shadow means that it plays a vital role in the issues surrounding trauma experience and expression. Van der Kolk and McFarlane comment on creative representation of trauma as being more accessible than psychological theory and practice itself:

The study of trauma inevitably confronts us with issues of morality and social values...In this regard, artists have traditionally fulfilled the function of holding up a mirror that

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<sup>1</sup> Rich, A. (1971). *When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision. On Lies, Secrets and Silence - Selected Prose 1966-1978*. New York, Norton.35.

contrasts sharply with the traditional obfuscation of these issues in the field of mental health.<sup>2</sup>

As the visibility of trauma discourse in fictional literature has increased in the modern context in which trauma experience, trauma theory and trauma representation have become informative and reflective of each other, the question remains as to the nature of the relationship among these three. Theories on what the fictional depiction of trauma achieves have emerged as analyses of the perpetuating, global cycle of violence and trauma, highlighting the significance of this for any analysis of the contemporary condition. The theorising about trauma in fiction has stressed that the reading of a fictional trauma representation can take us to places that are otherwise difficult to access. It is therefore the role of the trauma story to reflect both the personal and the political, in the sense that the depiction of trauma in literature and its status as re-formative initiates re-thinking about the history which contextualises the ‘inconceivable’ of the trauma experience. In terms of re-situating history, the fictional trauma story points to ways in which ideology has traditionally obscured, or left gaps, in the whole story.

Literature in this sense has its own history of serving as a reflector/container of “public memory, its language and symbols used to sustain public memory and express social context.”<sup>3</sup> Recent literary theory shows that where the event and condition of trauma are analysed the ideological can potentially be exposed. Fictional trauma narratives are capable of “exploring, and exploding, the limits of what can be told,”<sup>4</sup> and providing “case studies” or the “testing ground” to social and psychological theory by “speak[ing] something that the theory can not say...an extension of the theory’s own silences.”<sup>5</sup> The way that trauma

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<sup>2</sup> Mc Farlane, A. and B. van der Kolk (1996). Trauma and its Challenge to Society. Traumatic Stress - The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society. B. van der Kolk, A. Mc Farlane and L. Weisaeth. New York, The Guildford Press. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Vickroy, L. (2002). Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction. Charlottesville, The University of Virginia Press. 170.

<sup>4</sup> Robson, K. (2004). Writing Wounds - The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life-Writing. New York, Rodopi. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Whitehead, A. (2004). Trauma Fiction. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press. 4.

fiction has become a meaningful object of study within the same time frame that trauma theory itself is evolving, provides a significant link between these two approaches to the deconstruction of trauma.

The growing acknowledgement of the depiction of trauma in fiction and its double role in representing personal and political issues raises many questions as to the motivation of the fictional trauma story. What is the value of writing, reading and analysing these representations? Is the benefit that trauma theory ascribes to the voicing of a trauma survivor's story applicable in any similar manner to the fictional trauma narrative, created by authors who may or may not have experienced what they are depicting? What is the impact on writing when the trauma experience that is being depicted is essentially fragmentary and silent? How does the trauma story shape the process of symbolizing, narrating and constructing fiction? And, furthermore, what is the range of forms which trauma literature by women and about women can take, and in which way are they producing similar, or dissimilar means of addressing trauma?

### *The Literary Strategies for Conveying Trauma*

The representation of the experience of trauma, an internal event inherently imbued with voicelessness, requires structures and techniques that simultaneously contain and reform those qualities of the unspeakable. Anne Whitehead identifies the characteristics of literary imitation of trauma experiences, which can be found within fictional trauma representations:

Novelists have frequently found that the impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterised by repetition and indirection.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 3.



Inscribing trauma into the fictional narrative requires representational strategies that show that the author ‘knows’ the nature of trauma and its manifestation. True knowledge of trauma cannot be pretended, and the crafting of literary techniques to capture and convey this knowledge is essential in providing a pathway into the elusive internal wounding that is trauma.

The fictional trauma narratives of Ingeborg Bachmann, Christa Wolf, Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku demonstrate a range of innovative literary strategies in response to the task of the “directing outward of an inward, silent process.”<sup>7</sup> The texts evoke the experience of trauma for women through the fragmentation of narrative conventions, by using language, narration, speech and structure, and through the construction of metaphors, symbols and tropes that provide powerful links to the symbolic aspects of the playing out of trauma.

Fragmentation of narrative, meaning that the story is ‘interrupted’ through the use of various literary techniques, is something that has been identified as one of the tools used by fictional trauma writers to create a sense of the chaos, the undefinable disorderliness of the state of traumatising, particularly, as Laurie Vickroy states, in relation to the function of ‘remembering:’

Writers have created a number of narrative strategies to represent a conflicted or incomplete relation to memory, including textual gaps...repetition, breaks in linear time, shifting viewpoints, and a focus on visual images and affective states.<sup>8</sup>

In Bachmann’s *Das Buch Franza* the narrative voices, the shifting viewpoints, and most importantly, Franza’s particular inability to speak coherently and clearly about her trauma, are strong linguistic indications of the state of trauma. The unpredictability and uncontainability of the state of being traumatised are conveyed to the reader through the

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<sup>7</sup> Vickroy, L. (2002). *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. Charlottesville, The University of Virginia Press.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 29.

irregularity of language as Bachmann constructs the narrative to shift and weave. The narrative leaves gaps and presents a linguistic structure that is itself uncontainable, as it changes the conventions and use of literary realism. At the time of Bachmann's writing this narrative style was innovative, presenting a seemingly chaotic arrangement that was subversive of the sought after orderliness of post-war Austrian and German culture. Out of the four narratives analysed in this thesis, it is only Patricia Grace's depiction of Mata's lack of coherency in *Cousins* which displays similarity to Franza, as it uses linguistic fragmentation to access the inner fragmentation of the trauma sufferer's mind. Like Franza's, Mata's internal dialogue is distinguished by the struggle with being Other, splitting the mind into a chaotic state of 'knowing' and 'not knowing.' As in *Das Buch Franza*, the reader is aware of the "missing" parts of Mata's narrative, as she focuses on the fragmented symbols of her environment in favour of accessing the real story underneath; the story that Mata is unable to put into words at that stage.

All four narratives of this thesis use the tension between the knowing and the not knowing to evoke the trauma experience through the female protagonists' struggle to express their experiences and find the words that convey trauma. Like the memory of trauma, in which the psychological mechanism that promotes survival initially seeks to drive the experience of trauma underground, these works reflect the conflict that the characters experience while they go through this survival-based denial. This tension is represented in all the narratives as being in a state of flux, meaning that the female characters gradually uncover the truth of the trauma experience. Conflict is evoked by the narrative strategies as Franza reminds the reader of all the things she cannot say when she is suffocating in the desert, or when she recalls her psychosomatic 'ersticken' (choking) during her time with Jordan, which is linked to her knowledge about the truth of his 'research' on her.<sup>9</sup> Wolf depicts Cassandra's retrospective acknowledgement of her tendency to deny the truth to herself, recounting how she was forced by her body to articulate the truth with a "fremder" (foreign) voice.<sup>10</sup> Grace

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<sup>9</sup> "Did he know how much I already knew?" "Ob er wußte wieviel ich schon wußte?" Bachmann, I. (1998). *Das Buch Franza*. Munich, Piper. 105.

<sup>10</sup> "The voice, which spoke, was foreign to me, and of course I know today, have known for a long time, it was no coincidence that this foreign voice, which had so often been stuck in my throat, spoke through me for the first time in his presence." "Die Stimme, die das sagte, war mir fremd, und natürlich weiß ich heute, weiß ich seit langem, es war kein Zufall, daß diese fremde Stimme, die mir schon oft in der Kehle gesteckt hatte, in seiner Gegenwart zum ersten Male aus mir sprach." Wolf, C. (2001). *Kassandra*. München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. 42.

shows the conflict of Mata's stifled truth as she depicts her as an 'automated' robot-like, lost character, who crams her mind with the meaningless messages she recites, as she "Didn't want to ask where or why, or to have thoughts that lead to thinking."<sup>11</sup> In Te Awekotuku's *Ruahine* it is the authorial voice that indicates that there is tension between the known and the not known, as she pitches 'old' against 'new' versions, stating that: "Or so the story goes, but I could never accept it."<sup>12</sup>

All the texts evoke the role that memory plays in the simultaneous denial of and exposure of traumatic experience, a role that has only recently been clearly defined by trauma therapy itself. The de-construction of conventional modes of literary representations, and the creation of specific linguistic and narrative strategies to capture this emotional and cognitive process, represents how memory both disables and enables trauma expression. This aspect makes the literary, fictional representations of women's trauma, particularly in the early writing of Bachmann, markedly timely, if not ahead of time.

The narratives examined in this thesis exhibit the polyvocal quality of trauma, both in relation to the many voices contained within the memory of trauma and the notion of the communal involvement in trauma experience. The linear orderliness of narration is subverted by the sense that 'there is more to the story than the story.' The before mentioned mimicking of the chaotic fragmentation of trauma are depicted through intertextuality, such as Franza's inclusion of the other female trauma victims in her story, like her husband's ex-wives or Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut. These 'unseen' women provide additional voices in the background, which indicate the many layers and levels on which women's traumatisation occurs. Alongside Wolf's authorial, de-constructive acknowledgment of the voices that have told Cassandra's story before her, Cassandra's own narration of her story facilitates the emergence of the many other voices of the stories' female characters. In a similar manner, Te Awekotuku frames her mythological rewrites with the unheard, multiple voices and possibilities of the Other in Māori mythology. The effect of this is an

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<sup>11</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 75.

undercurrent of previously silenced voices accompanying the main voices that narrate the new versions of the trauma experiences for the protagonists of *Ruahine*. *Cousins* employs this dialogism through the different narrators and the different narrative versions of the cousins' stories, while also, like the other three works, acknowledging what has come before, by being in dialogue with the past in terms of the ancestors and the cultural past. All the texts demonstrate that trauma is on one level a very individual and private experience, as the effects of traumatising play out inside the private mind and body, while simultaneously being a communal experience based on the timeless and similar trauma experiences for women in the past. Furthermore, these representations embody the changing nature of the trauma experience as constituting a "dynamic, living process where interactions have a quality of being in process and unfinalizable."<sup>13</sup>

This polyvocality suggests that trauma builds on trauma, and points to the complex, cyclical process of unaddressed trauma's repetition from one generation to the next, and from the past into the present. The unvoiced and unacknowledged traumas of background female characters such as Bachmann's Hatshepsut, Greek mythology's Iphigeneia, the mothers from *Cousins*, or Hine-nui-te-Pō from *Ruahine*, are indicative of the replication of trauma as well as the community of women who are, on a literal and an actual level, connected through the experience with the triple-trauma, a connection that is:

...the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound.<sup>14</sup>

As already suggested in chapters two and three, the narrative strategy of polyvocality that the four texts employ is therefore also the creation of essential, female communities for the female protagonists. They are the communities of traumatised women that know, and listen

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<sup>13</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, quoted in Vickroy, L. (2002). *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. Charlottesville, The University of Virginia Press. 183.

