

TIME, PAIN AND MYTH IN
INGEBORG BACHMANN'S "DAS BUCH FRANZA"
AND ANNE DUDEN'S "ÜBERGANG"

by

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A thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, M.Phil.(B)

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August 2008

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Abstract

This thesis examines time, pain and myth in Ingeborg Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza* (1978) and Anne Duden's *Übergang* (1982) to elucidate tensions between gender and nationalism. Bachmann (1926-1973) and Duden (1942-) reflect a keen awareness of feminist theoretical and textual developments to provide an escape from pain through myth. I suggest the texts reveal that the female subject is linked to the silenced witnessing of a National Socialist past and therefore any productive discussions require a return to this historical site. However, Bachmann and Duden approach this claim differently. Chapter One proposes that *Das Buch Franza* and *Übergang* engage with modern German history as part of a time construct, which fails to capture the silences. Historic accounts exclude certain voices and therefore contradict what constitutes collective memory. Chapter Two illustrates how traumatic memories resurface violently in the body. As a result, the female protagonists question their transient existences within patriarchy and time. Pain unsettles boundaries and enables movement between past and present. Chapter Three proposes a reconciliation of the transient female subject in mythology. Alternative narrative strategies are established through Christian and Egyptian imageries and utilized to reinterpret violence, vocalize silenced women and offer a theoretical position in myth/"home".

In memory of my grandparents

Acknowledgments

My thesis took longer to complete than I anticipated but I am ever more grateful for all that I learned in the process. I want to thank foremost my supervisor William Dodd for his patience and guidance. I also would like to extend this gratitude to Alex Hughes who was present at the start of the thesis. I am thankful to the faculty members of the Gender Studies Programme, the staff at the School of Humanities and the Progress Board for readily providing support throughout my studies.

I would like to graciously acknowledge the help of Willi Goetschel, Dirk Götsche, Margaret Littler, John K. Noyes and. I am indebted to you for the time you took to offer helpful commentaries.

My motivation for this thesis would not have sustained without the encouragement from Claire Harnett-Mann, Martina Heeb, Tomoyo Ito, Airi Iwata, John Koster, Ivan V. R. Perez, Mandy Poetzsch and Kanshi Sato. A special thanks to Christiane Fleischer for our many discussions in Birmingham and Berlin.

Finally, to my family whose endless kindness continues to inspire me.

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0. Introduction

Ingeborg Bachmann comments in the foreword of *Das Buch Franza* (1966/7) that her unfinished work is about a woman on her way to die.¹ Similarly, Anne Duden's short stories *Übergang* (1982) revolve around a nameless woman on 'a journey into death'.² This statement overshadows the content of the narratives. Why do these women die? What is the significance of this bodily violence for Bachmann and Duden? This thesis retraces the events preceding their deaths to show how violence marks the female body in various ways and how these are mapped in the texts through time, pain and myth.

Austrian author Bachmann (1926-1973) investigated female identity intensively in the *Ways of Dying Project*. Among this cycle of novels is her unfinished work *Das Buch Franza*.³ The book consists of a foreword and three sections (Return to Galicia, Jordanian Time and Egyptian Darkness). Franza, estranged wife of prominent Austrian psychiatrist Leopold Jordan, escapes a mental institution and is found by her brother Martin, mediocre historian/geologist, in Galicia.⁴ He reluctantly takes his ailing sister to Egypt where she dies as a result of a violent encounter on the steps of the pyramids. Franza's travels are an investigation of history, gender and violence. Bachmann is exploring how violence is imagined or silenced at certain moments.

German author Anne Duden (1942-) adopts a similar line of questioning in her first work *Übergang*. Set mainly in 1980s Berlin, eight short stories portray a nameless thirty-three year old woman who is continuously exposed to violence at the hands of psychological and

¹ Ingeborg Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza: das Todesarten-Projekt in Einzelausgaben*, ed. Dirk Göttsche and Monika Albrecht (München; Zürich: Piper Verlag, 1998), 196.

Das Buch Franza translated into English means *The Book of Franza*.

² Uwe Schweikert, "Nachwort," in *Übergang*, Anne Duden (Hamburg: Rotbuch Verlag, 1996), 133. *Übergang* translated into English means *Transition*. The published English translation bears the title "Opening of the Mouth".

³ *Das Buch Franza* was written in 1966/7 and published posthumously in 1978.

⁴ Leopold Jordan is referred to as 'the Fossil' or 'the professor'.

physical attackers. Memories of Nazism add to this painful bodily existence. Her trauma comes from the inability to respond to disturbing events during her childhood; her father's invalidation of these experiences; and particularly the feeling of being silenced. She remembers her past, like Franza, through her body while others remain unaware. Duden states: "That what is 'unrepresentable', is representable, actually has a voice. It is an interest for the voiceless; already as a child, when people said 'we cannot speak about it' or 'that is not representable' I always have thought, 'why actually?'"⁵ Duden uses violence, like Bachmann, to reveal the gendered negotiations of power. She differs from Bachmann in that her uses of violent interactions dominate the short stories as a means to sift out what is being overlooked or what remains in the process. This introductory section explores some key elements of the historical and literary backgrounds of Bachmann's and Duden's writing; whilst also contextualizing and justifying the theoretical and methodological approaches underpinning this thesis.

Both texts suggest that Austrian and German gender identity is inextricably linked to unresolved trauma resulting from an unresolved National Socialist past. The women suffer physically as an expression of their trauma since language fails to accommodate this translation. Language is seen as part of the male economy and I propose that the female figure Franza in *Das Buch Franza* and the nameless woman in *Übergang* attempt to move out of this silenced position.

Chapter One opens with a textual exploration of time as constructed through documented history, technological progress and collective memory. Gender is recognized as

⁵ Teresa Ludden, *'Das Undarstellbare darstellen': Kulturkritik and the Representation of Difference in the works of Anne Duden* (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2006), 9.

"Das, was als 'undarstellbar' gilt, ist doch darstellbar, hat doch irgendwo eine Stimme. Das ist ein Interesse an dem Stimmlosen; als Kind schon, wenn Leute gesagt haben, 'darüber können wir nicht reden' oder 'das ist nicht darstellbar' habe ich immer gedacht, 'wieso eigentlich?'"

an effect of this lineage of power. I employ Sigmund Freud's case studies in "Fixation to Trauma" to demonstrate that the characters are arrested in the past through traumatic experiences. Their existence in the male economy is what Rosi Braidotti's terms the 'nomadic subject'. The nameless woman and Franza feel isolated in their surroundings and attempt to move out of their immobile state by confronting the past.

Chapter Two shows how mainstream history fails to recognize female contributions to the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* debates.⁶ Franza and the nameless woman produce bodily memories, which are alternatives to documented history. They purge their trauma when their bodies are in a state of extreme pain. The psychological and physical suffering allows the protagonists to suspend the experience of time, enable movement and mourn the past.

Chapter Three argues that the protagonists attempt to locate a voice or 'home' away from their silenced position. While language is another aspect of male economy, Bachmann and Duden propose varying returns to the uncanny or myth to facilitate the emergence of a female voice. I turn to Freud's essay on "The Uncanny" to establish how myth symbolizes a home. This desired presence of the "I", produced at a moment of violence, takes place in transition between textual death and mythical rebirth. I examine the death scenes to explain this arrival.

Finally, I conclude my discussions with a brief look at the significance of *Das Buch Franza* and *Übergang* for German feminist literature. I examine issues of race, for which Sara Lennox and Leslie Adelson offer excellent critiques of Bachmann and Duden. They question the position of the authors as white, non-Jewish, German and Austrian women narrating the National Socialist past. Especially, their examination of the racial others is unexplored in the texts such as Arab women and black soldiers.

⁶ *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is a compound German word to denote processing or coming to terms with the past by actively dealing with it.

West German Feminism 1970 – 1990s

West German feminist writings between the 1970s and 1990s signal a theoretical crisis which is better described as an impasse. A productive engagement with Germany's atrocious past was difficult because many German and Austrian women viewed themselves largely as victims. Furthermore, the ambivalent stance towards women and violence remained nestled in the perpetrator/victim dichotomy. Feminist writers also faced immediate concerns on national and global levels with the threat of nuclear conflict, the Vietnam War environmental deterioration and increased German state censorship. These concerns not only emphasized a need to reevaluate the distribution of political power but also the position of women.

In 1968, large student movements and the creation of the Action Council for Women's Liberation in West Berlin signalled possible social changes.⁷ Laws ensuring the equality of women after 1949 had met with resistance in political arenas. At the forefront of several women's organizations had been the demand for increased rights over the female body under the West German legal system. For instance, abortion laws became an important political issue behind which several women's organizations rallied.⁸ Helke Sander, a representative of the Action Council, stood in front of the Socialist German Student Federation in Frankfurt in the same year and called for recognition of the inequalities created under patriarchal systems and the status of women in relation to these power structures. She emphasized reproductive and maternal rights for women as issues that should be of national concern.⁹

The movements also branched out to other areas such as battered women's centres, female health education and lesbian rights. However, all laws for abortions rights were recalled in 1975 and the feminist movement viewed this change as a major setback to their

⁷ Edith Hoshino Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," *Signs* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1984), 454.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 457.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 455.

challenge of patriarchy. Unlike the American feminist movement, West German organizations tended to be heavily localized and oriented towards singular causes, which may have contributed to the difficulty in pushing through demands on a national level. Another particular concern, which grew out of a chain of political events, was the uncomfortable relationship between women and violence.

The debates over the 'legitimacy of violence' brought into focus theoretical and social assumptions. These were based on the anti-violence stance of the women's movements and contradicted by female members of the Red Army Faction (RAF) who practised violent resistance.¹⁰ The conflicting images of the female body provoked strong public responses that indirectly questioned essentialist arguments about the body. West German feminism looked to its neighbouring land for advice. French theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous provided important starting points for discussions on gender in practice and theory.¹¹ Within this 'personal is political' environment, feminist literature showed a renewed commitment to female aesthetics.

Hélène Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" reflects some of the debates on feminist literature of this period rather succinctly. "Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies -- for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text -- as into the world and into history -- by her own movement."¹²

She asserts the role of female authors to rebel against 'marked' writing. She writes, "...when I speak of male writing, I maintain unequivocally that there is such a thing as *marked* writing; that, until now, far more extensively and repressively than is ever suspected or

¹⁰ Ibid., 467.

¹¹ Ibid., 458.

¹² Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs* 1, no. 4, trans. Keith and Paula Cohen (Summer 1976): 876.

admitted, writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural – hence political, typically masculine – economy; that this locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated...”¹³ Cixous realizes that language emanates from this male economy. However, she calls for a disturbance of this system through a particular writing style, narrative and thematic focus that she describes as *écriture féminine*. Cixous wants this new voice radiating from the gendered body.¹⁴ Her staunch charges continue as she calls for women to return to their estranged bodies through an act of writing – a form of textual rebirth into the body. This transformation produces a second effect - the forceful disruption of silence.¹⁵

Cixous's repositioning of the female voice in writing corresponded with a proliferation of German feminist writing. The onslaught of multiple voices from the female perspective may disrupt the male economy from within but not change this system. Cixous anticipates this paradox and explains further: “It is impossible to *define* a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded – which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogentric system...”¹⁶ In her attempt to render female writing as an exculpatory practice, she encounters the limits of the male economy. She recognizes that feminine practices will remain outside of this power structure.

Whilst I concur that female writing is a vital project in establishing a female voice and one that is taken up particularly in Duden's work, I would wish to shift the perspective of this claim. That is, female writing sheds light on power structures and maps the silences it produces. Both authors materialize these invisible processes that destroy the female body. Lennox recalls that it was the mid-1980s when discussions around the terms gender and

¹³ Ibid., 879. author's emphasis.

¹⁴ Ibid., 879.

¹⁵ Ibid., 881.

¹⁶ Ibid., 883. author's emphasis.

sexuality as social constructs crystallized in scholarship.¹⁷ I align my theoretical approaches with a Butlerian understanding of gender as a construct, not in order to dismiss *écriture féminine* as an ineffective strategy. Rather, I draw on several possible frameworks to assist in a nuanced reading of the texts. I also use the term “power structures” in the thesis to describe individuals, institutions or regimes that exercise biopower to influence the psyche or regulate the body.¹⁸

Butler derives her arguments from Jacques Lacan’s postulations on signification and Joan Riviere’s ideas of masquerade in order to arrive at her definition of gender identity. Butler states: “That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.”¹⁹ In other words, gender relies on an operative language, marking and symbolism which constitutes its existence. Gender is an effect of these ‘various acts’ and any resistances register only within these boundaries. Butler provides an explanation for this claim citing Riviere’s “Womanliness as Masquerade”. Riviere argues early on that femininity is a masquerade. A performance, which masks its own Lacanian absence. If femininity is a masquerade, then masculinity is “effectively excluded and instated as outside the boundaries of the feminine gendered position.”²⁰ Yet, this supposition is unable to deal with the absence of the feminine or its unnamed status in the symbolic. According to Butler, citing Lacan, “For women to ‘be’ the Phallus means, then, to reflect the power of the Phallus, to signify that power, to ‘embody’ the Phallus, to supply the site to which it penetrates, and to signify the Phallus through ‘being’ its Other, its absence, its

¹⁷ Sara Lennox, *Cemetery of Murdered Daughters* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 154.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

¹⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 136.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

lack, the dialectical confirmation of its identity.”²¹ If female is the lack or the ‘Other’ and any representation of the Phallus leads only to a masquerade of femininity, then what language can the female speak?

Bachmann writing during these debates and Duden responding in retrospect provide different answers to this question in their texts. Butler unsettles the deliberations of Riviere and Lacan to alter her definition of gender. She posits gender to be a repetitive performance which has no original. Gender has no male/female binary but rather multiple possibilities. Butler challenges the rootedness of masculinity and femininity. She studies the terms as historicized rather than universalized constructs. Furthermore, gender is an imagined performance which allows for transgressions but simultaneously relies on an audience to judge its performance.

Feminism welcomed a critical confrontation of the ontology of women and found temporary solace in what subjectivity had to contribute to the debates. Butler recalls: “The destabilization of the subject within feminist criticism becomes a tactic in the exposure of masculine power and, in some French feminist contexts; the death of the subject spells the release or emancipation of the suppressed feminine sphere, the specific libidinal economy of women, the condition *écriture féminine*.”²²

Nonetheless, the female body remains silent in power structures because of its division into gendered body parts. The longstanding separation between body and mind replicates an essentialist trap. Writing through the body privileges female experience, and yet as James Elkins explains, “...the body has been understood as an object mediated by the mind (or the

²¹ Ibid., 44.

²² Judith Butler, “Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory and Psychoanalytic Discourse,” in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 327.

psyche, or soul, or pneuma, or logos, or ratio).”²³ Bachmann views this divide as a violent negotiation of the female body with a “virus” in the psyche. Duden also sides with the notion of the environment as a violent component of female existence and her writing resembles the requisites of *écriture féminine*. Margaret Littler and Brigid Haines describe Duden's engagement with the body as a: “...slippage between first- and third- person narrative, its rhythmic patterns, and its play with ambiguity point beyond the symbolic dimension of language to a repressed feminine space, while its foregrounding of the materiality of the body suggests a critique of the mind/body dualism of Western culture.”²⁴ What is striking about Bachmann and Duden is not necessarily their rejection of sexual difference but an expropriation of the body from the very apparatus that initiated this claim in the first place – the German psyche. Female experiences are positioned in opposition to knowledge and history that the German psyche produces. Moreover, both authors seek to unsettle those spaces as a way of retracing the steps which led to the take over of the Nazi regime in Germany and Austria.

