The Nature of the Beetle:

Language and Trauma in the Work of Ingeborg Bachmann

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THESIS

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To Brad – who stood by me for every jot, and who inspires me to dance the orange.

~

In loving memory:

Samantha Lauren Cohn (1980-2014)

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SBW

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GuI *Gespräche und Interviews* (Bachmann)

HZ *Herzzeit* (Bachmann and Celan)

IBM *Malina* (Bachmann, Kritische Ausgabe)

IBMB *Malina* (Bachmann), transl. Boehm

KTB *Kriegstagebuch and Letters to Jack Hamesh* (Bachmann)

KTBM *Kriegstagebuch and Letters to Jack Hamesh* (Bachmann), transl. Mitchell

PCM *Meridian* (Celan), transl. Joris if English

PI *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein)

WN *Wittgensteins Neffe* (Bernhard)

SUMMARY

This dissertation investigates the interface between language and trauma from philosophical and literary perspectives. Using Wittgenstein's private language argument as a point of departure, I hypothesize that trauma which is never verbalized is damaging because it remains less than fully real, for language itself is of paramount importance in granting legitimacy to the experience. I then investigate whether and how this claim is borne out in the work of Ingeborg Bachmann (*Malina*), Thomas Bernhard (*Wittgensteins Neffe*) and Paul Celan (*Meridian*). Each text proves revealing about the relationship between trauma, language and silence in a way that supports my hypothesis.

This dissertation combines contributions in several fields. Within Austrian studies, I demonstrate that Wittgenstein's private language argument is relevant to the problem of repressed and unspoken trauma in postwar Austrian literature, and that it can be a useful lens through which to reconsider the work of Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard. Within trauma studies, I propose that a key function of creating a trauma narrative is to make it more real for the survivor by bringing it into language. Within studies of Wittgenstein and literature, I expand on studies which examine influences and/or affinities between Wittgenstein and literature and carry my analysis back into a philosophical inquiry. Finally, within readings of Wittgenstein's private language argument, I make a novel claim about the argument's implications for trauma: If one remains silent about a traumatic experience, never verbalizing it even to oneself, a problem arises related to the impossibility of a private language; namely, one becomes privy to an experience no one else acknowledges, and this undermines the very reality of the experience.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Trauma and Language

Among scholars concerned with trauma, there is little doubt that it is therapeutic to talk about traumatic experiences, but much debate as to why. Does the primary therapeutic effect stem from having someone else listen and bear witness? Is there some transformative effect in merely putting trauma into language for oneself, even if no one else ever hears or reads the words? For answers to such questions, it is not uncommon to turn to literature or philosophy. Given their different tools, materials, approaches and methodologies, these two fields might be expected to yield different answers. Yet might there be some overlapping ideas, even some underlying truth?

Postwar Austrian literature developed in a historical moment when trauma was heavily present in society, yet largely absent from mainstream discourse. During the Second World War, Austria was occupied by as well as complicit with Nazi Germany, yet afterwards its historical narrative of the war years was characterized by denial, victimhood, and the heroism of Austrian resisters. In literature as in broader society, themes of war trauma, most especially the Holocaust, were discouraged. The literature that emerged from Austria's postwar decades offers fertile ground for exploring how trauma that has been silenced may be articulated within the arena of literary imagination. This dissertation focuses on Ingeborg Bachmann alongside two of her contemporaries, Paul Celan and Thomas Bernhard. Each author occupied a unique position within victim or perpetrator collectives. All were noted for their novel uses of language, and all fought widespread conservativism, repression and amnesia in their writing, challenging the dominant narrative and distancing themselves from it. Intriguingly, Bernhard and Bachmann also engaged directly with Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language.

In a section of *Philosophical Investigations* known as the Private Language Argument, Wittgenstein posits that it is impossible for there to be a language that only one person can speak, that is essentially private, that no one else can understand. He uses the image of a beetle in a box – more precisely, an *unseen* object *called* a "beetle" which is concealed in a box that only its owner may open – as a metaphor for sensations like pain, which only the 'owner' may know firsthand. The beetle image serves to problematize how it is that we can speak of another's pain as a *something* when the referent not directly knowable to us, and how it is that private experiences can come to have a place in common language. The beetle scenario also implicitly raises the question of what happens when we lack ways to talk about private pain.

Wittgenstein's beetle, I will argue, carries implications for unspoken trauma. Taking the Private Language Argument as a point of departure, I hypothesize that trauma which is never verbalized is damaging because it remains less than fully real, for language itself is of paramount importance in granting legitimacy to the experience. To test my argument within the trauma-laden field of postwar Austrian literature, I examine how selected works by Bachmann (*Malina*, 1973), Celan (*Meridian*, 1960) and Bernhard (*Wittgensteins Neffe*, 1982) engage the interface between language and trauma.

B. Preview of Findings

This project comprises two main questions. First, *does Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument have implications for traumatic experiences, particularly those one never speaks or writes about?* I approach this question using philosophical argumentation. It is necessary to first offer an account of the private language argument (hereafter "PLA") based on the original text and key subsequent interpretations, showing that it can be defended against accusations of false

premises and implications such as memory skepticism, verificationsim and behaviorism. At the core of the PLA as I parse it lies a claim that private ostensive definition is insufficient to confer meaning on a sign. After establishing a coherent reading of the PLA, I map out the argument's implications for trauma. I claim that if one cannot verbalize a traumatic experience even to oneself, a problem arises related to the impossibility of a private language. A trauma which lacks a place in public language (in Wittgensteinian terms, the collection of possible language games) will remain outside the realm of intersubjective reality, making the survivor privy to an experience no one else acknowledges and thereby compounding the trauma. My argument expands the reach of the PLA beyond its traditional domains (linguistic rules and meaning, behaviorism, solipsism, phenomenalism, philosophy of mind, Cartesian dualism) and places it in proximity to defining questions in psychology, psychoanalysis, and trauma theory.

Turning to postwar Austrian literature, my second question is: *Suppose, as I hypothesize, that unsayable trauma*[1] *remains in some way less than fully real. This would compound trauma for the survivor, whose experiences grow increasingly cut off from intersubjective reality. Is this borne out in the work of Bachmann and her peers?* I approach this question using close reading. I identify forms and devices that hint at or code for unsayable trauma and unpack how my selected texts approach the realm of the unsayable. Each text proves revealing about the relationship between trauma, language and silence, and supports my hypothesis that trauma which is never verbalized is damaging because it remains less than fully real, for language itself is of paramount importance in granting legitimacy to the experience.

[1] When I speak of "unsayable trauma," I use the phrase in a theoretical sense, at times in regard to literary figures. I use this term with the caveat that it is never a scholar's place to label any actual survivor's trauma *a priori* unsayable. As Ruth Kluger Angress notes, this can have the perverse effect of silencing victims. The dictum of the unspeakablilty of the Holocaust (and attacks on authors who ventured to convey their suffering in language) seems to have been driven in part by well-intentioned scholars and therapists and in part by a collective desire to leave certain traumata unrealized.

C. Study Structure

Chapter II provides multidisciplinary context for this work. First, I discuss the literary scene in Austria following World War II and my reasons for selecting Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard for a study on language and trauma. Second, I define what I mean by the "trauma" and situate my dissertation within other studies of so-called trauma literature. Thirdly, I situate my dissertation within other studies of Wittgenstein and literature. Finally, I define the terms "less than fully real" and "unsayable trauma," lay out in detail Wittgenstein's private language argument, and suggest implications for trauma.

Chapter III discusses the role played by trauma in Bachmann's personal, intellectual and creative development in order to lay a backdrop for my analysis of *Malina*. Bachmann came of age in Nazi-controlled Austria and her father, who joined the Nazi party in the early 1930s, was away fighting for most of the war. Her 1945 encounter with the Jewish British Soldier Jack Hamesh marked a dawning recognition that her parents and teachers had supported a genocidal regime, a discordance faced by the German and Austrian postwar generations. Shortly after the war, Bachmann left home to pursue a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Vienna, where her philosophical work reflects her struggle with the recent Nazi past. Her dissertation critiques Heidegger, whom she viewed as bound up with National Socialism, while she found in Wittgenstein an intriguing counter-figure. While making her way in the literary world, she fell in with the older, influential Hans Weigel; part of an often traumatic pattern of patronage between young female authors and older men. Her relationship with fellow poet Paul Celan beginning in 1948 caused profound turbulence for both lovers, as attested to by their recently published letters (*Herzzeit*, 2008). Her relationship with Swiss author Max Frisch ended in 1962

– "die größte Niederlage meines Lebens" ("the greatest defeat of my life"), she wrote – and was followed by several hospitalizations for nervous breakdowns and addiction. Weigel, Celan and Frisch all married other women after using Bachmann as a 'muse,' and the *Todesarten* texts contain Bachmann's literary reaction to these violations.

After discussing the role of these traumas in Bachmann's life and work, I turn to a striking formal feature of *Malina*: Its wide array of genres. The novel opens with a theatrical list of characters in which the narrator's identity is crossed out. *Telefonsätze* (phone sentences) between the narrator and Ivan, oddly devoid of punctuation and actual communication, hint at an ominous alienation. In libretto-style dialogues, Malina menaces and dominates the narrator. In a journalist's interview, she is objectified and ignored. In desperate unfinished letters, she silences herself. Dream sequences carry her silencing to nightmarish extremes. Drafts of utopian visions and fairytales never come to fruition. I argue that these genres, taken individually and collectively, express something impossible to convey in traditional narrative modes. Like Wittgenstein's notion of the mystical as that which cannot be expressed but reveals itself (*Tractatus* 6.522), the genres *show* rather than tell, and they constitute one of Bachmann's most creative attempts to the unsayable with novel language.

In **Chapter IV** I take a closer look at language games in *Malina*. Bachmann's *Todesarten* stories depict subtle, socially sanctioned murders that are allowed to take place because society turns a blind eye. One of the ways in which the dominant and ultimately murderous order exercises power is through language, for when society lacks language for certain crimes these crimes become impossible to report. The multi-layered language games in *Malina* suggest that one of the most destructive aspects of trauma occurs through silencing – when one is unable to voice trauma to a listening other. I show how Bachmann's pathology of

trauma in *Malina* critiques and reprocesses Freud, uses the motif of a split persona to drive a trauma-based plot, and prefigures clinical and gender-specific paradigms for trauma that emerged only after Bachmann's death. I next discuss a series of passages that play with language and behavior in a Wittgensteinian way, that play on the limits of language, and that thematize public versus private language. Finally, I examine the themes of silence, repression, secrecy and the unsayable in *Malina*, and argue that narrator ultimately internalizes social strictures to the point that she censors herself.

Chapter V takes up two of Bachmann's most influential contemporaries. In a close reading of Paul Celan's 1960 *Meridian* speech, I argue that (i) the theme of madness, implicit in *Meridian*, occupied Celan for personal reasons while he was writing the speech; (ii) *Meridian* functions as a productive silence marking the start of a journey; and (iii) Celan's language is the vehicle for a journey intended to encounter others and perhaps– unintentionally – himself. His is not a private language, but precisely the opposite, for it intends to address.

In *Wittgensteins Neffe,* Thomas Bernhard's loosely autobiographical novel cum eulogy for his friend Paul Wittgenstein, I show that Bernhard's language games serve to question what outward signs or symptoms justify the labels of 'crazy' or 'mentally ill,' leading us to critically examine how definitions of those word are formed and used in societal language games. I argue that Bernhard's definition of madness involves being labeled (or even becoming) insane when one cannot or will not participate in communal language games.

Chapter VI discusses conclusions and implications for the multiple fields of study with which I engage: Postwar Austrian literature; trauma theory; trauma literature; studies of Wittgenstein in literature, and Wittgenstein's private language argument. I contend that the PLA, in all its detail and nuance, is relevant to the problem of unspoken trauma in postwar

Austrian literature and is a useful lens through which to reconsider the work of Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard. I advocate not a rejection of, but an alternative to the testimony-centered understanding of trauma narratives; namely, the idea that trauma which is never verbalized is damaging because language itself is of paramount importance in granting legitimacy to experience. I depart from conventional studies of trauma literature by carrying my analysis back into a philosophical inquiry, on the premise that literature, although it may be 'fictional,' can be facilitate philosophical insight into the human condition. I anchor my reading of Wittgenstein's PLA within canonic readings and I do not take the dubious step of ascribing him a positive position on trauma; rather, I claim that the PLA contains implications for our understanding of why it is important to find words for trauma.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter lays out the multidisciplinary context for my study. I begin with a discussion of the literary scene in postwar Austrian and my reasons for selecting Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard for a study of language and trauma. Secondly, define what I mean by the problematic and contested term "trauma" and situate my dissertation within other studies of so-called trauma literature. Thirdly, I situate my dissertation within other studies of Wittgenstein and literature. Finally, I lay out in detail Wittgenstein's private language argument and what I take to be its implications for trauma.

A. Postwar Austrian Literature; Bachmann and her Cohort

1. Bachmann's Roots: Austrian Literature After World War II and the Postwar Generation of Authors

The works of Bachmann and her postwar peers cannot be understood without knowledge of Austria as a defeated country, one occupied by and complicit with Nazi Germany. After the war, the ambiguous historical narrative of the Second Austrian Republic and the silence of most older Austrians about the Nazi past left younger authors like Bachmann in a conceptual vacuum, unsure how to position themselves toward their parents, grandparents, and country.

The 1943 Moscow Declaration, signed by the USA, Britain, the USSR and China, declared Austria "the first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression."[2] Ironically, this view was likely bolstered by the activity of many exile authors, themselves victims of Nazi

[2] The declaration does state that Austria is responsible for its participation in the war on Germany's side, but that passage was conveniently forgotten or omitted. In the final round of negotiations for the Austrian State treaty in May 1955, the signatories deleted said passage (Bischof 20).

persecution, who contended that Austria as a whole did not want to be part of Nazi Germany.[3] While in West Germany the Western Allies initiated an extensive process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (reckoning with the past), and in East Germany the Soviet-installed government selectively emphasized fascist crimes, the nation that had furnished the Third Reich with half its concentration camp guards (Krylova 6) was not called to account for itself.[4] No country in the world, wrote Robert Menasse four decades after the war, has publicly problematized itself so little and shown so little basic self-reflection as Austria's Second Republic (Menasse 13).

Austria's postwar literary scene was shaped by its unique political path from Nazi collaborator to occupied nation to a new republic contingent on its purported neutrality. Whereas in post-1945 Germany there was talk of a *Stunde Null* ("zero hour")[5] and a new literature, postwar Austrian literature was increasingly shaped by the nation's neoconservative atmosphere and narrative of victimhood and denial. Leftist authors did publish early on, but faded from prominence because Austria's occupation by the Western Allies and Russia required purported neutrality. In the interest of rebuilding, literature and the arts were revived and

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[3] "One of the greatest achievements of the Austrian exile writers, a factor of great importance for influencing the allied treatment of Austria after the war, was the unified, loyal, and patriotic stance of the emigres. Almost unanimously the writers in exile exculpated Austria from any responsibility for their fate and went to great lengths in their writings and in their public speeches to create an autonomous identity for Austria, carefully separating it from Germany" (Daviau 28-9).

[4] Bischof notes some early efforts to prosecute Austrian war criminals. "Up until 1948 there was a vigorous effort to come to terms with the past. The Allies pushed the reluctant Austrian government on denazification. A system of 'People's Courts' was established to pursue Austrian Nazi perpetrators. Forty-two Austrian war criminals were sentenced to death and 30 of them executed. Austrian war criminals were also hanged after the Nuremberg and numerous Dachau trials" (Bischof 19). However, by the time the State Treaty was signed in 1955, former Nazis who had earlier been dismissals from office were being reinstated and paid in arrears, and war criminals had prison counted towards their pension entitlement (Niederacher 19).

[5] Lorenz has argued that Austria's *Stunde Null* began not in 1945 but in 1938: "Hier [1938] bricht durch staatliches *fiat* und Gewaltakte wie Bücherverbrennungen, Druckverbote und Zensur die Tradition ab, wird eine neue Scheintradition diktiert, deren Wertvorstellungen freilich bis über die Nachkriegsjahre hinausreichen." / "Here [1938] there occurs a break in tradition via state decree and acts of violence like book burnings, bans and censorship. A new pseudotradition is imposed whose moral concepts unquestionably persist into the postwar years." (Lorenz 1991, 132, my transl.)

favored by critics who paid little attention to who had done what during the war. After the war, writers such as Heimito von Doderer, Rudolf Henz, Max Mell and Gertrud Fussenegger who had supported Austro-fascism and/or Nazism, continued after 1945 to publish in their established mode largely without sanction. Many received state-sponsored literary prizes (see Bushell 168, Daviau 41). One list of Austrian authors who had collaborated or cooperated with the Nazis was 73 pages long (Daviau 41), but most of those names simply slipped into the amnesic woodwork of the Second Republic. As Bachmann and her generation came of age, the victim narrative began to unravel and it became clear that authoritarian attitudes, intolerance and racism, already ingrained in 19th century Habsburg culture, had survived into the present. "The cataclysmic effect of learning about the hidden past after having been raised with the myth of victimization" is evident in the work of Bachmann and Bernhard (Lorenz 2006, 181, 191).

Most literature in the early years of the Second Republic connected to the past, seeking to reconjure the sheen of the Habsburg Empire and fin-de-siècle Vienna. Themes of war trauma, especially the Holocaust, were repressed; writers who questioned the Austrian victim narrative turned to West Germany for a viable literary market. In the immediate postwar years, a number of Austrian authors did address the recent past in gripping and sometimes direct narratives. Robert Neumann's (1897-1975) *Die Kinder von Wien* (1946), with a focus on the exploitation of unaccompanied minors of different background under Allied occupation, and Ilse Aichinger's (1921-2016) *Die größere Hoffnung* (1948), written compellingly from the perspective of racially persecuted children, were among the first and few works to portray persecution, deportation, and postwar struggles of Jews. Paul Celan's (1920-1970) "Todesfuge," a poem about the Jewish concentration camp experience, was published in 1948 in Vienna. Jakov Lind, who began his career in Vienna, later addressed the Nazi euthanasia program in his grotesque novel *Eine Seele*

aus Holz (1962). Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979) addressed the Holocaust in *Mein ist die Rache* (1943) and *Hier bin ich, mein Vater* (1948).

Author and critic Hans Weigel (1908-1991), who returned from exile in Switzerland to become an influential voice in postwar Austrian literature, approached the Nazi past and the persecution of minorities indirectly in his satirical parody, *Der grüne Stern* (1946). Generally, however, Weigel kept his distance from distinctly Jewish themes and, like Torberg, rejected Marxist intellectuals. Exile author Fritz Hochwälder (1911-1986), whose plays had their greatest success at the Vienna Burgtheater in the 1950s, focused on moral and social problems surrounding political refugees in his drama *Der Flüchtling* (1945), and London-based exile author Erich Fried (1921-1988) thematized the Holocaust in poems and the novel *Ein Soldat und das Mädchen* (1960) (Daviau 31-44). In short, the Holocaust complex played a central role in the writings of exiled authors and survivors of Nazi persecution, but less so among older and younger Austrian mainstream authors.