<sup>14</sup> Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience - Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press. 8.

to, the Other's trauma. This creates the social context that frames and witnesses and thereby validates, and gives order to the trauma.

The inversion of traditional, linear concepts of time as represented through an orderly, sequentially progressing plot, is another narrative strategy that works to engage with the issues of trauma experience on a new level. The fragmentations of narrative that mirror the effects of trauma are also represented in the expansion of Western time concepts, as all the narratives turn time "upside-down" by extending backwards and forwards between past, present and future. This provides the sense of timelessness, a concept that is very relevant in regards to the experiencing and recollecting of trauma. The event of traumatisation is often described as being 'outside of time,' in the sense that traditional or 'rational' measures of time simply do not exist in the experiencing of trauma. Living with trauma impacts on how time is experienced, a state in which trauma re-shapes what is safe or bearable to live with, what Primo Levi calls the "stopping of history," and the reshaping of "the units of time."<sup>15</sup>

The re-conceptualisation of time is also pertinent to remembering or voicing trauma, as the involuntary memory of trauma can see the event in a never-ending replay, while the recovery-based voicing of it can seem just as anxiety inducing:

The second stage of recovery [telling trauma] has a timeless quality that is frightening. The reconstruction of the trauma requires immersion in a past experience of frozen time; the descent into mourning feels like a surrender to tears that are endless.<sup>16</sup>

By confronting and voicing this sensation of time as a non-quantifiable measure, the trauma narratives examined in this thesis reflect the paradox of the trauma experience as being both static and in motion, particularly as the protagonists are voicing their experiences. All the narratives move between the past, present and future in their exploration of trauma, in

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<sup>15</sup> Levi, P. (1961). Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity. New York, Collier.

quoted in Lewis Herman, J. (1992). Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. London, Basic Books.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis Herman, J. (1992). Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. London, Basic Books.

which the notion of timelessness corresponds to the manifestations of trauma. Franza and Cassandra's episodes of physically acted-out 'madness' are examples of time seeming endless and irrelevant to measurement, as Cassandra states that: "my life divided itself for some time into the time before the fit and the time after the fit – a measurement of time that soon became invalid..."<sup>17</sup> Mata expresses her immersion in frozen time as she cries "years of tears"<sup>18</sup> in a context where her own past intermingles with the ancient and timeless past of the spirit members of her whānau. In *Ruahine* Haumapuhia's "descent into mourning" through the creation of Lake Waikaremoana is timeless in that it exists from the mythical ancient to the present, freezing Haumapuhia at the bottom of the lake where she lies forever in her grief, static yet moving as she creates the "sea of rippling waters," and the "sea of rage."<sup>19</sup>

Another way in which the fictional trauma narratives of Bachmann, Wolf, Grace and Te Awekotuku employ literary strategies that represent the forms of trauma is through the creation of metaphors, symbols and tropes. The symbolic manifestations in the narratives mirror the experience of trauma, since initial traumatisation and subsequent life memory are strongly connected to symbols and metaphors. This connection forms from the re-experiencing or negotiation of the traumatic memory, as well as the capturing of the voiceless, language-deficient quality of trauma, in which symbols voice the unspeakable. The role played by metaphors and symbols in trauma experience is significant, as the meaning of particular symbols takes shape during traumatisation, which then influences and affects subsequent memory and re-experience of trauma. This very complex process plays part in inducing the psychophysiological reactions of the trauma sufferer to "specific reminders of the trauma, and in response to intense but [to other people] neutral stimuli,"<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "...mein Leben teilte sich dann eine Weile in die Zeit vor dem Anfall und die Zeit nach dem Anfall – eine Zeitrechnung, die bald ungültig wurde..." Wolf, C. (2001). *Kassandra*. München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. 43.

<sup>18</sup> Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 254.

<sup>19</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 49.

<sup>20</sup> van der Kolk, B. (1996). *The Body keeps Score - Approaches to the Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Traumatic Stress - The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*. B. van der Kolk, A. Mc Farlane and L. Weisaeth. New York, The Guildford Press: 214-241.

all of which are likely to be from a metaphoric or symbolic source, thereby marking the traumatised person's "loss of stimulus discrimination."<sup>21</sup>

The ability of metaphors and symbols to evoke a strong, psychophysiological reaction is a complicated issue to analyse within traumatology, a complexity that is relevant to any literary depiction of this process. The four narratives represent these intricacies as they use the depiction of the female body to highlight the role played by symbols and metaphors in the reaction to trauma. In *Das Buch Franza*, the protagonist embodies the fragmentation of her self through her seemingly involuntary and uncontrollable responses to stimuli. Franza's difficulty in evaluating trauma-stimulating symbols is represented by her 'inappropriate' responses to them, such as her reaction to the Egyptian children and the slaughtered camel at the Egyptian wedding feast, where Franza's inability to walk is linked to her own personification as a "slaughtered beast."<sup>22</sup> The depiction of Mata from Grace's *Cousins* as thinking of herself in animal-like terms at the outset of her narrative is comparable here, as is Mata's reaction to the symbols and metaphors of colonisation that surround her, such as the urban city scenes she walks through.<sup>23</sup> Mata is represented as displaying a common reaction to the state created by the physiological response to trauma related stimuli, which is to disengage and become numb in body and mind, serving the "function of allowing organisms not to 'consciously experience' or not remember situations of overwhelming stress."<sup>24</sup>

Wolf's character Cassandra's reaction to the traumatic truth, which she is able to grasp behind the Trojan, patriarchal rhetoric, depicts her inner conflict about knowing and not-

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 219.

<sup>22</sup> "I can't go any further...but I don't want to go through the blood, through this sand, which from its blood...I know what I look like. I look like the camel, which is looking at me." "Ich kann nicht weiter...aber ich will nicht durch das Blut, durch diesen Sand, der von seinem Blut...Ich weiß, wie ich aussehe. Ich sehe aus wie das Kamel, das mich ansieht." Bachmann, I. (1998). *Das Buch Franza*. Munich, Piper. 111.

<sup>23</sup> "...still churning words through her mind, words to do with shops and goods, signs and messages – from hairdressers and supermarkets, laundrettes, fishmongers, butchers, coffee shops, florists, dentists, photographers, jewellers and pharmacists." Grace, P. (1992). *Cousins*. Auckland, Penguin. 13.

<sup>24</sup> van der Kolk, B. (1996). *The Body keeps Score - Approaches to the Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Traumatic Stress - The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*. B. van der Kolk, A. Mc Farlane and L. Weisaeth. New York, The Guildford Press: 214-241.

knowing, or not wanting to know,<sup>25</sup> as well as highlighting how the body acts out the stimuli of trauma. Echoing the essential nature of trauma, Cassandra has no control over the contortions and actions of her body during her ‘fits’ and it is her body that signals the extent of the trauma she is experiencing. The representation of the female body as a site of traumatisation, meaning places where the sources of trauma converge in their wounding mechanisms, like the literal and figurative representation of the womb in *Ruahine*’s story of Haumapuhia, provides yet another layer of significance in the use of the female body as metaphor. This creates a very multifaceted and non-dichotomous picture of the body/mind interaction within women’s trauma experience. In this way the texts use the depiction of the female body to highlight the role that metaphor plays in trauma.

The metaphor of the body is extended and linked to yet another metaphor that seeks to give voice to the trauma experience, which is the notion of the ‘transformative.’ Transformation is a key element linking the separate metaphors associated with body, time, and death. It is also the trope that most clearly articulates the non-static nature of trauma and the act of the journey that is undertaken by all the female protagonists. The transformative is represented by the way in which the protagonists become able to express themselves. Transformation is also inherent in the authors’ rewriting of old stories, such as the Bluebeard fairy tale in *Das Buch Franza*, Greek mythology in *Kassandra*, and Māori mythology in *Ruahine*.

Furthermore, transformation is depicted through places, concepts and objects that are reformed in the narratives. The characters change their environment, or their perception of their environment, and experience internal changes in which the finding of place is crucial to the dealing with trauma. This is depicted when Franza finds the ‘lost part’ of herself in the desert, thereby within her mind changing the barrenness of the desert to a place where possibilities are ‘blooming.’ For Cassandra, Agamemnon’s country, where she is awaiting her death, is transformed in Cassandra’s mind into a refuge, in as far as it is here that she is finally able to express her whole story. Despite the fact that their Marae holds histories of trauma, the cousins Mata, Makareta and Missy effect change for themselves during their

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<sup>25</sup> “...I always allowed myself these times of being half-blind. To see everything at once – that would have destroyed me.” “...immer habe ich mir diese Zeiten gegönnt. Auf einmal sehend werden – das hätte mich zerstört.” Wolf, C. (2001). *Kassandra*. München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. 43.



coming together on the Marae. Transforming a place of trauma, such as the site of Haumapuhia's abused body into "a place of magic,"<sup>26</sup> is crucial to the expression and resolution of the protagonists of *Ruahine*.