Reading Gender

Bachmann and Duden were heavily influenced by personal experiences in childhood and by theoretical debates, which are reflected in their writings. Bachmann's father was an NSDAP supporter and officer in Austria and her experience of National Socialism was rather traumatic.²⁵ She recalls her emotions in 1938, “There was a certain moment which destroyed my childhood. The march of Hitler's troops into Klagenfurt. It was something so horrible that on this day, my memory begins: with a pain too early and with an intensity which I perhaps

²³ James Elkins, *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 27.

²⁴ Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler, *Contemporary Women's Writing in German: Changing the Subject* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-4.

²⁵ Monika Albrecht und Dirk Götsche, eds., *Bachmann Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung* (Stuttgart & Weimar: Metzler Verlag, 2002), 2.

never experienced again."²⁶ Duden recalls that as a child, she saw the aftermath of the Allied bombings on Berlin.²⁷ The disjuncture between knowing and witnessing the crime becomes highly problematic. Julia Hell reveals, "In many postwar texts, it is masculinity that is most irredeemably associated with the fathers' crime: their traumatic secret. Post-fascist authorship is obsessed with masculinity. It emerges in a perpetual confrontation with the image of the victims of Nazi genocide – the frozen representation of the father's incomprehensible crime, which configures the viewer as German, as part of a nation of perpetrators."²⁸ If Nazism is associated largely with the masculine, what does this say about women and violence? How can women speak about memories of a National Socialist past when their voices were excluded? I will return to this question again at the end of the Introduction and explore how Bachmann answers these questions.

The scholarly debates on Bachmann and Duden have been diverse. With third wave feminism, the criticisms around the *Ways of Dying-Project* mounted.²⁹ In the 1980s, Bachmann's work was revived again as an important contribution to German literature among feminist academics.³⁰ Duden's work also enjoys widespread recognition among academics as evidenced by the numerous dissertations, articles and books investigating her writing. While Duden's popularity remains within academia, Bachmann's work has achieved the status of literary icon in Austria. Perhaps, it is Duden's nonlinearly ordered narratives, repetitions and rhythms that narrow her audience down. She also focuses on the female body as a site of

²⁶ Ibid.

"Es hat einen bestimmten Moment gegeben, der hat meine Kindheit zerstört. Der Einmarsch von Hitler's Truppen in Klagenfurt. Es war etwas so Entsetzliches, daß mit diesem Tag meine Erinnerung anfängt: durch einen zu frühen Schmerz wie ich ihn in dieser Stärke vielleicht später überhaupt nie mehr hatte."

²⁷ Littler and Haines, *Contemporary Women's Writing in German*, 58.

²⁸ Julia Hell, "Eyes Wide Shut: German Post-Holocaust Authorship," *New German Critique*, no. 88 (Fall 2004): 15.

²⁹ Jutta Rosenkranz-Kaiser, *Feminismus und Mythos. Tendenzen in Literatur und die Theorie der achtziger Jahre* (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 1995), 86; 93.

³⁰ Lennox, *Cemetery of Murdered Daughters*, 183.

conflict. While earlier scholarship praised Bachmann and Duden for their writing, third wave feminists realized that 'woman' as a universalized category failed to take into consideration the socio-historical context as well as any recognition of positionality. Lennox remarks, "...as if gender were the only source of oppression from which women have ever suffered, and as if all women were only innocent victims of male power, not also members of classes and cultures in which they possess (some) privileges."³¹ The challenges to representation and victimization of women elicited greater reflexivity in feminist works.

Convincing criticism came from Adelson's article "Racism and Feminist Aesthetics". She takes Duden to task for re-inscribing German stereotypes about black men in her treatment of race in the short stories.³² Margaret McCarthy responds to the debate, "No matter how it is represented, otherness functions primarily as a means for the dominant culture to define itself, and not the groups it marginalizes."³³ Duden reproduces the dominant culture within the white German woman. I will elaborate on this debate in my conclusion and voice some reservations about the white woman as a 'victim'.

I want to foreground my discussions in the next section with some observations about Sara Lennox's reading of a passage in *Das Buch Franza*. Lennox concentrates on the crucial encounter between Franza and the mysterious man. I am commenting on her reading in an effort to reveal Bachmann's understanding of violence and to direct my research methodologies. Lennox offers a critique of Bachmann's work. She draws on Sigrid Weigel's interpretations of Franza at the pyramids. In Weigel's view, this moment is a place where Franza sheds her image as the oppressed woman. She destroys her ailing psyche and

³¹ Ibid., 158.

³² Leslie A. Adelson, "Racism and Feminist Aesthetics: The Provocation of Anne Duden's Opening of the Mouth." *Signs* 13, no. 2 (Winter 1988): 234-52.

³³ Margaret McCarthy, "Putting Stones in Place: Anne Duden and German Acts of Memory," *The German Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (Spring 2004), 213.

establishes 'new structures' that reach beyond death. Lennox perceives the death as a necessary step in the development of the storyline as well as Franza's desire to heal her psyche.³⁴ She writes: "...Franza walks around the pyramid, wading through the sand. She encounters there a white man who, while masturbating, hits her with his stick and then, returning, rapes her. Franza recalls that Jordan had also raped her in their library in Vienna...."³⁵ She reads the scene as a sexualized encounter which involves masturbation and rape.

The passage in *Das Buch Franza* reads:

He had a stick in his hand, he had stopped and turned to her, she saw him move the stick, taking a swing at her, she stood frozen there, received a light hit, as if he hit her with an ax, then only did she see what he did with the other hand and what he wanted from her. She brought out no tone and did not move, until he had walked past her. She started to walk again, she had still seen, how he buttoned up his tight Blue jeans.³⁶

In comparison to Lennox's assumptions about masturbation and rape in this sequence, there is no clarity about what is happening but this is not to say that there is no sexualized attack. Franza's silence seems to confirm Lennox's reading.

She is hit with a stick and remains silent and unmoved. The injuries near the pyramids and against the bookshelf in Vienna are a physical attack. Franza realizes that it was fear, not violence, which suppressed her voice in both instances. Lennox's interpretation extends this attack to also mean sexualized violence on the body. She elaborates, "That sexual violence should occasion Franza's death is fitting, since violence deriving from definitions of gender...is in a more general sense responsible for the "way of death"...it is not surprising that

³⁴ Lennox, *Cemetery of Murdered Daughters*, 175.

³⁵ Ibid., 176.

³⁶ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 133.

"Er hatte einen Stock in der Hand, er war stehen geblieben und hatte sich gegen sie gewandt, sie sah ihn den Stock bewegen, ausholen gegen sie, sie stand erstarrt da, erhielt den leichten Schlag, als hätte er sie mit einer Axt getroffen, dann erst sah sie, was er tat mit der anderen Hand und was er wollte von ihr. Sie brachte keinen Ton heraus und bewegte sich nicht, bis er an ihr vorbeigegangen war. Sie fing wieder zu gehen an, sie hatte noch gesehen, wie er seine enganliegende Bluejeans zuknöpfte..."

Franza's last injury should be self occasioned, since the order responsible for her destruction is, as Bachmann underlines, one of which she is the victim but one to which she has also acceded."³⁷

The text provokes the reader to complete the image of sexual violence even though silences conceal the actual event. It can be argued, that Bachmann is asking how we inscribe sexual violence in this instance. Lennox's reading assumes sexual violence to be in the text. The reader imagines sexual violations to have taken place between Franza and the stranger even though there is no clarity. If we assume gendered meetings to be violent then why are we unable to read textual silences elsewhere? How do we read "outside" of the text? Why do we sexualize or brutalize encounters in the gaps of texts? I have discussed the work of Lennox in order to demonstrate my understanding of violence and its relations to gendered writing in the works of Bachmann and Duden. I begin with a hopeful message from Bachmann towards my discussions on time, pain and myth. In her Frankfurt lectures of 1959-1960 she optimistically said to her audience: "But change is indeed possible. And the transforming effect of new works educates us to new perception, new feeling, new consciousness."³⁸

The difficult task of writing feminist literature in post-1945 Germany and Austria is apparent from the brief outline I provided on the political environment of the 1970s to 1990s. German feminism attempted to discuss gender theory cognizant to the subject of National Socialism. German and Austrian history remained unaccounted for in these theoretical postulations. French feminism appealed to German and Austrian feminist writers of this period because it called for a return to the female body and writing. However, historical issues from Therefore, I ground my theoretical understanding in Butler's gender performance theory, Braidotti's postulations on nomadism and lastly Freud's observations on the psyche in the

³⁷ Lennox, *Cemetery of Murdered Daughters*, 176.

³⁸ quoted in *Ibid.*, 15.

chapters on time, pain and myth. In the conclusion, I offer a critique of gender in the texts drawing on Adelson and Lennox to illustrate the current understanding of Bachmann's and Duden's text.

1. Time

There has been little discussion on the ambiguous relationship with time in *Das Buch Franza* and *Übergang*. I argue that the authors present their female characters to be at odds with time. They utilize this tension to show that the German past is dissonant and the female subject excluded from a voice within this time continuum. The concept of collective memory as understood through history is challenged. Both characters realize this and attempt to facilitate a movement out of these power structures. I use the term 'power structures' to denote the discourses of power manifested in regimes and institutions.

A chronology of progress, recorded as history, becomes the setting where Franza and the nameless woman face the effects of their struggle with power structures. Franza puts it succinctly as “...the time gone, no time anymore, the space in movement, the body in opposition to time and space here.”³⁹ The women attempt to translate individual experiences into history in order to achieve reconciliation with the past. For Franza, the male characters (representatives of institutions) forget, erase or deny the past. For the nameless woman, the unspoken violence in history remains as poison in her body. The suffering comes from this intimate knowledge of the past.

Elsbeth Dangel observes that German feminist literature became increasingly aware of the idea of women being symbolically 'homeless' in their society after influential works such as Verena Stefan's "Shedding Skin" was published in 1975 and Jacques Lacan's famous dictum that women are excluded from and through the word.⁴⁰ Stefan's controversial short story incited debates among feminists on the viability of writing from an exiled state – that is

³⁹ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 113.

“...die Zeit weg, keine Zeit mehr, der Raum in der Bewegung, der Körper in Gegenposition zur Zeit und den Raum hier.”

⁴⁰ Elsbeth Dangel, “Übergang und Ankunft: Positionen neuerer Frauenliteratur, Zu Anne Dudens *Übergang* und Verena Stefans *Wortgetreu ich träume*,” *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik XXII*, no. 2 (1990): 80.

a language which relegates the female voice to an invisible periphery. She lists commonalities in German feminist literature after the 1970s indicating this desire for a home. “...the search of the woman for her place in a society, in which all areas are occupied by men are (I) the search for a female I-identity in a culture and history, in which men set the tone (II), and the search linguistically composed from the perspective of the female body...”⁴¹ The search for a “home” widened in other feminist publications affirming an increasing sense of alienation of women in their surroundings. This isolation could be described as a confinement within male economy. Bachmann's criticism of time corresponds with Dangler's criteria of female homelessness. She comments in *Das Buch Franza* about European imperialism as part of a long lineage of regimes. Decolonization of African countries took place rather late following the Second World War. For her, the end of National Socialism marks the beginning of another oppressive system and a transformed continuation of an existing regime.

In the foreword of *Das Buch Franza*, Bachmann warns the audience of the past crimes as visible but present crimes as invisible. “[The book] attempts to introduce something, to locate something, which has not disappeared from the world. Because today it is just infinitely more difficult to commit crimes, and these crimes are therefore so sublime that we can hardly recognize or comprehend them.”⁴² She calls the crimes a “virus” which plagues the mind and attempts, with the *Ways of Dying-Project*, to document the horrors.

Bachmann genders the relationship with time in *Das Buch Franza* to echo her concerns about imperialism and National Socialism. Her interest in the genealogy of various

⁴¹ Ibid.

“...die Suche der Frau nach ihrem Ort in einer Gesellschaft, in der alle Bereiche von Männern besetzt sind (I) die Suche nach der weiblich Ich-Identität in einer Kultur und Geschichte, in der Männer den Ton angeben (II), und diese Suche sprachlich verfaßt aus der Perspektive des weiblichen Körpers...”

⁴² Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 201.

“Es [Buch] versucht, mit etwas bekanntzumachen, etwas aufzusuchen, was nicht aus der Welt verschwunden ist. Denn es ist heute nur unendlich viel schwerer, Verbrechen zu begehen, und daher sind diese Verbrechen so sublim, daß wir sie kaum wahrnehmen und begreifen können...”

political systems forms the basis of her interest in gender and remembrance. Kerwin Lee Klein explains the juxtaposition of history and memory. “History is modernism, the state, science, imperialism, androcentrism, a tool of oppression; memory is postmodernism, the 'symbolically excluded', 'the body,' 'a healing device and a tool for redemption.’⁴³ Klein locates history to mean capitalism and imperialism because they fall within a chronology. Written history is, in a Foucauldian sense, a record of surveillance. Where Duden inscribes history onto the body and internalizes space, Bachmann temporalizes space to represent past and present.

Arturo Larcati looks at the prevalent theme of violence in Bachmann's writings. He observes that she searches for a 'home in word' – the very place that Lacan declares solely male. Larcati connects her longing to mean a re-evaluation of time and space. Bachmann finds alternative ways to reestablish a home in time and movement. She resorts to music as a refuge for the female subject.⁴⁴ Whereas Larcati's analysis relies upon her lyrical contributions, *Das Buch Franza* provides a different refuge from time – myth. I discuss the 'myth as home' proposition in the third chapter to mean an escape from time for Bachmann and Duden.

Examining Duden's writings, Margaret Littler reasons that Duden consistently engages with time as a problematic construct. She comments “The structural features resulting from this postmodern consciousness, seen both in *Das Judasschaf* and in *Rita Münster*, include their abandonment of linear narrative in favour of topographical or associative structures, the representation of time as simultaneity rather than chronology, and the challenging of

⁴³ Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 138.

⁴⁴ Arturo Larcati, *Ingeborg Bachmanns Poetik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 265.

traditional subject-object relations...”⁴⁵ Duden repeats this style of writing in *Übergang*. The nameless woman suffers physical and psychological pain in all aspects of her life. The environment around Berlin becomes part of the attacks. The boundaries between the body and space blur and the protagonist starts with obsessively clinging to time in the first story “Country Cottage” and then reinterpreting the passing of time through changes between light/dark.

Annette Meusinger examines Duden's works and concludes the cause of this break with the linear structure is trauma. She explains that time fails to progress for the female subject. Trauma is “...a space that destroys time and makes self-reconfirmation and action impossible for the individual.”⁴⁶ This problem of space is secondary to time. However, Duden's engagement with time is very different from that of Bachmann. Duden pits her protagonist against the environment in Berlin. The memories of the past poison her body. The nameless woman suffers because her body is rotting like toxic waste with time.

Sigrid Weigel interviewed Duden in 1989. In the conversation, Duden remarks on her interpretation of the time-space system and how she responds to it in *Übergang*: “One proceeds, namely, on the assumption of a sort of nameless centre, from a core, wherein the person is contained, from the beginning. The core is demolished, always demolished again, like a replay, and the person in the ruins always goes outwards and in all directions, enacting the centrifugal movement and distance of the exploded ruins as well, without stopping or reflecting.”⁴⁷ As Meusinger mentions earlier, trauma changes the progression of time within

⁴⁵ Margaret Littler, “Diverging Trends in Feminine Aesthetics: Anne Duden and Brigitte Kronauer,” *Contemporary German Writers, Their Aesthetics and Their Language*, eds. Arthur Williams, Stuart Parkes and Julian Preece (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996), 162.

⁴⁶ Annette Meusinger, “The Wired Mouth: On the Positionality of Perception in Anne Duden's ‘Opening of the Mouth’ and ‘Das Judasschaf,’” *Women in German Yearbook* 13, trans. Sabine Schmidt, (1997):194.