In this cultural panorama, Bachmann and Celan, who came of age in the Nazi era, and members of Bernhard's generation who had experienced Nazi-dominated Austria as children, struggled to find a new language with which to address personal and collective traumas. Aichinger, a descendant of both Holocaust victims and National Socialists who early on had been one of Bachmann's mentors, received the 1951Prize of *Gruppe 47* (the most prestigious West German literary award) for her story "Spielgeschichte." The following year, Bachmann received the same honor. *Gruppe 47,* whose members believed that Nazi propaganda had corrupted the German language and that a fundamental revision of German language and literature was needed, offered an early platform for Austrian writers critical of their homeland. In 1952, Celan, with Bachmann's support, also attended the group's meeting, but was met with

rejection. Considering their special position as Austrians, it can be argued that Aichinger, Celan, and Bachmann did not fit into the veteran-dominated cadre. All went beyond the "Kahlschlag" and "Zero hour" by probing into the past and examined its legacy in the postwar present. Later, Thomas Bernhard, perhaps following the provocation issued by Peter Handke at the 1966 *Gruppe 47* meeting in Princeton, eschewed the group's prestige. Possibly its secretive, invitation-only meetings smacked too much of 'establishment' for his taste and he became aware of the rather superficial implementations of the early slogans.

2. Reasons for Focus on Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard

This dissertation is concerned with trauma that remains, in some way and for whatever set of reasons, beyond the reach of language. I approach my questions via literary and philosophical avenues, specifically Wittgenstein's private language argument and literary works in which trauma plays a key role. Bachmann, who completed a doctorate in philosophy before going on to become one of the preeminent literary voices in postwar Austria and West Germany, engaged with Wittgenstein in both nonfiction and creative forms. She has been featured in recent studies on Wittgenstein in literature (Perloff 1996, Steutzger 2001) as well as studies of trauma and the unsayable (Dennemarck-Jäger 2008, Fäcke 2013). The appearance of the *"Todesarten*-Projekt*"* Critical Edition in 1995 (ed. Pichl, Albrecht, Göttsche) catalyzed a fresh wave of Bachmann scholarship, and the planned 30-volume Salzburger Edition (Suhrkamp) promises to do likewise. Bachmann is thus a relevant and timely figure for a study on language and trauma in postwar Austrian literature.

I offer a renewed look at Bachmann's writing of trauma from a philosophical perspective, specifically considering her engagement with one of the most influential yet misunderstood

philosophers of the 20th century. Scholars have discussed Bachmann's literary uptake of ideas in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* about the limits of language and have debated where her work sits in relation to those limits (Achberger, Fäcke, Perloff, Steutzger, Weigel, and Roth). I diverge from previous approaches by connecting her work closely with the private language argument in *Philosophical Investigations*. I also venture my own philosophical claim that language itself is of paramount importance in granting legitimacy to traumatic experiences, and connect this with Bachmann's approach to unsayable trauma.

Bachmann was not merely writing trauma qua trauma. She wrote during a specific historical moment when multiple narratives like the Jewish experience of the Shoah, the gendered experience of women in the Second Republic, and the crimes of Austria's perpetrator generation were strongly repressed within families and by broader sociopolitical forces. Her oeuvre bears witness to a decidedly gendered struggle against a subtle, everyday fascism, yet the political thrust of her work remained largely unrecognized until after her death.[6] She shone a light on 'everyday fascism' in the basic units of familial and interpersonal interactions.[7]

Much has been written about Austria's silenced trauma and its gradual articulation, and trauma belongs to the experience of both the victim and perpetrator collectives. In this context, Bachmann's contemporaries serve as relevant points of comparison and context. Paul Celan and Thomas Bernhard both wrote against the Second Republic's deceptive historical narrative, Celan as a male member of the victim collective and Bernhard as a male member of the perpetrator

[6] Bachmann's works "fell victim to the very forces they were launched against, namely the conservative establishment of Restoration Germany, [and] Bachmann became a classic case of 'misreception,' of conflict between authorial intention and dominant modes of reception" (Achberger 1).

[7] Franza says: "Du sagst Faschismus, das ist komisch, ich habe das noch nie gehört als Wort für ein privates Verhalten." / „You say fascism, that is strange, I have never heard this used as a word for a private attitude." (Bachmann 1995a, 53)

collective. Both used innovative language go address individual and collective traumas from their own experience.

3. Bachmann and her Interactions with Contemporaries on Her Path to a Self-Elected Minority Outlook

Bachmann became acquainted with Ilse Aichinger, a few years her senior, through Hans Weigel's circle at Café Raimund. Aichinger had experienced racial persecution in Nazi-occupied Austria; she was classified as a *Mischling* (person of mixed race) under the Nuremberg laws, denied a place in medical school and forced to work for the war effort. She saw her aunt and grandmother deported to concentration camps and barely managed to keep her mother from the same fate. As the child of a Jewish mother and German father, Aichinger straddled the victim and perpetrator collectives while Bachmann grappled with her own roots in the latter. As female writers, both struggled to establish a voice within the old boys' club of postwar Austrian literature. The two authors maintained a friendship and moved in similar circles in Vienna and West Germany during the late 1940s and early 1950s – both frequently published their work in the *Wiener Tageszeitung* and were awarded the *Gruppe 47* literature prize in consecutive years – but their friendship ended in the late 1950s for unknown reasons. Aichinger may lurk behind the figure of Lily to whom letters are addressed in Bachmann's *Malina* (Šlibar 160-162).

Bachmann and Paul Celan (1920-1970) met in Vienna in 1948, quickly became lovers, and shared an intense, at times tumultuous relationship over two decades. A Romanian-born Jewish poet and Holocaust survivor, Celan confronted Bachmann with the Jewish experience of the Holocaust and played a role in her own self-examination and self-positioning in the early postwar years. For both parties, the relationship represented an encounter with the Other. Their

opposite backgrounds both drew them together and pushed them apart. Celan was a decisive influence for Bachmann, and intertextualities in their work continue to be explored in light of their recently published correspondence (*Herzzeit*, 2008).

Like Bachmann, Thomas Bernhard (1931-1989) grew up under National Socialism and belonged to a generation that was violently disillusioned as Austria's role in the war came to light. In her essay on Bernhard, Bachmann recognizes "a kindred spirit in terms of her own narrative project" (Krylova 5). Both authors' works repeatedly emphasize the immediate postwar period, returning to the scene of their own early traumas, and both mourn the cosmopolitanism, openness, and *Heimatsgefühl* that were sorely lacking in the Second Republic (Krylova 9, 17). Importantly for this project, both engaged with Wittgenstein explicitly, albeit in different manners. Bachmann's interest in the philosopher stood out sufficiently to Bernhard that his Bachman-esque character Maria in *Auslöschung* focuses the relationship between philosophy and literature (Weigel 113).

Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard are representative of different strains of collective memory and thus distinct kinds of trauma. Bachmann wrote from a woman's perspective and as someone with a Nazi family background. Celan, who experienced the Nazi invasion of Romania, the destruction of his family and culture of origin, and forced labor camps, wrote from a victim's perspective. Bernhard began life as an illegitimate child in poverty, grew up a sickly and gender ambivalent boy in the Nazi educational system and was for a time brainwashed by the lies of the older generation. After a seemingly sudden moment of recognition documented in "Politische Morgenandacht" (1966 – the same year as Handke's Princeton scandal), he abandoned his beginnings as a nature poet and built his fame on criticizing Austria, pointing out its hypocrisies from the inside.

Bachmann, like Bernhard, separated herself by choice from the Second Republic's dominant culture and narrative. Her personal and literary interactions with Aichinger, Celan and Bernhard moved her along a path to a self-elected minority outlook. Though not herself a survivor of Nazi persecution, Bachmann's emphasis on the traumatic effects of fascist rule in Austria and her father's allegiance to the National Socialist regime has led to her being considered alongside authors such as Aichinger, Celan, Nelly Sachs and Rose Ausländer.[8] As trauma plays a central role in Bachmann's experience, in my hypothesis and in the selected works, I next define the term "trauma" and situate my dissertation among other studies of trauma literature.

B. My Position Within Trauma Literature Scholarship

1. Defining Trauma

A definition of "trauma" may best proceed by way of lack. Namely, trauma lacks any straightforward and widely-accepted definition. Discourses on trauma theory yield a view of a composite object, or in Luckhurst's terms, a conceptual knot, with theorists debating something they *call* trauma while differing markedly on what it *is*. Caruth views trauma as a missed experience, one that can never be fully possessed and instead haunts its possessor. Leys highlights conflicts and contradictions in leading trauma paradigms, leaving no salvageable positive definition. Young views the PTSD diagnosis as a "harmony of illusions." Buelens et al. imagine trauma as turbulent stream with multiple currents. Trauma's roots in Western medical paradigms are currently undergoing critical reevaluation in an era of post-colonial conflicts,

[8] See, for example Hofmann, MagShamhráin et al.

global capitalism and environmental degradation. In short, the definition of trauma has always been contested and its future remains uncertain.

While acknowledging the difficulty with the term "trauma," it is necessary to define it for my own purposes. From a medical perspective, I borrow the notion that exposure to traumatic experiences can result in symptoms (an event-response model). I also incorporate Freud's concepts of repression, latency, repetition, and a "talking cure." I concur with Leys that the tension between mimetic and anti-mimetic paradigms of trauma cannot be satisfactorily resolved, but must be acknowledged.[9] One must also acknowledge that Western paradigms for trauma may not be generalizable to other contexts (see for example Craps). Finally, I overlap with Davoine and Gaudillière (*History Beyond Trauma*, 2004) in viewing madness and trauma as closely linked.

The foregoing summary is explored below in greater detail below. I highlight points of contention in the history and theory of trauma while pulling out those concepts pertinent to my understanding of trauma.

a. Medical Paradigms

In 2013, the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) defined Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a set of symptoms[10] that present

[9] This to say that trauma is not inevitably a missed event, as Caruth and other mimetic paradigms would have it, yet neither is it something fully isolable from the affected individual.

[10] To qualify for a diagnosis of PTSD, an individual must have symptoms in each of the following four categories, the symptoms must last for more than one month, and they must create distress or functional impairment for the individual: (1) *Persistent re-experiencing* (e.g. nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts); (2) *avoidance of trauma-related stimuli* (e.g. avoiding trauma-related thoughts, feelings, reminders); (3) *negative thoughts or feelings* that began or worsened after the trauma (e.g. exaggerated blame of self or others, feelings of isolation); (4) *arousal and reactivity* that began or worsened after the trauma (e.g. irritability, aggression, hypervigilance).

following exposure[11] to actual or threatened death; actual or threatened serious injury; or actual or threatened sexual violence.[12] Despite successive revisions, medical framings of the PTSD diagnosis, epitomized by the DSM, have come under fire from clinicians and theorists for failing to capture the full human range of reactions to trauma, as well as for overlooking certain forms of trauma that are embedded in everyday living conditions for minority and/or non-Western populations.[13] While acknowledging the validity of such critiques, what I wish to salvage from the medical perspective is the idea that direct or indirect exposure to a painful or horrific experience (including but not limited to those noted in the DSM-5 criteria) can manifest in symptoms (including but not limited to those listed in the DSM-5). I leave open the mechanisms that underlie reactions to trauma; somatic, psychological, verbal, and nonverbal pathways all play roles worthy of exploration. While my present investigation grants primacy to connections (and gaps) between language and trauma, I readily allow that this linguistic approach is but one piece within a larger whole.

b. Freud, Caruth, Leys, and critiques of Western paradigms

While the emergence of a modern concept of trauma can be traced back to German romanticism,[14] most contemporary paradigms are centered around (or against) the ideas of

[11] "Exposure" can mean direct personal experience, witnessing firsthand, learning that a relative or close friend was exposed to the trauma, or indirect exposure (such as through professional duties).

[12] U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

[13] Suggestions for expansions of and alternatives to the PTSD diagnosis include Type II traumas (Terr), complex PTSD or 'disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified' (Herman), safe-world violations (Janofff-Bulman), insidious trauma (Root), oppression based trauma (Spanierman and Poteat), postcolonial syndrome (Duran et al), postcolonial traumatic stress disorder (Turia), and post-traumatic slavery syndrome (Poussaint and Alexander) (Craps 49).

[14] Breithaupt argues that the German period of *Sturm und Drang* radicalized the notion of selfhood to such a degree that the battle cry for the self turned into a lamentation about its unachievability. The idea of trauma then came about as a possible remedy for the impossibility of the self (Breithaupt 78).

Sigmund Freud. His early *Verführungstheorie* ("seduction theory") posited that repressed trauma, and specifically early childhood sexual encounters (read: abuse), lay at the root of hysteria and neuroses (*Studies on Hysteria*, Freud and Breuer, 1895; *Etiology of Hysteria*, 1896). In his analysis of Emma Eckstein, Freud also described a *Nachträglichkeit* (belatedness or afterwardsness), whereby a traumatic event would be followed by a period of latency until a new experience reactivated the earlier trauma and caused neuroses to manifest (*Project for a Scientific Psychology*, 1895). Shortly thereafter – and problematically for later feminist readings – Freud amended this theory in favor of the idea that his patients' recovered memories were actually products of their imaginations and fantasies (letter to William Fliess, September 21, 1897; *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905). World War I brought a new set of patients: Traumatized soldiers whose symptoms stemmed from neither repressed childhood memories nor sexual urges, but rather from traumatic events experienced in adulthood. This led Freud to revise theories emphasizing infant sexuality and to postulate a 'death drive' which underlay the repetitive-compulsive symptoms of 'shell-shocked' war veterans (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1919). I view Freud's lasting insights about trauma to be that survivors often have difficulty accessing their traumatic experiences as explicit memories (repression); that there is often a belated reaction to trauma (i.e., *Nachträglichkeit*); that survivors tend to return involuntarily to trauma (as in *Wiederholungszwang,* forced repetition); and that talking about traumatic experiences can facilitate a working-through process (the so-called talking cure).

Grounding her approach in Freud, Caruth writes that trauma consists of the structure of its experience. To be traumatized is not to possess a memory but rather to be possessed by it. Because it is not fully assimilated as it occurs, trauma becomes a missed event that is inherently not fully representable; it is "a crisis that is marked, not by a simple knowledge, but by the ways

it simultaneously defies and demands our witness" (Caruth 1996, 5).[15] Caruth's view captures well the seeming inaccessibility of some trauma. However, painting trauma as inherently and inevitably unrepresentable carries the undesirable consequence that *any* representation of trauma *perforce* misses something. As Leys notes in her critique of this position, if trauma is a wound so violent that the psyche is unable to fully register it, this must mean that ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition are ruptured. The survivor should then be incapable of consciously testifying to her traumatic experience and doomed instead to compulsively repeat or revisit it. Yet people can and do talk about traumatic experiences. Approaching survivor statements and narratives with an attitude of presumed unrepresentability risks missing something significant.

In Leys' "genealogy"' of trauma, "mimetic" and "anti-mimetic" theories of trauma have always competed with one another. The *mimetic* paradigm, in which trauma shatters one's cognitive-perceptual capacities, thereby making the event(s) unavailable for a certain kind of recollection, appealed for its ability to explain the victim's suggestibility and abjection.[16] However, the idea that trauma immerses the victim in the traumatic scene so fully as to preclude any distance or cognitive knowledge, leaving the subject fundamentally altered, threatened ideals of individual autonomy and responsibility. *Antimimetic* models, which succeed in distinguishing

[15] Caruth's project responds in part to concerns that structuralist and poststructuralist developments in literary theory, through their focus on linguistic devices by which meaning is produced and the difficulties these devices create for our understanding of a text, lead to the conclusion that language cannot refer adequately to the world. This can be extended to the idea that literature, language and even consciousness are cut off from historical reality and we have no means of making political or ethical judgments. Caruth's response regarding trauma is to propose that we can salvage some points of reference precisely by recognizing the possibility of a history that is not straightforwardly referential (i.e. based on simple models of experience and reference), and that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding (Caruth 1996, 10-11, 73-4).

[16] To elaborate on the mimetic paradigm: Per Leys, theories of trauma display a set of perpetually resurfacing difficulties, all of which may be seen to revolve around the problem of imitation, defined as a problem of hypnotic imitation. Because of the tendency of hypnotized persons to imitate or repeat whatever they were told, hypnosis played a major role in the conceptualization of trauma; it came to be defined as a situation of 'absence' from the self in which the victim unconsciously imitated or identified with the aggressor or traumatic scene. Trauma thus meant an experience of hypnotic imitation or identification, or what Leys calls *mimesis* – "an experience that, because it appeared to shatter the victim's cognitive-perceptual capacities, made the traumatic scene unavailable for a certain kind of recollection" (Leys 8-9).

between an autonomous subject and an external trauma, have also led to positivist or scientific approaches that Leys finds equally problematic. She views the mimetic/antimimetic oscillations as stemming from an insoluble tension, and by her own admission does not offer a meta-position from which to assess the conundrums of the field (Leys 307).

While I do not presume to resolve Leys' mimesis riddle, the truth probably lies in the realm of "both and neither." Trauma undeniably exhibits delayed effects, and is in part recognizable as such through symptoms of repetition and revisiting (as in the mimetic paradigm). It involves grave and perhaps irreparable damage to the self; consider Jean Améry's description of how torture ruptures the victim's physical boundaries and inner world. Yet the survivor is not reduced to a puppet-like mimetic state, devoid of all consciousness and agency. Trauma leaves neurophysical traces on the body and brain (as posited in anti-mimetic approaches like the work of Bessel van der Kolk). Yet these traces do not constitute a blueprint of some absolute reality wholly distinct from an individual's modes of understanding and creating meaning. And of course, one's understanding of an event and a set of reactions as traumatic (as opposed to, say, a fact of life) is culturally mediated.

Other notable critiques of trauma theory point to its failure at cross-cultural ethical engagement. Stef Craps has argued that the founders of trauma theory (Caruth, Felman, Laub, Hartman, LaCapra) miss the mark on at least three counts: Firstly, they marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western and minority groups. Secondly, they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that stem specifically from Western modernity. The Western event-based view regards trauma as occurring within some identifiable window of time and holds that the trauma can be processed once the survivor presumably regains a secure environment. This paradigm is ill-suited for situations of constant

ambient violence in which people live amid trauma without ever reading a safe place, and it tends to render the traumas of minority and third-world populations invisible and unknowable (Craps 49).[17] Thirdly, they favor or prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to bearing witness while overlooking other narrative forms (Craps 45-46). I wish to acknowledge these limitations and seek, where possible, to transcend them. My paradigm for trauma, rooted as it is in Freudian ideas and Western medicine, is not universally applicable. However, I apply it in a Western context without presuming generalizability to other cultures and contexts. In discussing literary techniques used to represent or imply trauma later in this chapter, I leave open the ways and means that trauma can be represented or witnessed. Lastly, I go beyond individual event-based models of trauma by exploring collective historical trauma in postwar Austria.

c. Individual versus Collective Trauma; Historical versus Structural Trauma

Trauma is both an individual and collective phenomenon. To be traumatized is a deeply personal experience. Yet certain events affect entire societies, and individual experiences of trauma are culturally mediated. Of the most frequently studied traumas, events like war, genocide, and colonialism are clearly collective. Rape and incest, while they may seem more confined to the private sphere, often stem from patriarchal social structures like those Bachmann critiques and create an identifiable victim collective. Mental illness (something traumatic that is also often a symptom of trauma) may seem more personal, and in contrast to traumas wrought by

[17] Rothberg offers the following example of how the Western event-based paradigm can obscure important aspects of trauma. Two factory fires in Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2012 killed hundreds of workers. The conflagrations were both (1) sudden events of extreme violence that were traumatizing for survivors and family members of the those killed (a 'classic' traumatic *event*), and (2) the predictable outcome of a system of violence and exploitation in an age of globalized neo-liberal capitalism – something trauma theory itself can 'miss' (Rothberg xiv).

historical events, it is arguably structured into human existence. Yet sociocultural factors shape the ways in which mental illness is seen by those who treat it and experienced by those who suffer from it. As Davoine and Gaudillière convincingly show, we must also understand madness in relation to historical traumas.