The concept of transformation is fundamental to the representations of death or dying within the narratives. All the authors depict death as a transformative element, as liberating and voice-enabling, and thereby subvert the traditional Western notions of death as a purely undesirable, tragic end. Instead, death is an entry point for the protagonists to make choices about their life, and the way they express their trauma experiences. Franza's choice to die after the rape at the Pyramids is also her final, powerful statement against the mechanisms of trauma, as she curses those responsible for it. Cassandra sees death as a more liberating option than continuing to be part of the destructive patriarchal madness she can see ahead. In *Cousins* it is Makareta's death that enables Mata to live and finally grieve for her trauma, while in *Ruahine* many of the protagonists choose death as a forceful protest, or as a catalyst to transform at the point of death into a powerful Other that lives on to tell the tale of trauma.

The transformation that takes place through death is treated as an entry into the healing process. In this way transformation is depicted as much as a result of trauma as a healing response to it, as the depictions of transformation subvert expected notions of the binaries between life and death. These representations acknowledge that the changing of trauma through change of self is a process in which the metaphors of death and dying are central, as Mwalimu Imara states:

Abandoning old ways and breaking patterns is like dying, at least dying to old ways of life for an unknown new life of meaning and relationship. But living without change is not living at all, not growing at all. Dying is a pre-condition for living.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Te Awekotuku, N. (2003). *Ruahine - Mythic Women*. Wellington, Huia. 45.

<sup>27</sup> Mwalimu Imara quoted in hooks, b. (2005). *Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery*. Cambridge, South End Press. 84.

In this sense, all these works depict the death of the old self that needs to occur when trauma is truly confronted and expressed. It also symbolises the fear that underlies trauma experience and trauma memory, which is the absolute fear of dying. Furthermore, it reflects the feeling of death that occurs after traumatisation: the death of the previously non-traumatised individual, *and*, arising out of the expression of trauma, the eventual death of the traumatised self, a challenging prospect for trauma sufferers, where change can be as frightening as the state of traumatisation.

### ***Trauma Resolution and the Female Protagonist***

The literary strategies used by Bachmann, Wolf, Grace and Te Awekotuku effect initial disruption, or deconstruction of traditional, literary notions of plot, narrative, chronology, metaphor and symbol use, and then subsequently re-construct these elements in such a way as to depict the voices of trauma. Integration of the disarray of trauma is the key to moving from the *exposition* of the trauma story to the *processing* of it. The question here is: to what extent do these texts represent models or examples of healing trauma experiences for women? The analysis so far has shown that all the narratives convey trauma in very real and engaging ways, yet do the novels go further than demonstrating trauma and its numerous complex effects, and move towards depicting restoration or healing of the damaged selves of the female protagonists? To what degree do the narratives suggest that their female characters are engaged in the process of healing, in which, as Lewis Herman states, the ‘owning of self’ is fundamental:

...she is in possession of self. She has some understanding of the person she used to be and of the damage done to that person by the traumatic event. Her task now is to become the person she wants to be.<sup>28</sup>

Ingeborg Bachmann’s Franza is not depicted in ‘possession of herself,’ as the novel narrates her journey from inner fragmentation to the confrontation with the sources of trauma that

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<sup>28</sup> Lewis Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. London, Basic Books. 202.

have shaped her mental crisis. Franza does have some understanding of her past, pre-traumatised self, yet the narrative makes it clear that she has difficulty trusting her memory, while she struggles to articulate and accept the truth of her marriage to Jordan. By the second part of the novel, on the way to Egypt, Franza is able to voice the effects that the trauma has had on her, as she knows of what she has been robbed, and uses the metaphors of “illness” (Krankheit), “lowly race” (mindere Rasse), and “long-term psychologically damaged” (Spätschaden), to describe and explain herself. For Franza there seem to be only glimpses of hope of formulating for herself a picture of what she wants to be. While her experiences in the desert, especially with Dr Körner, demonstrate that she knows she has to “come to her rights,” the narrative does not present an alternative picture of a healed, or healthy woman. As the novel is built on the legacy of traumatised women and sinister examples of male medical professionals (Nazi medical experimentation, Jordan, Dr Körner) and scientists (the grave-robbing archaeologists in Egypt), there is literally no place from which Franza can derive a model of good mental health. This means that after the rape at the pyramids Franza cannot choose wellness *and* live in a world in which the sources of trauma, ancient and modern, converge and are still fully operational.

As already discussed in chapter two, the fact that Franza is actively and increasingly consciously in pursuit of coherence, in pursuit of piecing together and telling her story, and that in the end she makes an articulated *choice* about her death, is in itself a form of self-recovery. All four texts examined in this thesis demonstrate this pursuit of coherence in the face of essentially fragmentary experiences of trauma as the first step in the process towards self-recovery. The search for expression constitutes the commitment to set out on the journey through past and present trauma, an attempted recovery of the psyche and as John Harvey states, an “opportunity for survivors to create greater value in their lives.”<sup>29</sup>

Whereas Franza lacks coherence in her search for expression of the trauma story, the character of Cassandra from Christa Wolf’s re-write makes a clear connection between trauma and her life-role as the one to ‘see it’ and articulate it, right from the outset of the

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<sup>29</sup> Harvey, J. H. (2002). Perspectives on Loss and Trauma - Assaults on the Self. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

narrative when she states that she “keeps living so as to see.”<sup>30</sup> Cassandra’s narrative is constructed in a deliberately retrospective way by Wolf, allowing for self-analysis and understanding of the sources of trauma as key processes. Cassandra is self-aware and honest about her own motivations from the past, of what shaped her to be a priestess and a ‘seer,’ motivations in which power dynamics inherent in the patriarchal social structure of Troy are deeply embedded. Cassandra provides increasing resistance to the sources of her trauma, initially acted out in her body and then through her voice. Through this resistance, her sense of self, or who she wants to be, is increasingly clearly visible, as it clashes with the actuality of the Trojan patriarchy and the war. Unlike Franza, Cassandra has a context of an alternative to Bachmann’s “society that keeps on killing,” which is the depiction of the community living by the mountain, the choice between “killing and dying.” Once Cassandra is able to be truthful about herself and her family, she is able to live in this community, which presents the brief opportunity for her to start healing from the trauma of being imprisoned by her own father. When the war escalates and Cassandra sees that there is no future place for such a community, even with Aineias, she consciously and deliberately chooses to see out the war and its consequences, fulfilling her role as the eyes and voice of the truth of the Trojan story. In this sense, Cassandra is depicted as finding ‘who she wants to be,’ as she states: “The joy of being myself and through this to be more useful to others - this I have experienced.”<sup>31</sup> Cassandra finds this sense of fulfilment, a fulfilment that comes from playing a role in the articulation of and resistance to the sources of trauma. The healing that is experienced by Cassandra derives from her voice, and her choice to extricate herself, as well as from the future hope for yet another seer who will expose and analyse the mechanisms of trauma.

The character of Makareta from Patricia Grace’s *Cousins* also experiences personal fulfilment and growth from the acknowledgement and expression of trauma. In adulthood she describes the impact of colonisation, while as a young woman she resists oppression by refusing the arranged marriage. Makareta has clarity about her past, and knows that she,

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<sup>30</sup> “...denn ich zog Lust aus allem, was ich sah – Lust; Hoffnung nicht! -, und lebte weiter um zu sehen.” Wolf, C. (2001). Kassandra. München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. 6.

<sup>31</sup> “ Das Glück, ich selbst zu werden und dadurch den anderen nützlicher – ich habe es noch erlebt.” Ibid. 14.

like Cassandra, has been bestowed with certain privileges that enable her to speak coherently. Makareta is very clearly ‘the person she wants to be,’ as she finds herself in the position to use her cultural knowledge and privileges to help her community and her cousin Mata. Like Franza and Cassandra, Makareta exits the narrative with a suggestion of ‘choice’ about her death, when she states that: “I’m tired. It’s burn-out time, time to go home.”<sup>32</sup> Makareta does not make this choice because there is no alternative in which to live, but rather because her work is done, and it is time to hand on the taonga of knowledge to Missy and especially Mata. Makareta extends Cassandra’s sense of herself as ‘being of service’ through her insight into trauma. She expresses hope as residing in an indefinite future, as well as in the very present in the form of her cousin Mata, who is able to live, for the first time, in the face of Makareta’s death, after Makareta’s assertion that “Gifts are meant to be given, and one day returned. It must be her [Mata’s] turn, again, to hold the coloured marble.”<sup>33</sup> As Mata is the most ‘damaged’ wahine in the novel this is a significant event, as the gift that Makareta gives to Mata is the first ever opportunity for Mata to voice her trauma experience, and to return to her whānau. Both of these events are cathartic experiences, in which Makareta represents the view that healing or being healthy is a ‘gift’ and that healing does not take place in isolation. Makareta represents for Mata the past that Mata is entitled to, and the potential for what she herself can be. In this sense, Makareta is the alternative that Wolf represents through the community at Mount Ida, providing ‘the missing links’ of her self-identity. Mata leaves the novel with an articulated understanding of this identity, and she knows that she is on the path towards healing, a process rather than an event, something she voices when she speaks of her knowledge that she *will* see her mother, Kui Hinemate and the other ancestors again in time. For Mata the process of healing is a choice that is imbued with the political; as hooks states, “choosing wellness is an act of political resistance.”<sup>34</sup> The act of political resistance is that Mata’s healing from the scars of colonisation resides in her re-entry into the Māori world, an act that requires the deconstruction of the processes of trauma sources, and an embracing of, and immersion in,

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<sup>32</sup> Grace, P. (1992). Cousins. Auckland, Penguin. 217.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 218.

<sup>34</sup> hooks, b. (2005). Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery. Cambridge, South End Press. 7.

the Other. This is precisely the alternative that doesn't exist in *Das Buch Franza*, and is only briefly experienced and then destroyed in *Kassandra*.