⁴⁷ Sigrid Weigel, *Die Stimme der Medusa: Schreibweisen in der Gegenwartsliteratur von Frauen* (Dülme-Hiddingsel: tende Verlag, 1987), 144.

the protagonist. Duden conceptualizes memory as the core which gets repeatedly damaged in an outward movement. Chronology is distorted and the subject determines the mapping of time along trauma. Duden changes the definition of space to mean the body. In order to demonstrate the relationship between time and trauma, Freud's case history of two women suffering from neurosis is useful. Thereafter, Braidotti's postulations on 'nomadism' will demonstrate how the female characters survive within the power structures.

In a lecture on two cases entitled "Fixation to Trauma, the Unconscious," Freud comes across women who suffer from neurosis. One has a broken marriage and refuses to move on despite her young age and the other is erotically drawn to her father and refuses to marry. "For a start, both patients give us the impression of being fixated on a particular part of their past, as if they did not understand how to release themselves from it and were therefore alienated from the present and the future. They are now stuck in their illness..."⁴⁸ The patients remain in the past and are unable to resolve their issues in the present.

The traumatic neurosis is relived in dreams and the patient finds herself in mourning.⁴⁹ He describes the patient's symptoms of neurosis as that of an 'immortal foreigners among mortals'. The mourning persists even though time has passed and thereby the incident which caused the trauma.⁵⁰ Bachmann and Duden develop the theme of suffering in their characters represented through an illness, virus or attack. The symptoms express the

"Da wird nämlich von einer Art namenlosem Zentrum ausgegangen, von einem Kern, in der die Person mit enthalten ist, von vornherein. Der Kern wird zertrümmert, immer wieder zertrümmert, einem replay gleich, und die Person geht in den Trümmern immer nach außen und in alle Richtungen, immer die Schleuderbewegung und -weite der Explosionstrümmer mitvollziehen, unaufhörlich und selbstverständlich."

⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, "Fixierung an das Trauma," in *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse und Neue Folge*, eds. Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards, and James Strachey (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1978), 273.

"Fürs erste. Beide Patienten machen uns den Eindruck, als wären sie an ein bestimmten Stück ihrer Vergangenheit fixiert, verständen nicht davon freizukommen und seien deshalb der Gegenwart und der Zukunft entfremdet. Sie stecken nun in ihrer Krankheit..."

⁴⁹ Ibid., 276.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 277.

inner pain which originates in the unconscious. Bachmann and Duden diverge from Freud in their understanding of the illness. For they ask the question: what if the conscious state, the present, continues this illness?

I consult Braidotti's "Nomadic Subject" in order to investigate the situation of the "homeless" traumatized woman. Freud derived the diagnosis that trauma removes a person from their awareness of time even leading to alienation. This isolation, according to Bachmann and Duden, catalyzes creative endeavours in the female subjects to rectify the situation and attempt to find a home. The memories of National Socialism hinder the female characters from resting in their bodies. Both authors construct the female subject to be a performative repetition of femininity. I deliberately say femininity rather than gender because sex difference is essentialized in the texts.

At times, Franza shows awareness of her restricted position as a woman. She interprets Leo Jordan's disturbing rendering of her as a case history, "Der Fall F." to mean a possession of her body. Franza recalls how a virus which paralyzes her without any initial warning signs infected her. The mention of paralysis is understood as a stoppage of movement. "...it must still be changeable, but why I am I talking about a venereal disease, that is becoming extinct. Spoiled, through a hundred stories, cases, hysterias, perhaps I choose it as an example, because it has to do with a sexual disease, this, which was."⁵¹ Jordan's abusive attacks on her memory are the cause of the infection but she names this a serious "disease". Bachmann plays with the meaning of this word and poses the question of gender through the

⁵¹ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 72.

"...es muß noch zu ändern sein, aber warum spreche ich von einer Geschlechtskrankheit, die im Aussterben ist. Verdorben, durch hundert Geschichten, Fälle, Hysterie, vielleicht wähle ich das Beispiel, weil das mit einer Geschlechtskrankheit zu tun hat, dieses, was war."

protagonist. Franza asks, "Why was I so hated? No, not I, the other in me..."⁵² The translation of the German word "Geschlecht" can mean sexuality, gender, family, lineage, pedigree and race. Here I believe the meaning is a disease of gendered existence which has been perpetuated through numerous histories, cases, and hysterias. Jordan, representative of the medical community, who maps and times the progression of illnesses and its cures, becomes implicated in the attack on the female body.

Braidotti's definition of nomadism is helpful in examining the women who are arrested in time and trauma. Their escape from this frozen existence likens to Braidotti's nomadic subject. She rejects the idea of homelessness and instead adopts a subject who favors a transitory mode of existence with rhythmical repetitions and movements.⁵³ Braidotti states, "Being a nomad, living in transition, does not mean that one cannot or is unwilling to create those necessarily stable and reassuring bases for identity that allow one to function in a community. Rather, nomadic consciousness consists in not taking any kind of identity as permanent. The nomad is only passing through; s/he makes those necessarily situated connections that can help her/him survive, but s/he never takes on fully the limits of one national, fixed identity."⁵⁴ She defines the nomad and nomadic consciousness in light of Foucault's term "countermemory". Nomadism resists the "...assimilation or homologation into dominant ways of representing the self."⁵⁵ The countermemory of history challenges notions of collective memory.

The irreconcilability of individual experience into collective memory becomes a dominant concern for Bachmann and Duden. The individual remembers and thereby

⁵² Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 56. "Warum bin ich so gehaßt worden? Nein, nicht ich, das andere in mir..."

⁵³ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 22.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 25.

subjectively recreates an event in imagination which is spatially no longer present. The event becomes animated in movement and personalized with emotions. In contrast, collective memory is a public recreation of past events. Amos Funkenstein compares it to, "...language,[which] can be characterized as a system of signs, symbols, and practices: memorial dates, names of places, monuments and victory arches, museums and texts, customs and manners, stereotype images (incorporated, for instance, in manners of expression), and even language itself (in de Saussure's terms). The individual's memory -- that is, the act of remembering -- is the instantiation of these symbols, analogous to 'speech; no act of remembering is like any other.'"⁵⁶ The incompatibility in these two ways of remembrance stems in the lack of vocabulary. Language responsible for accommodating violence, pain and silence fails in transition between individual and collective. The signs, symbols and practices only allow certain memories to participate in the collective production.

Edges of an Empire

Bachmann proposes that the present, which still has the same power structures in place, disallows a cure of Franza's illness. She unfolds the story such that Franza travels to the outskirts of Europe – its colonies. Time is ordered according to progress. Imperialism operates on the ideology that colonization brings progress to the colonies. Europe stands for the highest level of progress and thus represents the present tense. Its colonies are also aligned, through colonization, to this standard of modernization as a way of measuring progress. The colonies are assumed to be in the past because they lack the same European technologies. Therefore, Franza's departure to Egypt can be viewed as a journey into the past. I reason that this reversion of chronological order is an escape into myth which I take up

⁵⁶ Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 6.

again in the last chapter. Moreover, time orders space equating more distance - between empire and colony - with less progress.

This move towards the past is an attempt to address the silence as well as to revisit the childhood trauma of Nazism. The silenced Franza is unable to heal her body because the same male figures of the past exist in the present. Furthermore, Bachmann argues that gender is an effect of this system as Franza remarks about Jordan and the stranger with the stick: "He must be sick, that's how I became sick."⁵⁷ Franza conveys the problem with history as part of this disturbing survival of a virus. In a conversation with Martin about the historic Suez Canal opening she says, "History will record the day of water. And I was buried alive. My history and the histories of all, who make up the great History, where do they come together with the great ones. Always at the edge of a street? How does that come together?"⁵⁸ This is a question which has been taken up in scholarship on collective memory but remains problematic for Bachmann. Collective memory enforced through written history pushes experiences to the periphery and even wipes them out like the flooding of the Nile.

The denial of memory takes place at the hands of several male figures in *Das Buch Franza* because they forget, deny or erase parts of Franza's past. Foremost, it is Franza's father who appears in her earliest memory. He reappears in other characters such as Jordan, Sir Percival Glyde, and the stranger at the pyramids. Her father is a soldier who disappeared in El Alamein and has two beauty marks on his face.⁵⁹ The memory of her absent father provides insights into Franza's psyche. He is the lost soldier in the desert who traumatizes her

⁵⁷ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 133.

"Er muß ja krank sein, ich bin nur davon krank geworden."

⁵⁸ Ibid., 103.

"Die Geschichte wird den Wassertag verzeichnen. Und ich war lebendig begraben. Meine Geschichte und die Geschichten aller, die doch die große Geschichte ausmachen, wo kommen die mit der großen zusammen. Immer an einem Straßenrand? Wie kommt das zusammen?"

⁵⁹ Ibid., 39.

persistently in dreams and hallucinations as a fragmented figure. The dream which steals her sight and hearing is an image of a cemetery of daughters. Notably, this scene is a continuation of the first sentence in the novel which states that Martin's sister has been destroyed by Professor Leo Jordan. The dream symbolizes the burial of destructed identities. "And I looked down to my own grave, because I belonged to the daughters, and my father was not there. But I had died because of him and was buried here. Do you by any chance know in your waking moments anything about a cemetery for children and from whom you die?"⁶⁰ In the dream, it is the child that is buried not the father. The past represented by her father survives but Franza representing the present dies in the cemetery. The vision is replicated when she hallucinates in the desert. She says "...he in the white coat, he climbs out of the picture, he came from Vienna..."⁶¹ It is Jordan but then she notices that he discards the coat and believes it is an image of her father. Then realizes that it is only a false illusion. The importance of the father is reinforced through Leo Jordan's character who is her husband and re-presents her father.

Jordan, also known as the fossil, acts as an authoritative figure towards Franza but serves as a caretaker of psyches since he is one of the most prominent psychiatrists of Vienna. Martin despises his tone as a "Special mixture of educated and authoritarian nasal" and his writing which formulates "Illness and Time and Time-Illness, which categories covered natural science, its liminal questions, and pastoral work."⁶² Jordan is an abusive husband at home who attempts to alter her memory and even erase her from history. She recalls her past

⁶⁰ Ibid., 75.

"Und ich sah auf mein eigenes Grab hinunter, denn ich gehörte zu den Töchtern, und mein Vater war nicht da. Aber ich war seinetwegen gestorben und hier begraben. Weißt du vielleicht in deinen wachen Zuständen etwas von einem Friedhof der Kinder und an wem du stirbst?"

⁶¹ Ibid., 115.

"...er in dem weißen Mantel, er steigt aus dem Bild, er ist gekommen aus Wien."

⁶² Ibid., 13; 16.

"Spezialmischung aus Bildungsnasal und Autoritätsnasal";

"Krankheit und Zeit und Zeitkrankheit, und unter welche Hüte Naturwissenschaft und ihre Grenzfragen und die Seelsorgerei gebracht wurden."

in Galicia where she kissed the departing captain Sir Percival Glyde on the mouth. She calls these “English Kisses”. However, Jordan corrects her memory stating that the kisses were angelic not English. She tries to correct him but he deconstructs, categorizes and finally sterilizes her experiences.⁶³ Franza encounters the physical violence even in her dreams when she is in a gas chamber. She is in constant fear of Jordan's terror.

He exhibits his power to alter history when he leaves out Franza's name from his book. She had gathered materials for the work on concentration camp survivors. Jordan intentionally erases her name from the foreword. She realizes the extent of his control and his sinister plan. “...it was actually not the missing name, that I regretted, no, it was a sign for something else. He wanted to wipe me out, my name should have disappeared, so that thereafter I could really disappear.”⁶⁴ Jordan's intentions are connected to changing her memories and erasing her through his written work – he writes her out of his history.

Yet the past resurfaces as Franza confronts her fears demanding her death. Dr. Körner, a former Nazi physician hiding in Egypt, used to administer lethal injections as part of his experiments in the concentration camps. Franza knows his identity from Jordan's book. The physician used to turn humans into subjects for his scientific experiments. Franza wants her death through an injection. She unsettles the power behind the terror of the past. Moreover, she speaks as *a victim* among many through her request. “A murderer’s honour or his doctor’s honour, these people were certainly all very sensitive, and suddenly she thought of Jordan, and no differently of him than of Körner.”⁶⁵ Dr. Körner calls Franza insane for demanding

⁶³ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 57.

“...es war nicht eigentlich das Fehlen des Names, das ich bedauerte, nein, es war ein Signal für etwas anderes. Er wollte mich auslöschen, mein Name sollte verschwinden, damit ich danach wirklich verschwunden sein konnte.”

⁶⁵ Ibid., 130.

“Mörderehre oder seine Arztehre, diese Leute waren sicher alle sehr empfindlich, und plötzlich dachte sie an Jordan und nicht anders an ihn als an Körner.”

her death. Nonetheless, she returns to his boathouse with money for the procedure only to find him gone. Franza realizes for the first time that she instilled fear instead being fearful. In relation to time, Bachmann points to the continuation of certain power structures. She also stresses while Nazism only exists in books that the evil behind it survives because problems are unsettled but not resolved. Dr. Körner's is left unpunished for his crimes and Franza is only interested in curing herself. The claim of representing *victims* is superficial but also demonstrates the lack of responsibility on the part of German women in resolving their past.

In contrast, Martin opposes the father figures and yet he is a supporter of the same power structure. He partly understands the psychological problems of Franza because they used to share a common language in childhood. He forgot most of this language because he adopted the dominating gendered language. Martin also provides her chronological guidance. He possesses some memories of her past and therefore can validate her experiences. He discovers her different sense of time when he goes through letters addressed to him, which are dated, whereas letters to Jordan are undated. His role can be likened to Freud who views the task of psychoanalysis to that of archeology - uncovering ruins of the past. Freud used the Latin phrase "Saxa loquuntur!" which translates into 'the stones talk!'⁶⁶

The feeling of being at odds with her time continues in Egypt. In the temple walls of queen Hatshepsut, she points to the wall where every sign of the queen has been erased by Thutmosis III. Martin is uncertain about the erased queen. "See, she said, but he forgot, that at the spot where he had effaced her, she remained standing. She is discernible, because nothing is there, where she should be."⁶⁷ Franza links her history as a murdered daughter to the queen

⁶⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1, ed. Anna Freud and others (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1976-81), 427.

⁶⁷ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 107.

"Siehst du, sagte sie, aber er hat vergessen, daß an der Stelle wo er sie getilgt hat, doch sie stehen geblieben ist. Sie ist abzulesen, weil da nichts ist, wo sie sein soll."

who is also a daughter in her grave. She, in the role of archaeologist, translates the absences of history and recognizes the gendered violence on the stones. Martin only sees the markings of the chisels and wonders why there is no record of this in books.⁶⁸ Franza's discovery is also a criticism of recorded history. The destroyed queen has no voice or books to tell of her existence. Bachmann applies this analogy to the gaps in recent history.

A particular memory of her research work on the Nuremberg trials for Jordan's book reiterates the problem of collective memory. Franza becomes emotional and stops reading. One of the victims is at a loss for words as noted in the court document. The witness is a concentration camp survivor who was castrated, burned and operated on his testicles. Franza notices certain places in the protocols and case histories with x...x x...x. "Witness B had begun to stutter, but that was not in the protocol, no, rather, he was suddenly swallowed from the page by the paper and print. The representative for the accused MacHaney, after he received no answer to his question:/Witness, have no fear! But then there was silence again."⁶⁹ The unspoken which falls outside of recorded history and yet imbues an event with meaning is Bachmann's criticism of time and history. Erasures of emotions, silences and thus alternative accounts of events remain unrecorded and thereby fall outside of written history. The victim in the court document retains his reduced status as witness B. Franza is the reduced subject of Jordan and is able to read this silence.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 108.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 126. own emphasis.