Though trauma is both individual and collective, the way we *think* about it nonetheless tends to go in one direction or the other. Light may be characterized as a wave or a particle and neither model is "right" or "wrong," but a physicist must select one model based on what best suits her analysis. Similarly, trauma may be approached via multiple valid paradigms.

The authors I explore in the following chapters address both individual and collective traumas, and I am interested in both types as they interface with language. In Germany, where expressions of loss or nostalgia became taboo in light of the horrors of the Holocaust, the Mitscherlichs describe a collective inability to mourn the loss of the father and Führer figure. Austria preempted its working-through process one step earlier by assuming victim status and admitting no wrongdoing. Expressions of loss or nostalgia directed at pre-1934 Austria became common currency in politics, literature and daily discourses while the reason for Austria's abjection remained discretely shrouded. Bachmann, Bernhard, Celan and Aichinger all challenged the country's amnesia by crafting new language to reveal unacknowledged traumas. At the same time, each author had experienced personal traumas, and their individual struggles can be seen to shape their literary projects.

Of course, not all collective traumas are of a kind. LaCapra offers a useful typology for distinguishing between two major forms of collective trauma. He understands *structural* or *existential traumas* to be those that inhere in the human condition. *Historical traumas*, by contrast, are traumatogenic socio-political events like war, slavery, colonialism and patriarchy

(LaCapra 1998, 47). It is problematic to conflate the two types: If one mistakes historical for structural trauma (such as by reading Celan's poetry as an expression of existential angst while ignoring the role of the Holocaust), one risks subsuming the specificity of historical traumas under the universality of existential trauma. Moreover, such a move may well be a means to evade one's complicity in historical trauma.[18] On the other hand, wrongly attributing structural trauma to historical events, and thereby mistaking *absence* for *loss,* can lead to a delusion of erstwhile wholeness, misplaced nostalgia and utopian politics (LaCapra 1999). The Shoah and Second World War were historical traumas, and Austria's disavowal of its role in those events rendered certain narratives transgressive. My selected authors owed their reputations to works that challenged if not violated the bounds of accepted discourse.

Bachmann, Bernhard, Celan, and Aichinger belong to a larger set of authors whose work brings repressed trauma narratives to the surface and makes them available for public consumption. This function of literature is naturally not limited to the context of post-World War II perpetrator nations. The notion of literature as emerging from historical trauma features in two recent studies of trauma literature which largely examine post-slavery and post-colonial narratives. Whitehead (*Trauma Fiction,* 2004) views trauma fiction as inextricable from postmodernism, postcolonialism, and postwar consciousness. Vickroy (*Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction,* 2002) sees trauma narratives as personalized responses to the catastrophic effects of wars, poverty, colonization, and domestic abuse. By singling out individual characters to enact and represent social conflicts and traumatic histories, literature can

[18] Forter argues that both Freud and William Faulkner were aware of historical trauma, but limbed in structural trauma as a way to evade their own involvement in its enabling structures: "just as Freud's second theory of trauma enabled him to escape implication in the dynamics of patriarchal oppression uncovered by his first theory, so did Faulkner's generalization of trauma as the Truth of historical experience save him from confronting the forms of guilt and responsibility that the history he anatomizes bequeathed to him" (Forter 281).

serve to make history personal and tangible to readers: "authors engage their imaginations and fictional techniques in order to fill in gaps left by official histories, pointing to unhealed wounds that linger in or on the body, in sexuality, intrusive memory, and emotional relations" (Vickroy 167-168). As I discuss next, collective traumas may also be revealed by literary and actual cases of mental illness or (so-called) madness.

d. Links Between Trauma and Madness

My analysis of Bachmann, Celan, and Bernhard uncovers links between trauma and madness. The work of French psychoanalysts Davoine and Gaudillière is most informative on this point. Drawing on theory, philosophy, literature, and their own clinical experience, Davoine and Gaudillière illustrate how patients whose understanding lies beyond the bounds of social reality are often perceived by others and themselves as mad. Such so-called mad individuals always have histories tied to trauma – in some contexts it is normal to be crazy – and the astute analyst will recognize a 'social link' underlying the disorder (Davoine and Gaudillière 13). Celan, for example, suffered circumstances under which it was appropriate to be 'mad,' and his work constitutes a desperate attempt to speak to someone who will listen.

Language is of paramount importance for Davoine and Gaudillière. When trauma is severed from language, an isolating new form of trauma is added: "The destruction – this is no metaphor – of the guarantees of speech, and the deconstruction of all reference points, leave the subject who is confronted with them in a state of total estrangement, of absolute aloneness with regard to all the ties that, up to that point, were familiar" (Davoine and Gaudillière xxviii). In Bachmann's *Todesarten* works, the motifs of madness accompany oppression and silencing by a dominant social order. As Franza is emotionally abused by her analyst husband and cannot voice

her trauma to anyone who would hear or help, she appears to go mad by medical standards, but her symptoms are a reasonable reaction to the trauma she suffers. The narrator in *Malina* has a nightmare in which she is crazy and her father pulls out her tongue to silence her cries of protest – a move by the patriarchal order to cut out her 'mad' speech – but her so-called craziness is a social construct associated with causing problems and not fitting in. Both Franza and the *Malina* narrator seem unable to fully voice their trauma even to themselves, as if something bars them from creating a coherent narrative.

e. Language and Trauma

The impossibility of speaking about traumatic experiences in any available or accepted "language game" plays a role in creating 'truths' that are secret or private, and that this in turn compounds the trauma. Narrative Exposure Therapy studies have documented that shifts in survivors' relationships with their memories can occur with narrativization. Intriguingly, creating a narrative can have effects even if no one hears or reads the survivor's testimony.[19] If creating a narrative only for oneself is beneficial, it follows that the impossibility of creating such a narrative may cause harm.

While the dialogical and testimonial qualities of narrative have received attention from most trauma theorists,[20] I am concerned with a point further upstream in narrative; namely, its very creation. Before any idea can be conveyed to another, it must be put into language for

[19] Writing about personally upsetting experiences can bring improvements in subjective and objective measures of health and well-being, from self-reported level of depression to grade point average to immune function. Many studies involve writing exercises in which no one other than participant herself sees what (s)he writes. See for example Frattaroli (2006) and Gwodziewycz and Mehl-Madrona (2013).

[20] Caruth writes that "the history of a trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another" (Caruth 1996, 11). Laub describes Holocaust survivors as carriers of a secret truth and conceives of testimony as a "dialogical process of exploration and reconciliation," underscoring the role of a witness or reader in affirming the survivor's truth (Laub and Felman 79-91).

oneself. This step, though it has been acknowledged by psychologists as early as Janet,[21] is often overlooked. Narrativizing trauma entails decisions about sequence, narrative arc, and at the most basic level, words. A rape victim may say "he forced himself on me" or "he raped me," and each phrase makes for a different narrative. Perhaps she says nothing at all – but that is not necessarily 'mere' silence; it can indicate an unspoken narrative, a gap in the survivor's willingness to share, or a limit to what can be expressed in commonly accepted language.[22]

Problems arise when trauma is severed from language, but determining when that occurs is not self-evident. In Herman's paradigm (*Trauma and Recovery*, 1992), language itself is controlled by a dominant order and victimhood goes hand in hand with knowing something unnamable.[23] True as this rings, one must be cautious about declaring trauma *inherently* unsayable. Ruth Klüger Angress' writes of Lanzmann's *Shoah* that the film "focuses on what matters by speaking unremittingly about what the myth-makers call the 'unspeakable'" (Klüger Angress 219). This remark from a survivor critiquing the notion of the Holocaust as a priori "unsayable" or "unspeakable" cautions us that such terms can hold a perverse power to silence survivors.

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[21] Janet writes: "A situation has not been satisfactorily liquidated…. Until we have achieved, not merely an outward reaction through our movements, but also an inward reaction *through the words we address to ourselves*, through the organization of the recital of the event to others *and to ourselves*, and through the putting of this recital in its place as one of the chapters in our personal history" (*Psychological Healing* (1919), vol. I, cited in Herman 37, my emphasis).

[22] Peter Haidu calls silence the 'constitutive alterity' of language: "Silence is the antiworld of speech, and at least as polyvalent, constitutive, and fragile (…) Silence resembles words also in that each production of silence must be judged in its own contexts, in its own situations of enunciation. Silence can be a mere absence of speech; at other times, it is both the negation of speech and a production of meaning. At times, it has to be overcome, and for the same reasons the effort is made to index 'beyond' of language in full recognition of the fact that language is not to be transcended: silence is one of the ways in which we make sense of the world, and as such, it is one of the *différends* over which we struggle. But silence is enfolded in its opposite, in language. As such, silence is simultaneously the contrary of language, its contradiction, and an integral part of language. Silence, in this sense, is the necessary discrepancy of language with itself, its constitutive alterity" (Haidu 278).

[23] "The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his *prerogative to name and define reality***,** and the more completely his arguments prevail. (…) When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place *outside the realm of socially validated reality*. Her experience becomes *unspeakable*" (Herman 8, my emphasis).

Herman and Klüger Angress each point out in their own way that when something cannot be said, there is a "why" to be investigated. Rather than labeling something unsayable, we may well ask: If one cannot say something, why is that? Should one not try? What would that bring to light? This line of questioning may reveal Foucauldian dynamics of discourse in which a dominant social order privileges certain speech and renders other speech inadmissible. Under such circumstances, literature can serve as an outlet for forbidden truths, mad speech, and trauma struggling to become sayable.

A brief word on the general absence of German authors from discussions of trauma theory. Apart from Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern (The Inability to Mourn*; 1967) and Jan and Aleida Assmann's work on cultural and collective memory in the 1990s, most influential work in modern trauma theory has not issued from German or Austrian authors. This may reflect the very phenomenon the Mitscherlichs describe, namely, an inability to fully come to terms with the past. It may also reflect the postwar dispersion of survivors of Nazi persecution, many of whom made their homes and careers in the US (like Ruth Klüger Angress and Geoffrey Hartman). At the same time, many who returned found other avenues to address twentieth century traumata. For example, trauma plays a role in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer and other Frankfurt School thinkers, but it took them in the direction of critiquing and developing broader social theories.

Having laid out my view of trauma, in the following section I turn to trauma in literature. I first provide background on studies of trauma and the unsayable in literature. I then take up the question of what trauma literature is and how it functions as a genre. Finally, I discuss several narrative tools and techniques relevant to my analysis of trauma in postwar Austrian literature.

2. Studies of "Trauma Literature"

a. Background on the Unsayable

Though the idea of an unsayable emerged *en masse* amid the violence and alienation of the industrial and post-industrial ages, it is hardly unique to modernist and postmodernist artists and thinkers. The notion that certain experiences defy verbalization appears in philosophical traditions and apophatic discourses dating back to the origins of the Western intellectual tradition. Ineffability was a key theme of the Gnostics, the Neoplatonists, Christian mysticism, the Kaballah, Sufism, post-Scholastics like Meister Eckhart, Baroque mystics, and Romantic thinkers like Kierkegaard (Franke 2).

Common among all these lineages is an attitude toward language that is attuned to what words must miss; an openness to what words cannot say; and an awareness that while the unsayable repels language, it requires some kind of language in order to register at all (Franke 3). When it comes to what makes some things unsayable, multiple ideas are discernible. One possibility is that language cannot go beyond itself to account for itself, just as Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem posits that no formal axiomatic system can prove its own consistency (Hofstadter). This is a linguistic problem of self-reference in the spirit of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* 4.12. Another possibility is that certain experiences are inherently unsayable, be they traumatic or ecstatic or too radically personal. This notion locates unsayability not in properties of language but rather in human experiences that necessarily do not correspond to language (consider, for example, Musil's *andere Zustand* (the other condition)). Franke contrasts poets Edmond Jabès and Paul Celan to differentiate between these two lineages of apophatic thinking: Jabès' work embodies an ineffability inherent to language itself, while Celan's concerns an ineffability of existence (Franke 97). A third possibility is that some things are only

conditionally unsayable; that is, they cannot be said under certain circumstances. This might be because a ruling social order suppresses certain discourse (exemplified by Bachmann's female protagonists who cannot voice their trauma within a patriarchal and fascist society) or because there is no word in one's language for the concept one wishes to express (as is the case in George Orwell's chilling vision of "Newspeak"). This third type of unsayability wrought by social conditions is most relevant to my analysis of trauma in the postwar Austrian literary context.

The 1980s and 1990s brought widespread recognition of trauma. The addition of the PTSD diagnosis to the DSM-III (1980), the appearance of Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), and the publication of Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) marked decisive events in the popularization of trauma in both clinical and literary realms. Over the following decades, literary inscriptions of trauma have received much attention from literary critics and clinicians, sometimes in collaboration with one another as with Felman and Laub. Certain themes and events predominate in contemporary studies of trauma literature such as World War I, World War II, the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, post-colonial conflicts, slavery and its legacies, and sexual violence. However, many scholars have fruitfully explored trauma in other contexts.[24]

In approaching narratives of appreciably diverse events, studies of trauma literature tend to share common concerns about descriptive and ethical questions, as discussed in the following section. They also share several methodological approaches including analysis of the historical context, discussions of clinical insights on trauma, and close reading of the literature. My dissertation employes these methods, as well as a line of philosophical argumentation, to explore the nature and implications of unspoken trauma.

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[24] Such studies include Breithaupt (ETA Hoffmann's *Fräulein von Scuder,* 1818); Ramazani (Baudelaire's *Le spleen de Paris,* 1869); Franke (Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* 1899); and Rimmon-Kenan (Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury,* 1929).

b. Defining Trauma Literature

It is delicate to define "trauma literature." Analyses of so-called trauma literature focus much attention on narrative form, and rightly so, for trauma does manifest on the formal level.[25] However, specific techniques or features inevitably vary with contemporary norms and cultural context, and considering only a narrow set of forms creates a hazard of excluding certain works. Clearly, "trauma literature" is not limited to fragmented postmodern narratives.

Focusing on content over form, I roughly define trauma literature as "stories in which the essence or plot turns on a traumatic event and its impact on the characters." The trauma may be personal, collective, or a both; it may be structural, historical, or a both; what is key is that the work cannot be fully understood unless trauma is considered.

In studies of trauma literature, there are several recurring questions which bear mention. One line of questioning regards the purpose or agenda of trauma narratives. Is their goal communicative? Cathartic? Therapeutic? Redemptive? Activist (as in raising awareness)? To bear witness? To give voice to the dead, if such a thing is possible? These goals are neither comprehensive nor mutually exclusive, and narratives can clearly have multiple goals. There is also a teleological peril in ascribing an author or text a *raison d'être*: Some narratives are not reducible to a positive statement, and imputing a "purpose" may do violence to the author's intended portrayal of a purely shattering experience with no possibility for redemption or

[25] Robinett gives good reason for examining not just content but structure of the literary works as markers and carriers of trauma. Postmodern literary theory, ideas of authorship, as well as trauma theory, have drawn a stark divide between a narrative and the author's experience, viewing trauma in various ways as fundamentally inaccessible. However, if traumatic experience cannot be represented in language, how are we to understand narratives that clearly bear a relationship to the writer's lived experience? Formal aspects of narrative and writing process that correspond to trauma can offer a useful avenue with which to approach trauma narratives that lie somewhere on the edge of the unsayable (Robinett 290-297).

healing. It is impossible to craft a one-size-fits-all approach (e.g., "trauma narratives seek to do X"), leaving readers and scholars to approach each work on its own terms.

Another set of questions examines ethics for writers and readers. Who may tell a trauma narrative? What are the ethics of narrating real or fictionalized trauma, particularly if altering or imagining historical facts? Are there unacceptable ways of writing certain events?[26] What are our obligations as readers? How much can or should we relate to narratives about limit experiences? LaCapra's notion of "empathic unsettlement" (LaCapra 2001, 41) suggests that trauma literature has the potential to convey a kind of emotional truth even if some facts are altered or imagined. Such "authentic trauma fiction," Vickroy argues, is important because it can provide pathways for reader empathy that may ultimately lead to greater historical understanding.

On the other hand, Cavedon quips, readers' interest need not stem from a desire to understand or combat injustice; it can equally well be driven by entertainment-based appetites for gruesome tales (Cavedon 139-141). The publishing industry responds to market demands, and accounts of extreme situations often sell. Narratives of illness, sexual abuse, torture or the death of loved ones have come to rival the classic, heroic adventure as a test of limits that offers readers "the suspicious thrill of borrowed emotion" (Miller and Tougaw 2).

It may seem roundly unethical to produce trauma for popular consumption. Yet this very market dynamic can help gain a broader audience for marginalized groups and accounts of trauma that would otherwise remain unheard. Consider the inclusion of Toni Morrison's works in Oprah's Book Club, which led millions of readers to encounter or consider anew the historical

[26] These questions have been discussed extensively with regard to Holocaust literature. Fetz and Magsham further explore the viability of the 'repossession' of the Holocaust by a second generation of authors like Robert Menasse and Doron Rabinovici.

traumas of African Americans. There is arguably some good in such an outcome. We are left, then, with the uneasy question of what it means to respect others' suffering without appropriating, commodifying, or over-identifying.

c. Techniques of Narrative Trauma

Studies of trauma literature point to a roughly consistent set of tools and techniques that serve to convey trauma. Many of these features such as repetition, multiple perspectives, disrupted time and intertextuality are common narrative devices that can be found in most fiction. Hence, they cannot be treated like diagnostic criteria that 'prove' trauma. However, attention to these devices becomes productive if one examines how they function in a particular narrative context.[27] Below I discuss how commonly cited narrative devices can function to mime, represent, or otherwise convey trauma, drawing on examples from recent scholarship and my own study.

The physical body functions like a palimpsest onto which trauma is etched. Vickroy discusses the war veteran Paco (Larry Heinemann, *Paco's Story*, 1986), who is covered in scars from his experiences in Vietnam, and the slave Sethe (Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, 1987), whose back has been deeply scarred by the whip. In both cases, the scars represent a painful past literally etched into the body while their meaning as traumatic signs remains out of reach to their owners. The scars' meaning also transcends the individual. The body becomes a concrete battlefield for the waging of military, post-colonial and patriarchal violence. Such scars are important to trauma narratives because a key part of the story lies in the horrifying physical conditions that go with war, slavery and sexual assault, and the suffering body serves as "a

[27] As Vice argues, because of the subject matter in trauma narratives, standard features may be "brought to their limit, taken literally, defamiliarized or used self-consciously" (Vice 4).

vehicle for rendering unimaginable experience tangible to readers" (Vickroy 32-33). Bachmann's characters often manifest trauma bodily (as in the *Malina* narrator's idiopathic foot pain) or through disrupted senses like vision and hearing (*Simultan* collection). Bernhard's *Wittgensteins Neffe* opens with the narrator's swollen "moonface" (*Mondgesicht*), suggesting a connection with 'loony,' and Bernhard seemed to relish raw depictions of illness and bodily decay.

Repetition can occur at multiple levels of a narrative including language, imagery, and plot. It is often linked to Freudian *Wiederholungszwang*, wherein a victim of trauma compulsively repeats or revisits a traumatic scene. Repetition without possibility of recuperation or resolution can signal breakage and loss (see Rimmon-Kenan's discussion of *The Sound and the Fury*). Repetition can also reproduce speech patterns of a traumatized person, and/or mimic the effects of trauma by signaling its insistent return to the point that it disrupts narrative chronology or progression (Whitehead 86). In *Malina*, the narrator's utopian drafts and horrific nightmares contain recurring images and phrases that lend consistency to the achronological narrative while imparting a trapped, fearful quality to her dreams.