This option in response to trauma is also represented throughout Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's *Ruahine*, where even the most heavily traumatised protagonists *create* their own alternatives. For characters such as Haumapuhia, Wairaka, Kurungaituku, Hinemoa or Hinengaro there is a distinct and deliberate modifying of their trauma into another state, a state that creates an alternative existence for the wāhine. Whether the action is of revenge, of finding their own place, or of finding their right partner, the heroines express and address their trauma through the fundamental act of restoring equilibrium in their lives, and the equilibrium of the life-ordering forces of tapu and noa. This is a significant creation, as it models images and scenarios of healing that address the process of 'choosing wellness' at its very core:

Clearly, if black women want to be about the business of collective self-healing, we have to be about the business of inventing all manner of images and representations that show us the way we want to be and are.<sup>35</sup>

The images depicted in *Ruahine* convey the traumatisation process and sources at the same time as delivering healing alternatives. These options are actions that address the trauma in ways that imbue the trauma experience with very real meaning for the protagonists and their communities, as the responses to trauma shape the natural and cultural resources from ancient times into the contemporary. The actuality of turning trauma around is the result of the long-lasting expression of trauma by the wāhine, in which cultural taonga are created. Just as Franza manages finally to achieve revenge by cursing the symbolic sources of trauma, 'the whites,' many of the protagonists of *Ruahine*, such as Hinengaro and Kurungaituku, vigorously seek and gain revenge, leaving more than a spoken condemnation of the sources of trauma. Wellness, or the choice to transcend trauma in this depiction is not a passive one, it is an effective commitment to 'doing' and acting in ways that open up a different life. It is saying that if there are no healthy alternatives, or healthy places to live,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 62.

then they must be created. In its subversion of the structures of trauma, *Ruahine* is therefore the most powerful of all the four narratives, as it surpasses the theoretical, or linguistic, and moves to actions that create digressive and long-lasting statements about trauma and healing.

In this way Te Awekotuku has illustrated the many forms in which expression of trauma and resolution of trauma can simultaneously occur. In *Ruahine*, unlike in Bachmann, Wolf and Grace's narratives, there is a clear movement from the event of traumatisation to the female protagonists' creation of resolutions, which are resolutions that change the trauma for the protagonists, as well as leaving culturally appropriate 'road-signs' for future generations. Te Awekotuku's re-writes of ancient Māori mythology present a progression from trauma to healing in which change is pivotal, or as Harvey explains:

A major loss leads to the development of a story about or understanding of the loss, which leads to storytelling or confiding about the loss, which leads to identifying possibilities for change, which leads to some sort of action that addresses the loss in some constructive way.<sup>36</sup>

The voicing of trauma as a restorative act is based on the fact that in order to integrate trauma there has to be an *engagement* with trauma, in the sense of facing the trauma and then working through it to create a narrative. In therapy, for survivors of trauma this initial confrontation is the beginning of a journey that does not make the trauma disappear, but rather, gives it a meaning that one can live with:

Developing an adequate and evolving narrative of life's unbidden transitions does not assuage the pain associated with them, but it does permit them to be articulated in a way that encourages both personal integration of such experiences and social validation of their meaning.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Harvey, J. H. (2002). Perspectives on Loss and Trauma - Assaults on the Self. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications. 260.

<sup>37</sup> Neimeyer, R. A. and H. M. Levitt (2000). What's Narrative Got to Do With It? Construction and Coherence in Accounts of Loss. Loss and Trauma - General and Close Relationship Perspectives. J. H. Harvey and E. D. Miller. Philadelphia, Brunner - Routledge. 416.

The protagonists of Bachmann, Wolf, Grace and Te Awekotuku's texts are in the process of creating evolving narratives, in which the measure of healing trauma corresponds to this process of evolution, which rather than answering it, raises the question of 'what is adequate' in terms of depicting trauma through the literary trauma genre.

### *Trauma Resolution and the Female Author*

Stories about trauma address an individual and social need to express the 'in-expressible' of how trauma originates and plays out as part of the overarching social context. It is therefore important to consider the meaning or impact that is created through the acts of writing and reading fictional narratives of trauma. Stories about trauma are not created in a vacuum, nor without context; neither is their reception or place within a given society and culture a random accident. Instead, there are psychological and ideological forces that determine these issues at any given time, processes that are far too complex for them to be given full justice in this last part of the thesis, but which nevertheless need to be raised as they are of significance to the topic of women's trauma as a whole. The finding of trauma in the texts that have been examined in this thesis, and the construction of a key framework of sources or areas in which these authors locate trauma for women, in the form of the triple trauma, can be seen as a beginning in terms of raising questions as to what all this means. Further issues arising from this thesis, which has shown how trauma for women is inflicted on the narratives' protagonists, and how this is represented in literary forms, include questions about what such representations 'do' for the real people involved in the production and consumption of such fictional trauma, particularly in the face of the prevailing response to trauma as being marked by "denial, repression, and dissociation [that] operate on a social as well as an individual level."<sup>38</sup> Questioning what might drive an author to construct fictional trauma, what compels people to read it and whether this process is of influence in the contemporary social perception of and addressing real trauma for women is of great interest; and something that is hoped will be closely analysed in further research. Such

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<sup>38</sup> Lewis Herman, J. (1992). Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. London, Basic Books. 2.



research would contribute to the evolution of narratives of trauma and the theories of how these can be of positive use for individuals and societies.

The relationship of an author to their trauma representation, or to trauma in general is one of the areas in which the 'how' of fictional trauma changes to the 'why.' For the non-fictional trauma story, the connection between the narrative and the author is crucial, yet what does this relationship entail in the case of the fictional trauma narrative? The psychologically determined need for the telling of the story, and the ensuing therapeutic correlation of integration that occur when the trauma sufferer tells her own story are not a 'given' in the case of *fictional* narrative construction. The engagement with trauma in the case of the fictional storyteller involves an imaginative creation of trauma, which is followed by the process of finding ways to construct a narrative from this creation. The progression that takes the teller through the voicing of trauma from a point of outward construction, or exposition to the transformation of the traumatic memory and the moving towards recovery,<sup>39</sup> can not be assumed to function in the same way for the teller whose trauma stories are created as fiction. There cannot be a generalised assumption that the writers have personally and directly experienced the trauma stories they ascribe to their female protagonists. A more useful approach is to consider whether the fundamentally positive effects of using *voice* for a woman as Other can also be assumed to have an effect on the author, and whether this is of significance when looking at the exposition of female trauma.

The act of writing fictional narratives by women and about women has already been discussed as constituting a personally and politically effective task, as the female authorial voice writing about trauma can be the liberation of the voice of the Other. This is an act contributing to gaining psychological freedom, while also presenting a challenge, a transgressive, 'disruptive excess' to the ideological structures that create women as an Other. The fictional trauma author's writing as an Other, *about* the Other from within a social, cultural and political framework, in which the Other experiences strategic and institutionalised oppression, is a journey of expression similar to that of the constructed female protagonists.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 175.

Like Franza, who is struggling to find the words to express herself and her experience as Other, Ingeborg Bachmann in the nineteen-sixties struggled to find the written words that could contain and communicate what she felt was a historically unspoken and as yet, unspeakable condition for women, including the female writer. In the *Frankfurt Lectures* Bachmann acknowledges the public resistance to and fear of the truth, and how writing about the unspeakable holds the potential for change:

Poetry like bread? This bread would have to be ground between the teeth and to reawaken hunger before appeasing it... For we are sleeping, we are sleepers, out of fear of having to look at ourselves and our world... But change is indeed possible. And the transforming effect of new works educates us to new perception, new feeling, new consciousness.<sup>40</sup>

Bachmann engages with the “limitations of language,” stipulating that “if we had the word, if we had language we would not need the weapons.”<sup>41</sup> This echoes Franza’s fictional experience of being without the ‘weapon’ of language, and thereby forcibly silenced by Jordan and the ‘society that keeps on killing.’ But unlike Franza, Bachmann is articulate and clear about her condition, she knows much more than Franza, who furtively gathers the clues of her traumatisation and hesitantly makes some connections between her personal experience and the wider, patriarchal systems of othering and violence. Bachmann knows who has silenced her, and why. Throughout her public lectures, addresses and interviews she was able to speak about the condition of voicelessness, using her writing to wade through the things “they have crammed me full,” in an exploration that was meant to give language to these processes and, destroy the “clichés” that are used to obscure the truth.<sup>42</sup> Bachmann was adamant that it was her task to highlight and correct her own lack of voice. Her search for voice was looking to create a literature that would be able to write honestly

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<sup>40</sup> Ingeborg Bachmann in Wolf, C. (1993). *The Author's Dimension*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press. 101.

<sup>41</sup> Ingeborg Bachmann in Achberger, K. R. (1995). *Understanding Ingeborg Bachmann*. Columbia, University of South Carolina Press. 60,61.

<sup>42</sup> Ingeborg Bachmann in Krick-Aigner, K. (2002). *Ingeborg Bachmann's Telling Stories - From Fairy Tale Beginnings and Holocaust Endings*. Riverside, Ariadne Press. 108.

about the times in which, even though post-war, the mechanisms of what she called fascism were still the order of the day. Bachmann's equation that likens living in silence to living in madness (making the connection between her own voicelessness and a manifestation of traumatisedness) intrinsically challenges notions of the norm through the literary expression of trauma.