"Der Zeuge B. war ins Stocken gekommen, *das stand aber nicht da in dem Protokoll, nein, vielmehr er war auf der Seite plötzlich wie vom Papier und von Druck verschluckt*. Anklagevertreter MacHaney, nachdem er auf seine Frage keine Antwort bekam:/ Zeuge, haben Sie keine Furcht! Aber dann war wieder das Schweigen."

Historical Remains

Duden expresses a disjunction between past and present through the female body. She internalizes conflicts and thereby uses the body as a surface to record experiences. The body becomes a collector of experiences and events where literally “time is running out.”⁷⁰ Duden reinterprets the definition of recorded history as the last paragraph of the short story cycle declares that the body is the memory. Bachmann's project was to criticize imperialism in the colonies as well as the rendition of the Nazi past in history. Duden concentrates her commentaries on Germany's commemoration of the Holocaust. Duden mentions the word “*Überrest*” meaning remains such as monuments, documents, graves and skeletons. The body is a living, moving historical remnant where gendered and racialized ideologies become inscribed. The body is a site where resistance is acted out. Freud's comment that ‘the stones can talk!’ can also be applied to Duden's fossilized protagonist because she too is a ruin to study and derive meaning from as a historical remnant or *Überrest*. Freud imparted earlier that trauma changes the patient's ability to perceive time. The protagonist captures a specific point in time.

The nameless woman in *Übergang* signals at the beginning of the stories that she has a crypt inside her which provides safety and escape from others. “It is a kind of sometimes swimming, sometimes hovering crypt, an *Unterdauerungsraum*.”⁷¹ The construction of the inner room spanned over several decades. Her room has no magical or religious properties like the coffin in Snow White or Lazarus where they were resurrected from the dead. Instead, the protagonist is “Fossilization with many coagulated traces.”⁷² The fossilized body displays

⁷⁰ Duden, *Übergang*, 23.

⁷¹ Duden, *Übergang*, 7.

“Es ist eine Art manchmal schwimmender, manchmal schwebender Krypta, ein Unterdauerungsraum.” (There is no equivalent English word for *Unterdauerungsraum*. It is a neologism.)

⁷² Ibid. “Versteinerung mit vielen geronnenen Spuren.”

an ability to absorb or feel as well as reject matter such as the psychological fears of other people. It becomes a monument which illustrates psychological history of the nameless woman and serves as a metaphor for Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. I view this as a possible critique of German society and its efforts to memorialize the victims of Nazism.

McCarthy views gestures such as the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin as uneasy attempts to commemorate the past. In her view, the monuments allow history to disappear into stones. She compares some shortcomings of the memorials to Duden's short story "Transition."⁷³ The injured protagonist who has her mouth sewn shut after a brutal attack resembles the open architectural ruins in Berlin left over from the Second World War. McCarthy establishes Duden's writing to be a reminder of an ambiguous German identity.⁷⁴ She points out that an act of forgetting took place during the 1950s when rubble was cleared away in large quantities. "Since acts of construction and destruction perpetually blur in 'Transition,' identity-construction becomes a very slipshod affair. On the one hand, the mature self, as I argued, recognizes boundaries between self and other, as if it were a freestanding edifice taking up a particular location in space. Boundaries put in place to oust alterity, however, will sooner or later give way."⁷⁵ This idea of cleaning up the geographical evidence continues with the building of memorials in specific areas and retaining it there through boundaries such as white fences around Auschwitz.⁷⁶ I wish to extend McCarthy's argument, elaborating on the porous stone body of the nameless woman, to reference the historical role of German women after the war. The protagonist experiences a transformation after her mouth is reconstructed in surgery. "I was free. I felt the absence of walls around grounds that

⁷³ McCarthy, "Putting Stones in Place," 210.
Vergangenheitsbewältigung is a compound German word to denote processing or coming to terms with the past by actively dealing with it.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 211.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 221.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 212.

were uneven, because of the remaining ruins, but open to all sides, and the cool draft, that was now caught in the agonizing soft parts of the opened face cavity, like in a trap, blew excitedly back and forth, leaving knife-like gashes whose lines and pathways the pain now began to precisely record, and would not permit to fade until the next cut came.”⁷⁷ She speaks of her mouth as if it were a building in ruins. This supposition connects her mouth and thus inability to speak “history” to the damaged structures of WWII.

The National Socialist past disappears to a large extent from the public eye with the removal of stones. *Trümmerfrauen* were women who worked on damaged buildings to find reusable bricks. In contrast, the Holocaust is visible only in specific areas and fails to reflect the extent of the former regime. McCarthy cites Holocaust survivor Ruth Klüger and her attempts to disseminate her experiences. “She aims for affect, a bodily response which is also the preferred aim of many Holocaust monuments and memorials, including Eisenman’s. Affect proffers the illusion of a past and present which literally touches, as if brutalized bodies from a distant past could telegraph their presence to animate, in turn, our own visceral response.”⁷⁸ The bodies disrupt the inanimate memorials of the present. Klüger recruits the body as an active memorial which can move around in space, consolidate temporal boundaries and agitate the German psyche to remember. The ‘brutalized bodies’ disrupt an otherwise sterilized space and thereby induce a remembrance process. McCarthy warns of overplaying emotions and thereby normalizing rather than continuously calling attention to the Holocaust in German society.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Duden, *Übergang*, 63.

“Ich war frei. Ich fühlte die Mauerlosigkeit eines wegen der Trümmerüberreste zwar holprigen, aber nach allen Seiten offenen Geländes, die kühle Zugluft, die sich in den qualligen Weichteilen der aufgeschlagenen Gesichtshöhle jetzt verfang wie in einer Falle, sich dort aufgereggt hin und her warf und messerhafte Einschnitte hinterließ, deren Linien und Verläufe der Schmerz nun genau aufzuzeichnen begann und jeweils so lange nicht verblaßen ließ, bis der nächste Schnitt erfolgte.”

⁷⁸ McCarthy, “Putting Stones in Place,” 213.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 214.

In Duden's writing, the focus is on the voice of the German, non-Jewish woman reflective of her own experiences. She disrupts the order of time through her non-linear narrations to illustrate the inadequacies of history. The nameless woman grows paranoid as illustrated in the first short story "Country Cottage".⁸⁰ She stays in the cottage of two researchers. Their house has uneven doors, different size rooms but has neatly ordered contents. Alphabetized index cards, books ordered by subject and a large music collection neatly packed in protective plastic catch the eye of the protagonist. Increasingly, she loses her mental stability and feels as if she is on a ship travelling between two unknown places.⁸¹ The protagonist realizes, "Here exactly stood time still, arrested in this question and stopped everything, also me. Then it must have made a jump, must have jumped over itself at the same time."⁸² Duden introduces disorder to counteract time and order.

This determination to change the experience of linearity is reiterated in the short story "Heart and Mouth." Duden's concerns about the competencies of historical narrative and her efforts to subvert this construct materialize in this section. A dead woman speaks from her grave in Schöneberg and Tiergarten, Berlin. She comes to life and the story is told backwards. Duden explains the attack on the protagonist's mouth in the later short story. Only here the nameless woman serves as vessel for history. She is about to reawaken from death and states, "And in the criss and cross rage within this mass of transient and cadaver: teeth, bones, splints, arrows/small arrows in the flesh. Image of the water corpse Rosa Luxemburg."⁸³ The transference between two different histories takes place. One is the unnamed woman who is

⁸⁰ Duden, *Übergang*, 29.

⁸¹ Ibid., 14.

⁸² Ibid., 28.

"Hier genau blieb die Zeit stehen, rastete ein in dieser Frage und hielt alles an, auch mich. Dann mußte sie einen Sprung gemacht, gleichsam sich selbst übersprungen haben."

⁸³ Ibid., 42.

"Und in ein Kreuz- und Quergerage innerhalb dieser Masse aus Vergänglichem und Kadaver: Zähne, Knochen, Splitter, Pfahl/Pfählchen im Fleisch. Abbildung der Wasserleiche Rosa Luxemburgs."

about to be attacked in the next story but already has a damaged face. The other historical figure is Rosa Luxemburg. She was murdered in the streets of Berlin and her body rotted for four months in a canal.⁸⁴ Her death and the protagonist's resurrection occur in the same body. Duden collapses the boundaries of past and present as well as life and death.

Luxemburg is a martyr whose death, like that of queen Hatshepsut in *Das Buch Franza*, serves as a starting point for the creation of myth in the texts. Both historical figures operated within highly masculinized spaces and attempted to change inherent power structures from within. The death of Franza and the nameless woman can be viewed as a resistance of power structures and a criticism of its expression surviving in discourse.

⁸⁴ Max Gallo, *Rosa Luxemburg: Eine Biographie* (Zürich: Verlag Benziger, 1993), 15.

2. Pain

In the last chapter, I explored how time functions as part of a hegemonic discourse. I discussed how the protagonists are at odds with time as history. In this chapter, I argue how pain disrupts time, enables movement and facilitates an arrival in myth. Pain enables two important functions. Firstly, the moments of intense physical pain cease the recognition of time. Secondly, past trauma is awakened and repeated in this suffering. Namely, trauma marked with the loss of speech. In medicine, pain is said to 'dismember' the body because the person becomes separated from society and time.⁸⁵ Pain pushes the person's body into another state of being. The body is in motion and its qualitative effects remain mute to language. The female body in pain can be connoted with a sense of homesickness – more precisely a desire for home in language. In order for a voice to emerge, the very language which banished the female to the outskirts has to change. That is, as Bachmann suggests, a different return to language.

Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* recognizes pain as an individualizing experience because it cannot be denied or affirmed. "Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds, and cries a human being makes before language is learned."⁸⁶ Language is only lost in the sense of linguistic abilities. James Elkins' analysis of pain suggests, "Pain signifies that mode of awareness that listens to the body and is aware of its feeling – whether that feeling is the low-level muttering of a body in good health or the high pain of illness."⁸⁷ Thus,

⁸⁵ Iris Hermann, *Schmerzarten: Prolegomena einer Aesthetik, des Schmerzes in Literatur, Musik und Psychoanalyse* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2006), 22.

Physician Galenus von Pergamon (ca. 130-200AD) stated that loss of time occurs in a state of pain.

⁸⁶ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

⁸⁷ Elkins, *Pictures of the Body*, 23.

pain is the language of the body, which articulates processes that the mouth fails to capture in speech. The body is the site where traumatic events surface through symptoms.

In contrast, Mark Ledbetter urges us to view violence as a necessary discourse to catapult suffering onto a level understood by the “privileged and powerful”.⁸⁸ The women signify their nomadic existences through bodily suffering. Moreover, mobility calls attention to the inadequacies of recorded history. The body's symptoms become the voice which speaks of past trauma and thereby breaks through the linguistic barriers. Language as has been widely restated in postwar literature has no adequate vocabulary, which could represent the experiences of the Holocaust survivors. It is an event, which produced a discourse of silence that still needs to be adequately given voice to in scholarship. I propose that this inability of language to record is actually a moment of realization that the victim is speaking. The victimized body revolts against speechlessness and utilizes bodily symptoms as a language.

Bodily Memories

The narration in *Das Buch Franza* progresses forward through a series of travels in space and time. Franza experiences a coinciding internal turmoil through her environment, memory and gender. The narrator in the story delves into the history of Franza and Martin and their common past. The validity of certain memories is placed into question throughout the narration as personal recollections compete with material evidences. A telegram marks the beginning of the story verifying to the reader that the events are real and not Martin's imagined narration. Bachmann posits the question: where does violence survive to if its evidence is erased? In her view, it is memory but even this is problematic. “...for there are

⁸⁸ Mark Ledbetter, *Victims and the Postmodern Narrative or Doing Violence to the Body: An Ethic of Reading and Writing* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), 19.

only words that allude to and insist that something exists, and that something else does not exist...”⁸⁹

Franza's experiences of pain are mainly the early loss of her parents, the extensive mental and physical abuse of her husband Leo Jordan and finally the painful knowledge about the Holocaust and colonialism. These causes are underlined with her sense of voicelessness. She remains unheard within various power structures. She is forced to repeat her trauma because personal events are linked with historical events. That is, Franza's suffering is both a struggle for herself and mourning of other victims such as those of the Nazi regime. As Martin and Franza visit the grave of their mother in Galicia, Martin remarks that Franza's suffering is symptomatic of "...the illness of the Then. She looked back, turning in her actual old name, and when he addressed her, then she awakened, but as if she had nearly forgotten, that it was her, who, perished and bore her final name, who had been her first...”⁹⁰ Franza's concern for time is linked to history. The narrator reveals Martin's relation to history stating that he would refuse to belong to those dying or going to the grave.⁹¹ The reference here is to Franza who remembers the horrors. The multiple intersections of history, subjectivity and violence merge. Martin admonishes any thoughts of his own suffering in favor of forgetting the past.⁹² The opposition of the remembering and forgetting body will explain my claims about Franza's traumas in relation to Freud.

Her return to her former name Franziska Ranner and revisit of her childhood place foreground the start of a journey into death. It is also a hiding place from the source of her

⁸⁹ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 8.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 33.

“...der Krankheit des Damals...Sie schaute zurück, drehte sich in ihren wirklichen alten Namen, und wenn er sie ansprach, dann wachte sie auf, aber als hätte sie beinahe vergessen, daß sie es war, die, sie ging unter und trug ihren letzten Namen, der ihr erster gewesen war...”

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

illness – Jordan. In the earlier instance, Jordan kept Franza under his control by sharing the same last name as a married couple. He set Franza's boundaries through manipulating speech, memory, language and body. Franza undergoes bodily transformations which reflect her psychological changes. She mentions the shedding of skin to illustrate two paradoxical changes – renewal and deterioration.⁹³ She feels liberated with this bodily change but still has invisible markings on her body. While on the ship, she speaks of Jordan's terror in connection to female subjectivity.

Her memory reverts to the time when she still resisted his mockery of her behaviours, her thoughts and ultimately her existence. Franza remembers saying, "I think differently, I do not think like you..."⁹⁴ She understands that his thoughts are a disease to which she has been exposed to for over nine years. Franza resists Jordan's systematic attempts to destroy her with this phrase as well as stating that she was not sick at first.⁹⁵ Jordan perverts his role as physician at home. His control equals "lawlessness", "fanaticism", "wanting to destroy" and "needing to destroy" according to Franza.⁹⁶ The house is an analogy to Austria's role during the Nazi regime. History is repeated in imagination to reiterate the intimacy of the violence. She recalls a dream which also takes place in Bachmann's *Malina*. Franza dreams of a gas chamber where Jordan turns on the gas. "...how can I dream something like that, how can I, immediately one wants to ask for forgiveness, he would be incapable of doing it, no one would detest it more, but now I dream it anyway and express it, which is a thousand times more complicated. Long-term damages. I am a single long-term injury, not a remembrance record, that I set to play, that did not start with a horrible scratching of the needle, not a

⁹³ Ibid., 55.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 58.

"ich denke anders, ich denke nicht wie du..."

⁹⁵ Ibid., 63.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 64.

"Gesetzlosigkeit", "Fanatismus", "Vernichtenwollen" and "Vernichtenmüssen"

summer day, on which there did not fall a toxic drizzle.”⁹⁷ The connection to the gas chambers in the concentration camps is made but Bachmann carefully inserts a partition between actual horrific events and an imagined death sentence. The dream repeats when she finds herself on the ship. There the whiteness of the cabin brings up thoughts of Jordan and she cannot speak or move her lips.⁹⁸

Franza has arrived at her destination point and again uses the theme of shedding to describe her bodily transformations. She comes to a harsh realization: "Pain, strange word, strange thing, in the natural history of humans intended for the body, migrated from the body and made more explosive in the brain. I am in the desert in order to lose my pain and if I do not lose it..."⁹⁹ The pain itself travels around exhibiting symptoms in various body parts. In the first instance, Franza believes suffering to be inscribed on the body surface with the choke marks and peeling skin. In the last instance, she succumbs to the infiltrating pollution and the painful attacks on her mind, mouth and heart. This is a representation of her memory, speech and emotion. The shedding metaphor plays an important role in that it further reiterates the futility of her situation "...my body, it is completely offended, in every spot offended. I cannot continue living like this. I cannot. How often must I dip into the Nile, so that it is washed off.”¹⁰⁰ She escapes from Jordan's physical control through her name change and her travel to the desert but her body fails to correspond with escape – the trauma remains.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 63.