Disruptions to narrative time can convey trauma through temporal shifts that occur frequently and without warning; lapses from past into present tense narration (as in reliving); abrupt, capricious thematic shifts (rather than transitions to foster continuity); and vague or missing time markers (Robinett). Bernhard's works are often characterized by a collapse of narrative time. Instead of chapters or even paragraph breaks, a rambling first-person narrator transitions between topics via incidental reference to some present situation, enabling an associative leap to the next theme. This results in an uncomfortable feeling of being trapped in

time – possessed by the past, fleetingly visiting the present, and occasionally glancing toward a bleak future.

Distancing techniques form another category of traumatic narrative devices. Secondary or peripheral characters "serving as first-person narrators add a layer of mystery or unknowability to events. The use of a frame story introduces uncertainty and diverted focus. Shifts from first to third person can mime dissociation. An example of the latter in *Malina* is when the narrator, recounting a childhood experience of being struck in the face by a schoolboy, refers to herself after the incident as "jemand, der einmal ich war" ("someone who was once me"). The human insect Gregor Samsa's penchant for hanging on the ceiling parallels clinical descriptions of dissociative experiences, and the narrator of Paula Ludwig's "Das Tier" recognizing herself in an animal through a window involves a refraction of the self through glass and across species (Campana 17-18).

Disturbed symbolization processes which fuse self and object, or object and symbol, can indicate an inability to distinguish between inner and outer reality (Vickroy 29). Language that gives objects an independent, dissociated existence can reflect a character's inner fragmentation, impaired perception of a totality or whole, and lack of subjecthood (Rimmon-Kenan 241-2). Disrupted symbolization can also function as a productive technique to forge new meanings. Winslow argues that unconventional uses of tropes like metaphor and metonymy disrupt conventional paths of meaning in order to create a world in which words refer differently. By creating her own meanings for signs, Aichinger crafts her own language and thereby an alternate world where words *mean* in different ways.

Examples of ***fractured voice*** include telling a story from multiple narrators' perspectives, shifting narrative focalization, and fragmented identity and memory.[28] Bachmann's *Malina* employs diverse genres including letters, dreams, manuscripts, telephone conversations, dialogues and opera libretti to suggest trauma that cannot be straightforwardly told.

Apophatic discourse – discourse that negates itself – often plays a key role in trauma narratives. Examples of self-subverting or self-unsaying linguistic maneuvers include oxymoron, paradox, ellipsis, contradiction, irony, anacoluthon, and litotes (Franke 26). Narratives may also directly say that they cannot say, as when the narrator in *Malina* says, "es ist die Furchtbarkeit noch gar nicht enthalten in einem Wort, es ist zu furchtbar" ("it is terribleness not even contained in one word, it is too terrible") (*IBM* 669, my transl.).

Silences in the text can mime trauma on a formal level. These include lacunae where an event or memory should be, references to things that cannot be said (a kind of apophatic discourse), narrative gaps where we can infer an untold story, and voices that are muzzled or missing. In an example of the latter, the narrator of Baudelaire's "Les Yeux des Pauvres" violates the poor by appropriating their thoughts and voices so that "they are made to speak a language that eclipses – that represents yet does not feel, does not 'present' – their pain" (Ramazani 133). Bachmann's portra yal of men silencing women, as well Paul's inability to tell his own story in *Wittgensteins Neffe*, bespeak similarly violent silences.

Intertextuality serves a range of functions in trauma narratives including suggesting repressed or forgotten memories; evoking a literary precedent which threatens to influence the

[28] See, for example, Rimmon-Kenan's analysis of *The Sound and the Fury* and Vickroy's discussion of works by Marguerite Duras and Toni Morrison. Whitehead posits that a multiplicity of voices may suggest a recovery based on a community of witnesses, whereby "through the compassionate sharing of the story, trauma resolves itself into new forms and constellations" (Whitehead 88). This may be a valid reading of some trauma narratives, but is inappropriate for those that offer no basis for a redemptive interpretation.

actions of a character; and 'revising' canonical works by reading them against the grain or allowing silenced voices to tell their story (Whitehead 85). Malchow argues that Bernhard's *Frost* employs Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* as an intertext in order to question Austria's peaceful Alpine identity and bring repressed trauma to the surface. Bachmann employs intertextual references to underscore her problematic view on gender relations in *Malina* by having the narrator sign letters *eine Unbekannte* (an unknown woman). In alluding to Stephan Zweig's *Brief einer Unbekannten* (*Letter from an Unknown Woman*), in which a woman devotes her love and life to a famous author who cannot recall the few nights they spent together, Bachmann conjures a long history of the socially acceptable and indeed romanticized destruction of women. Another intertext noted by Schlipphacke appears in Bachmann's *Franza* fragment: The teenage Franza falls in love with a seemingly benevolent British soldier who shares a name with a nefarious villain in Wilkie Collins' Victorian detective thriller *The Lady in White*, lending the kindly solder diabolical underpinnings.

Though attention to specific devices varies, all studies of trauma literature view breaks with traditional narrative structure as playing a key role in the traumatic nature of the text. I would propose that if we look beyond the devices themselves, the need to deviate from contemporary norms (whatever they may be) is itself a touchstone of this literature. This would suggest that in a world where fragmented postmodern renderings of trauma have become *de rigeur*, authors will continue to find new forms and techniques that help convey experiences fundamentally unknowable to those who have not lived them. This unknowable essence need not be due to trauma; it could just as well abide in cases of mystical or ecstatic experiences like those that make up the realm of Musil's *andere Zustand*.

The problem of speaking the unknowable brings me to Wittgenstein, whose ideas about the limits of language have captivated Bachmann and so many others.

C. My position within studies of Wittgenstein and Literature

1. Bridges Between Wittgenstein and Literature

Wittgenstein's philosophy has become increasingly influential in literary and literary-critical circles. A recent search of the MLA bibliography identified close to a thousand entries linking Wittgenstein and literature (Yu 2013, 362). Approaches to bridging Wittgenstein and literature include focusing on the literary qualities in Wittgenstein's writing; proposing a philosophical purpose in literature; and asking what account Wittgenstein's philosophy can give of literature or literary theory. To situate my dissertation within the topography of such inquiries, I provide a brief overview of how philosophers and literary scholars have sought to construct bridges between Wittgenstein and literature. As the bridge metaphor implies, literature and philosophy are two neighboring realms that are not contiguous, but are close enough to be connected by thoughtful engineering.

One bridge arises through exploring the literary qualities of Wittgenstein's writing. Philosophers and literary scholars alike acknowledge that that the importance of language for Wittgenstein is reflected not only in what he said but how he said it. This runs parallel to a general characteristic of literary texts, in which form matters alongside or even above content. Perloff (2011) goes one step further in regarding Wittgenstein's writing itself as a kind of literature; a move which, while justifiable, is beyond the scope of this work.[29]

[29] Perloff argues that the primacy of *how* Wittgenstein says what he says makes his work not merely philosophy but poetry. She finds that the text is imbued with poeticity by repetition with slight permutation; a certain density (*Dichtheit*) and weaving together of threads; the self-processing and even self-canceling nature of his propositions; and the use of countless examples, anecdotes, narratives and analogies (Perloff 2011, 718-727). To provide other

A second bridge arises through examining literature that engages directly or indirectly with Wittgenstein. The oft-noted literary and imaginative qualities of Wittgenstein's writing account in part for his appeal to authors and artists on both sides of the Atlantic such as Oswald Wiener (*Die Verbesserung von Mitteleuropa*, 1958), Helmut Heißenbüttel (*Textbüchern*, 1960-67), Peter Handke (*Kaspar*, 1967), Terry Eagleton (*Saints and Scholars*, 1987), David Markson (*Wittgenstein's Mistress*, 1988), Philip Kerr (*A Philosophical Investigation*, 1992), Barbara Köhler (*Wittgensteins Nichte*, 1999). Recent monographs by Steutzger (*Zu einem Sprachspiel gehört eine ganze Kultur*, 2001) and Perloff (*Wittgenstein's Ladder*, 1996) focus on authors who engage explicitly with Wittgenstein, including Bachmann and Bernhard,[30] and this dissertation expands in part on their work. Others such as Schumann (*Kafka and Wittgenstein*, 2015) and Lemahieu ("Bellow's Private Language" in *Wittgenstein and Modernism*, 2017) take up authors whose work shares affinities to Wittgenstein without citing him directly; I employ this approach in my discussion of Celan's *Meridian* speech.

A third bridge arises through positing some philosophical purpose in literature. Both poetry and philosophy represent forms of linguistic self-consciousness, and both may be mobilized in the service of deliverance from misleading images (Harrison 103). Literary genres can be seen to serve a philosophical purpose; by directing the reader's attention to language itself and thereby illuminating our understanding of our own language, literature can become a tool for grammatical investigation (Huemer 3-5). While I selected Bachmann, Bernhard, and Celan

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points of comparison for Perloff's thesis, it would be valuable to examine the reception within literary circles of other philosophers whose writing contains comparable 'poeticity'.

[30] Perloff opens with useful background on Wittgenstein's own interest (at times, lack thereof) in literature before examining the literary qualities of his writing and his uptake in select literary works. Steutzger examines how Bachmann and Bernhard 'transcribe' (*umschreiben*) Wittgenstein's philosophy. She views their reworking of his ideas as explications and critiques, yet not mere literary philosophizing; she writes instead of a 're-staging' (*Reinszenierung*) of Wittgensteinian philosophemes.

precisely for their innovative use of language, I do not attribute to them philosophical postulates. Instead, my investigation is premised on the notion that literature qua literature can inform philosophy of language.

A fourth bridge arises through questions about what account philosophy can offer of literature. Given that literature involves special uses of language, can philosophy tell us what it is and why it matters? Purely referential theories of language, in which the meaning of a word or phrase resides in its real-world referent, do not account for why people take time to write and read literature, or how we can 'understand' something that has no truth-value. By contrast, a Wittgensteinian view of language as a social practice might regard literary uses of language as part of an accepted set of language games, allowing for us to make more sense of their existence (Huemer 3-5).

A fifth bridge concerns the relationship between Wittgenstein's philosophy and literary theory (two wildly contested territories in their own right). Some of the most ambitious approaches (for example, those of Stanley Fish, Charles Bernstein, and Charles Altieri) seek in Wittgenstein's thought a more positive foundation for literary theory. Responses from the philosophical side, however, often dismiss such attempts as based on misreadings of Wittgenstein and ignorance of philosophical context (Yu 363). Margolis, for example, views the record of "applying" Wittgenstein to the philosophy of art and literature one of sustained failure and argues persuasively against any purported application of Wittgenstein's "method."[31] While I share Margolis' skepticism that any clear method can be attributed to Wittgenstein, Yu points out that some skeptical philosophers may themselves be neglecting a basic Wittgensteinian insight:

[31] "Nearly every would-be principled 'application' that I know of errs by invoking 'everyday use' as if it could be isolated and packaged, made criterial and philosophically decisive in judging 'doctrinal' disputes, and/or by casting doubt on any and every metaphysical and epistemological proposal merely for being such… If indeed Wittgenstein did subscribe to anything like the 'method' just sketched, then so much the worse for him" (Margolis 337).

"By demanding that literary critics adhere to philosophical definitions of 'interpretation,' 'intention,' and 'meaning,' they fail to ask how such terms are actually used in the language-game of literary criticism" (Yu 363). In other words, philosophers and literary critics have not quite learned how to talk to one another.

While many applications of Wittgenstein to literature ask how his ideas about language can inform literary criticism, my objective is slightly different. This dissertation take an idea extrapolated from his philosophy and examine whether and how it is present in selected literature. One assumption underlying my effort is that we can rightly expect literature to reflect philosophical postulates or phenomena. This assumption is in turn premised on the views that (1) philosophy seeks insights into the human condition which will hold true across many different times and places (this is not to say always and everywhere, as in universalism), and (2) literature, though it may engage with a fictional realm, is a use of language that intertwines with the human condition. That literature, by definition, takes liberties with facts makes it challenging to combine with philosophy – a discipline concerned with attributes like logic, truth, factuality, or validity – for what would constitute "evidence" of a philosophical idea in a text? Wittgenstein would not say of a story or poem, "this text *means* that." He might say, however, "this text speaks to us of that," or, "this text calls forth a picture in our minds." If the selected texts are shown to call forth a picture in our minds of how language helps anchor traumatic experiences to intersubjective reality, then another bridge will have been established.

2. Wittgenstein and Trauma

Wittgenstein's biography contains multiple traumata. His father was a harsh and demanding authority figure with impossibly high expectations of his children. Three of his older

brothers committed suicide: Hans ran away and disappeared in 1902, Rudi poisoned himself publicly in Vienna in 1904 (after which the father forbade mention of his name), and Kurt shot himself at the end of World War I. Wittgenstein himself had a depressive streak. He was probably homosexual, which would have added to his sense of alienation. During World War I, he voluntarily served in the Austro-Hungarian army, fought on the front lines against the Russian, British and Italian armies, and received several decorations for bravery. With the Anschluss, Wittgenstein was classified as a *Volljude* under Nazi racial law (having had three Jewish grandparents), causing him to seek British citizenship and live the rest of his life in exile.

In studies concerned with the relevance of personal trauma to Wittgenstein's philosophy, his time as a soldier during World War I has received the greatest attention. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, the only major work published during his lifetime, began as a treatise on the nature of logic. During 1916-1918, he continued to write from the trenches amid harsh conditions, danger and death. His *Geheime Tagebücher* (wartime diaries, published in 1985), which contain prototype sentences for many of the more esoteric propositions in *Tractatus* on ethics, aesthetics, the soul, and the meaning of life, reveal that the origins of his philosophy do not lie far afield from the horror and trauma of war.[32] That my study concerns implications of Wittgenstein's ideas for trauma seems appropriate considering that his work grew in part out of his own trauma.

A separate line of studies examines Wittgenstein's views on Freud and psychoanalysis. Wittgenstein grew up in Viennese psychoanalytic culture. He was familiar with Freud's work, especially *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. His sister Gretl underwent analysis and remained friends with Freud (Heaton 4). Though not without

[32] See Perloff (28-9); Monk, and Macho.

admiration for Freud's project, Wittgenstein was skeptical of Freud's claim to have developed a scientific method and was hostile to Freud's positive approaches to knowledge and meaning (see Bouveresse 1995, Heaton 2000). In Freudian theories of trauma and the unconscious, Wittgenstein was inclined to see a language game that contributed to "the bewitchment of our intelligence by language" (Heaton 109).

Regarding Wittgenstein's own views on trauma, I do not ascribe him a positive position. I do, however, show in the following section that certain lines of argument in *Philosophical Investigations* carry implications for trauma that remains unspoken.

D. <u>Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument: Implications for trauma</u>

Is it possible for there to be a language that only one person can speak, that is essentially private, that no one else can in principle understand? The so-called private language argument, closely associated with Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), concludes that such a private language is not possible. The term 'private language *argument*' is misleading. *PI* does not contain one single structured argument against a private language, but rather a loose series of remarks on the matter which has proven widely open to interpretation. That said, the name has stuck, so I will follow common practice – or the rule, as it were.

The present section offers an account of the private language argument (hereafter "PLA") based on original text and subsequent interpretations, then maps out what I take to be the argument's implications for trauma. I will show that Wittgenstein's PLA can be defended against accusations of false premises and implications such as memory skepticism, verificationsim and behaviorism. At the core of the PLA as I understand it lies a claim that private ostensive definition is insufficient to confer meaning on a sign. I suggest that if one

remains silent about a traumatic experience, never verbalizing it even to oneself, a problem arises related to the impossibility of a private language: One becomes privy to an experience no one else acknowledges, and this undermines the reality of the experience.

1. Introduction to the Private Language Argument

The PLA has been at the heart of debates on linguistic rules and meaning, behaviorism, solipsism, phenomenalism, philosophy of mind, and efforts to query Cartesian dualism from an 'ordinary language' perspective (Audi 741, Nielsen 2-3). Its exact structure remains controversial. 'Orthodox readings' tend to view the PLA as some kind of *reductio ad absurdum* of Cartesian dualism,[33] while Kripke's 1982 reading takes the it to be a subsidiary point within a larger case against private language.

The PLA is generally taken to be located in *Philosophical Investigations* (hereafter "*PI*") §244-271, though it can be seen as extending to §315 (Candlish and Wrisley). Most early responses to the PLA focused on a small number of paragraphs such as §258, §265, §293, and much subsequent debate over what Wittgenstein did or did not intend to say consists of responses to a few canonical interpretations of these supposedly key passages (Stern 337). I will briefly introduce a few of these passages to set the stage for issues that arise in my discussion. To counter the distressingly widespread practice of briefly quoting Wittgenstein before whisking his words out of context, I cite key paragraphs in full.

[33] Dualism was of course not unique to Descartes but pervaded the thinking of British Empiricists like Locke, Berkeley and Hume and became a heritage that many later philosophers and psychologists accepted (Jones 14). Beyond a critique of dualism, Wittgenstein may have also intended to target ideas of his contemporaries including Frege, Russell, James, Ogden, Richards, Carnap, Schlick. He likely also intended to critique or revise his own earlier work (Stern 336).

Paragraph 258 presents the case of a "private diarist" who keeps a journal about a sensation he labels 'S.' However, his inwardly pointing to and naming the sensation (as in an ostensive definition) does not yield a reliable definition of 'S' that he can be certain of using correctly in the future:

> Stellen wir uns diesen Fall vor. Ich will über das Wiederkehren einer gewissen Empfindung ein Tagebuch führen. Dazu assoziiere ich sie mit dem Zeichen "E" und schreibe in einem Kalender zu jedem Tag, an dem ich die Empfindung habe, dieses Zeichen. – Ich will zuerst bemerken, dass sich eine Definition des Zeichens nicht aussprechen lässt. – Aber ich kann sie doch mir selbst als eine Art hinweisende Definition geben! – Wie? Kann ich auf die Empfindung zeigen? – Nicht im gewöhnlichen Sinne. Aber ich spreche oder schreibe das Zeichen, und dabei konzentriere ich meine Aufmerksamkeit auf die Empfindung – zeige also gleichsam im Innern auf sie. – Aber wozu diese Zeremonie? Denn nur eine solche scheint es zu sein! Eine Definition dient doch dazu, die Bedeutung eines Zeichens festzulegen. – Nun, das geschieht eben durch das Konzentrieren der Aufmerksamkeit; denn dadurch präge ich mir die Verbindung des Zeichens mit der Empfindung ein. – "Ich präge sie mir ein" kann doch nur heissen: dieser Vorgang bewirkt, dass ich mich in Zukunft *richtig* an die Verbindung erinnere. Aber in unserem Falle habe ich ja kein Kriterium für die Richtigkeit. Man möchte hier sagen: richtig ist, was immer mir als richtig erscheinen wird. Und das heisst nur, dass hier von 'richtig' nicht geredet werden kann.
>
> Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. – I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. – but still I give myself a kind of ostensive definition. How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation – and so as it were, point to it inwardly. But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign. – Well that is done precisely by the concentration of my attention; for in this way I impress upon myself the connection between the sign and the sensation. But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection *right* in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: Whatever is going to seem right to me is right, and that only means that here we can't talk about 'right.'

This passage is generally taken to show that inwardly pointing to a sensation and purporting to remember that connection correctly in subsequent uses does not constitute *language*. However, how and why the connection fails have been debated. Is the breakdown caused by a failure of memory, a failure of private ostensive definition, or something else altogether?