As stated in chapter two, Christa Wolf picks up on Bachmann's analysis of voicelessness. She attempts to meet Bachmann's challenge that during "the confrontation of the impossible with the possible we can widen our possibilities,"<sup>43</sup> by using her own authorial voice in analysis and in fiction to engage with the 'impossible' trauma story: Cassandra's story of ancient othering, violence and enforced voicelessness. In Wolf's *Conditions of a Narrative*, Cassandra's historical voicelessness is also the voicelessness of all the female storytellers before Wolf, who like Cassandra were disregarded, misunderstood or forgotten. Wolf wants her exposure of the sources of trauma to provoke change, in the sense that her desire to write so that "the society in which one lives, receives the greatest use from it."<sup>44</sup>

Wolf, before she even gets to the fictional narrative of *Kassandra*, very methodically and clearly deconstructs her own voicelessness in the context of the history and the contemporary experience of women's voicelessness. She uses Bachmann as a bridge in this analysis, a bridge that spans the condition of the female writer from Bachmann's nineteen sixties/seventies to Wolf's own time of writing, less than twenty years later. Wolf's description of her own voice as potentially useful to herself and her society goes even further than Bachmann in her analysis of women's voicelessness. Throughout her narratives Wolf pinpoints the act of writing as involving the search for coherence in the face of the layers of traumatic contexts out of which she writes. This means that writing about the second-world war memory from *Kindheitsmuster*, or the fear of the cold war in *Conditions for a Narrative*, or the near loss of her brother in her novel *Störfall*, are ways in which the author continues to engage with hope and the possibility for change. Wolf not only expresses her own and other female writers' and storytellers' difficulty in accessing their voices, but she also writes about what it means once this has been achieved. The function of

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<sup>43</sup> Bird, S. (2003). *Women Writers and National Identity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Drees, H. (2002). *A Comprehensive Interpretation of the Life and Work of Christa Wolf, Twentieth - Century German Writer*. Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press. i.

writing, as it orders and bestows meaning, is like the healing of trauma in which these steps are necessary. Wolf acknowledges this when she states:

And since people have never completely abandoned the labor of writing even in the hardest times, it appears that mere life – life undescribed, untransmitted, uninterpreted, uncontemplated – cannot come to terms with itself directly.<sup>45</sup>

This reiterates the psychological necessity that during the “hardest times,” the times in which one is rendered the most voiceless, it is of great importance to “contemplate,” “describe,” “transmit,” and then “come to terms with.” Wolf moves from what she describes as Bachmann’s “compulsion to speak,”<sup>46</sup> to her own analysis of what it actually means to speak, and how it brings the speaker closer to understanding herself and her environment. Furthermore, Wolf states how such meaning-making, such liberation of voice, can make life for the speaker/author more tolerable.

For the Māori writers, Patricia Grace and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, writing from inside a colonised condition, a “culture of domination,” which “undermines individuals’ capacity to assert meaningful agency in their lives,”<sup>47</sup> means that the act of writing is one of the ways in which agency is asserted. The case of voicelessness for Māori writers is more acutely literal than it is for Bachmann and Wolf, as the issue of a lost/displaced language of te reo Māori reinforces a fundamental, cultural voicelessness based on the importance having ones own language. The authors’ challenge here is not merely the construction of a literary language that can describe the fragmentation of trauma, but moreover the construction of such experiences in a way that somehow captures, portrays and rebuilds this essential lost voice of a culture in the language of the colonisers. While Bachmann and Wolf chart the historical legacy of the exclusion of women’s voices as a context for their own experiences

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<sup>45</sup> Wolf, C. (1993). The Author's Dimension. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press. 23.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 104.

<sup>47</sup> hooks, b. (2005). Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery. Cambridge, South End Press.

of voice/lessness, Te Awēkotuku, and particularly Grace, as one of the earliest Māori writers, have to consider the historical exclusion of a whole culture, and the colonised exclusion of themselves as writers *and readers*:

There is the classic tale of the writer who, when asked by a publisher ‘Who will read your books?’, responded that Maoris would. The publisher’s reply was ‘But Maoris don’t read books’.<sup>48</sup>

Patricia Grace describes how this affects the way that literature, books, and reading for indigenous peoples becomes a perilous reinforcement of voicelessness, as she believes books:

1)...do not reinforce our values, actions, customs, culture and identity; 2) when they tell us about others they are saying that we do not exist; 3) they may be writing about us but are writing things which are untrue; and 4) they are writing about us but are saying negative and insensitive things which tell us that we are no good.<sup>49</sup>

The task of writing books that are ‘good’ for Māori readers requires this initial analysis that defines a lack, and then the subsequent construction of forms of expression that will tell stories that represent what has been silenced. These are stories that transcend the truthlessness of the stories that are told *about* the Other, rather than *by* the Other. Part of Grace’s challenge to this is to normalise the narratives she writes about, in her assertion that she writes about “ordinary people living their ordinary lives.”<sup>50</sup> The transformation of an ‘exoticised’ otherness into an ordinary experience echoes the analytical processes

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<sup>48</sup> Ihimaera, W. and D. S. Long (1982). Contemporary Maori Writing: A Context. Into the World of Light - An Anthology of Maori Writing. W. Ihimaera and D. S. Long. Auckland, Heinemann. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Patricia Grace: “Books are Dangerous,” quoted in Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 35.

<sup>50</sup> McRae, J. (1992). Patricia Grace. In the Same Room - Conversations with New Zealand Writers. E. Alley and M. Williams. Auckland, Auckland University Press. 292.

undertaken by feminist traumatology, which seek to transform concepts and treatment of women's trauma from being abnormal illnesses into constituting symptomatic reactions to "an enforced adaptation to a particular political and social arrangement."<sup>51</sup> Grace is able to chart trauma from these "enforced adaptations" to a colonising culture and to upheaval in her indigenous culture, to the point where community brings the desired closure for the female characters. This also creates a community which Grace seeks for herself as a storyteller:

[...] the story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people, and the people with the story...[as such] the indigenous community becomes the story that is a collection of individual stories.<sup>52</sup>

Like Mata, whose ability to express her trauma is linked to community, Grace places herself and her way of using her voice onto a cultural continuum, in which connection and innovation are essential to expression. Of the act of writing Grace states that "[we] express our culture in many ways, in every way available, just as our ancestors did. They used everything that was available."<sup>53</sup> In the process of attaining a voice, the author who uses all available tools, old and new, is part of the communal bond of culture that by Grace's authorial voice is described as a fundamental state, and through her fictional narrative is shown to provide the connection between voicing trauma and beneficial, personal integration of it.

Developing Patricia Grace's stated theme of working as the ancestors did by using all available methods for expression, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku uses an extensive array of new

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<sup>51</sup> Gilligan, C. (1998). *Wild Voices: Fiction, Feminism, and the Perennial Flowering of Truth. Analyzing the Different Voice - Feminist Psychological Theory and Literary Texts*. J. Fisher and E. S. Silber. Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.xii.

<sup>52</sup> Russel Bishop quoted in Tuhivai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 145.

<sup>53</sup> Sarti, A. (1998). *Spiritcarvers : Interviews with Eighteen Writers from New Zealand*. Amsterdam, Rodopi. 50.

and old methods to create spaces in which to experiment with her own voice and thereby free the voices of ancient heroines. The author introduces the adaptation of the sources and tools throughout *Ruahine*, with the intent of creating a mode of storytelling that suits her purpose. The re-telling of old stories in this way functions as an essential liberation of self:

Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes...a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying.<sup>54</sup>

Te Awekotuku ‘owns’ her stories as she includes herself in the group of Others traditionally excluded from having a voice. She highlights the silences of voices that are particularly othered, even within a community of Others, namely Māori women and Māori lesbian women.<sup>55</sup> Like Christa Wolf, Te Awekotuku has engaged in much non-fictional analysis about her own lack of voice, and like Patricia Grace, she also explores the notion of herself in community. The difference here is that Te Awekotuku asserts that she is in community with Māori culture, while simultaneously highlighting that this has some exclusivity to it, as the othered whom she is concerned with, such as lesbian wāhine, or ‘unconventional’ wāhine, have been relegated outside contemporary community. Any healing of trauma in Te Awekotuku’s narrative therefore entails more than the claiming of a legacy of kinship. Instead, the lack of community, or the exclusivity of community is expressed, and then, through the authorial voice, a new community is constructed. Te Awekotuku has commented on the creation of one’s ‘own version’ as being a restorative act, when she states that she is “lucky that my way of working things out is through working with words, writing.”<sup>56</sup> In *Ruahine* Te Awekotuku creates a place for her othered protagonists, and by

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<sup>54</sup> Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing Methodologies - Research and Indigenous Peoples. Dunedin, University of Otago Press. 28.

<sup>55</sup> “I’m concerned about Māori lesbian women, particularly aging Māori lesbians, because I think as a group we’ve been battered economically socially, emotionally, and spiritually.” Te Awekotuku, N. (1994). He Ngangahu. Mana Wahine - Women who Show the Way. A. Brown. Auckland, Reed. 30.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.24.

this act finds a place for herself in which to “work things out.” The act of writing is thereby given credit by the author as providing a site for reflection and consolidation, a safe space in which possibilities can be explored and claimed and a device that facilitates engagement with issues of the inner self.

This notion of writing as a site in which to access the self is echoed by the other three authors, where writing is an act in which their own voices are dealing with the world in which they are placed. That all four authors are writing out of contexts which cause trauma is unquestionable, whether it be the trauma of the Second World War, the trauma of belonging to a country and cultural system that brutally murdered or oppressed millions of Others, the trauma of being an Other based on gender and/or race and/or sexual orientation, or the trauma of living with the effects of a devastating colonisation of one’s culture. The extent, to which these contexts have provided the choices of fictional representation of the mechanisms of the triple-trauma, can be seen within each work examined in this thesis. There is no claim made by the authors or this analysis that the fictional traumas are, in fact, the authors’ own traumas, yet the processes of sublimation of trauma, meaning the re-formation of one’s own trauma experience into another kind of trauma, an imaginary trauma, is of interest in the analysis of the dynamics of writing about trauma.

What can certainly be said is that Bachmann, Wolf, Grace and Te Awekotuku all challenge the voicelessness of the Other, including any voicelessness of their own, through their act of writing. While there are differences in terms of the authors’ stated personal intent in regards to what this means to the readers who may also be othered or voiceless, or their society and culture in general, the use of writing in this way changes the authors’ own struggle to have a voice. Such expression of the othered voice through the creative act is inherently therapeutic, since the creative process that constitutes writing is both “healing and life enhancing.”<sup>57</sup> Engagement with one’s own voicelessness through writing facilitates the confrontation with one’s inner demons. The analysis of speechlessness and subsequent construction of a voice through the creation of narrative is the process of “creating a new

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<sup>57</sup> Ferrara, N. (2004). *Healing Through Art - Ritualized Space and Cree Identity*. Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press. 3.



self by deconstructing the old, redefining the components, and building a new, multivocal self.”<sup>58</sup>

If the finding of voice is an imperative progression for the female protagonists of the narratives, then the essential formation of voice achieved by the authors of the narratives has similarly powerful, therapeutic consequences. If “healing takes place within us as we speak the truth of our lives,”<sup>59</sup> then it does so whether our truth is delivered through a non-fictional testimony, or through our own truth that is fitted into, or re-formed in a fictional, literary space. In fact, the investigation of trauma in this fictional, literary sense opens up possibilities of dealing with trauma in what perhaps could be a safer way than voicing trauma in a non-fictional way, as it offers wider possibilities of inclusion and exploration. It allows the author to deal with trauma, including their own, in a way that transfers and inscribes trauma through the wide range of diversity, creating a “reflexive distance”<sup>60</sup> which can be a powerful way in which to voice trauma.