“...wie kann ich sowas träumen, wie kann ich nur, gleich möchte man um Verzeihung bitten, er wäre unfähig, es zu tun, keiner würde es mehr verabscheuen, aber nun träume ich es doch und drücke es so aus, was tausendmal komplizierter ist. Spätschäden. Ich bin ein einziger Spätschaden, keine Erinnerungsplatte, die ich auflege, die nicht mit einem schrecklichen Nadelgekratze losginge, kein Sommertag, auf den nicht ein Giftsprühregen niederginge...”

⁹⁸ Ibid., 74.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 110.

“Schmerz, seltsames Wort, seltsames Ding, in der Naturgeschichte des Menschen dem Körper zugeordnet, aus dem Körper abgewandert und brisanter gemacht in seinem Gehirn. Ich bin in der Wüste um meinen Schmerz zu verlieren, und verlier ich ihn nicht...”

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 106.

Nonetheless, her role as victim is somewhat skewed in that she positions herself as the sufferer but also asserts herself in the role of inquisitor. In other words, she is turning to the perpetrators for answers about their past crimes. She oscillates between the active and passive victim role in that she is the clear victim in the first two chapters of the story but then comes out of this position by asking for her death at the hands of the former NS-Doctor. Nevertheless, her silence seems to awaken a resistance – the body starts to speak through inscriptions on the body.

Stephanie Bird alludes to the same limiting interpretive possibilities that violence on the body produces in her exploration of Duden's protagonist. In her view, "...the way in which the text lingers on moments of violence or repulsive descriptions of the body suggests indulgence in, if not a dependence on, the role of the anguished victim...It is, though, to suggest that central to an individual narrator's double bind, in her inability not to be a victim, lurks her own *unacknowledged fantasy of violence*. She does not or cannot recognize *a fascination, a desire, for that which she consciously abhors*."¹⁰¹ Bird points to the charged meanings hidden in the violent experiences. The desire for violence is reconfigured in Duden and thereby the meaning of victim is ambiguous. The nameless woman is the recipient of physical violence but not all attackers are graspable because the attacks are unpredictable and from unusual places, things and bodies. Processes such as the change from night to day, the noise of chirping birds or a plane passing in the sky becomes violators of space. The overemphasis of violence everywhere is intentional. Franziska Frei Gerlach asserts that the graphic displays in Duden's writing open up hidden "interstices" of suffering and thereby

"...mein Körper, er ist ganz beleidigt, an jeder Stelle beleidigt. Ich kann so nicht weiterleben. Ich kann das nicht. Wie oft muss ich noch in den Nil tauchen, damit das abgewaschen wird von ihm."

¹⁰¹ Stephanie Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 122.

shift taboos and boundaries.¹⁰² The most dramatic transformation takes place, not in the intricacies of agony, but in the use of pain and torture as a means to an end. The nameless woman in *Übergang* undergoes a metamorphism to eliminate childhood trauma. Bird postulates that the unmitigated suffering serves a purpose. “But the suffering cannot be escaped, resulting as it does from an identity rooted in the memory of the body. An honest assertion of existence must thus involve profound physical suffering as well as mental anguish, as she herself makes clear in the statement, ‘Memory-Effort-Identity’.¹⁰³ Therefore, the body must endure a rebirth in order to reclaim personal identity. In other words, the fragmented representation of identity in the short stories is enabled through violent confrontations. The final act of drowning allows her to complete the process but it is questionable how this identity can be mapped.

The first sentences of “the Mission, the Love” heralds “Everything is in order. I just cut off the head. It is hardly bleeding. What should I kill next?”¹⁰⁴ She describes a portrait of St. Michael with a snake entitled “Piero della Francesca, St. Michael” in the National Gallery of London to explain her position to love and identifies with the subjugated position of the slain animal in the portrait. The protagonist repeats the phrase “Like crushing a worm.” in bold letters twice in the text.¹⁰⁵ The phrase confirms the looming death of her body but also aligns it with the status of a *guilty* victim. Christian religion casts the snake as a seductive animal from the Garden of Eden. The new voice in the story, St. Michael, proclaims his victory. The protagonist is in the position of the snake and thereby acknowledges the sinful

¹⁰² Franziska Frei Gerlach, *Schrift und Geschlecht* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998), 311.

¹⁰³ Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity*, 99.

‘Erinnerung – Anstrengung – Identität’

¹⁰⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, 106.

“Es ist alles in Ordnung. Ich habe ihr soeben den Kopf abgeschlagen. Sie blutete kaum. Was soll ich als nächstes erledigen?”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 110.

“Wie einen Wurm zertreten.”

embodiment that she represents as a woman with knowledge. Returning to her association with the animal, she is also aware of her death and in fact feels close to dead animals.

Duden places violence and victimhood into question as the unnamed woman is in the same position as St. Michael in “Country Cottage”. The protagonist goes through the garden and comes upon a group of snail houses. She recounts, “With every step I trampled on the snail houses. The light, fragile crunch got on my nerves, especially because I assumed, they were live snails. But as I looked closer, I noticed, that they all were faded and abandoned houses.”¹⁰⁶ She feels no guilt about the killing and only finds it “annoying”. In the prior encounter with the painting she is the dead snake. The protagonist shifts positions as administrator and recipient of death.

Perpetual Movements

In *Übergang*, the use of overt violence signals a shift of narrative voices. The nameless woman speaks in first person when the body is in pain. Duden comments on the transitional phase of this cohesive formation of the “I”. In an interview with Sigrid Weigel, she states the body in pain to be “...a process that always continues and out of which one pulls oneself only artificially for but a moment. One produces a sort of connection and coherence, but it always decays again anew. Other cultures and times have known this more self-evidently, that such an identity, something so eternal, doesn’t exist at all.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 17.

“Bei jedem Schritt zertrat ich Schneckenhäuser. Das leichte, brüchige Knacken ging mir auf die Nerven, besonders weil ich annahm, es seien lebende Schnecken. Aber als ich genauer hinsah, bemerkte ich, daß es alles ausgebleichte und verlassene Behausungen waren.“

¹⁰⁷ Duden and Weigel Interview in 1987 quoted in Margaret Littler, “Diverging Trends in Feminine Aesthetics,” 162.

“...ein Prozeß, der immer weitergeht und aus dem man sich selber nur künstlich für einen Moment rausholt. Man stellt eine Art Zusammenhalt, Zusammenhang her, der aber auch immer wieder aufs neue verfällt. Andere Kulturen und andere Zeiten haben das viel selbstverständlicher gewußt, daß es so eine Identität, etwas so Ewiges gar nicht gibt.”

Kristeva's "The Subject in Process" offers a strong criticism of the "subject" as defined in psychoanalysis. "[T]he unitary subject discovered by psychoanalysis is only one moment, a time of arrest, a stasis, exceeded and threatened by this movement."¹⁰⁸ Her answer is the "subject in process" which can be conceptualized as an awareness of nomadic existence. Margaret Littler attributes temporary compositions of identity as a form of 'nomadic thinking'.¹⁰⁹ How does this nomadic thinking or existence translate into the text? "... [T]he recourse to painting and music as alternative signifying systems within the dominant symbolic order has become a recognizable strategy for women writers seeking to challenge the constraints of patriarchal discourse."¹¹⁰ I briefly outlined the arguments of Kristeva and Littler to situate pain as a way to establish an alternative signifying system. While psychoanalysis does have shortcomings in respect to the formation of the subject, I will illustrate how Freud's postulations on trauma help to understand the transitions between pain and memory.

Freud's section on "Memory, Repetition and Working Through" asks the psychoanalyst to encourage the patient to remember past events. He states, "The aim of these different techniques has, of course, remained the same. Descriptively speaking, it is to fill in gaps in memory; dynamically speaking, it is to overcome resistances due to repression."¹¹¹ The conflict in *Das Buch Franza* and *Übergang*, is that the women remember but their male counterparts fail to have the same memories. For instance, Franza understands colonialism as

¹⁰⁸ Julia Kristeva, "The Subject in Process," in *The Tel Quel Reader*, eds. Patrick ffrench and Roland-François Lack (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), 134.

¹⁰⁹ Littler, "Diverging Trends in Feminine Aesthetics," 168.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 171.

¹¹¹ Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, eds. James Strachey and others (London: Imago Publishing, 1948), 147-8.

Freud, "Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten," in *Gesammelte Werke*, 127.

"Das Ziel dieser Techniken ist natürlich unverändert geblieben. Deskriptiv: die Ausfüllung der Lücken der Erinnerung, dynamisch: die Überwindung der Verdrängungswiderstände."

an oppressive system but Martin prefers its profit potential. In *Übergang*, the violent experiences of the nameless woman find no audience and therefore her memories are formed in isolation. Freud elucidates: “For instance, the patient does not say that he remembers that he used to be defiant and critical towards his parents' authority; instead, he behaves in that way to the doctor.”¹¹² The patient reproduces his memories into performance or reiteration of the mind in the body. The repetition of memories for Franza and the nameless woman are part of a painful process.

States of pain and rest are linked to movement of body and thought as Franza's only Latin phrase “perpetuum mobile, ad absurdum, sic transit,” suggest.¹¹³ The three fragments mean “perpetual motion, reduction to the absurd and in transit.” She refers here to language as having the ability to make Jordan and others of his class nervous. Language is an indicator of power in Vienna. Nasal sounds, tones and words mark distinctions between class as well as gender. Franza is a linguistic chameleon when she easily learns the Viennese accent. It is an analogy to learning thoughts of this class as well. “When one steals from the people their ladder and rein words, they are very little, they can hardly move anymore, and Franza noticed this, as she heard Jordan speaking with his brother, Jordan lost his hold...every world is learned, and Franza who allowed herself so little, operated between the academic world...”¹¹⁴ Social mobility between classes is denoted through the ability to mimic a certain language. Bachmann reiterates how masculine language is part of oppression. Franza becomes afflicted through the psycho-linguistic terror of Jordan. Her recourse lies in re-establishing a position

¹¹² Ibid., 150.

¹¹³ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 67.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 87.

“Wenn man die Leute ihrer Steigbügelworte und ihrer Zügelworte beraubt, sind sie sehr wenig, sie können sich kaum mehr bewegen, und Franza merkte das, als sie Jordan mit seinem Bruder sprechen hörte, Jordan verlor den Halt...jede Welt ist eine erlernte, und Franza die so wenig sich erlaubte, hantierte zwischen der Universitätswelt...”

in this language. As I will illustrate in the later chapter, she chooses mythological stories rather than history.

Martin's journey to find Franza leads him to reveal certain changes in her which took place in the past. Her full name is Franziska and like Martin, she underwent changes in her demeanor as she moved from Galicia to Vienna. She discarded her accent, her appearance and even her walk. These changes are indicative of an important juncture in her identity. Franza expresses this transformation further in the way she signs the telegram as "Franziska" and not Franza as she had in the last ten years. Martin remarks that she had come to her senses.¹¹⁵ She presents Martin with her passport, which states "her own name".¹¹⁶ To her, the name is important, the narrator reveals, "She hurried to explain how she had gotten the new passport, asking whether or not he had noticed (her voice growing ever more rushed) that her own name was printed on it."¹¹⁷ Her former married name Jordan trapped her into his power. She was not able to express her ideas or even if she did they were dismissed or not heard. The narrator further explains, "As long as she carried the Fossil's name, she had no chance of being sick like the others were, not amid his power base, which inspired more fear in her than dying on a straw mattress in Galicia or while on a journey..."¹¹⁸ The house in Galicia has no street name and the location is only in the memories of Franza and Martin, "At least the Fossil had never set foot in this part of the world and *could not lay claim* to the signs and names by which everything here was coded..."¹¹⁹ It is a hiding place from the source of her illness. Returning to the question of marking places becomes a site of resistance in the relationship

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 21.

juxtaposing Martin/Franza and Leo, the Fossil. In Galicia, she finds distance and refuge but also realizes that the extent of his destructive influences is too strong.

Dangler is not convinced about similar movements in Duden's short stories. She sees her instead describing a state of immobility. "The transition in Duden cannot actually be understood as a movement, not even as a fragmentation, only as a literary expression of a placeless transient situation, from where release can only be found in death."¹²⁰ It is hard to describe movement in *Übergang* because there are no boundaries between the nameless woman and her surroundings. The constant descriptions of pain, madness, headaches and panic evoke an image of an arrested body. The narrative progression of the short stories is disordered and pain in her body produces memory. Moreover, she is constantly running away from people.¹²¹ There is movement in Duden's writing - pain enables the nameless woman to revisit sites of her past. Nevertheless, she does state that she seeks a "moving release" from her situation.¹²²

The nameless woman experiences a violent attack on her mouth. Thereafter, her hospital stay is a first person narration of the details of her surgery as well as the various follow-up procedures such as the wiring of the mouth. Here the attack and absent agony leads to a confessional. "My hole, my mouth was to be stuffed, as soon as it had been opened. Yet I could somehow consider myself lucky that my anatomy had finally been wounded as well, so that the body could begin to recover, this task which had until then been reserved only for my brain-head, namely of following the boundless chaos of the world on all its secret paths and

¹²⁰ Dangel, "Übergang und Ankunft," 84.

"Der Übergang bei Duden kann nicht eigentlich als Bewegung verstanden werden, schon gar nicht als Aufbruch, nur als eine Festschreibung eines ortlosen Zwischenzustands, aus dem einzig die Unbeweglichkeit des Todes erlösen kann."

¹²¹ Duden, *Übergang*, 7.

¹²² Ibid., 29.

"bewegende Erlösung"

wherever else it made itself noticeable, including letting it break into me and rage there.”¹²³

The dream starts with the confession that she is to become what she is not. A threatening indication of a transformation. The nameless woman is beheaded in her dreams, similarly to the snake in the St. Michael portrait in “The Mission, The Love.” She continues to live with her body maintaining her memory. The threat of death arises constantly with the bombings at night. She remembers the bombings during the war through bodily trauma. This trauma, part of many, inhabits her body. Freud locates the original trauma in the memory of his patients. The trauma is expressed again through the body or its pains and behaviours not necessarily as an exact replication but a manifestation of the original trauma.¹²⁴ In the case of the nameless woman, her fears of dying during the bombings in the Second World War continue to exist in her psyche along with other unpleasant moments in her life. The body becomes a deposit of rotting mass. The mass, which is a reminder of her trauma, rots within her body as a living being. The protagonist's body suffers even though the memories are fragmented and in the past.

At night, the description changes to the fantastical. The trauma materializes into another being – her death. The doppelgänger motif is apparent in the comparison of the living body and dead memories however the encounter is far from harmonious. A dead faceless being chases her around the apartment until she calls for help on the telephone. The whole ordeal is hopeless as the being invades parts of her body and continues to poison her. The separation of entities results in the materialization of her memory and the repeat experience of

¹²³ Ibid., 63.

“Das Loch, das Maul sollte mir gestopft werden, kaum, daß es aufgerißen worden war. Dabei konnte ich doch von Glück sagen, daß nun endlich auch meine Anatomie einen Knacks bekommen hatte, daß der Körper aufzuholen beginnen konnte, was bis dahin allein meinem Gehirnkopf vorbehalten war, nämlich dem grenzlosen Chaos der Welt auf allen Schleichwegen und überallhin zu folgen, wo es sich bemerkbar machte, es also auch in mich einbrechen und in mir wüten zu lassen,..”