In §265, Wittgenstein asks whether looking up information in a table that exists only in one's imagination (*eine Tabelle, die nur in unserer Vorstellung existiert*) can serve as a justification for a fact. He concludes that if there is no standard for correctness outside one's imagination, any such "justification" can only be imaginary:

> Denken wir uns eine Tabelle, die nur in unsrer Vorstellung existiert; etwa ein Wörterbuch. Mittels eines Wörterbuchs kann man die Übersetzung eines Wortes X durch ein Wort Y rechtfertigen. Sollen wir es aber auch eine Rechtfertigung nennen, wenn diese Tabelle nur in der Vorstellung nachgeschlagen wird? – "Nun, es ist dann eben eine subjektive Rechtfertigung." – Aber die Rechtfertigung besteht doch darin, daß man an eine unabhängige Stelle appelliert. – "Aber ich kann doch auch von einer Erinnerung an eine andre appellieren. Ich weiß (z.B.) nicht, ob ich mir die Abfahrzeit des Zuges richtig gemerkt habe und rufe mir zur Kontrolle das Bild der Seite des Fahrplans ins Gedächtnis. Haben wir hier nicht den gleichen Fall?" – Nein; denn dieser Vorgang muß nun wirklich die richtige Erinnerung hervorrufen. Wäre das Vorstellungsbild des Fahrplans nicht selbst auf seine Richtigkeit zu prüfen, wie könnte es die Richtigkeit der ersten Erinnerung bestätigen? (Als kaufte Einer mehrere Exemplare der heutigen Morgenzeitung, um sich zu vergewissern, daß sie die Wahrheit schreibt.) In der Vorstellung eine Tabelle nachschlagen, ist so wenig ein Nachschlagen einer Tabelle, wie die Vorstellung des Ergebnisses eines vorgestellten Experiments das Ergebnis eines Experiments ist.
>
> Let us imagine a table (something like a dictionary) that exists only in our imagination. A dictionary can be used to justify the translation of a word X by a word Y. But are we also to call it a justification if such a table is to be looked up only in the imagination? – "Well, yes; then it is a subjective justification. – But justification consists in appealing to something independent. – "But surely I can appeal from one memory to another. For example, I don't know if I nave remembered the time of departure of a train right and to check it I call to mind how a page of the time-table looked. Isn't it the same here?" – No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually *correct.* If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be *tested* for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory? (As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true.)
>
> Looking up a table in the imagination is no more looking up a table than the image of the result of an imagined experiment is the result of an experiment.

This and neighboring passages have sometimes been construed to imply memory-skepticism (i.e., because the thinker's memory cannot be trusted) or verificationism (i.e., requiring outside proof). However, §265 only points to the need for *some* non-specified, non-private criterion for correctness of facts.

Paragraph 293 presents the image of a beetle in a box, or rather, an *unseen* object that is *called* a "beetle" and is concealed in a box that only its owner may open:

> Wenn ich von mir selbst sage, ich wisse nur vom eigenen Fall, was das Wort "Schmerz" bedeutet, – muß ich das nicht auch von den Andern sagen? Und wie kann ich denn den einen Fall in so unverantwortlicher Weise verallgemeinern? Nun, ein Jeder sagt es mir von sich, er wisse nur von sich selbst, was Schmerzen seien! – Angenommen, es hätte Jeder eine Schachtel, darin wäre etwas, was wir "Käfer" nennen. Niemand kann je in die Schachtel des Andern schaun; und Jeder sagt, er wisse nur vom Anblick seines Käfers, was ein Käfer ist. - Da könnte es ja sein, daß Jeder ein anderes Ding in seiner Schachtel hätte. Ja, man könnte sich vorstellen, daß sich ein solches Ding fortwährend veränderte. – Aber wenn nun das Wort "Käfer" dieser Leute doch einen Gebrauch hätte? - So wäre er nicht der der Bezeichnung eines Dings. Das Ding in der Schachtel gehört überhaupt nicht zum Sprachspiel; auch nicht einmal als ein Etwas: denn die Schachtel könnte auch leer sein. – Nein, durch dieses Ding in der Schachtel kann 'gekürzt werden'; es hebt sich weg, was immer es ist. Das heißt: Wenn man die Grammatik des Ausdrucks der Empfindung nach dem Muster von 'Gegenstand und Bezeichnung' konstruiert, dann fällt der Gegenstand als irrelevant aus der Betrachtung heraus.
>
> If I say of myself that it is only from my own case that I know what the word "pain" means, – must I not say the same of other people too? And how can I generalize the *one* case so irresponsibly?
> Now someone tells me that *he* knows what pain is only from his own case! – Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle." No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. – But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? – If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a *something:* for the box might even be empty. – No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is. That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.

This beetle works as a metaphor for the sensation of pain, which only its 'owner' knows firsthand. There emerges a conundrum as to how we can speak of another's pain as a *something* when the referent is unknowable. (The same holds for other sensations like joy, anger, taste, and seeing colors.) Of course, we *do* speak of pain, and we believe we understand what others mean by the word. Paragraph 293 shows that a simple sign-and-referent model of language does not hold up for sensation words. This does not negate the possibility of private sensations, but points

to a disconnect between any putative private object and its having a straightforward place in *language*.

2. Orthodox interpretations and their discontents

a. Overview of Early Responses to the PLA

Early reviews of *PI* are worth revisiting both for the issues they raise and because they largely defined the context in which subsequent debates about Wittgenstein's PLA would play out. The term 'orthodox' generally refers to interpretations of the PLA that preceded Kripke's 1982 reading. Core early interpretations of the PLA came from A. J. Ayer, Rush Rhees, Norman Malcolm and P. F. Strawson (1954). Usually considered alongside them are papers by Judith Jarvis Thomson (1964) and Anthony Kenny (1971) focusing on the verification principle. While Rhees, Malcolm and Kenny take Wittgenstein to have successfully shown that there cannot be a private language, Ayer, Strawson and Thomson deem the arguments he provided insufficient for said conclusion.

Despite their vigorous disagreements, it may appear today that what 'orthodox' commentators have in common outweighs their differences (Stern 334). The so-called orthodox view is that while the PLA is never fully nor clearly stated in *PI*, it is best understood as a deductive, *reductio ad absurdum* argument that begins with a premise or premises about the nature of a private language and progresses to the conclusion that such a language is impossible (Stern 335). Such interpretations all in one way or another take Wittgenstein to be arguing (whether successfully or not) that a private language is impossible because it would be impossible for a would-be language user to establish meanings for its purported signs.

Various orthodox interpretations have been accused of making Wittgenstein out to rely on flawed premises such as memory-skepticism and verificationism or attributing to him troubling conclusions like the doctrine of linguistic behaviorism.[34] One view, typified by Malcolm, assumes that a privately defined term (such as the sensation 'S' in §258) can be introduced through an act of inner ostensive definition but doubts whether one could ever make use of such a term. If the necessary condition for 'S' to be meaningfully applied is that the private diarist must accurately remember what 'S' feels like, we can then reject his private language by claiming that he may misidentify his sensations or misremember the connection in the future. However, as Kenny points out, this reliance on memory-skepticism is problematic because it could also be used to rule out the possibility of public language. Malcolm also argues that there is no way of knowing whether one has used a private definition successfully because there is no possibility of a public check. However, Thomson quips that this depends on a version of verificationism which would make it possible to directly rule out the possibility of a private language, making the PLA superfluous (Stern 342). Finally, many philosophers believe that if Wittgenstein's PLA succeeds in refuting mind-body dualism, one must instead accept behaviorism, the view that any statements about human experience can be reduced to statements about observable behavior. Thus, to say someone has toothache would simply be to say that he behaves in specific ways, and the *experience* of the toothache would, counterintuitively, appear irrelevant (Jones 21).

[34] Though Wittgenstein's *interpreters* have been accused of invoking memory skepticism, verificationism and/or behaviorism, the opinion that Wittgenstein *himself* relied on these views is not prevalent. While Strawson and others have hinted that Wittgenstein displayed verificationist tendencies, such attitudes have generally remained timid. *PI* contains passages criticizing verificationism, which Wittgenstein briefly entertained during his time with the Vienna Circle in 1929-30 (see Hymes 68-70, Nielsen 85), and other passages distancing Wittgenstein from behaviorism (see *PI* §307-308, Jones 22).

While a comprehensive treatment of the debates about memory-skepticism, verificationism and behaviorism in orthodox readings of the PLA lies beyond my scope, it is necessary to briefly address these problems in order to arrive at a coherent account of the argument.

b. Memory-skepticism

Memory skepticism refers to the idea that an individual cannot be relied upon to recall precisely the connection between a word and its referent. This view becomes problematic when extended to public language because it implies that no one is authorized to use everyday words, lest he remember them wrong. One way to avoid the pitfall of memory-skepticism in Wittgenstein's PLA is to scrutinize the initial endowment of sensation 'S' with meaning. Kenny cites several passages from *PI* in support of the view that for an act of inner ostensive definition like that in §258 to succeed, the word must already have some place in the existing grammar of a language (Kenny 208-9).[35] Kenny's Wittgenstein thus critiques the idea that one can learn the meaning of a word simply by becoming acquainted with what it stands for, i.e., by fixing his attention on the appropriate object and associating the word with it. Such a notion is wrong because in the absence of certain training in the use of words, an ostensive definition can always be variously interpreted. If one points to a pencil and says, "This is called tove," 'tove' could mean pencil, round, wood, one, hard, and so on (Kenny 206). It is likewise impossible to give an

[35] Kenny cites §30, "The ostensive definition explains the use – the meaning – of the word when the overall role of the word in language is clear," and §257, "One forgets that a great deal of stage-setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense." He also points to a chess analogy in §31: "When one shews someone the king in chess and says: 'This is the king,' this does not tell him the use of the piece – unless he already knows the rules of the game up to this point..."

inner ostensive definition by privately pointing to a sensation.[36] Later authors such as McGinn (1997) and Nielsen (2008) have supported this view. McGinn argues that looking inward and naming (i.e., an act of private inner ostension) is problematic because it presupposes a grammar for said name (McGinn 128).[37] Nielsen points out that as early as 1933 in his "Notes for the 'Philosophical Lecture,'" Wittgenstein critiqued ostensive definitions by proposing that they work only when language is already up and running, hence a prior determination of meaning must come from the word's already-existing place in a language (Nielsen 47).

c. Verificationism

The Principle of Verification, closely associated with Vienna Circle logical positivism, has been proposed in various forms, most of which have quickly proven flawed. Verificationism is broadly characterized as a metaphysical theory that the meaning of a statement consists in its method(s) of verification. Hence, a sentence is meaningful provided there is a method for verifying it, with and stronger and weaker accounts of what qualifies as verification. This approach to meaning departs markedly from accounts like those of Frege, Davidson and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* that identify meaning with truth conditions (Audi 739, 953).

Malcolm locates the failure of a private language partly in the fact that it does not appear to be subject to rules. He cites §258, §259, §265 and §269, which deal with having the *impression* of following a rule or *thinking* one understands a word, and argues: "The proof that I

[36] Wittgenstein's critique of the theory that one knows what pain is only from one's own case – a formulation of the theory that it is acquaintance which conveys meaning – carries with it a critique of Russell's idea in *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* about a logically perfect language which would be largely private and in which naming would be based on 'acquaintance' with the object.

[37] Hacker also argues in *Insight and Illusion* (1972) and *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind* (1986) that it is impossible to give an inner ostensive definition by pointing at a sensation. However, for Hacker this is so because it is impossible to introduce a criterion for correct application without the possibility of a public or independent check (Stern 343); a line of argument which falls prey to concerns of verificationism.

am following a rule must appeal to something *independent* of my impression that I am. If in the nature of the case there cannot be such an appeal, then my private language does not have *rules*, for the concept of a rule requires that there be a difference between 'He is following a rule' and 'he is under the impression that he is following a rule'" (Malcolm 43).

J. J. Thomson dismantles Malcom's account into three component theses which she argues amount to a reformulation of the Principle of Verification.[38] Malcolm's reading, per Thompson, would have us believe "that what purports to be a kind-name 'K' is a kind-name in a man's language only if it is possible to find out whether or not a thing is a K," and this "finding out" goes with verificationism (Thomson 200).

Kenny offered an alternative to the verificationist reading of the *reductio* argument. As noted above, he sidesteps the problem of memory-skepticism by maintaining that because ostensive definitions presuppose an understanding of a word's role in language, they cannot be fundamental or primary in teaching intersubjective language. By extension, a private analogue of the training that enables public language is impossible, so the private diarist's attempt at internal ostension fails to confer meaning on 'S.' Plainly put, the definition never sticks in the first place. If upon (alleged) recurrence of the sensation the private diarist cries, "this is 'S' again," 'S' would have no real referent and the proposition could have no truth-value (Nielsen 122). In short, a failed ostensive definition implies that there is nothing to forget or misremember, so no verificationism need be at play.[39] A viable reading of §258, then, is that the

[38] Malcolm's theses, per Thompson, are: (1) "If a sign which a man uses is to be a word in a language, his use of it must be governed by a rule or set of rules; and this means that it must be possible for him to use the sign correctly or incorrectly." (2) "A man's use of a sign is not governed by a rule unless it is not merely possible that he should violate the rule but more, that he should violate it unwittingly." (3) There is no such thing as a man's thinking a thing is of the kind to be called 'K' and it not being so unless it is logically possible that it be *found out* that it is not so" (Thomson 187-196).

[39] Note that rather than insisting that the truth or falsity of an empirical statement must be within the reach of possible verification, Kenny held that a proposition must merely be *capable* of both truth and falsity. The problem in cases like "this is 'S' again" then becomes one of circular reference: The private diarist is using the same

impossibility of establishing a definition for 'S' stems from a lack of grammar rather than a lack of independent verification (see also McGinn 131).

There is one potentially troubling passage Malcolm cites that can admittedly lend itself to a verificationist reading: "Always get rid of the idea of the private object in this way: assume that it constantly changes, but that you do not notice the change because your memory constantly deceives you" (*PI* §207). Kenny revisits this passage to defend Wittgenstein against claims of verificationism. Per Kenny, the explanation for this passage, which at first glance may seem to call for outside verification, is not the question of how we would find out whether a putative private object was the correct object but rather what difference it would make. He argues that this line of thought, if fully developed, depends not upon the Principle of Verification but rather upon premises from Wittgenstein's picture theory of the proposition in the 1910s (Kenny 221). McGinn also distances Wittgenstein from a verificationist position. Passages like §288 ("I turn to stone but my pains go on…") have sometimes been taken to make a verificationist argument; namely, that the intelligibility of our pain concept would depend upon behavioral criteria for use which can be checked. McGinn contends that it instead serves to show that if we picture pain as an inner object, we cut essential grammatical links (McGinn 158).

d. Behaviorism

Because of his focus on outward signs and manifestations of sensations, Wittgenstein has sometimes been ascribed the view that any statements about human experience can be reduced to statements about observable behavior. However, branding him a behaviorist is inconsistent with

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statement to (1) describe the meaning of 'S' and (2) talk about the state of the world. Hence what is supposed to give the proposition its content is *also* what is supposed to give it its truth, and this is invalid (Kenny 225-226). Nielsen, however, questions this line of argument (see Nielsen 161-2).

other parts of *PI*. Wittgenstein maintains, for example, that it does not make sense to say one is mistaken about one's own sensations or feelings, which implies they do not merely amount to patterns of behavior (*PI* §307-308). Other philosophers such as Holborow and Kenny have offered further arguments that distance Wittgenstein's PLA from behaviorism.

L. C. Holborow (1967) writes that we must distinguish between experiences which are (1) merely private insofar as there need be no bodily changes or outward signs through which an outside observer could detect them and (2) 'radically private' because they completely lack natural expression (Holborow 118-119). He argues that the PLA aims to deny the latter, i.e., the possibility of a language which would refer to experiences which are 'radically private,' but that a careful reading of *PI* allows for language for the former type of privacy. This would rescue Wittgenstein from committing himself to behaviorism.

Kenny takes Wittgenstein to suggest in §244 that the verbal expression of pain is a learned, articulate *replacement* of primitive expressions such as moaning and wincing. Wittgenstein's position here differs from behaviorism because he is not claiming that 'A is in pain' *means* 'A is behaving in such and such a way.' The verbal expression of pain does not describe the natural expression of the sensation but rather *takes its place* (Kenny 210-11).

Wittgenstein himself rejected the behaviorist label. In §308, he clarifies that he does not deny the existence of inner processes. He points out, however, that the Cartesian view is misleading and we should not think of sensation words as straightforwardly referential: "We talk of processes and states (…) Sometime perhaps we shall know more about them – we think." This passage cautions that it is only a mistake in thinking which brings behaviorism into play: We *think* we can learn more about our inner processes, but when faced with our inability to actually get inside them, we may feel forced to deny their existence because they defy our

concept of what is knowable – "for we have a definite concept of what it means to learn to know a process better." Yet this is misguided, for "naturally we don't want to deny them!" It is thus a trick of our grammar for 'knowing about' a thing which gives the *appearance* that we must deny inner process altogether. The false dichotomy that either we can 'know' about sensations or they do not exist may be overcome by recognizing grammar as the root of our worries.

3. Kripke and After

a. The 'Communitarian View'

Saul Kripke (1982) bypasses most previous interpreters' reliance on the claim (in some form or other) that a private language user cannot check whether a rule has been followed. He argues instead that Wittgenstein concluded earlier in the rule-following passages around §200 that language is necessarily social, thus ruling out the possibility of a private language early on in *PI*. The purpose of the sections known as the PLA is then to illustrate an *application* of this general conclusion about language to the problem of sensations.

Paragraph 201 states: "This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule." Kripke considers this paradox – that any course of action may be seen to accord or conflict with a rule – "perhaps the central problem" of *PI* (Kripke 7), and develops his claim by way of a well-known mathematical function. Suppose that after years of performing addition on numbers smaller than 57, Kripke is asked to compute 68 + 57. He answers, quite naturally, 125. However, a sceptic suggests the answer could just as well be 5. At first glance, this is absurd. But the sceptic contends that it is possible that there is another mathematical function known as 'quus' which behaves exactly like 'plus' for numbers smaller than 57 but yields the result of 5 for all numbers

≥ 57. Since he has never added numbers larger than 57, there is no fact about Kripke's past behavior or mental history that can prove whether he meant 'plus' or 'quus' at any time in his life when he thought himself to be performing addition (maybe it was 'quaddition'!). The sceptic's argument becomes, in short, that "there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word" (Kripke 55). This is not to deny the *concept* of addition, but rather our capacity to adequately demonstrate that we *mean* a word the way we think we do.

Kripke's Wittgenstein thus proposes a radical new form of skepticism. Moreover, he permits a skeptical solution; rather than refuting the sceptic and rescuing our ability to demonstrably mean 'plus' instead of 'quus,' he allows the sceptic's claims to stand. To explain how language can exist at all, Krikpe's Wittgenstein offers the notion that meaning consists in being considered to have passed the community's test for employing a word or function. This so-called *communitarian view* carries with it the impossibility of a private language, leading Kripke to interpret the structure of *PI* in a new light.[40] He regards the PLA as something akin to a case study rather than a central feature of the text and criticizes many philosophers for missing the larger problem that Wittgenstein's sceptic reveals; namely, that *all* language should seem impossible or incoherent.

b. <u>The PLA Today</u>

The Kripkean debate was most intense during the first half of the 1980s. Leading opponents of his interpretation, i.e., that §243ff was merely a special case following from the

[40] Kripke vies the structure of *PI* as follows: Paragraphs 1-137 serve to refute the views of language espoused in *Tractatus*, in which meaning was seen to rely on truth conditions. *PI* focuses instead on assertability and justification conditions; when can we *use* a word? Paragraphs 138-242 contain the skeptical paradox and Wittgenstein's solution. Paragraph 243 and on (the so-called PLA) deals with the application of Wittgenstein's already-drawn general conclusion about rules and language to specific cases, including sensations (Kripke 78-9).

more general considerations around §202, were Peter Hacker and Gordon Baker. They show that in the original manuscript from which Wittgenstein had retrieved §202, key rule-following passage occur *after* the exposition of the PLA, and that the sections Kripke took to be pivotal for Wittgenstein's argument (§201-203) were not included in the intermediate version of *PI* (Nielsen 139). Moreover, by taking Wittgenstein to preemptively rule out a private language, the communitarian view renders much subsequent material superfluous, making for an odd reading of the text (Candlish and Wrisley).