### *Trauma Resolution and the Female Reader*

Of interest in regards to this “reflexive distance” attributable to the writing of the fictional trauma story, is the consideration whether and how this impacts on the actual *reading* of fictional trauma. Could the reading of fictionally constructed trauma be a similarly safe space in which to engage with trauma? And does this entail the possibility of any benefit for the female reader in regards to her own experiences or perceptions of trauma? And if so, is this facilitated by witnessing the reconciliation of trauma depicted in the texts, or through the expression of women’s voices (that of author and protagonist)?

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> hooks, b. (2005). Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery. Cambridge, South End Press. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Whitehead, A. (2004). Trauma Fiction. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press. 92.

Determining what kinds of impact literary works have on readers is a complex question, in which a variety of factors preclude a single and definitive answer. When investigating women reading trauma narratives by and about women, of interest is the reading process and how this relates to the dynamics of trauma experience and articulation. Reception theorist Wolfgang Iser defines a process in which the reader ‘realizes’ the text, bringing it to life through a series of internal acts that are meaning-making and discovery procedures, both about the reader herself and about the text.<sup>61</sup> The important part of this practice in regards to trauma analysis is that this process can be said to resemble the ordering of the chaos that is trauma, undertaken by the female protagonists and writers of the trauma narratives. The reader is not given the whole story; fissures in the narrative determine the kind of strategies required by the reader to fill the gaps, to make sense in a similar way in which the fictional female trauma sufferers are seeking to structure their experiences by voicing them.

That this is a progression in which the reader is called upon to retrieve her own memory, her own experiences in regards to trauma, is unquestionable, as the “work” of meaning-making is the “very process [that] results ultimately in the awakening of responses within [her]self.”<sup>62</sup> In this sense, then, the reader participates in the de-coding of the unwritten of the trauma experiences, such as making sense of Franza’s incoherent and fragmented statements, or Cassandra’s trying to access the truth behind the Trojan patriarchal war rhetoric, piecing together the multi-voiced narratives of *Cousins*, and re-discovering the trauma experiences and responses of Māori mythological heroines. The more gaps there are in the narrative, the more ample opportunities there are for the reader to become truly involved in employing her imagination, as the unsaid is crucial to truly involving the reader:

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<sup>61</sup> Iser, W. (1980). *The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach*. Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. J. P. Tompkins. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 51.

...it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things; indeed without the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the texts, we should not be able to use our imagination.<sup>63</sup>

Negotiating the unspoken of the trauma narratives is not just a matter of deciphering what is not said, but also of creatively establishing what meaning this has in regards to one's own personal context. Mirroring the developments undertaken by the trauma subject and the author in their quest to articulate the unspeakable, the reader of the fictional trauma narratives forms the final link in the exposition of trauma, being what trauma theory regards as the important 'witness' to the story, who is also a co-creator of the trauma meaning and reconciliation. In this way the reader enacts a communication that links herself to the author and the female protagonist(s) of the trauma narrative. The act of creating understanding and significance of the trauma narrative is the filling in of the unsaid, which is done for the protagonist but also by the reader for herself, meaning that "whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins."<sup>64</sup> This is a pivotal element of the trauma story as to a large extent it is a story about being without or outside of communication. The textual communication that is achieved through this process is therefore of importance in dispelling the sense of isolation which lies at the core of the narrated trauma experiences. This is done through the involvement of the reader in formulating expression, by witnessing, and through personal involvement in the story.

It is also a communication with the authors of the narratives, who, as in the case of Bachmann, Wolf, Grace and Te Awekotuku are *readers* themselves as they re-read old texts and re-create them in their trauma narratives. Like the authors, the readers of these narratives are reading the subtext of the 'old' narratives, integrating the old with the new in consideration of each reader's own trauma context:

This would mean that consciousness forms at the point at which author and reader converge, and at the same time it would result in the cessation of the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 58.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 24.

temporary self-alienation that occurs to the reader when [her] consciousness brings to life the ideas formulated by the author.<sup>65</sup>

Reading the fictional trauma story is yet another way in which the representation of fictional trauma creates a community, where the active deciphering of trauma, the considering and voicing of traditionally silenced female experiences, become shared experiences. This is in accordance with feminist notions of reader theory, where reading is seen as a potentially powerful *activity*, in which the connections between female author, protagonist and reader are essential, and the voicing of the previously silenced is of extreme importance, as reading and interpretation is:

...a mode of *praxis*. The point is not merely to interpret literature in various ways; the point is to *change the world*. We cannot afford to ignore the activity of reading, for it is here that literature is realised as *praxis*.  
...Literature acts on the world by acting on its readers.<sup>66</sup>

This creates an important link to feminist trauma theory, as the facilitation of voicing women's trauma and the processes involved in the reconciliation of trauma within a world where women are othered, is also a praxis with the goal of effecting change. The answer to the question of whether the female reading of fictional trauma by women plays a part in this process, in a broad sense, has to be yes. The political aspect of this reading praxis can be demonstrated by the ample feminist literary interpretations that have looked at the older texts in this thesis, Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza* and Wolf's *Kassandra*, and to a smaller extent Grace's *Cousins*,<sup>67</sup> where the connection between author, protagonists and reader is expanded to connect to a "community of readers."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Iser, W. (1980). *The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach*. Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. J. P. Tompkins. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press. 66.

<sup>66</sup> Schweickart, P. P. (1995). *Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading*. Readers and Reading. A. Bennett. New York, Longman. 70.

<sup>67</sup> At the time of writing this thesis Te Awekotuku's *Ruahine*, the newest of the narratives, has not yet received the same critical analyses.

<sup>68</sup> Schweickart, P. P. (1995). *Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading*. Readers and Reading. A. Bennett. New York, Longman. 88.

The personal aspect of experiencing a change through fictional trauma narratives derives from the interaction of self with the text, something that happens regardless of individual circumstances, history or context. Reading *does* have the potential for personal change, in that once our personal faculties are activated, in particular the way our own memory interacts to shape meaning out of a trauma story, they are challenged to not resume their “original shape.”<sup>69</sup> In this sense, reading is an experience in which the aspect of *understanding* is central, an aspect that may continue to be engaged with long after the reading of the actual text has concluded.

Reading can involve the dissolution of “subject-object division that is otherwise prerequisite for all knowledge and all observation,”<sup>70</sup> thereby providing a rare entry into the heart of the experience of women’s trauma, and potentially accessing personal depths of cognition, memory and feeling. This means that reading fictional trauma can be transformative, as the reader alters the text to bring it to life and make sense, at the same time as interacting with her own story:

In the act of reading, having to think something that we have not yet experienced does not mean only being in a position to conceive or even understand it, it also means that such acts of conception are possible and successful to the degree that they lead to something being formulated in us.<sup>71</sup>

Readers’ formulations of the ‘unformulated’ lie at the core of trauma exposition, whether non-fictional or fictional. As this provides the impetus that leads to the journey towards reconciliation of trauma, the reader is placed in the midst of such a reconciliatory process. For women readers as Other based on their gender and race and/or sexual orientation etc,

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<sup>69</sup> Iser, W. (1980). *The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach*. Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. J. P. Tompkins. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press. 54.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 66.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 67.

the identification with trauma that results from being an Other is a strong and realistic possibility. Such engagement with literature, occurring on a prospective deep, personal level is what bell hooks means when she comments on the ability of reading to be a part of the journey towards healing:

Reading inspirational writing is an essential part of self-recovery. We are sustained by one another's testimony when we find ourselves falling or falling into despair.<sup>72</sup>

While there is no definitive, single way in which a reader will react to fictional trauma narratives, the process of reading trauma does invite the deconstruction of Other and of self. Questions arise as to how the reading process and impact may differ if a male reader as opposed to a female, or a non-indigenous reader as opposed to an indigenous reader undertakes it. Nevertheless, the access that fictional trauma facilitates to “ourselves and so discover[s] what had previously seemed to elude consciousness,”<sup>73</sup> remains the pivotal relationship between reading and trauma. Being a reader of fictional trauma narratives is a compelling and empowering part of ascertaining the sources of trauma, articulating and exposing trauma, and integrating it in a world where trauma occupies a notoriously large position in people's lives.

### ***Fictional Trauma and Trauma Resolution in Society***

If the fictional trauma narrative is able to evoke or access a part of consciousness that allows the uncovering of trauma and moves it towards integration on a personal and political level for the female writer, protagonist and reader, then how does that situate the trauma texts within the culture and/or society in which they are contextualised? How does this process of engagement with trauma occurring in a literary sphere interact with the

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<sup>72</sup> hooks, b. (2005). Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery. Cambridge, South End Press. 146.

<sup>73</sup> Iser, W. (1980). The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach. Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism. J. P. Tompkins. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press. 68.

societies from which the trauma has found its sources? And in which, if any, way could this be seen to contribute towards an awareness of trauma, sought by feminist traumatologists in an aim to move us “to a radical re-visioning of our understanding of the human condition?”<sup>74</sup>

Van der Kolk and McFarlane consider that the general circulation of trauma stories is indeed something that has the potential to change a society’s perception of and engagement with trauma, as the stories inspire or promote *actions* that can lead to change:

Trauma may act as a catalyst for social change: By giving voice to their own misery, many social critics, political leaders, and artists have been able to transform their trauma into a way of helping people...it can be sublimated into social or artistic action and thus can serve as a powerful agent for social change.<sup>75</sup>

While this is not a generic or absolute outcome of the fictional trauma story, the point is that any act of exposing the traumatising mechanisms and enforcements of othering, is an act that goes against the stories that have concealed such oppression. The expression of a traditionally unvoiced story of women’s trauma “can be extraordinarily disruptive to the social order.”<sup>76</sup> If, as has been already stated in the case of the female authoring and readership of trauma narratives, the deconstruction of trauma and the process of making meaning of it are *active* and *transformative* engagements, then the notion of change can have wider, social repercussions. The ways in which this occurs are here defined as a spectrum. This spectrum constitutes the varying ways in which concepts of trauma are expanded in regards to the Other, and in which the previously unsaid becomes expressed. This spectrum furthermore comprises the ways in which the sources of trauma are exposed,

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<sup>74</sup> Laura Brown quoted in Root, M. P. P. (1992). *Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality*. Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 230.