¹²⁴ Freud, “Erinnern, Wiederholen, Durcharbeiten,” in *Gesammelte Werke*, 129.

her fear of death. The meeting between these bodies produces an image of rhythmical movement between past and present. The nameless woman constantly negotiates with her surroundings through movement between space and transitions between states of being, pain and death.

She endures extreme pain in her legs at the hospital when another imagined sequence surfaces. “Nearly everyone succeeded in life. With breathtaking tricks in calculation. Only crazies and weirdoes never achieved anything. The armies of the dead, the murdered and the anyways-done-in were simply suppressed; the never-to-be-rectified does not only simply not exist, but was only a figment of the imagination.”¹²⁵ Again, memories about the war push themselves to the forefront. The physical pain in her body sets off relapses into the past. She agonizes over the many people who were murdered but were simply hidden through silences and with no intention of reparations. The psychological trauma remains in her body even through her teenage years, as she had to keep her emotional outbursts in control. In contrast, the boys forgot about the war and instead “...worked on their cars, they had hobbies and friends.”¹²⁶ The gendered observation is comparable to that of Franza's remarks about men forgetting events. The disbelief that others move on while she carries around her trauma reiterates that pain offers retrospective. “One way or another I had to be really careful, that my appearance did not get out of control and that I, continued visibly well, to advance on the prescribed paths even if already very uncertainly.”¹²⁷ The protagonist is cautious to note that

¹²⁵ Duden, *Übergang*, 74.

“Fast all brachten es fertig, daß die Rechnungen ihres Lebens aufgingen. Mit atemberaubenden Kalkuliertricks. Nur Verrückte und Sonderlinge brachten es zu nichts. Die Heere der Toten, der Gemordeten und so oder so Um die-Ecke-Gebrachten wurden einfach verschwiegen; das Nie-wieder-gut-zu-Machende existierte nicht nur nicht, sonder war Hirngespinnst.”

¹²⁶ Ibid.

“...bastelten an ihren Autos, sie hatten Hobbies and Freunde.”

¹²⁷ Ibid., 75.

this unsettling experience challenges her outer appearance to the world. Her image as a white German woman becomes unsettled through her violent memories living in her body and not in those of others. This realization also indicates that her perception of identity is based on that of a Butlerian performance of this image. She wants to express an accepted identity in order to hide the internal processes of her body. However, this fails at the end when the memories turn her body into a fossil.

“So oder so aber mußte ich schon sehr darauf achten, daß mein Erscheinungsbild mir nicht außer Kontrolle geriet und das ich, weiterhin gut sichtbar, auf den vorgezeichneten Wegen voranschritt. Wenn auch schon sehr viel unsicherer.”

3. Myth

In this last chapter, I attempt to illustrate what the effects of pain and shifts in time are – namely a return to myth. Alternate histories, interpretations and gender relations are established as a way to restore the psyche. Myth is a different approach to the past in that it is an anachronistic attempt to reveal unrepresentable events because "For at the beginning of literature, there is myth, and at its end as well."¹²⁸ The commentary attests to the constitutive element of myth. Its potency lies in its access to the same collective which perceives history – the German psyche. Fairy tales, Christian images and ancient Egyptian religion mark the return to an oral tradition. The emphasis on resolving trauma is dependant upon the voice as a medium. Myth is a cultural transition from the non-fictional to the fantastical. It allows for different perspectives of the same past. Bachmann and Duden incorporate myth to access the unheard and thereby represent those left as voiceless witnesses of history. Bettina von Jagow, drawing on Hans Blumenberg's work on myth, summarizes that myth is created when the unspeakable is encountered. Rationality fails to explain the event and fear sets in. The way out of this fear is an escape from the 'absoluteness of reality'.¹²⁹ Mythology functions as reinterpretation of events which does not rely on linear narrative but blurs the difference between fiction and reality. History is demarcated and challenged within this literary construct.

Myth unsettles sexualized relationships such as heterosexuality or traditional roles of motherhood by transgressing normative boundaries. Nonetheless, Barbara Weir Huber's "Transforming Psyche" warns about assigning too much freedom to mythologies. Taboos

¹²⁸ Jorge Luis Borges, "Parabel von Cervantes und Don Quixote," in *Borges und ich: Gedichte und Prosa* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1969), 45.

"Denn am Anfang der Literatur ist der Mythos und ebenso am Ende."

¹²⁹ Bettina von Jagow, "Liebe und Tabu: Zum Kulturtransfer des Isis-Osiris-Mythos in die Moderne: Ingeborg Bachmanns *Der Fall Franza* und Robert Musils *Isis und Osiris*," *Orbis Litterarum* 58, no. 2 (April 2003): 117.

may be transgressed but patriarchal relationships are replicated in mythology. She finds myth as a realm to “reclaim” and “revise” female experience.¹³⁰ The question remains where this escape leads to in the texts. Country (*Heimat*) as physical space becomes troublesome in post-1945 Germany or Austria. When Bachmann attempts to situate myth as home, she prepares a theoretical move. The spatial affinity to fatherland is fraught with past ideologies. Duden proposes the same in *Übergang* because the loss of voice can be understood as a rejection of the parental fatherland and mother tongue. A search for language fails because the adequate words are missing to speak of the past. Thus, the concept of home is not necessarily tied to space or linguistic boundaries. I propose myth as home because that is where the female figures seek alterity. Freud's analysis of the “unheimlich/heimlich” (“uncanny/homelike”) further illustrates the interplay of meaning between home, secrecy and the uncanny. The root of both German words is *heim* referring specifically to the home. The uncanny in the texts is represented through myth where the homelike resides for the protagonists.

Freud's essay “The Uncanny” provides a map for understanding Franza and the nameless woman. His discussion on the uncanny in literature is a thorough treatment of the ambiguous German term “uncanny/homelike”. Freud builds on E. Jentsch's research and E.T.A. Hoffmann's “The Sandman”. He lays out the various meanings of the uncanny to illustrate their multiple interpretations. One possible meaning is “...that kind of terrifying, which refers back to one's oldest knowledge, to that which has been familiar for the longest time.”¹³¹ It reveals what is known but kept secret or hidden and functions as something uncanny because it originates from a known image. Daniel Sander's German dictionary,

¹³⁰ Barbara Weir Huber, *Transforming Psyche* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 22.

¹³¹ Sigmund Freud, *Das Unheimliche: Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Doppelpunkt, 1963), 46.

“...jene Art des Schreckhaften, welche auf das Altbekannte, Längstvertraute zurückgeht.”

quoted in Freud, provides a plethora of meanings for the opposite term homelike. The homelike denotes not only a sense of belonging or home but also stillness. Freud cites another dictionary to demonstrate the variety of meanings. For instance, the Grimm's Dictionary dated 1877, lists homelike to mean “the recognition, mystical, allegorical.”¹³² The uncanny is an arrival in the homelike and a return to the allegorical in literature. The return is demarcated by the transition from the real to the imaginary.

This ambiguous, borderless duality is discussed in the formation of the subject. He elaborates on the doppelgänger motif in Hoffmann's *The Sandmann* as a duplication of the “I”. The double resembles the protagonist to such an extent that the appearance becomes uncanny.¹³³ Freud confirms this supposition with the work of Otto Rank on the motif. Rank reveals that the doppelgänger acted as a safety mechanism against the destruction of the “I”.¹³⁴ Freud remarks that the uncanny is produced through the repression of what is familiar and the fear surrounding the uncanny surfaces precisely because it has been repressed.¹³⁵ I will now illustrate how myth is interpreted differently in each of the works and where the authors draw commonalities.

Myth as Home

Bachmann's confrontation with the un/representable is continuously present in her writing. She places the female voice in myth both as a commentary and a creative outlook. It is a statement on the exclusion of the female from a male economy and a look towards mythology as an alternative. In his paper on the genealogy of violence, Larcatti describes Bachmann's committed research into violence, destruction and torture as a reoccurring motif

¹³² Ibid., 52.
 “das Erkenntnis, mystisch, allegorisch”

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 70.

in her writing. Violence expresses itself in the intimate interactions involving families, familiar environments and lastly home/country. Her disengagement with the concept of home results from, "...the relativization of a territorially defined concept of home and of the idea of homelessness as an approach of the literature and the poet that are permanently in transit and never arrive at their destination."¹³⁶ The transient existence of Franza is reflected in the use of several myths to speak about the past. The mouth governs existence through an oral and textual tradition. Lennox views Franza's return to Galicia as a gendered journey back to a place free of patriarchal influences.¹³⁷ I argue that the movement away from her illness is a departure from her nomadic existence towards myth. Memories become mythologized as a means to confront fears and face associated trauma.

I will focus on two tales: Bluebeard and Isis/Osiris to show how Franza resorts to myth to communicate her trauma to Martin. At the beginning of the story, Martin reluctantly decides to help his sister. Her brother fails to locate her in Vienna and realizes that she is at her childhood place in Galicia.¹³⁸ While Franza has fond memories, they do not have the same effects of the past – things are not innocent anymore. Instead her favorite sentence from a Robert Musil poem reminds the reader that home is an escape from patriarchy for Franza.¹³⁹ It is male figures that mark her history and who exist in various power relationships. Her life history comes to the surface in this uttering of a poem. It is a confirmation of the entrapment among the many men but also the hope of a way out through the brother's rescue.

Martin remembers little of his childhood and recalls Franza as a mythological figure instead of his sister. The narrator explains through Martin's thoughts, Franza's appeal to

¹³⁶ Larcati, *Ingeborg Bachmanns Poetik*, 266.

"....der Relativierung eines territorial definitieren Heimatbegriffs und der Idee der Heimatlosigkeit eine Auffassung der Dichtung und des Dichters, die permanent unterwegs sind und nie ans Ziel kommen."

¹³⁷ Lennox, *Cemetery of Murdered Daughters*, 169.

¹³⁸ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 19.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

mythology. “[Franza]...last of the family, a mythical figure, that pulled him out of the Gail, who went into the coldest water, and for this figure he sought his way back into childhood...”¹⁴⁰ His fragmented recollection casts her as an extraordinary being who acted as his rescuer during the Second World War. She was the parental authority figure for Martin but he cannot fathom a reciprocation of the same.¹⁴¹ Martin's childhood lacks the father figure whereas Franza lacks the mother figure. It is because of these absences that the Isis/Osiris myth appeals to the siblings. I will elaborate on this setting of the married siblings after foregrounding the discussion with another tale.

The relationship between Franza and Jordan represents several conflicts with a central focus on gender. Bachmann utilizes the fairy tale Bluebeard by Charles Perrault to shed light on the severity of Jordan's abuse but also to relegate his presence into the past. Jordan is only a character recalled in the minds of Martin and Franza. He is voiceless in the story but remains powerful in the psyche of Franza. The train ride from the familiar surroundings is liberating for Franza.¹⁴² Martin plays the role of rescuer in Franza's narrations in two mythological tales. The Bluebeard tale narrates her life with Jordan where Martin is cast as brother/rescuer. On the train ride, Martin is cast into a brother/husband role in the Egyptian myth of Isis/Osiris. The consistent use of myth is a way for Franza to navigate through gender discourse.

”Jordanian Time” marks for Franza, an entry into the heart of darkness, on board a ship. Martin fails to understand his sister's suffering and confronts her, Franza answers, “It is really hard to relate. Oh, I am out of breath again, she laughed, now wheezing, she stared at

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 21.

“...die letzte aus einer Familie, eine mythische Figur, die ihn aus der Gail zog, die ins kälteste Wasser ging, und für diese Figur suchte er sich zurück in die Kindheit...”

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁴² Ibid., 54.

her hands, which had developed blisters, I am shedding, she said, look, it will all be better, I am growing new skin.”¹⁴³ Franza is unable to tell her past as she searches for language. Her inability to speak is amplified through the loss of her breath.

At this moment, she resorts to the Bluebeard tale to narrate her history with Leo Jordan. His first wife disappeared silently and his second gassed herself. Franza confesses that she viewed his previous wives as unworthy and dumb to live up to his standards. She resorts to myth to explain her marriage. “Whatever other girls want, I must have been driven to look into the last room, the Bluebeard marriage, curious about the last room, to be killed in a mysterious way and for mysterious reasons and to be puzzled to death about the only figure who was not transparent to me.”¹⁴⁴ Jordan's secrets are not only a revealing of his dubious past but something more sinister.

The German version of Bluebeard tells of an older nobleman who wants a wife but is feared for his unusual blue beard and his suspicious past. The people of his town distrust him because his previous wives disappeared over time. He eventually marries the young daughter of his neighbour. One day, Bluebeard goes on journey abroad and leaves his wife with the keys to the castle. She is forbidden to enter one room but is overwhelmed by her curiosity. She discovers his dead wives decapitated and hanging on the walls.¹⁴⁵ Bluebeard abruptly returns to the castle and realizes that his wife has discovered his murderous past. He readies himself to kill his wife but her brothers come to the rescue. There are several versions of this

¹⁴³ Ibid.

“Es ist nur schwer zu erzählen. Ach, jetzt ist wieder die Luft weg, sie lachte, ihr Atem ging pfeifend, sie starrte auf ihre Hände, wo sich Blasen gebildet hatten, ich häute mich, sagte sie, siehst du, es wird alles besser, ich bekomme eine neue Haut.”

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

“Was andre Mädchen auch wollen, ich muß wohl getrieben gewesen sein, ins letzte Zimmer zu schauen, die Blaubartehe, auf das letzte Zimmer neugierig, auf geheimnisvolle Weise und zu geheimnisvollen Zwecken getötet zu werden und mich zutodzurätseln an der einzigen Figur, die für mich nicht durchschaubar war.”

¹⁴⁵ Mererid Puw Davies, “Laughing their Heads off: Nineteenth-century Comic Versions of the Bluebeard Tale,” *German Life and Letters* 55, no. 4 (Oct 2002): 329.

gruesome tale but the moral behind Bluebeard's repeated violence and terror is blamed on the curiosity and disobedience of women.¹⁴⁶

In order to understand Franza's mention of her Bluebeard marriage, a closer look is warranted at the role of female sexuality. Bluebeard kills his young wife because she disobeyed his orders and thereby undermined his sense of power in the home. Mererid Puw Davies notes that, "...Bluebeard's chamber contains his secret knowledge, that is, privileged knowledge, and therefore power...written text embodies the secret of patriarchal power."¹⁴⁷ More importantly, she gains access to his memories from this room. He decapitated his wives to regain control of his home and keep his secrets. The killings are based on a transgression of gender and memory. His role as ruler of the castle is challenged when memories are exposed through the dead bodies. It is also a negotiation of women through men in that the daughter moves from the control of her father into the arms of Bluebeard and thereafter the care of her brother. Franza's body oscillates among male figures in a similar way. She turns to another myth in an attempt to narrate a new ending.

The myth of Isis/Osiris is appealing as an untapped area of sexualized relationships. Bachmann declares Freud as the pioneer of the mind in her preface but with a distance. "I only state it. From the undiscovered Sacher-Masoch to the greatest pioneer Sigmund Freud, however historical he may have become, this line is never disrupted, this research."¹⁴⁸ This lineage of trying to understand the psyche becomes the agenda in *Das Buch Franza*. She is using similar metaphorical language of archeology that Freud utilized in his work on the female psyche.

¹⁴⁶ Brüder Grimm. "Blaubart" in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen 1812/15, vol. 1*, ed. Hans-Jörg Uther (Berlin: Directmedia Publishing GmbH, 2003) <http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Blaubart> (accessed June 20, 2008).

¹⁴⁷ Davies, "Laughing their heads off," 337.

¹⁴⁸ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 155.