Since *PI* appeared in 1953, it has been closely tied to the private language debate. Little consensus on the PLA emerged through the mid-1980s and much attention was devoted explicating what Wittgenstein did *not* intend to say or imply.[41] Although Wittgenstein's interpretation is naturally separate from the truth about private languages, the two have long remained close. Since the 1990s, however, there has been a move towards a more purely scholarly, historical approach to his work. Increasingly, the question of the possibility of a private language has faded from the center of philosophy of mind and language and been replaced with the question, "What did Wittgenstein think about private language?" (Nielsen 155).

[41] Much debate has concerned whether Wittgenstein wished to show that a private language is logically impossible or whether he believed the notion itself to be nonsensical. The former position, associated with orthodox readings, is generally referred to as *substantial* or *non-Pyrhonnian*; under this interpretation Wittgenstein typically assumes a private language to be possible, shows that the assumption leads to absurdities or contradiction and concludes that the assumption must have been false. The latter position, called *resolute* or *Pyrhonnian* based on the idea that Wittgenstein may be writing in the tradition of the ancient Pyrrhonian sceptics who doubted the possibility of philosophy, rejects the idea that there is something we cannot do in philosophy: There is not some limitation on language that bars us from a private language, but rather, the idea itself is simply nonsense. Ultimately this dichotomy itself has been questioned. Fogelin and Stern argue that one need not decide between the two extremes, but may instead view the tension between them as evidence of the author's struggle between being drawn into philosophical positions versus wanting to uncover the 'disguised nonsense' of philosophical theses (Candlish and Wrisley). That said, my own argumentation lies closer to a substantial perspective; I regard the notion of a private language as more impossible than nonsensical and believe that this impossibility can lead to further insights about the nature of language.

One might say there are two types of Wittgensteinians today: Those who discuss his work and those who have internalized some of his distinctive conclusions. Among those who actively discuss him, some ascribe Wittgenstein positive views while others like McGinn attribute to him hostility towards the theory building of traditional philosophy.[42] Still others (such as Hacker and Nielsen) occupy a middle ground, allowing him to offer some clarifications (Nielsen 172-8). There is fairly broad agreement that §243-315 offer mainly negative conclusions about the possibility of a private language.

In the tradition of philosophers concerned with what Wittgenstein thought (as opposed to the truth about private languages), I take Wittgenstein to have argued – loosely, and in a middle ground between positive views and hostility to theory – that a private language is impossible because one cannot make up a term, undertake to use it only with oneself, and have that constitute *language*. This is not because memory fails, nor because use of the word requires outside verification. Rather, private ostension cannot anchor meaning to begin with because words used in language require a supporting grammar.

4. Implications of the PLA for Trauma

In what follows, I map out what I take to be the PLA's implications for trauma. After defining key terms for my argument, I propose that when one cannot speak about trauma, not verbalizing it even to oneself, a problem arises related to the impossibility of a private language.

[42] According to McGinn (1997), Wittgenstein's technique directs us away from speculating about phenomena themselves and towards a concern with the grammar of our concepts. Our psychological concepts may invite a picture of inner versus outer, but Wittgenstein wished to show that the only real distinction lies in the grammar of our concepts (McGinn 148). He believed that we cannot grasp the nature of a psychological state through introspection; rather, clarity is reached through describing the *use of the words*. He uses §244 to show that introspection plays no part in the training we receive with sensation words, but rather, the distinctive *grammar* of psychological concepts reveals the nature of the phenomena they describe. In short, complexity in grammar needs no explanation; *the grammar itself* reveals (McGinn 120-123).

One becomes, in effect, privy to a reality that no one else shares. This state is harmful because it chips away at the very reality of the experience to the point that the individual may feel, appear, and even become crazy.

a. Key Terms: "Unsayable trauma," "less than fully real"

One must distinguish between (1) trauma that it is theoretically *possible* to verbalize because it corresponds readily to existing language games,[43] and (2) trauma that it is *impossible* to verbalize because it cannot be described in any existing language. The second type is, by definition, impossible to directly present on paper in words, and some may question its existence. However, for anyone unwilling to affirm the thesis that language can cover *all* possible human experiences, it follows that *some* experiences may be impossible to verbalize.

By "unsayable trauma," then, I refer to the second case above, in which an individual cannot put a traumatic experience into words because there is no grammar within the language(s) available to him or her that would allow for factual description of or direct reference to the trauma. One could also think *of* a traumatic experience without thinking *words about* it, even develop a verbal shorthand or code for it like "das was geschah" (that which happened); that might lie in a liminal zone toward the unsayable end of the spectrum.

By "less than fully real," I mean that some doubt about basic aspects of an event exists in the mind of the individual who experienced it. This notion enters into philosophical and psychological discussions in different ways.

Philosophically speaking, an individual may be aware that he is not fully sure about some fact. We have language to express positions along the (un)certainty spectrum ranging from 'I

[43] Manners of verbalizing trauma include sharing a (spoken or written) narrative with another person and writing a narrative in a private journal. One could also create a detailed narrative in his head and perhaps habitually tell the story to himself, yet never say or write anything of it, and such an 'inner' narrative would constitute verbalizing the trauma because it puts words and language to the experience.

suspect [x]' and 'I think [x]' to 'I know [x]' and '[x] is true.' Wittgenstein's private language argument is not *primarily* focused on the problem of doubting one's experiences or sensations. However, in the process of showing the disconnect between a private sensation on the one hand and something that can be called language on the other, Wittgenstein creates a scenario of such doubt. At first, the private diarist is confident that he has a particular sensation 'S' and attempts to record it. But there is ultimately no 'criterion of correctness' for his use of the term 'S': "Whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'" (*PI* §258). Thus sensation 'S,' which the private diarist *believes* he has, is impossible to anchor to anyone or anything outside himself. Similarly, in the cases of looking up a train's departure time in an imaginary table (§265) or conducting stress tests on material for a bridge in one's imagination (§267), the individual cannot be certain that the thing in his mind corresponds to any intersubjective reality, making that thing less than fully real.

Psychologically speaking, memories are encoded in varying ways. They may be visual, verbal, physical, olfactory, etc.; they may be lost or recovered over time; they may evolve with processing; they are inherently dynamic and are intimately tied up with subjective perceptions. On the analyst's couch or in everyday life, one may be uncertain about an event, be it traumatic or banal. I am concerned with cases in which a pivotal or defining moment for an individual remains shrouded in doubt; where the individual thinks, feels or suspects there is a *something* (like a sensation 'S' or an imaginary table) but cannot anchor that memory or sense-impression in the realm of intersubjective reality.

To distinguish "unsayable trauma" from "less than fully real," note the difference between (1) being unable to find words for a trauma and (2) doubting the reality of an experience. In the former, basic facts are known to the individual but (s)he lacks the vocabulary

to express them. In the latter, basic facts are in question, and even if the individual can articulate a narrative, it is subject to doubt. The two can come together if, as I discuss below, the impossibility of articulating trauma can lead to doubting its reality.[44]

b. Implications for Trauma

Wittgenstein's PLA tells us that private sensations, though they may exist, cannot be ushered into public language solely via inner ostensive definition if the word has no place in grammar. I wish to apply that notion to a situation in which a person has experienced something both traumatic and unsayable. According to the Augustinian paradigm, the meaning of a word is roughly equal to the object that it stands for in the world. In *PI*, Wittgenstein challenges this view and instead suggesting a picture of language in which the meaning of a word rests in its use. The PLA explores how meaning is tied up with a word's place in language in the case of sensations. Extrapolating to the case of unsayable trauma, a lack of any verbal expression for the trauma would be closely tied to a lack of any structured, normative way of confronting and dealing with said trauma. The inability to speak about a trauma and the inability to make that trauma a locus of communal attention and action are two sides of the same coin.

There is a gap between experiences and memories as they exist in our minds and the *words* in which we render them, whether to broach them with ourselves or to communicate with others. Sometimes that gap is so wide that that it cannot be bridged. Consider the predicament of a woman whose husband violently forces sex on her within a culture in which that is perfectly acceptable; not only is there no term for marital rape, but the very concept itself is lacking. A literary parallel may be found in Bachmann's *Todesarten*, where women like Franza and the

[44] A causal arrow could also go in the opposite direction, such that doubting the reality of a traumatic experience leads to it not being verbalized. However, this is not my concern as regards the implications of the PLA for trauma.

narrator of *Malina* are destroyed and indeed murdered in plain sight because no one recognizes the abuses. If such a women wants to talk or even think about her trauma, she runs up against a problem of language: There is no word for her experience. Perhaps she can invent a word and mentally match it to her pain. But that word would have no grammar, so inwardly pointing and naming would not establish a definition (in accordance with my own, Kenny's, and McGinn's reading of §258). As with consulting an imaginary timetable (§265), she could not be certain that the notion in her mind corresponds to any intersubjective reality. This could conceivably worsen her predicament because although she could not bridge the gap between her experience and public language, the trauma would still give rise to thoughts, feelings, memories, perhaps symptoms. It would float in her memory, connected to nothing yet coloring everything. She might eventually start to feel crazy by virtue of having no one who shared her worldview.

"Crazy" is a term used to label people who see things others do not, who acts in ways others do not understand, or who make connections that appear ungrounded in reality. One way to regard the proverbial thin line between genius and insanity is that geniuses make connections most people would not think to make but which are borne out as valid, while insane people see things that cannot be corroborated by others as real. In a sense, "crazy" people are privy to a private reality not admissible in public discourse.

To be an accepted participant in a society's language game – to be deemed a competent and sane player – one must employ recognizable uses of language. (The term 'recognizable' includes innovative uses of language and narrative; novel formulations that nonetheless register as meaningful to the listener or reader because they play on existing language games.) Wittgenstein's picture of the private diarist who cannot bring his sensation into language has implications for trauma that cannot be grounded in intersubjective reality: The absence of

language as a tool to approach and make sense of the trauma one has experienced compounds the trauma. While not every act of narrating trauma need be therapeutic), the impossibility of articulating trauma is itself traumatic.

III. BACKGROUND AND APPROACH TO INGEBORG BACHMANN

This chapter first provides a narrative of Bachmann's life with a focus on the role of trauma in her personal, intellectual and creative development. It then lay out my approach to the relationship between language, trauma and silence in *Malina* and discusses how the multiplicity of genres in the novel serves to express information impossible to convey in traditional narrative modes.

A. Biographical Background

In the following, I focus on trauma as a formative force in Bachmann's personal experience and intellectual development.[45] Bachmann's reception has admittedly suffered from the tendency to sentimentalize female authors and read their works as autobiographical 'confessions.' To avoid the pitfall (endemic in contemporary reviews of her work) of merely drawing connections between her writing and personal life while ignoring the political and cultural forces she is critiquing (see Achberger 3), I situate my narrative within the larger historical traumas Bachmann experienced and sought to address.

Ingeborg Bachmann was born on June 25, 1926 in Klagenfurt, near the Slovenian border and the triangle where Yugoslavia, Austria and Italy met. She grew up aware of converging borders between languages, cultures and identities. She was was gifted with languages and learned Latin, English and French in school and Italian at home from her father (the nurturing

[45] I speak of Bachmann's 'development' half earnestly and half tongue-in-cheek. Bachmann disliked biographical questions (see Weigel 296-300) and *Malina* wryly parodies a journalistic interview in which one Herr Mühlbauer ask the narrator banal questions about 'her development.' As Weigel, cautions, author biographies relying on a convenient circular explanatory relationship between biography and work, whereby literary passages are enlisted to fill in gaps in the author's experience and biographical facts are employed to resolve riddles in literary texts, should be viewed as suspect (Weigel 297).

father and Nazi father thus intertwine). Her early encounter with multiple languages laid the foundation for a lifelong fascination with the nature of words and the limits of language in addressing trauma. Code-switching appears occasionally in *Malina* and extensively in "Simultan" ("Word for Word"; 1972), a story about a simultaneous interpreter who is fluent in seven languages but cannot express *herself* in any of them.

The cultural rifts of the region and the remnants of Nazi racial ideology are reflected in the *Franza* fragment as the eponymous protagonist applies the notion of an 'inferior race' to herself. Franza is of Slovenian background, the Slavs having been an oppressed minority in Austria and considered racially inferior by Nazi racial theorists such as Hans Günther, author of the widely distributed *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (1922). Bachmann's later fascination with liminal phenomena – the boundaries of logic, the limits of language, the bounds of society, and whether love can exist outside those limits – may have its roots in this setting, which she fictionalized in her story "Jugend in einer österreichen Stadt*"* ("Youth in an Austrian Town"; 1961; hereafter "Jugend").

The anonymous narrator of "Jugend," looks back on growing up in a war-torn town and coldly lists traumatic events like bombings and deaths with seeming detachment; this was not a happy childhood. Much remains unknown about Bachmann's own early years; she kept her personal life private and rarely spoke about her childhood.[46] Her friends and associates likewise guarded her personal information. Her family has kept a tight rein on her *Nachlass* (literary estate), perhaps because her personal papers would reveal unflattering details about Bachmann and/or her family.

[46] She did draft a *Versuch einer Autobiographie* (*Attempt at an Autobiography*) around 1960 which she broke off and never published. According to Weigel, while her goal at the time may have been to shore up her then-modest oeuvre with a weighty intellectual biography, many scholars today use the draft to draw holistic conclusions about her work based on a presumed overarching Identity of 'the Author' (see Weigel 297).

Bachmann's father, Matthias Bachmann, was a schoolteacher and World War I veteran, and later a supporter and member of the National Socialist party. Her mother, Olga Bachmann née Haas, shared her husband's propensities. Scholars have often attempted to identify some early childhood trauma that would explain the pain emanating from Bachmann's work, but lack a reliable window into her early years.[47] Bachmann's two younger siblings have maintained that their home was happy and loving, and Bachmann did exchange caring letters with her family throughout her life. The siblings' bright account, however, contrasts with the cold and loveless fictional home in "Jugend."

The discrepancy may arise from the horror of finding out that one's parents supported a genocidal regime, a dilemma faced by the German and Austrian postwar generations. Silence, denial and defending Nazi family members on the one hand, and outrage, grief and the desire to do penance on the other, were typical reactions among Nazi children.[48] The confrontation with the truth, often followed by the strain of keeping up a 'normal' relationship with older family members, constituted a major trauma for Bachmann and most of her generation. Viewed in this light, Bachmann's letters and visits to her parents may have been attempts to hide an unpleasant truth from the public and even herself.

Bachmann was not quite twelve years old in 1938 when the annexation of Austria by the Third Reich brought the systematic Nazification of Austria's political, civic, social and

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[47] Brigitte Dennemarck-Jäger's 2008 study of *Malina* contends that while the narrator's pain is frequently generalized to represent all women suffering under patriarchal power structures, perhaps we should take the novel's incest and abuse as pertaining more concretely to sexual trauma. Dennemarck-Jäger, a trauma therapist by training, goes out on a limb with her clinical 'diagnosis' of Bachmann as someone who suffered an early trauma and used her art to help her process it (see for example 178). However, she readily concedes that Bachmann's own experience with incest or other traumas cannot be known, and her stated goal of juxtaposing trauma research with Bachmann's literary production is a worthy one.

[48] This topic is treated in Peter Sichrovsky's *Schuldig geboren: Kinder aus Nazifamilien* (*Born Guilty: Children of Nazi Families*; 1987) and lampooned in several essays in Hendryk Broder's *Jedem das Seine* (*To Each His Own*; 1999).

educational structures. Bachmann, followed by many of her biographers, emphasized her horror at seeing Hitler's troops march into Klagenfurt and shattering her peaceful Carinthia.[49] In fact, Carinthia was a mainstay of Austrian Fascism and Nazism (and would later be the seat of power for Jörg Haider). Bachmann was old enough to realize a war was going on, but the real trauma may have come later when she grasped her own position on the perpetrator side and was confronted with the victim experience, most immediately by meeting the British soldier and former Austrian Jewish child refugee Jack Hamesh.

Bachmann (similar to Ilse Aichinger) had begun writing during the war years, producing a historical drama, a novella and several poems, and she received support and mentoring from the author Josef Friedrich Perkonig whose Nazi sympathies were well known.[50] Her father had joined the Nazi party in the early 1930s when it was still outlawed in Austria and volunteered for military service immediately after the Anschluss in 1939 (Brockman 183).[51] Accepting support from Perkonig and her father's joining the Nazi forces must have been painful to reconcile as details of the war and the Holocaust emerged. Her romance with Jack Hamesh and later

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[49] Bachmann's description in a 1973 interview of her horror at Hitler's invasion has been problematized because it appears that she was not actually in Klagenfurt when Nazi troops first marched in on March 12, 1938. It may of course be pointed out that the revelry carried on for weeks, that Hitler himself visited Klagenfurt on April 5 (Höller 18), and that the young Bachmann would have had ample opportunity in the following months and years to see Nazi troops. The memory may thus retain its validity as a traumatic caesura marking the end of her childhood and a collective or national innocence (Weigel 317). However, the broad reception of this anecdote among scholars has served as an overly pat explanation for the trauma present in Bachmann's work. As Dennemarck-Jäger quips: "The circle of [Bachmann] interpreters appear to be grateful for the fact that that Bachmann herself provided an explanation for her fears, an explanation no one need challenge. Because it lies in her individual experience, to be sure, but is also an expression of a collective fate shared with her contemporaries" (Dennemarck-Jäger 171, my translation).

[50] Perkonig enthusiastically supported the Anschluss through propaganda. His name appears in *Briefe an Felician* in the role of a mentor, confidante, and at times love object. Bachmann later distanced herself from him and was content to let their association be forgotten. This distance later allowed critics to read Bachmann's *Kriegstagebuch* (war diary), early texts and interviews as attesting to her early rejection of Nazism.

[51] Matthias Bachmann is often assumed based on Bachmann's fictional writings to have been a sadistic 'Nazi father.' Stoll presents a more sympathetic portrait, noting that in letters he was able to send home from the front through unofficial and hence uncensored channels, he expressed doubts about the regime (see Stoll 2013, 47, 61). Both may be right; the role of father and provider and that of Nazi operative are different but not mutually exclusive, and one is no less true than the other.

entanglements with Jewish survivors and exiles faltered because of the partners' divergent memory narratives and experiential outlooks, which are already apparent in her assessments of Hamesh in her *Kriegstagebuch* (war diary) and in the letters he wrote her.