<sup>75</sup> Mc Farlane, A. and B. van der Kolk (1996). *Trauma and its Challenge to Society*. Traumatic Stress - The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society. B. van der Kolk, A. Mc Farlane and L. Weisaeth. New York, The Guildford Press. 33.

<sup>76</sup> Hanne, M. (1994). *Narrative and Power*. The Power of the Story: Fiction and Political Change. Providence, Berghahn Books. 12.

while also providing models of reconciliation of trauma. The four narratives analysed in this thesis all fit onto this spectrum at different points. While they all contain the above elements within their texts, they do so to different degrees and by differing means.

Ingeborg Bachmann in *Das Buch Franza* creates a chronologically early development of the concept of trauma for women. Bachmann's reference to contemporary sources of trauma in what she calls fascism, an ideological and systematic way of thinking and acting against the Other, is used as a way of showing pervasive and perpetual trauma sources for women that, as Kuhn states, go far beyond the Second World War:

...Franza is a rejection of (national) monumentalist historiography...in favour of a commemorative remembrance of and mourning for the unnamed victims, for those traditionally excluded from the historical record.<sup>77</sup>

Linking these sources of public traumatising to the private traumatising that is endured by Franza was, at the time of Bachmann's writing, a new assertion, in which women's trauma became not merely re-framed, but also made equal to the male, social trauma which was just beginning to be dealt with in nineteen-sixties Europe. Fragmentary, disjointed and potentially elusive, the model of trauma presented by Bachmann in *Das Buch Franza* is nevertheless a model that rewrites popular notions of what constitutes the traumatic, and connects private and public spheres. Furthermore, the novel seeks to break out of the Eurocentric by using early post-colonial theories on the Other of colonial history, such as the writings of Frantz Fanon, in its analyses of othering. In her trauma exposition Bachmann makes these important, cross-cultural links, expanding them not just to explain Franza's experience, but also to provide a historical context that shows the mechanisms of colonisation and violence to have gone hand in hand with trauma interminably throughout history.

Bachmann's representation of the sources of trauma and the effect they have on Franza provides a pioneering recognition of what lies beneath trauma, and is a major contribution

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<sup>77</sup> Kuhn, A. (1993). "Ingeborg Bachmann's Der Fall Franza: Myth, History, Utopia." *History of European Ideas* 16(4). 614.



towards an expansive view of what constitutes trauma for women. It is also a very early view, in the sense that society in Bachmann's time was, in many ways, not ready to fully embrace or comprehend these new representations, instead positioning the author onto an intellectual margin of her society.<sup>78</sup> Due to the fragmentary nature of the text, one can point to the way in which the author herself irresolutely and at times disjointedly embraced her new ideological and literary creation, reflecting the ongoing struggle to 'find the words' that Franza lacks. That Bachmann was ahead of her time became obvious to the feminist literary critics, who, during the "Bachmann renaissance"<sup>79</sup> in the nineteen-eighties found many of her representational models to anticipate much of the feminist thinking that was just being formulated. The new and ongoing criticism of Bachmann's writing has succeeded in situating the author and *Das Buch Franza* in a central and pivotal role in post-war German literature. *Das Buch Franza* offers a model of women's trauma that anticipated and constructed many definitions and configurations of the trauma experience that would later be formulated by feminist traumatology seeking for a way in which to integrate the definitions and healing of trauma into a traumatising society.

Like *Das Buch Franza*, Christa Wolf's *Kassandra* draws on a contemporary context of traumatising circumstances. Wolf expresses the challenges of living in a nuclear 'target area' during the cold war, providing an early engagement with the traumatising German reality of the early nineteen-eighties. While discourse and criticism of the cold war was starting to emerge during this time, Wolf felt that there was not enough linking of the current situation with Europe's past in terms of analysing an ideology that seemed to be perpetually producing the same violent outcomes. In *Kassandra* Wolf offers a comprehensive and systematic exposure of the sources of trauma, meaning the ideological framework of patriarchal societies that claim to do one thing (such as, protect the people, especially women), while in fact doing another (subjugating them).

Wolf's exposure of the sources of trauma is more precisely analytical and clearer than Bachmann's, as though in the twenty years between their narratives more space had become

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<sup>78</sup> "It is important to note that Bachmann herself did not have a popular discourse with which to discuss the Holocaust at the time..." See Krick-Aigner, K. (2002). Ingeborg Bachmann's Telling Stories - From Fairy Tale Beginnings and Holocaust Endings. Riverside, Ariadne Press. 104.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 21.

available for the woman writer's voice in Europe. Wolf writes from within a classical, European context, choosing a 'high' cultural area to deconstruct and re-write in the classical story of Troy. She develops the model of women's trauma by making very distinct links between the sources and modes of traumatising and the outcomes for the women of Troy. There is a challenge to the traditional depiction of Cassandra (and, by implication, the tradition of the depiction of the 'madwoman' in psychology and literature) by showing the actual stability of Cassandra's mind, and the inevitability of her body acting out her mind's conflicts.

Christa Wolf also goes further in her engagement with trauma by showing the detrimental, traumatising effects that are experienced by the traumatisers themselves, as the men who are doing the violent othering, Trojans and Greeks alike, slowly 'fall apart.' Wolf locates the trauma sources and their effects across time, situating *Kassandra* at one of the crucial beginnings of Wolf's society. Like *Das Buch Franza*, this creates a model of contemporary trauma for women, as well as a historical *legacy* that is still being acted out today. While Wolf as an author may have had more freedom than Bachmann to give voice to these taboo topics, it is important to remember that Wolf was writing from within the system of the German Democratic Republic, in which these themes "were nonexistent and officially forbidden," meaning that Wolf required "exceptional courage to write about them."<sup>80</sup> Unlike Bachmann's later, post-humous critical recognition, Christa Wolf and *Kassandra* found immediate acclaim and international readership.<sup>81</sup> Wolf's writing provoked academic and social responses that took up her themes of the mechanisms of violence, confirming to some extent Kathleen Komar's view that:

...contemporary women writers produce revisions that become clearly subversive acts with enough weight and authority to precipitate genuine cultural rethinking.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Resch, M. (1997). *Understanding Christa Wolf - Returning Home to a Foreign Land*. Understanding Modern European and Latin American Literature. J. Hardin. Columbia, University of South Carolina Press. 8.

<sup>81</sup> "It is a remarkable and unparalleled feat for an East German writer to establish a worldwide readership and to earn critical acclaim in the East as well as the West." Ibid. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Komar, K. (2003). Reclaiming Klytemnestra - Revenge or Reconciliation. Urbana, University of Illinois Press. 11.

That Wolf presents the possibility of an alternative to living in a traumatising society, and shows a degree of the integration of Cassandra's trauma, fleetingly yet more distinct than Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza*, makes another contribution towards the expansion of the way in which women's trauma is represented and processed, an expansion which looks even further towards the development of feminist traumatology.

Patricia Grace's *Cousins* locates the sources of trauma in the same ideological structures of othering as Bachmann and Wolf. Grace develops the post-colonial theory, such as experimented with by Bachmann, and utilises the context of the European traditions, from which Wolf writes, in a new way. The narrative of *Cousins* is situated within a bi-cultural framework that includes the Pākehā heritage of Europe as it overshadows, or uncomfortably contains, Māori society. The influences on the story and its protagonists are both Pākehā and Māori, as the new sources of trauma that are represented explore this dysfunctional and unequal juxtaposition of cultures. Where Bachmann's notion of colonisation is more abstract, presenting a general mechanism of women's othering, Grace's depiction of colonisation is a real and concrete structure within each of the character's lives. In this way the sources and the impact of trauma expand significantly, as they represent racial othering. This foreshadows an important development in trauma theory in the decade following the publication of *Cousins*, where the recognition of racial trauma is declared as a crucial element of trauma engagement:

...until the daily occurrence of racial trauma becomes an important part of trauma theory, it will be addressing neither structural nor the historical traumas of the Twentieth Century, nor will it provide a viable theoretical paradigm for the twenty first.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, Grace begins to compare and contrast the sources of trauma from inside this bi-cultural framework, through the exploration of how trauma manifests itself and is dealt with by differing cultural ideologies. Unlike Bachmann and Wolf's texts, where an alternative to, or a model of healing from trauma is only momentarily or fragmentarily

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<sup>83</sup> Burrows, V. (2004). Whiteness and Trauma: The Mother- Daughter Knot in the Fiction of Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid and Toni Morrison. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

constructed, *Cousins* creates a paradigm for psychological health which highlights the importance of the protagonists' integration into Māori culture. Writing such an exposition of the colonial sources of trauma during the early nineteen-nineties in Aotearoa was part of a larger discourse on the consequences of colonisation, in which the particular effects and concerns of wāhine Māori were only just beginning to be expressed. As one of the first published Māori writers and the first published female Māori writer, Grace's influence in the formation of Māori literature has been formidable, being part of the general evolution of New Zealand literature, or as Ihimaera states, as:

...one of the most exciting experiences in New Zealand literature. In the process New Zealand literary forms, concerns and directions have been transformed in ways which could hardly have been foretold as little as thirty years ago.<sup>84</sup>

Whether the trauma exposition in the novel *changed* colonial oppression in Aotearoa to any major extent is debatable, yet the point is that Grace provides images and models of Māori women and their experiences which were hitherto largely unarticulated and unexplored. This means that these experiences have the potential to affect the consciousness of Pākehā and Māori alike, as the reader negotiates the uncomfortable transitions between the enveloping Pākehā world and the emerging Māori world. In comparison to the narratives of Wolf and Bachmann, *Cousins* broadens the definition of Other as inclusive of the indigenous woman's experience, thereby broaching an area of trauma engagement which was, during Bachmann's early, courageous attempts, simply unheard of, and during the time of writing *Cousins* as yet unacknowledged and unformulated within investigations into traumatology or Māori psychology.