"Ich konstatiere es nur. Von dem unentdeckten Sacher-Masoch bis zu dem größten Pionier Sigmund Freud, wie historisch er auch geworden sein mag, ist diese Linie nie abgerissen, diese Recherche"

The casting of Franza/Martin into Isis/Osiris is facilitated through an intertextual reference to Musil's poem. Freud adds to this setting with his comment in "The Aetiology of Hysteria." He states: "One must use his method -or- something similar in character – to direct the patient's attention from the symptom back to the scene in and through which the symptom was generated, and this symptom is alleviated, according to his instructions, by reproducing the traumatic scene and retroactively correcting the original psychic process."¹⁴⁹ Thus, the final setting in Egypt alludes to Jordan's, and indirectly Freud's room - a reproduction of a traumatic scene. Freud's room also becomes the place where trauma can be corrected.

Egyptian mythology is ripe with incest, fratricide and matriarchy. According to various versions of the Isis and Osiris tale, most prominently Plutarch's, the love between the siblings extends beyond the limits of life and death. Brother Osiris becomes a great ruler of Egypt and gradually other countries in the southern hemisphere. He marries his sister Isis who shares equally the governing duties of the throne. A statue of Isis often represents her as the seat of the throne itself and comes to stand for social, agricultural and medicinal progress in Egypt. She appeared in dreams to help her subjects with conflicts. Their evil brother Seth who symbolizes darkness and barrenness desires Isis and the kingdom which she rules with Osiris. Seth succeeds in trapping the unsuspecting Osiris in a coffin, throwing him into the Nile and taking his throne. The mourning sister searches for Osiris and finds his body in Byblos. She returns it to Egypt but Seth discovers Osiris and cuts up the corpse into many pieces. Isis recovers all parts except the phallus which had been devoured by a fish in the Nile.¹⁵⁰ Isis

¹⁴⁹ Freud, "Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie," 427.

"Man muß sein Verfahren – oder – ein im Wesen gleichartiges – anwenden, um die Aufmerksamkeit des Kranken vom Symptom aus auf die Szene zurückzuleiten in welcher und durch welche das Symptom entstanden ist, und man beseitigt nach seiner Anweisung dieses Symptom, indem man bei der Reproduktion der traumatischen Szene eine nachträgliche Korrektur des damaligen psychischen Ablaufes durchsetzt."

¹⁵⁰ Hans Wilhelm Haussig, ed., *Götter und Mythen im Vorderen Orient* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1965), 367; 382.

replaces the missing part with artificial genitals. She performs rituals which return to life and ensure passage into the underworld. The phallus symbolizes masculine power, returned by Isis and her pregnancy to Osiris. Isis represents knowledge because she knows the secret names of the gods and other supernatural beings. Joan Raphael-Leff points out that transgression of time; relations and space are marked in Egyptian texts as “the time of the confusion”.¹⁵¹ Myth alludes to a primordial vision of sexuality which is malleable and intergenerational diluting the authoritative conflicts embodied in the Greek tragedy of Oedipus.

Returning to the last scene by the pyramids in the appropriately named “Egyptian darkness”, the events leading up to her fall are indicative of a return to myth as her resting place. As mentioned already, Martin renders her a “mythical figure” who rescued him from drowning in the river during his childhood. The rescue reenacts Isis rescuing Osiris in the Nile. Their relationship in childhood with sexual undertones directs the unfolding of the story through Isis/Osiris allegories. Franza senses the imminent change with her repeated statement “Sire, I will arrive” throughout the fragments.¹⁵² The “Sire” address indicates her arrival to be in the past and refers to Sir Percival Glyde, the British officer, whom she desired sexually in her childhood. The usage of Egyptian myth can also be read again in the scene where Martin buries her corpse-like body in the mud. Franza nearly choking on the mud reveals to Martin that she was not able to scream for a long time.¹⁵³ This soundless suffering also touches upon her relationship with Leo Jordan as “I wanted to scream, always wanted to scream. But I was not able to ever scream. When the suffocating began, I went out of the room in time.”¹⁵⁴ The

¹⁵¹ Joan Raphael-Leff, “Freud's 'Dark Continent,’” *Parallax 13*, no. 2 (2007): 43-4.

¹⁵² Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 91.

“Sire, ich werde ankommen.”

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

Isis and Osiris relationship is reversed in that Osiris has lost his productive powers the same way that Franza has lost her voice. Martin plays the role of Isis in that he attempts to restore her but to no avail. The metaphor of destruction, which governs the story of Osiris' death, also reoccurs in Franza's progression towards death. The narrator steps in and states "An end with writing. Another beginning."¹⁵⁵ I argue that this is a pivotal moment for Franza because it is her departure into myth from the "black and white ornaments" or alphabet which appears in her drug induced state.¹⁵⁶

Franza realizes, "I or I. I and the desert. Or I and the other. And exclusively and tolerating nothing half, I and I began to go against each other."¹⁵⁷ Here the impending destruction of Franza becomes apparent. She recognizes her existence relies on a confrontation with the underworld – or subconscious. Furthermore, this tension reiterates Franza's drive towards myth and rebirth. Franza desires the same transformation where the two "I" are consolidated into stableness. This wish for an identity materializes when an unknown man appears by the pyramids that the narrator associates with "the repetition. the representation". The stranger hits her head twice against the pyramids. The repetition of trauma takes place as Franza loses her voice out of fear.¹⁵⁸ Suddenly, she turns her trauma into an act which reestablished the suppressed "I" and "...there was her other voice. No. No."¹⁵⁹ Franza's descent into myth is completed as she confronts her old fears from Vienna

"Ich wollte ja schreien, immer wollte ich schreien. Aber ich habe ja nie schreien können. Wenn das Erstricken anfing, ging ich rechtzeitig aus dem Zimmer."

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 113.

"Ein Ende mit der Schrift. Ein anderer Anfang."

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 115.

"schwarzweißen Ornamenten"

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 92.

"Ich oder Ich. Ich und die Wüste. Oder Ich und das Andere. Und ausschließlich und nichts Halbes duldend, fingen Ich und Ich an, gegeneinanderzugehen."

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 134.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

"...da war ihre andre Stimme. Nein, Nein"

and recovers her voice. This surfacing of a second “I” relates back to another moment on the bus. “Since she had staggered out of the bus, a battle had started within her, two opponents went against each other inside her...”¹⁶⁰ She has established her own voice through the destruction of her historically bound “I”. Freud describes the uncanny effect of the double and here the two “I” within one body represent incompatible selves. The balance is established between past and present when she dies with her sleeping brother beside her with the utterance of the phrases, “Martin /Among a hundred brothers./ The desert is something./ The edge of the Arabian desert./ From the broken, from the broken, the breaking./ All expectations broken.”¹⁶¹ The “I” which carried around the trauma of the past is discarded which leads to the death of the body and resurrection in myth. The move is an allegory for an entry into the text. In *Übergang*, the same realization takes place about the body but Duden finds solace in another concept of myth.

Return to the Womb

Duden incorporates Christian imageries as a way to return to myth. She makes use of diverse symbols to narrate the transition of the nameless woman between life, death and rebirth. The title *Übergang* means transition between life and death but also other boundaries. In 1985, Della Couling translated Duden's work into English with the title *Opening of the Mouth*. The meaning of the title is significant when seen as part of Christian or ancient Egyptian religion. The opening of the mouth ritual - source of language - denotes rebirth in both religions. More precisely, “a rite of animation” of life and movement.¹⁶² The 'myth as

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 92.

“Seit sie aus dem Bus herausgewankt war, hatte ein Kampf in ihr angefangen, in ihr gingen zwei Gegner aufeinander los...”

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 135.

“Martin/Unter hundert Brüdern./Die Wüste ist etwas./Der Rand der arabischen Wüste./Von zerbrochenen, von zerbrochenen, das Zerschlagen./Alle Vorstellungen zerbrochen.”

¹⁶² Mark Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing* (Oxford : Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1993), 13.

home' applies to the nameless woman because she experiences her surroundings as violent towards herself and seeks to find another space as is evident in the first sentences of the text when her eyes are ripped out – and thereby another symbol of life.

The motif of losing eyes plays a reoccurring role in several myths and literatures – most prominently in the story of Oedipus. Duden offers an altogether different interpretation of this fear. Freud observes that this fear of damaging or losing eyes stems from childhood. The fear remains in adults but as a substitute for the fear of losing another organ – the phallus.¹⁶³ In contrast, the opening lines of *Übergang* recast the act to mean something different altogether. The nameless protagonist speaks her thoughts, demarcated in italic writing, “I am constantly on the run from other people. They have only one thing on their mind: to exploit or kill me. They always begin with the same thing. First they rip out my eyes and attach them to themselves, so that from then on I am forced to look at them. They do not know about the extra eye I have, that now without the other two looks like an axe: merciless and cleaving.”¹⁶⁴ The act of removing the eyes is a carefully worded scene. Other people rip out her eyes to remove her ability to see what is before her. The eyes represent a recording device of the past – specifically the trauma of German history. Stealing the sensory organs and attaching them to their bodies also reflects the conforming behaviour of the protagonist. It is the multiplicity of eyes/selves looking differently at the “I” or collective “I”. The forced

¹⁶³ Freud, *Das Unheimliche*, 59.

“Hingegen mahnt uns die psychoanalytische Erfahrung daran, daß es eine schreckliche Kinderangst ist, die Augen zu beschädigen oder zu verlieren. Vielen Erwachsenen ist diese Ängstlichkeit verblieben und sie fürchten keine andere Organverletzung so sehr wie die des Auges...Das Studium der Träume, der Phantasien und Mythen hat uns dann gelehrt, daß die Angst um die Augen, die Angst zu erblinden, häufig genug ein Ersatz für die Kastrationsangst ist.”

¹⁶⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, 7.

“Ich bin ständig auf der Flucht vor anderen Menschen. Sie haben nur eins im Sinn: mich auszubeuten oder umzubringen. Sie fangen immer mit ein und derselben Sache an. Erst reißen sie mir die Augen aus und befestigen sie an sich selbst, damit sie anzusehen ich von nun an gezwungen bin. Sie wissen nicht von dem Auge, das ich zuviel habe, das nun allerdings ohne die beiden anderen sieht wie eine Axt: spaltend und unerbitterlich.”

looking at the people represents the ideology of Nazi Germany whereas the individual “I” sees things differently. This split in perspective vitalizes the process of criticism with the presence of a third eye.

The body undergoes events, the eyes attached to the others observe the proceedings, and the third eye reflects on the whole process. The third eye provides several abilities according to mythology. Foremost, Christian theology recognizes the eye's ability to distinguish between light and dark as well as to see the past, present and future.¹⁶⁵ Duden hints to Oedipus who scratched his eyes out after learning of his crime. In *Übergang*, the protagonist engages in a collective realization of the crime but the message is somewhat disturbing. The removal of her two eyes indicates a forced return to the traumatic event. Furthermore, she forms an ambiguous perspective as a guilty victim. I propose that the alignment with the Freudian castration anxiety fails because the protagonist returns to the site of her trauma in childhood through an internalized look at the body away from history. She revisits the events living within her and causing her to suffer pain. The protagonist cloaks herself in a metaphor of blind justice and with the judicial, objective third eye of truth. An authoritative stance of the protagonist over other characters and ultimately the reader of the stories. The female character turns her eyes to the incident in the middle text “Transition”. She speaks of her guilt in the war:

“I had just turned thirty-three years old, when I was finally able to admit to myself, what I had been swallowing for so long, namely that it was about extermination. The species, to which I belonged, came last; it was simultaneously the species of the responsible. Most of those among them did not even know this. I had also, ever since I was little, always assumed the opposite. The opposite was law, disrupted through blows of fate such as death and world war.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ William Johnston, *The Inner Eye of Love* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 9.

¹⁶⁶ Duden, *Übergang*, 64.

“Ich war gerade dreiunddreißig Jahre alt geworden, als ich mir endlich eingestehen konnte, was ich lange schon geschluckt hatte, nämlich daß es um Ausrottung ging. Die Spezies zu der ich gehörte, kam zu allerletzt dran; es war zugleich die Spezies der Verantwortlichen. Die meisten unter ihnen wußten nicht einmal das. Auch ich war

She confesses her trauma as a denial of responsibility. She remembers the past, revealing an incident during the reign of National Socialism.

Open windows in the summer and a soft new dress made of a swastika flag. A Russian, who always shot in the air and whom we had to pass by, I was holding the hand of my mother, to go around the turnpike. I screamed, he would shoot us dead, and did not understand my mother, who simply walked towards him and pulled me along behind her. One Sunday a Russian was shot, in the middle of the park at Rondell, and immediately also buried there, in between the roses and the snapdragons and under one of the plaster statues of a musician. My father and I stood somewhat aloof. As my eyes started to tear, were we chased away by men in uniforms. I asked and my father answered something, among the two big words were: traitor and teargas.¹⁶⁷

The traumatic memory revolves around the eyes. Her experiences as a child are recorded as a visual shock among innocent recollections of nature. The fate of the two Russians becomes lumped together. The first meeting with a Russian is a fearful encounter with her own possible death. The second meeting with a Russian is a traumatic visualization of this fear – death on display. He is buried among symbols of innocence such as nature and music. Her eyes capture the incident whereas her inability to comprehend the words of her father adds to a near voiceless accompaniment of this memory. The two words that do surface are indicative of her experiences. She comprehends betrayal and teargas but is more shocked by the distortion of the environment and the silences surrounding the buried Russian. The eye is a primary sensory organ through which her memories are formed. The earlier removal of her eyes is an act of removing her knowledge of the past but the forced look back is a mirrored

von kleinauf immer von Gegenteil ausgegangen. Das Gegenteil war Gesetz, unterbrochen durch Schicksalsschläge wie Tod und Weltkrieg.”

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

“Offene Fenster im Sommer und ein weiches neues Kleid aus einer Hakenkreuzfahne. Ein Russe, der immerzu in die Luft schoß und an dem wir vorbei mußten, ich an der Hand meiner Mutter, um den Schlagbaum zu passieren. Ich schrie, er werde uns totschießen, und verstand meine Mutter nicht, die einfach auf ihn zuging und mich hinter sich herzog. Eines Sonntags wurde ein Russe erschossen, mitten im Park am Rondell, und dort auch gleich, inmitten der Rosen und Löwenmäulchen und unter einer der Musikantenstatuen aus Gips, begraben. Mein Vater und ich standen etwas abseits. Als meine Augen zu tränen anfangen, wurden wir von Uniformierten verjagt. Ich fragte und mein Vater antwortete etwas, unter dem zwei große Worte waren: Verräter und Tränengas.”

confrontation of her past. Childhood experiences resurface through the eyes again. The third eye functions as judge of historical events but also separates the individual from collective memory. A childhood conflict between morality and immorality during the war is questioned in the present. The revisiting of her past also leads to a failure to correct this trauma. The eyes only witness, record and project back the visual images and the only reaction they are able to produce - tears. The locus of the nameless woman's trauma lies in the mouth. Thus attempts to return to the past are through the oral tradition within the text. Duden answers this lack of language as a means to explain German history. The protagonist seeks her refuge in the potential release of memories through the mouth which possesses the ability to absorb as well as to produce. The protagonist confirms the focus on speech through another remark. "The vacuum mouth became the most important organ. It learned only one thing: to take in and to swallow away. The reverse did not work. It was incapable of expression. That inwardly eaten became the grammar of a heavy tongued, not yet conscious language, a language in dream state, beyond the threshold for sense and form. Eyeless and dark."¹⁶⁸ The mouth swallows food and thoughts, which resurface in language. She is a passive participant in the feeding frenzy of language. She is unable to vocalize her own thoughts because they are overpowered by the constant swallowing of words. She finds resolution from this suspended, dreamlike state only at the end of her journey where a cleansing of her bodily memories takes place by the ocean. Her purging of bodily fluids and vocalizations of pain fail to bring forth a voice.