Following Klagenfurt's liberation, Hamesh had interviewed the eighteen-year-old Bachmann about her involvement in the Bund Deutscher Mädel (girls' Hitler Youth). Like Aichinger's sister Helga, Hamesh (*ca 1920) had escaped Vienna in 1938 on a *Kindertransport* to England and changed his birth name of Jakob Fünfer. His family was killed in the Holocaust. Bachmann and Hamesh discovered a mutual passion for literature, he began visiting the Bachmann household, and the unlikely pair was often seen around town together. This created an uncomfortable situation given the political leanings of her parents and prevailing social attitudes in Carinthia. Bachmann wrote in her journal:

> Alle reden über mich, und natürlich auch die ganze Verwandschaft. 'Sie geht mit dem Juden.' Und die Muttis ist natürlich ganz nervös wegen dem Tratsch, und sie kanns ja gar nicht verstehen, was für mich alles bedeutet! (*KTB* 22)
>
> Everyone's talking about me, including all our relations, of course. 'She's going out with the Jew.' And naturally Mummy's quite worried because of all the gossip, she just can't understand what it all means to me! (*KTBM* 15-16)

They continued to exchange letters but, only Hamesh's letters are extant. Bachmann does not seem to have written a great deal over the following two years as she moved to Vienna and he to Palestine.[52] Hamesh represents a formative and traumatic encounter with the victim experience of the Holocaust. His letters suggest that the past was a strained and painful topic between them: "sehr selten hast Du mir etwas von Deiner Vergangenheit erzählt und auch ich war nicht allzu

[52] The *Franza* fragment contains a character much like Hamesh – a seemingly kind and benevolent British soldier who arrives after the war and captivates the teenage Franza's romantic imagination. However, he is named Percival Glyde after a nefarious villain in Wilkie Collins' Victorian detective thriller *The Lady in White*, making for a nuanced intertextual reading of gender relations in the story (see Schlipphacke 37-64; Lennox 2006, 223-238).

gesprächig" (16. June, 1946, *KTB* 30) ("you only rarely told me something of your past and I wasn't all that communicative either"; *KTBM* 26). Hamesh further hints at a utopian love made impossible by the actual circumstances of their lives: "Wie glücklich war ich als ich mit Dir zusammen sein konnte, damals als Du noch bei Denen lieben Eltern warst, in Deinem schönem Zimmer, damals hast Du von all der schrecklichen Wirklichkeit noch nichts gewusst" (1. Nov., 1946, *KTB* 45) ("How happy I was when I could be together with you, at the time when you were still living with your dear parents, in your lovely room, at the time when you still knew nothing of all the terrible reality"; *KTBM* 41). The relationship was highly symbolic for both; Bachmann's war diary emphasizes his Jewish identity, and his letters to her load their encounter with the weight of the Holocaust.[53] The final letters show Hamesh still feeling alone, struggling to make his new life, and coming to terms with the love Bachmann could not give him. Here, as in later situations, one sees a story of two incompatibly traumatized individuals. Tumultuous relationships with victims of Nazi persecution became a recurring theme in Bachmann's life as they did in her writing, like a persistent return to a traumatic wound.[54]

Bachmann departed in 1945 to study philosophy in Innsbruck, Graz, and finally at the University of Vienna in fall 1946. The presence of the old Nazi guard and the influx of returning exiles and former victims made for a disturbing and tense environment. She received her doctorate in 1950 with a dissertation titled "The critical reception of the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger" while, just as she graduated, Heidegger was being reinstated at

[53] Hamesh writes of their time together: "für mich war es kein blosses Zusammenentreffen, für mich war es ein Beweis dass trotz allem was auch über unseren beiden Völker hereinbrach noch ein Weg gibt – den der Liebe und des Verständnisses" (1. Nov., 1946, *KTB* 52) ("For me it was proof that despite everything that has overtaken our two peoples there is still a way – the way of love and understanding; *KTBM* 47-8).

[54] Bachmann went on to have romantic relationships Hans Weigel and Paul Celan. As Sigrid Weigel notes, she was likely both positioning herself and processing her and her family's past through her close association with these Jewish colleagues (see Weigel 476-8).

Freiburg University. Bachmann considered his philosophy tainted by his support for the Nazi regime, which he had never seen fit to revisit or retract. She was not alone in this; the debate on Heidegger's Nazi affinities continues in current historical, philosophical and public discourses. Bachmann positioned herself against him in her dissertation, and a hostility to 'German metaphysics' permeates her subsequent philosophical writings and later interviews. The growing vehemence in her statements over time[55] reveals anger and contempt that she was not free to voice as a Ph.D. candidate or young author, suggesting that the inability to speak out about systemic injustices left a traumatic mark.

Whereas Heidegger was bound up with National Socialism, Bachmann found in Wittgenstein a kind of counter-figure. Her radio play notes that he fled Austrian in 1938 due to "racial reasons" (Bachmann 1978a 121), implicitly positioning the philosopher with three Jewish grandparents among the victim collective. Bachmann 'discovered'[56] him while a student, and her interest grew into a 1953 essay[57] and radio essay.[58] Her personal library contained copies of

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[55] In 1959 Martin Heidegger asked Paul Celan and Ingeborg Bachmann to contribute poems to a commemorative publication for his 70th birthday. Bachmann recounts in a 1973 interview: "wir haben beide nein gesagt. Denn ich kenne die Rektoratsrede von Heidegger, und selbst wenn es diese Rektoratsrede nicht gäbe, so wäre da noch immer etwas, es liegt eine Verführung eben wieder zum deutschen Irrationaldenken vor" / "We both said no. Because I know the rectorate speech, and even if there were no rectorate speech, there would always still be a latent seduction to German irrational thinking" (*GuI* 137). Nearly 25 years after her dissertation, Bachmann thus stood by her antipathy towards Heidegger "because she could not ignore the political corruption of the philosopher" (Höller 68). According to Gehle, her mention of the rectorate speech and use of Celan's name constitute an important reference to the complex of "National Socialist violence, Heidegger's involvement therein, his silence about it into the present, [and] his continued engagement with irrational German metaphysics" (Gehle 243).

[56] Bachmann describes in a 1973 interview: "Ich habe damals in Wein studiert. Diese ganze Literatur war natürlich verbrannt von den Nazis, und ein Bibliothekar hat mich dann in die Keller – Sie wissen ja, Wien ist unterkellert – unsere Nationalbibliothek geführt. Es war kein Professor, niemand hat mich dazu gebracht, sondern ich habe selbst herumgesucht, ich habe diese Buch gefunden, das heißt, ich habe es nicht entdeckt, in England hat man ja Wittgenstein schon längst gekannt, aber für uns war er ganz neu." / "I was studying in Vienna at the time. All this literature had naturally been burned by the Nazis, and a librarian led me down into the basement – as you know Vienna is full of cellars – of our national library. It wasn't a professor, no one led me to it, rather I looked around myself, I found this book. I mean, I didn't discover it, Wittgenstein was already well-known in England, but for us he was completely new." (*GuI* 135, my translation)

[57] "Ludwig Wittgenstein – Zu einem Kapitel der jüngsten Philosophiegeschichte" ("Ludwig Wittgenstein – on the Latest Chapter in Philosophy"). First appeared in *Frankfurter Heften* in July 1953.

[58] "Sagbares und Unsagbares – Die Philosophie Ludwig Wittgensteins" ("Sayable and Unsayable – The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein"). Broadcast by Bayerische Rundfunk on September 16, 1954. A radio script titled "Der

his major works, and she continued to return to his ideas long after setting aside academic writing. Wittgenstein's philosophy along with his Jewish background probably combined to make him such an appealing figure for Bachmann; she viewed his ideas as a bastion against fascism and 'German metaphysics' (code for Heidegger and his Nazi leanings), and he stood against Heidegger and all that Heidegger represented in her (and Celan's) mind.[59] Her attraction to Wittgenstein and other Jewish intellectuals forms part of a pattern of affinities that helped distance her from her family origins.

In Vienna, Bachmann began attending gatherings of authors and intellectuals in Café Raimund, where a nascent post-war literary scene had begun to coalesce around the newly returned Austrian-Jewish writer and critic Hans Weigel. Bizarrely, formerly persecuted writers sat side by side with those who had cooperated with the Nazi regime; a scenario she would later fictionalize in her 1961 short story *Unter Mördern und Irren* (Stoll 2013, 81-6). The young philosophy student and writer had a sharp intellect which, uncurbed and in a woman, made waves with the more conservative members of circle, some of them former Nazi party members like Alexander Lernet-Holenia and Heimito von Doderer.

Though Bachmann gained access to the café scene, it was an old boys' club. Like other aspiring writers, she fell into a relationship with the older, influential Hans Weigel, who published the literary series *Junge österreichische Autoren* (Ed. Hans Weigel, Jungbrunnen Verlag, Wien, 1951) and was involved with the leading Austrian literary journals of the postwar

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Wiener Kreis" ("The Vienna Circle") was also broadcast by Hessischen Rundfunk on April 14, 1953 (Stoll 2013, 159).

[59] In her 1953 essay and radio essay, Bachmann would continue to employ Wittgenstein in her critique of Heidegger. She characterizes Wittgenstein's position as *metaphysikfeindlich* (hostile to metaphysics) and writes that to speak of the "sense" of being is impossible according to Wittgenstein's theses. The first speaker in the play, ostensibly articulating a correct view, explains that Wittgenstein's positive silence leaves a space that is "once again open for authentic belief content. Certainly, there is no more place is for the fight of the occidental metaphysics" (Bachmann 1978a 125). Heidegger is the unnamed but clear target of these remarks.

era. His ability to promote her work and connect her with authors and publishers proved important in Vienna's insular, connection-based postwar literary scene. This patronage system involving young female authors and older men was likely traumatic for Bachmann. The asymmetrical power dynamic is mirrored in the relationship between Franza and Leo Jordan in her *Franza* fragment. Weigel fictionalized his relationship with Bachmann in his 1951 novel *Unvollendete Symphonie* – not the last time a male lover and writer would exploit her for his own literary ends.[60] Bachmann issued a subtle yet forceful response to this situation her short story "Undine geht" ("Undine goes"; 1961), using the name Hans to refer to all men who disappoint and betray the water nymph Undine.[61] According to Weigel's novel, their relationship deteriorated because of his wandering eye; however, as Stoll paints it, when he wanted to get more serious, Bachmann pulled back.[62] Bachmann met Paul Celan in May 1948, and Weigel married actress Elvira Hofer in 1951. Weigel later lived with the actress Elfriede Ott and married her a few months before his death in 1991.

Celan, a Romanian-born Jewish poet and Holocaust survivor, wrote in German as his literary language. While it was the language of the perpetrators of the Holocaust, German was also literally his mother tongue; his mother, a member of the educated class of German-speaking Jews in the Austro-Hungarian empire, had raised him with German as the lofty language of literature and culture. His and Bachmann's relationship was burdened from the start by the

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[60] Weigel's account plays up Bachmann's fascination with his experience as a Jew. At other times, however, Weigel sought to distance himself from his roots, and he was considered by some to be a self-hating Jew.

[61] The word *Bach* (a stream or brook) perhaps ties Bachmann's name to the water nymph motif.

[62] Stoll's description of Bachmann's evasive tactics recalls the narrator's behavior in *Malina*: "Dem dominierenden Weigel gegenüber entwickelte sie ein Verhaltensmuster, das sie in den kommenden Jahren weiterentwickeln und zur Verzweiflung ihrer Freunde und Lebensgefährten perfektionieren würde. Sie wurde krank oder täuschte Krankheiten und Unpässlichkeiten vor, kündigte Verabredungen in letzter Minute auf und ließ sich dabei nie in die Karten blicken" ("She developed a pattern of behavior towards the dominating Weigel that she would elaborate and perfect in the years to come, much to the distress of her friends and life companions. She got sick or feigned illnesses and indispositions, canceled meetings at the last minute, and always kept her cards close") (Stoll 2013, 84).

weight of the Holocaust; the first poem Celan wrote and dedicated to her "In Ägypten" ("In Egypt") conjures the ghosts of Jewish women murdered in the Holocaust as the speaker, a surviving man, lies with "der Fremden," the stranger or other – or in Yiddish terms, a 'goy'. Celan was haunted by the past in ways that were foreign to Bachmann and that Hamesh had been too discreet to fully articulate. He had ambivalent feelings toward her since she could only incompletely relate to him. Bachmann's relationships with Jewish men must also be viewed in the context of the 'negative symbiosis' described by Arendt and Diner between Germans and Jews after Auschwitz. The two groups' mutually constitutive negative identities partly explain the efforts of many post-Holocaust authors, intellectuals and everyday Germans to distance themselves from the Nazi past by converting to Judaism, marrying Jewish partners, and/or moving to Israel.[63]

After a few intense weeks in Vienna that would remain a figure and cipher throughout their exchanges, Celan departed for Paris. Bachmann continued working on her doctorate and began her unfinished novel *Stadt ohne Namen*. After recovering from a nervous breakdown in July 1950,[64] Bachmann went to see Celan in Paris in October. Their letters suggest that this much-anticipated visit was a difficult one. In December Bachmann departed for London, where she stayed with Ilse Aichinger's twin sister Helga Michie and met Hilde Spiel, Erich Fried and Elias Canetti. If she perhaps sought to bridge the gulf between herself and the collective of Nazi

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[63] See for example:

Berger and Berger, Eds. *Second Generation Voices: Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 2001.

Udasin, Sharon. "For German Converts, A New Home for the Soul." *The New York Jewish Week*, 4/13/09. Web. http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/international-news/german-converts-new-home-soul (accessed 12/22/16)

Gold, Tanya. "The Sins of their Fathers." The Guardian, 5/8/08. Web. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/06/judaism.secondworldwar (accessed 12/22/16)

[64] Bachmann writes of a complete and crippling breakdown in a letter to her parents on 16. July, 1950 and later to Celan on 6. September, 1950. She was treated by Viennese psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, a friend of Hans Weigel (*HZ* letter 12 and notes).

victims, foremost Celan, by connecting with exiles and survivors of Nazi persecution, it did not work; a second visit with Celan in early 1951 did not resolve any conflicts (Stoll 2013, 109). The turbulent letters were finally published in 2008 and attest to the profound turmoil the relationship caused both partners. Bachmann writes, for example:

> Ich sehne mich so, so sehr nach dir und ich bin manchmal fast krank davon und wünsche mir nur, Dich wiederzusehen, irgendwo, aber nicht irgendwann, sondern bald. Aber wenn ich mir vorzustellen versuche, wie und was Du mir darauf antworten könntest, wird es sehr dunkel, es stellen sich die alten Missverständnisse ein, die ich so gerne wegräumen möchte. (Vienna June 27, 1951; *HZ* letter 18.3, p. 24)

> I long for you so much, so very much, and sometimes it almost makes me ill and all I wish for is to see you again, somewhere – not some time, but soon. Yet if I try to imagine how and what you might reply, things become very dark, and the old misunderstandings that I would so like to do away with come back again. (Vienna, June 27, 1951; *HZH* letter 18.3, p. 28)

> ich weiss, dass Du mich verabscheust und das Du mir zutiefst misstraust, und ich bedaure Dich – den ich habe zu Deinem Misstrauen kenen Zugang – und werde es nie verstehen – ich bedaure Dich, weil Du, um eine Enttäuschung zu verwinden, den anderen, der Dir diese Enttäuschung gebracht hat, so sehr vor Dir und den anderen zerstören musst. / Dass ich Dich dennoch liebe, ist seitdem meine Sache geworden. (Vienna, September 25, 1951, not sent; *HZ* letter 23, p. 33)

> I know that you despise me and that you harbor profound suspicion towards me, and I feel sorry for you – for I have no access to your suspicion – and I will never understand it – I feel sorry for you because, in order to cope with a disappointment, you are compelled to destroy the other, the one who caused this disappointment, so thoroughly before your own eyes and those of the others. / Since then, the fact that I love you all the same has become my business. (Vienna, September 25, 1951, not sent; *HZH*, letter 23, p. 39)

Their letters, punctuated by love alternating with silence, misunderstandings, accusations, and cautious politeness, bespeak an overwhelming mutual attraction, despite or because of which they never achieved a stable existence as lovers or friends.

Celan married French artist Gisèle Lestrange in 1952 and they had two sons together, one of whom died at birth. He and Bachmann briefly resumed their affair in 1957, but agreed to break up for the sake of his family. Claire Goll's accusations that Celan had plagiarized the

work of her husband Yvan Goll, whose work Celan had translated, took a toll on Celan's mental health, which was already tenuous from his Holocaust traumas. During the last decade of his life, he underwent repeated stays in psychiatric clinics, at times lived apart from his wife and son, and made a suicide attempt by stabbing himself in 1967. Celan drowned himself on April 20, 1970 in the Seine River and his body was found two weeks later. For Bachmann, his suicide was a traumatic blow that is coded quietly into the *Franza* fragment[65] and key passages in *Malina*. The legend of the Princess of Kagran[66] contains intertextualities with and references to Celan. The Kagran legend was sent to the publisher after Celan's death and after the bulk of the manuscript had already been submitted, suggesting that it was part of Bachmann's processing of Celan's death (see Weigel 412).

In spring 1951, having completed her doctorate, Bachmann began working for the American broadcaster Rot-Weiß-Rot editing scripts. There she wrote an essay and radio essay on Wittgenstein discussing ideas from his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and newly published *Investigations*.[67] In her dissertation, Bachmann had already taken a critical stance against Heidegger's metaphysics and used Wittgenstein in part to refute him. Her essay and radio essay

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[65] Franza throws herself into a shallow river in Galicia. After she is rescued by some passers-by, there is a veiled reference to Celan's drowning in the Seine: "es war nichts mit In-den-Fluß-Springen, hier waren keine Seinebrücken und nichts, was sich zu dramatischen Stürzen eignete" (Bachmann 1978a, 394) / "It had nothing to do with jumping in the river, there were no Seine River bridges here and nothing suited to dramatic plunges" (my translation).

[66] Kagran, a district of modern-day Vienna, is also mentioned in Joseph Roth's ironic fairy tale *The Tale of the 1002nd Night* (Krylova 171). In Roth's novel, it is the site of a women's penitentiary.

[67] Although Wittgenstein's thought was (and often still is) divided into 'early' and 'late,' Bachmann's essays argue for a continuity throughout his work. That she went against the prevailing view – and did so no less with a position that would occupy Wittgenstein scholars decades later – illustrates the extent to which she authentically engaged with his work and formulated her own opinions. The radio essay is also a clear intellectual precursor to her later literary production: It explores the limits of logic and language, highlighting the idea in *Tractatus* that language is a logical from and cannot talk about itself. It explains that *Investigations* offers a different yet related answer to the problems of language, for language 'lives and breathes' in natural use. It cites images from *Investigations* that reappear throughout Bachmann's oeuvre such as language as labyrinth, philosophy as therapy, multiplicity of meanings, and the notion of the mystical. See also Lennox 2006, 207-208.

continued this fight, taking aim at Heideggerian terms and concepts[68] as if still shadow-boxing with her origins. Bachmann's writings on Heidegger and Wittgenstein – philosophical discussions of intellectuals from the former 'victim' and 'perpetrator' collectives – represent the scholarly working through of a trauma that began with finding out her parents and mentors had been Nazis. The confusion and pain are transposed into philosophical writings that grapple with ghosts of the past between the lines.