Like Grace's *Cousins*, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's *Ruahine* presents an entry into the trauma experiences of wāhine Māori, and as with *Kassandra*, this is achieved by re-writing mythology. Unlike Grace in *Cousins*, Te Awekotuku frames her stories within pre-colonial, Māori settings. Just as *Das Buch Franza* uses cross-cultural notions as part of the *European*

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<sup>84</sup> Ihimaera, W. and D. S. Long (1982). Contemporary Maori Writing: A Context. *Into the World of Light - An Anthology of Maori Writing*. W. Ihimaera and D. S. Long. Auckland, Heinemann.

story, the stories in *Ruahine* utilise a variety of European and other cross-cultural influences, adapting Pākehā contexts and influences to the text's dominant Māori framework. The origins of trauma are expanded, as Te Awekotuku explores the sources of trauma within this context, finding the Other in the representation of women that don't quite 'fit' Māori society.

*Ruahine* moves into the realm of analysing culture the sources and manifestation of women's trauma from within Māori culture. In this way, Te Awekotuku shows a different kind of structural dysfunction and oppression of women as an Other. By creating succinct, culturally meaningful and *active* ways in which trauma is resolved by the traumatised women, the author also develops the engagement with trauma in a way that none of the other three narratives do. These representations of trauma resolution bring to life contemporary feminist theory of trauma, where the "principle of restoring control to the traumatized person"<sup>85</sup> is a key factor in women healing from the effects of trauma. It also acknowledges that wāhine Māori must have the determination and ownership of models for expressing and treating trauma. Demonstrating the power of wahine Māori paradigms, or knowledge about reconciling with trauma is an inherent challenge to what has been the "issue of Western classification of Māori knowledge as 'myth,'"<sup>86</sup> as it is through the use of mythology that these models for healing can become expressed. In terms of Te Awekotuku's literary achievement, she is the first Māori woman to broach the subject of the mis-representations of Māori women in mythology *and* actually re-write these mythologies to address those issues.

Like Bachmann, Grace, and particularly Wolf before her, Te Awekotuku is also using the historical point of the narrative to draw it back into the contemporary experience of othering women. The contextualising across time, genre and culture allows for a statement about the perpetuation and continuity of the sources of women's trauma. Exposing trauma in this way places *Ruahine* defiantly within Māori culture, and delivers a new and daring approach to the sources of trauma and its manifestations. *Ruahine* presents a contemporary

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<sup>85</sup> Lewis Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. London, Basic Books. 134.

<sup>86</sup> Stewart, T. (1997). Historical Interfaces between Maori and Psychology. *Mai i Rangiatea*. P. T. Whaiti, M. McCarthy and A. Durie. Auckland, Auckland University Press: Bridget Williams Books.

and ancient truth about women's trauma that is, just like Bachmann, Wolf and Grace's truths at the time of their writing, a risky exposé, a text that in time will be regarded as a strong statement about Māori women's othering, or as hooks states:

If it remains a mark of our oppression that as black people we cannot be dedicated to truth in our lives, without putting ourselves at risk, then it is a mark of our resistance, our commitment to liberation, when we claim to speak the truth of our reality anyway.<sup>87</sup>

Commonality between the four authors examined in this thesis, and their narratives spanning across times and cultures, comes from the fact that through their representations they all *expose* and *dissect* the sources of trauma for women as they see them operating during their time. Furthermore, these expositions are of a pioneering nature, in the sense that they represent early criticism of the structures that enable/construct the sources of trauma against women. How such subversive criticism interacts with the society in which it is created, and which, to some extent it represents, comes from the way in which readers of the narratives can identify the reality within the texts, thereby accepting them "to be accurate representations of real human and social processes."<sup>88</sup> In each case the narratives pre-date or sit on the 'cusp' of an evolving larger discourse about oppression and traumatisation. In this way the narratives have, or will, in time succeed in:

...complementing and aggregating with the narratives of other kinds...from which political and social action primarily derives, or in competition with them by a process of capping or reframing or disruption. In some striking instances, narrative fiction may insert a new provocative element into one or more of the controlling metanarratives of a particular society and so contribute to radical change...<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> hooks, b. (2005). Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery. Cambridge, South End Press. 17.

<sup>88</sup> Hanne, M. (1994). Narrative and Power. The Power of the Story: Fiction and Political Change. Providence, Berghahn Books . 34.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.36.

In regards to the evolution of traumatology, the narratives of *Das Buch Franza*, *Kassandra*, *Cousins*, and *Ruahine* have all contributed new and provocative elements to the way that women's trauma has been viewed within the larger socio/psychological context of each society. The deconstruction of women's trauma, which the narratives undertake, opens up the subject of trauma, and looks beyond the trend of focusing on particular symptomatology. Most importantly, these narratives, through various means and in varying degrees, have provided representations not just of women's 'victimisation,' but also of women's strength in the face of the traumatising they encounter. This is a significant contribution to the area of trauma studies, where the social legacy consists of:

...a history of distorted research that has stressed the emotional pathologies and behavioural deficits of marginalized communities, [while] less research has illustrated their strength, resources and resilience.<sup>90</sup>

While this resilience is particularly expressed in the narratives of Grace and Te Awekotuku, the fact that *all* the traumatised female protagonists voice their stories and defy silencing in the face of an overwhelming, oppressive framework, represents models for strength and the drawing on women's own voices as a powerful resource in the face of trauma. Resilience is demonstrated by all four narratives looking for their own, personal truth, which in itself constitutes a powerful disturbance to, or subversion of, the cultures and societies out of which the narratives originate. The search for the truth of the narrative attacks the very core of the sources of trauma, where othering through violence and voicelessness is made possible by the concealing of the truth, as "a culture of domination is necessarily a culture where lying is an acceptable norm. It is, in fact, required."<sup>91</sup>

The fictional narratives of trauma analysed in this thesis can therefore be said to provide representations of the very thing that feminist traumatology has been attempting to provide through research and theory on women's trauma, which is a way of drawing "attention to the experience of oppressed people." This makes the production of such literature, like

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<sup>90</sup> Bryant-Davis, T. (2005). *Thriving in the Wake of Trauma - A Multicultural Guide*. Westport, Praeger. 5.

<sup>91</sup> hooks, b. (2005). *Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery*. Cambridge, South End Press. 12.

feminist traumatology, a powerful and “inherently political enterprise.”<sup>92</sup> These narratives can be seen as presenting a *range* of the experiences of trauma, and the reading and study of them can provide a constructive tool for comparison across time and culture. They provide what Maria P. Root sees as a crucial space to focus on in regards to the study of trauma:

By moving away from the debate of which experiences are “valid traumas”...we are more likely to be able to examine the similarities, and the differences between and among traumatic experiences in a way that may increase our understanding of human behaviour.<sup>93</sup>

Analysis of the connections among these literatures facilitates the notion of growth, or trauma resolution in the sense that this creates a “lesson of possibilities,”<sup>94</sup> which was expanded on in the introductory chapter of this thesis. In terms of representing a range of women’s trauma expressions, the four narratives of this thesis can be seen to link with and connect to each other across times and cultures, with similarities and differences which enlighten the reading from one to another. They provide creative, yet illuminating representations of issues that contemporary feminist traumatology theorises, and allows a much needed entry into the space that constitutes trauma for women. Essentially, they bring trauma stories forth from out of the dark, providing images that tap into the larger consciousness of women throughout the world. The community that is established by the creation, reading and writing about women’s fictional trauma narratives like Ingeborg Bachmann’s *Das Buch Franza*, Christa Wolf’s *Kassandra*, Patricia Grace’s *Cousins*, and Ngahua Te Awekotuku’s *Ruahine* disrupts the isolation which lies at the core of the trauma experience. The narratives create a community of women who are engaged with trauma, in which the search for meaning about trauma occurs on a personal and private, and a public and shared level. This process of engagement presents a collective paradigm of resistance against the sources of trauma and a transcendence of the experience of trauma:

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<sup>92</sup> Lewis Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. London, Basic Books. 237.

<sup>93</sup> Root, M. P. P. (1992). Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality. *Personality and Psychopathology - Feminist Reappraisals*. L. S. Brown and M. Ballou. New York, The Guildford Press. 251.

<sup>94</sup> Nnaemeka, O. (1994). Bringing African Women into the Classroom: Rethinking Pedagogy and Epistemology. *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*. M. Higonnet. Ithaca, Cornell University Press. 304.



No level of individual self actualisation alone can sustain the marginalized and oppressed. We must be linked to collective struggle, to communities of resistance that move us outward, into the world.<sup>95</sup>

This thesis has shown that the fictional writing about the sources of women's trauma can expose a range of ideological connections, and that the writing and reading about these connections, and the specific experiences they create, constitute a valid and purposeful trauma discourse. Bachmann's, Wolf's, Grace's and Te Awekotuku's narratives chart the existence of trauma for women, and while they may be depicted in a *fictional* context, the reality of the structures and methods of traumatising, alongside the justifications for these can be recognised across the board. In these fictional representations of trauma the similarities in terms of how the triple trauma of othering, violence and voicelessness operate against women and their physical and mental health, constitutes the link between the experiences of these German, Austrian and New Zealand Māori female protagonists, writers *and* their female readers. The moving outward into the world with stories about women's trauma is thereby definitely promoted through these trauma engagements, as they provide what I believe is the most fundamental achievement and the most crucial aspect of the fictional trauma narratives: the providing of an individual *and* communal safe space for the Other to find and recognise the 'self' within the pages of the story.

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<sup>95</sup> hooks, b. (2005). Sisters of the Yam - Black Women and Self-Recovery. Cambridge, South End Press. 115.

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