The nameless woman arrives in myth because she seeks her redemption in the form of cleansing and rebirth through water. The narrator announces that, "The person had to follow

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 65.

"Der Vakuummund wurde zum wichtigsten Organ. Er lernte nur eines: aufzunehmen und nach innen wegzuschlucken. Das Umgekehrte funktionierte nicht. Er war unfähig zum Ausdruck. Das einwärts Gegessene wurde zur Grammatik einer schwerzungigen, nicht zu sich kommenden Sprache, einer Sprache im Traumzustand, jenseits der Sinn- und Formenschwelle. Augenlos und dunkel."

three paths of differing quality, one after the other, in order to arrive at an undefined destination – in the language of dreams – home.”¹⁶⁹ The protagonist sets out to arrive in this home through the three ways as a metamorphosis of states of being. The first passage is over the sand and the bridge to the frozen ocean. She resorts to walking on all fours because the frozen water is like an icy mirror. There, she falls asleep and enters a dream state. She wakes up drowning in the water but in an unclear state of being. The realization to have stillness is also comparable to being at home or a bodily rest meaning death.¹⁷⁰ When the protagonist drowns in the water, the narrator continues to reveal her experiences which involve a battle of her body with words, water and memories. The symbolism of drowning is the return to the maternal womb and thereby the elimination of the conflicting bodily “I”. Again, Freud enlightens us that some people consider being buried alive as the greatest uncanny. The horrible fantasy of being buried alive is a transformation of the fantasy to live in the womb.¹⁷¹ The maternal womb represents the original *Heimat* because it is the space where bodies begin. Furthermore, it is the pre-patriarchal stage where language is in its formative stages. The nameless woman remains as a ruin in the water. The narrator comments that sentences are chiseled on her fossilized body. The first words are illegible from the water damage and the end of it unthinkable. The sentence is noted in italics, “My memory is my body. My body is porous. The only thing that does not fall through its mesh, is love and agony...It [agony] willingly endured everything, but in reality never disappeared, and instead remained

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 124.

“Drei Wege von unterschiedlicher Beschaffenheit hatte die Person nacheinander zu gehen, um zu einem unbestimmten Ziel – in der Sprache der Träume: nach Hause – zu gelangen.”

¹⁷⁰ Freud, *Das Unheimliche*, 48.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 74.

“Manche Menschen würden die Krone der Unheimlichkeit der Vorstellung zuweisen, scheinot begraben zu werden. Allein die Psychoanalyse hat uns gelehrt, daß diese schreckliche Phantasie nur die Umwandlung einer anderen ist, die ursprünglich nichts Schreckhaftes war, sondern von einer gewissen Lüsternheit getragen wurde, nämlich der Phantasie vom Leben im Mutterleib.”

withdrawn and completely still like a dismembered, seemingly dead body.”¹⁷² Where the traumatic events have been linked to the eyes and mouth before, the narrator points to the body as another recording site where the event continues to reside in even when the mind tries to forget. The eroding message on her body is a reiteration that the beginning of words lies beyond memory in myth.

¹⁷² Duden, *Übergang*, 127.

“Mein Gedächtnis ist mein Körper. Mein Körper ist löchrig. Das Einzige, was nicht durch seine Maschen fällt, ist Liebe und Qual...Sie [Qual] ließ daß alles mit sich machen, verschwand aber in Wirklichkeit nie, sondern hielt inwendig nur ganz still wie eine zerstückelte Scheintote.”

Conclusion

This thesis began with the suggestion that German and Austrian female identity is linked to its unresolved Nazi past. Both protagonists illustrated this problematic position and their attempts to move out of the male economy. They rejected time as a masculine construct. Franza and the nameless woman internalized various aspects of National Socialism and their bodies displayed symptoms as a way to express this trauma. Lastly, the protagonists sought a different return to language – namely in myth. Bachmann and Duden undoubtedly raised in German literature and gender discourse many challenging questions. More precisely, they pointed towards the unclear relationship of the German or Austrian woman towards violence. They urged for a return to the historical sites in order to ground and reconstruct an identity. In the conclusion, I wish to demonstrate how the focus on gender creates other shortcomings in these texts. The question of race remains under explored in these texts and this has been the harshest feminist criticism to date.

Bachmann and Duden illustrate the complexity of their female figures in terms of race and assign culpability to their actions. The assumption of victim status as a blanket statement about the German woman has already been heavily criticized in feminist scholarship. For instance, Lennox comments that the generalized “white woman” claims to be victim while ignoring the racial components of their interactions in a German/Austrian surrounding.¹⁷³ She writes that the secondary status of women within National Socialism has often been used to exonerate their racially privileged position. According to Lennox, the women “..in the German/Austrian context, targets of a similar [feminist] critique of white Christian (“Aryan”) women consider women’s subordination by the National Socialist regime (which many of

¹⁷³ Lennox, *Cemetery of Murdered Daughters*, 2.

them supported) to parallel the treatment of the millions the Nazis murdered”.¹⁷⁴ Lennox argues convincingly that a generalization such as the white German non-Jewish woman reduced to a ‘victim’ is a thoroughly flawed perception. Franza and the nameless woman are white and non-Jewish. Thus the victim status renders them ahistorical. In other words, relegating the white woman into the myth of the “perpetual victim” disables any opportunities of critically and comprehensively interrogating gender discourse itself.

Black Violence

There has been early criticism of Duden's *Übergang* ignoring race in her writing. The nameless woman is confronted by black men in the short stories. Adelson writes, “As a white German woman she is caught in the crossfire of racial tensions in a culture whose present sensibilities with regard to race to be determined by responses to the Nazi past, the presence of black American soldiers stationed in West Germany and West Berlin, and the continued employment of so-called guest workers from countries such as Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece.”¹⁷⁵ Adelson, speaking from a viewpoint of a white Jewish American takes Duden to task for letting the racial presences go unexplored, “...the particular linkage in the black GIs yields black human beings who function in the text only as evil. Duden in fact has the attackers represent what men traditionally fear in women: darkness, loss of self, threat to life. Yet, the GIs do pose a real threat to the woman.”¹⁷⁶ The question of positionality becomes significant when unsettling the white woman.

The short story “Transition” begins with the following news style reportage. “In the night of Saturday to Sunday a 25 year old man was beaten up in a disco in West Berlin by a

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Leslie Adelson, “Racism and Feminist Aesthetics: The Provocation of Anne Duden's *Opening of the Mouth*,” *Signs* 13, no. 2 (Winter 1988): 242.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 249.

group of black GIs.”¹⁷⁷ The story is written in the past and begins with the beaten man returning to his girlfriend, a friend and his sister who are inside the disco. As he tells them about the incident, a “group of blacks” appear at his table like a moving, impenetrable wall. The identities of the black men disappear and the narrator comments that only body parts were remembered. “In memory there was only a dense mass, arms and fists, which appeared, aiming at the head and stomach of the young man...”¹⁷⁸ The attack continues as they attempt to escape the situation in a car. The nameless protagonist, his sister, drives the car and is thereby attacked on the head. “She lifted her hand to touch her lips, but instead touched ripped open, exploded soft matter, and loosely hanging teeth.”¹⁷⁹ The protagonist experiences the whole situation passively from the moment she is hit to the arrival at the hospital. Only the brother screams in pain whereas the protagonist painlessly observes the incident and arrives at the hospital. She encounters another black man in the hospital and panics before her reconstructive surgery. “It was a semi-glossy black face...my anesthesiologist. He belonged to them. They want to kill me. You cannot, I am allergic to iodine. Yes, yes, I will take care of you. He smiled softly. It will be alright. Okay. He is killing me. Okay.”¹⁸⁰

The role reversal from attacker to protector is an interesting movement in identities. The black man as GI is a historicized identity which brings context to the writing. The black soldiers participated in the war but were also victims of sexualized fears among white

¹⁷⁷ Duden, *Übergang*, 57.

“Übergang”/ “In der Nacht von Samstag auf Sonntag wurde in einer Diskothek in West-Berlin ein 25-jähriger Mann von einer Gruppe schwarzer GIs zusammengeschlagen.”

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

“Gruppe Schwarzer”/ “In der Erinnerung gab es nur eine dichte Masse, Arme und Fäuste, die sich hervortraten, auf Kopf und Bauch des jungen Mannes zielten...”

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 60.

“Sie hob die Hand, um ihre Lippen zu berühren, berührte aber statt dessen aufgerißenes und geplatzttes Weiches und lose drin hängende Zähne.”

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 66.

“Es war ein mattglänzendes schwarzes Gesicht,...Mein Anästhesiearzt. Er gehört zu ihnen. Sie wollen mich umbringen. Sie dürfe nicht, ich habe Jodallergien. Ja, ja, ich passe auf Sie auf. Er lächelte sanft. Es ist alles okay. Okay. Er bringt mich um. Okay.”

Germans. The racialized colonial image of the black man as vicious and dangerous is played out in the attack on the protagonist's mouth. It evokes fears of rape. The propaganda of the black man raping white women is played at with the "violated mouth."¹⁸¹ In contrast, the anesthesiologist represents a modern image of the black man as a professional member of German society. He acts in a protective position even while the protagonist's fears continue to linger on. The purpose of violence changes with the switch from the brick to the surgeon's knife. Scarry observes in "The Body in Pain" that the body learns to accept the medical instrument or "tool" rather than distinguish it from a weapon. The scenarios of unexpected and expected violence shift the understanding of power and agency.¹⁸² Adelson's intervention with her racism critique is justified in this incident where the identity of the black man is simply generalized into a mass. There is no individuality only recognition of different occupations and a persistent fear. Haines and Littler agree that black identity is excluded by the protagonist and notes that the violence in the stories is part of a Lacanian signification process. "The protagonist's indignation indicates that the violence perpetrated by her attackers is only a continuation of the violence underlying the process of symbolic subjectification."¹⁸³ Moreover, Duden plays with the violence on the mouth as a symbolism for acquiring a voice. The protagonist proclaims "I was free."¹⁸⁴ The nameless black mass becomes her liberators. The past is repeated in her voicelessness during the attack and the gesture of violence allows her to release sounds.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁸² Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 174.

¹⁸³ Haines and Littler, *Contemporary Women's Writing in German*, 65.

¹⁸⁴ Duden, *Übergang*, 63.

"Ich war frei."

'The Whites are Coming'

This cathartic exercise is also present in the *Das Buch Franza* narration of the racialized other. However, the interactions produce a different post-colonialist critique for Bachmann. For instance, the presence of Shell oil fields and dying animals reveal the darker side of capitalism.¹⁸⁵ She casts the Egyptian and European men with Franza to shed light on the colonial situation and the historical significance of the Suez canal crisis.

Franza experiences several incidents which comment on her recognition of the other but also affirm her disregard of her position. This is not to say that a mere categorization as white German woman equals perpetrator but to call for a more nuanced recognition of her identity. Through her travels in the desert and visit to the pyramids with Martin, Franza charges the “whites” as the cause of suffering. Martin tries to make sense of it after her death. He wonders, “But how could he have explained, in Döbling, in a trusted friend's apartment, a white among whites, why someone had said that the whites should be cursed, and something about a desert, which he had finally become aware of through the destruction of another.”¹⁸⁶ The play on the word “Wüste/Verwüstung” means the desert and the destruction of others. Similarly, Duden uses the colour black as a racial identity, whereas here “white” becomes synonymous with fear and suffering. However, Franza diverges on this thought slightly because she also uses the color white to symbolize the medical profession, white colonizers and whites in general. Her message to Martin is that the whites signify the colonization not only of ground but also of the psyche. Bachmann echoes Frantz Fanon's ideas.¹⁸⁷ “The whites

¹⁸⁵ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 114.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 139.

“Wie aber hätte er in Döbling, in einer Wohnung von vertrauten Freunden, ein Weißer <unter> Weißen, erklären können, warum jemand gesagt hatte, die Weißen, sie sollen verflucht sein, und wie etwas von einer Wüste, die er durch die Verwüstung eines anderen zuletzt doch erfahren hatte.”

¹⁸⁷ Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin White Masks*, trans. Charles L. Markmann. (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

are coming. The whites are going on land. And when they are thrown back, then they will return again, and no revolution and no resolution and no foreign law will help, they will return with their spirit, if they cannot come any other way. And resurrected in a brown or black brain, it will still always be the whites, even then. They will continue to own the world by way of this detour.”¹⁸⁸ However, there is no realization that she is one of the white people who are infiltrating the land.

Unlike Duden's main character, she identifies with the plight of the oppressed but fails to realize her own positionality. She accomplishes this transition through the transference of her suffering onto a common nouveau. She calls suffering into a collective consciousness of the oppressed and identifies her pain with that of another woman. In this instance, it is an Arab woman tied up at the train station in Cairo. Her husband holds her down by her long black hair while smiling and feeding her corn.¹⁸⁹ He displays her in public and to Franza's shock the men think the woman is insane and not the man who holds his wife captive. This realization leads Franza to think that she has become this woman. This solidarity with the imprisoned woman is concentrated on the significance of the mouth. Franza explains, “She could not speak, now it was the barricade around the mouth...”¹⁹⁰ While the corn fills the Arab woman's mouth, the sense of speechlessness becomes the identifying character between the women.

Franza consolidates racial identity in Cairo as well. She identifies with the colonized in an act of defiance, rebellion and vocalization of her own suffering. Her affiliations as a

¹⁸⁸ Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza*, 109.

“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 keine Resolution und kein Devisengesetz, sie werden mit ihrem Geist wiederkommen, wenn sie anders nicht mehr kommen können. Und auferstehen in einem braunen oder schwarzem Gehirn, es werden noch immer die Weißen sein, auch dann noch. Sie werden die Welt weiter besitzen auf diesem Umweg.”

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 127.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

“Sie konnte nicht sprechen, jetzt war es die Sperrung um Mund...”

white woman become suspended (however imaginary) and she runs away from the whites. In this instance, it is clear that the racial category of “white” is synonymous with the colonizer or oppressor. “Rumbling of thought-missiles in flight, it thinks something, racing fast, too fast for a brain, the thoughts sweep and blow new thoughts into the air. The whites are coming, don’t think, just don’t think anymore and atomize that way.”¹⁹¹ It is a mode of panic in which the whites also come to mean her husband Leopold Jordan. Her personal fears become aligned with the mentality of the colonized and more specifically with the imminent threat of whites invading her psyche as opposed to her “white” psyche. Bachmann wrote at a time when concerns about the colonized were pushed to the forefront of scholarly and political debates. It is easy to conclude that the figure of Franza is simply denying her own involvement as a “white” person and naively identifying with the people in the former colonies. Nonetheless, Bachmann is concerned with the regimes, which conjure up desires of conquest, and attempts to contest this lineage of thought. She is not naive in presenting Franza as a victim. In fact, Franza is criticized at the very beginning of the story. Martin's declares her and Leo Jordan to be fossils.¹⁹²

Martin criticizes the oppressed and the oppressor to be of the same stone because they embody a similar way of thinking. Franza participates in the same regime that Jordan creates to imprison her. Bachmann is aware of the difficulty in finding a forum to speak within these oppressions. On the other hand, Duden attempts to elucidate the silenced presence of minorities, more precisely black men, and situate them within a dominant historical discourse. The black men also become bystanders to the voice of the oppressed woman. The nameless

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 114.

“Gestöber von Gedankengeschossen im Flug, es denkt sich etwas, rasend schnell, zu schnell für ein Hirn, die Gedanken fegen und wirbeln neue Gedanken auf. Die Weißen kommen. Nicht denken, nur nicht mehr denken und so zerstäuben.”

¹⁹² Ibid., 33.

woman finds only solidarity with dying animals and not the racialized others. In these stories, negotiations between the white woman and the black men become exercises of transference. Whereas Franza identifies herself with the shackled Arab woman, the nameless woman finds herself in the care of a black anesthesiologist – silenced racial others witnessing the birth of the female voice.

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