While working for Rot-Weiß-Rot, Bachmann made the acquaintance of Hans Werner Richter, organizer of the West German literary association *Gruppe 47*. Thanks to Richter, she secured invitations for herself and Celan to the group meeting. In 1952, Bachmann, Celan and Aichinger held their debut readings with *Gruppe 47*, making a splash in the literary world. Celan's reading of "Todesfuge" received a cool if not indeed hostile and cruel reception from the group, which included former Wehrmacht and Hitler Youth members; he never attended another meeting.[69] That year Aichinger won the group's prize for her short story "Spiegelgeschichte," which avoids allusion to Holocaust. The following year Bachmann won the prize for her poems in *Die gestundete Zeit* (*Mortgaged Time*, 1953), whose critical undertones were ignored.[70] Thanks in part to the *Gruppe 47* prize, Bachmann became one of the most celebrated voices in West German poetry in the 1950s. However, the memory contests made for a tense

[68] "To speak of the 'sense' of being is impossible according to Wittgenstein's theses," she writes in the play. This is because for the neopositivists, all questions must be sensibly formulated; if they are not, "it is fundamentally impossible for a sensible answer to be given" (Bachmann 1978a 111-114). Implicitly, the questions of Heidegger's metaphysics were not sensibly formulated and could therefore yield only pseudo-answers.

[69] Celan read his poems "Todesfüge" and "In Ägypten," which no doubt had a disquieting effect on the former Wehrmacht solders in the crowd. Hans Werner Richter caused a storm by saying that Celan's sing-songy manner of reading reminded him of Joseph Goebbels. Celan, whose parents had been murdered by the SS, was deeply upset, as were Bachmann and Achinger (Stoll 2013, 119).

[70] Höller has argued that the title poem of *Die Gestundete Zeit* should be regarded as a *Todesarten* poem. Though contemporary critics ignored the latent social critique, instead lauding Bachmann's language, the poem is about the death and silencing of a woman and a war surreptitiously carried out in peacetime (see Höller 73-80).

environment, and Bachmann may have harbored guilt over inviting Celan into the lions' den where she benefited from the group's acclaim.

In October 1952 Bachmann met the German composer Hans Werner Henze at a meeting of *Gruppe 47* and appeared to have found in him an intellectual and musical soulmate. Like many of her key relationships, however, Henze may also be mapped out vis à vis the trauma of her encounter with Nazi crimes. He shared her experiences with fascism, having grown up with a Nazi father who made sure his sons were enrolled in the Hitler Youth (a hostile setting for a young gay man with artistic leanings). The pair spent months at a time living and working together,[71] exchanged letters in an animated banter across four languages, and even considered marriage (though the latter became a point of stress for their relationship). Henze was gay; later in life openly so with his companion of five decades, Fausto Moroni, with whom he lived in Italy.

The mid-1950s were productive years for Bachmann. In addition to poetry, radio plays and musical collaborations, she penned essays on philosophy, culture, music and art, and her second poetry collection (*Anrufung des Großen Bären* / *Invocation of the Great Bear*, 1956) garnered high accolades. At the same time, her geographic whereabouts begin to suggest a restlessness and inability to settle down. During 1955-57 she spent time in Vienna, Rome (captured in her 1955 essay, "Was ich in Rom sah und hörte"), the United States (to teach at Harvard), Klagenfurt (to recover from an illness), Paris, Naples (with Henze), Ischia, Venice, Klagenfurt again (where another illness put her in the hospital), Berlin, and once more Rome. She went to Munich in November 1957 to take a position as a dramaturg with Bayrische Rundfunk, but did not stay for the contracted year because she met Max Frisch (Höller 103-7).

[71] Their collaborations include *Der Prinz von Homburg* (1950), *Der Idiot* (1952), the radio play *Die Zikaden* (1955); *Serenades and Arias* (1957), *Lieder von einer Insel* (1964) and *Der junge Lord* (1964).

Bachmann's radio play "Der Gute Gott von Manhattan," broadcast in May 1958, won her the *Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden* (War-Blinded Audio Play Prize) and the attention of Swiss author Max Frisch. He wrote Bachmann of his enthusiasm and their first meeting took place in Paris, where Frisch had two theater pieces premiering. On the day they met – July 3, 1958[72] – Frisch was apparently so smitten that instead of attending his own premiere, he went to dinner with her. A week later they met again in Zurich, already as a couple (Stoll 2013, 206-7).

Their relationship contained incompatibilities from the start. Frisch used language in a straightforward way in the spirit of *Gruppe 47*. It was a tool for realism and recording experiences that he seemed to trust as unproblematic. To the contrary, for Bachmann, Celan and Aichinger, language problematic and a topic in and of itself. Bachmann perennially reflected on the nature of language as she grappled with Heidegger, Adorno, Wittgenstein and Benjamin. Frisch's ego had fragile spots that were exacerbated by Bachmann's success, and their relationship was plagued by spates of insecurity and jealousy on both sides. Bachmann did make compromises she had never made before, such as moving to Zurich and attempting to lead a domestic life. Yet when he wrote her in early 1959 proposing marriage, she did not respond (Stoll 2013, 208-220).

Bachmann's productivity continued. In 1959 she was invited to give the Frankfurt lectures on poetics. In 1961 she completed her short story collection *Das Dreißigste Jahr* (published to mixed reviews), and expanded her circle of friends and correspondents to include Theodor Adorno, Gershon Sholem, Ernst Bloch and Hannah Arendt (Weigel 88). Especially in

[72] This date is mentioned by the narrator of *Malina*: "es ist ein leerer oder ausgeraubter Tag, an dem ich älter geworden bin, an dem ich mich nicht gewehrt habe und etwas geschehen ließ" " (*IBM* 589) / "an empty or robbed day, on which I grew older, on which I did not defend myself and allowed something to happen (*IBMB* 168) (Höller 254-5). September 19, a date ostensibly corresponding to their breakup in 1962, is also found in the novel: The Ich-figure recounts to Malina a dream in which her father gives her a ring and she throws it into the Danube on that date (*IBM* 549/ *IBMB* 145).

Adorno's grappling with the Shoah and his social criticism, Bachmann found a kind of theoretical counterpart to her poetic work and there are parallels between her *Todesarten* project and Adorno's statements on the survival of National Socialism into the present.[73]

In September 1962, Frisch informed Bachmann that he had fallen in love with Marianne Oellens, a student many years his junior, whom he later married. Bachmann described their breakup in a letter to Henze as "die größte Niederlage meines Lebens" ("the greatest defeat of my life") (Stoll 2013, 249). She felt further betrayed when Frisch exposed thinly fictionalized details of their relationship in his novel *Mein Name sei Gantenbein* (1964)[74] – a violation that continued after her death in his autobiographical work *Montauk* (1975). Frisch exemplifies a pattern of betrayal and exploitation that contributed to Bachmann's personal traumata. This pattern of betrayal began on the social level with her Nazi upbringing, with which she was confronted after the war. It continued on the personal level in exploitative relationships with womanizers who married other women after using her as a 'muse' for their books, much the way the fictional Leopold Jordan exploited concentration camp prisoners as material for his research and later used his wife Franza as a psychological case study. The *Todesarten* texts contain Bachmann's literary reaction to the violations she experienced at the hands of male predators. In *Requiem for Fanny Goldmann* a woman has an affair with an author who exposes and dissects

[73] See for example Stoll 2013, 225-6; Lennox 2007, 116. Bachmann also took up ideas from Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialektik der Ausklärung* (1947) in her 1949 short story "Das Lächeln der Sphinx"; see Weigel 74-81.

[74] Bachmann opened up about this trauma to Adolf Opel in 1964 during a 2-day boat trip on the Nile. Opel's journal describes how what she had only vaguely alluded to as a 'destruction' and 'catastrophe' finally emerged as a betrayal by Frisch. She had just seen the proofs for his novel and was appalled: Her former lover had abused her as an object of study, shamed and dissected her, made her into a case study, and violated every part of her body (see Stoll 2013, 276; Opel 167-171).

her in his fiction (a variation on the *Franza* theme), and *Malina* contains coded references to the relationship with Frisch.[75]

Following their break-up, Bachmann spent time in and out of mental hospitals in Zurich and Berlin trying to overcome addictions to alcohol and prescription drugs. Addiction, often a reaction to trauma, causes new traumas of its own as it wreaks havoc on the addict's outer and inner life. Addiction and illness become increasingly prominent themes in Bachmann's work, starting with *Ein Ort für Zufälle* (*A Place for Coincides*, 1965) and continuing with the *Todesarten* texts. Her unflinching portrayals of sickness, madness and violent emotional dependency parallel an emerging trend in 1960s Western literature. In America, it was the era of sex, drugs, Rock 'n Roll, and the Beat Generation. In early 1960s Germany and Austria, authors developed an aggressive language to critique reactionary post-war relations; consider Thomas Bernhard's *Frost* (1963), Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* (1964), and Edgar Hilsenrath's *Nacht* (1964). A new, striking and belligerent tone can also be noted in Celan's poem "Huhediblu" (1963) (Höller 124-7).

In 1963, Bachmann moved to Berlin for a Ford Foundation fellowship and visited Henze in Rome to collaborate on the libretto for *Der junge Lord*.[76] In January 1964, she met the young

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[75] Frisch also did not move on easily. The pair last saw one another in 1963, yet Frisch told his friend Peter von Matt shortly before his death in 1991 that he tried nightly to dream of her but never succeeded (Stoll 2013, 250).

[76] To guard against her inconsistent productivity, Henze instituted a strict work schedule, his own recounting of which uncannily recalls the title figure's paternal measures in *Malina*: "Dagegen half nur rohe Gewalt: ich nahm Ingeborg Bachmann mit in mein Haus bei Rom, sperrte sie dort in einem Zimmer ein, zog den Schlüssel ab und ließ die Gefangene nur frei (und zu Tisch gehen), wenn sie ihr Tagespensum abgeliefert hatte. Ausbrüche zu den römischen Couturier wurden verhindert, sogar einen Anfall von Zahnschmerz sah ich nur als 'Flucht in die Krankheit' an, brachte die Gefangene zwar zum Zahnartzt, überwachte aber die Behandlung, die auf meine Anordnung sogleich begonnen und abschlossen werden mußte. Sofort schloß sich wieder die Tür hinter meiner Dichterin – und sechs Wochen später war das Libretto fertig. Es erfuhr später nur einige kleine Umarbeitungen und Bereicherungen." ("Only crude force worked. I took Ingeborg Bachmann to my house near Rome, locked her in a room, took the key and only let the prisoner free (and come to meals) once she had delivered her work for the day. Escapes to the Roman couturiers were foiled, even an attack of toothache I viewed only as a 'retreat into sickness.' Naturally I brought the prisoner to the dentist, but oversaw the treatment, which proceeded from start to finish at my orders. The door immediately shut again behind my poetess – and six weeks later the libretto was done. It later

author Adolf Opel as he was preparing to travel to Prague, Egypt and Sudan. She joined him on a six-week journey that energized her and provided her with new material. It also helped her to recognize behind her individual sufferings a cultural-historical paradigm in which power and helplessness, white and dark, men and women clashed (Stoll 2013, 276-7). Upon her return she began weaving the dramatic, desolate desert landscapes into the lines of the *Wüstenbuch*, which later grew into the *Franza* fragment.

During the last seven years of her life, Bachmann resided mostly in Rome and drafted thousands of pages of the *Todesarten* novels.[77] Of these drafts, only *Malina* was published.[78]

On the night of September 25, 1973, there was a fire in Bachmann's Rome apartment likely caused by a cigarette she dropped when she fell asleep. She spent three weeks in the hospital and died on October 17. It is possible that the burns were not themselves fatal, but that withdrawal from the benzodiazepine Serestra contributed to her death (see Dennemarck-Jäger 167-70[79]).

Newspapers, magazines and scholarly articles have dramatized Bachmann's death with lines from her prose, attributing her writings a prophetic quality. Unverifiable theories have

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underwent only a few minor changes and additions.") (Henze in conversation mit Klaus Geitel, 1965, cited in Stoll 2013, 266.)

[77] The *Todesarten-Projekt* is most commonly taken to comprise the novel *Malina*, the *Franza* fragment and the *Requiem für Fanny Goldmann* fragment. Bachmann also wrote sketches of a fourth character named Eka Kottwitz, later Aga Rottwitz, who appears to be part of the project (Achberger 133). Earlier pieces such as her short story collection *Das dreißigte Jahr* or her Büchner prize speech "Ein Ort für Zufälle" are sometimes included as well; a move Weigel finds unjustified (Weigel 511). Weigel also excludes her *Simultan* collection; a position on which I differ; because the *Simultan* stories were written contemporaneously with the *Todesarten* novels and contain extensive overlap of characters and themes, they can reasonably be considered *Todesarten* texts.

[78] *Malina* appeared with Suhrkamp because Bachmann left Piper, her long-time publisher, over an incident in 1966: She had recommended that Piper use Paul Celan to translate a forthcoming poem by Anna Achmatova, but they instead used former Nazi poet Hans Baumann, whereupon Bachmann wrote a letter explaining she could no longer work with Piper (Höller 141).

[79] Dennemarck-Jäger asks pointedly why Bachmann did not inform the doctors about her heavy addiction to Serestra, implying some sort of possible death wish on Bachmann's part. She fails to consider that Bachmann could have privately hoped to use the hospital stay to finally withdraw, not realizing it could be fatal.

proliferated, some suggesting that the fire was not an accident. While there seem to be correspondences between the fiery images in her work and her death, the two cannot be conflated. I concur here with Weigel (325-7) and Achberger (100), who underscore that interpreting her death through her writing and vice versa leads to a false sense of understanding both without taking either on their own terms.

B. Language and Trauma in *Malina*: An Introduction

Malina (1971), Ingeborg Bachmann's only completed novel, is part of a set of works known as the *Todesarten-Projekt*.[80] The *Todesarten* stories all depict subtle, socially sanctioned murders that are allowed to take place because society turns a blind eye. One of the ways in which the dominant and ultimately murderous order exercises power is through language. This linguistic power calls to mind Foucault's ideas about the social control of discourse that renders certain speech impossible because it is de facto forbidden. It also conjures up the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, revealing that when society lacks language for certain crimes these crimes become impossible to report.

Malina is narrated by a woman whose traumatic experiences never cross the threshold into conscious memory and can never be told to another – and even if she could talk, there is no other there to listen. Trauma is inscribed in the language of *Malina* through diverse genres

[80] Bachmann first used the term *Todesarten* at a 1966 reading from the *Franza* fragment, referred to that book's title as *Todesarten*. The following year, she first spoke of *Todesarten* as a multivolume project that would stand as a "Kompendium der Verbrechen" ("compendium of crimes") (Weigel 513). She did not use the term *Todesartenprojekt*; that was invented posthumously by the editors of the critical edition (Friedberg 189). While *Todesarten* is often translated as 'Ways of Death' or 'Death Styles.' I retain the original German because it captures Bachmann's meaning better than any translation. It also preserves a possible allusion to Brecht's phrase "Arten zu töten" ("ways to kill") in *Me-Ti. Buch der Wendungen* (1965; *Me-Ti. Book of Interventions in the Flow of Things*). Friedburg proposes 'Manners of death' as the English translation that best preserves the web of allusions and references inherent in *Todesarten*, in part because in both German and English, legal and medical distinctions exist between *manner* of death (i.e., natural, accidental, suicide, homicide) and *cause* of death (i.e., a specific disease or injury that led to death) (Friedberg 193).

including letters, dreams, manuscripts, fractured telephone conversations, dialogues resembling opera libretti, and above all in conspicuous silences. If we carefully read its multi-layered 'language games' and suggestive lacunae, the novel may be seen to show that one of the most destructive aspects of trauma occurs through silencing – i.e., when one is unable to voice trauma to a listening other.

While the complexity and ambiguity of *Malina* is hardly conducive to synopsis, a basic description of characters and events will be helpful at the outset. The novel is told from the perspective of a first-person narrator, seemingly a well-known author, who refers to herself as *ich*[81] and signs her letters *Eine Unbekannte* (an unknown woman). In the opening chapter, "Happy with Ivan," we gather that she shares an apartment in Vienna with a man named Malina with whom she appears to be in a relationship (though the nature of their relationship is up for debate). Largely absent and detached, Malina poses little barrier to the narrator's passionate but one-sided affair with her neighbor Ivan – with whom she is clearly *not* happy. The novel's middle chapter, "The Third Man,"[82] features horrific nightmares in which the narrator is tortured, mutilated, silenced and murdered by a father figure. These dreams are interspersed with waking moments in which Malina alternately calms and interrogates her. The third and final chapter, "Last Things,"[83] returns to waking life with several significant developments: The Ich-figure grows increasingly fearful and troubled; increasingly, Malina seems less like a partner than some kind of other half; and Ivan grows more distant. The Ich-figure ultimately disappears into a

[81] *Ich* is the German word for 'I' and 'me.' It is also the ego in Freud's structural model for the psyche.

[82] The chapter title is a nod to Carol Reed's 1949 film, *The Third Man*, which takes place in corrupt post-war Vienna. For an informative discussion of parallels between *Malina* and the film, see Lennox 2007.

[83] The German, "Von Letzten Dingen," echoes the title of Otto Weininger's (1880-1903) posthumous work "Über die letzten Dinge" (1904-7; "On Last things"). Bachmann's choice to cite a philosopher whom history has made famous largely for being racist and sexist draws attention to gender power dynamics. It also indirectly connects to Wittgenstein, who was a great admirer of Weininger, though he did not necessarily agree with the latter's ideas.

crack in the wall of her apartment and Malina violently discards all traces of her. Immurement of women and animals is also a time-honored cultural practice and fairy tale motif with which this fantasy resonates. When the phone rings – one last call from Ivan – Malina informs him that no woman has ever lived there. The novel ends thus:

> Ein Stillstehen. Kein Alarm, keine Sirenen. Es kommt niemand zu Hilfe. Der Rettungswagen nicht und nicht die Polizei. Est ist eine sehr alte, eine sehr starke Wand, aus der niemand fallen kann, die niemand aufbrechen kann, aus der nie mehr etwas laut werden kann.
> Es war Mord. (*IBM* 695)

> A standing still. No alarm, no sirens. No one comes to help. Not the ambulance and not the police. It is a very old, a very strong wall, from which no one can fall, from which no one can break open, from which nothing can ever be heard again.
> It was murder.[84] (*IBMB* 225)

While the novel's final words – *Es war Mord* – are famous, the penultimate words deserve equal attention. They seal the narrator's fate as a descent into *silence*[85] in a wall inside her home, making the site of her murder the most basic physical division within the domestic sphere. Because we cannot parse the method of her murder in realistic terms, the plot is also one about the unknowable. The narrator's death mirrors the silence under Austrofascism and National Socialism, the post-war silence about the country's history, and still more silence about problems in post-war Austrian society. Bachmann's relentless portrayal of trauma and pathology in *Malina* along with her own statements about the novel[86] make it clear that we are to take seriously this story of societal sickness and murder.

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[84] All English quotes from *Malina* are based on Philip Boehm's 1990 translation, with my own modifications.

[85] In the *Franza* fragment, Franza imagines that her husband's previous wives, one of whom went insane and the other of whom committed suicide, had punished themselves for their own defects with a 'descent into silence' (*Abgang ins Schweigen*).

[86] "Denn, was meint man eigentlich damit, die ganze Gesellschaft beschreiben, die Bewußtseinslage in einer Zeit? Das heißt doch nicht, daß man die Sätze nachspricht, die diese Gesellschaft spricht, sondern sie muß sich anders zeigen, und sie muß sich *radikal* anders zeigen, denn sonst wird man nie wissen, was unsere Zeit war. Und die Krankheit, die Folter darin, die Krankheit der Welt, und die Krankheit dieser Person, ist die Krankheit unserer Zeit, für mich. Und wenn mann das nicht so sehen kann, dann ist mein Buch verfehlt. Aber, wenn es doch darin zu sehen ist, dann vielleicht nicht" (*GuI* 71f).

C. Why *Malina*?

While the relationship between language, trauma and silence is a key thread running throughout Bachmann's oeuvre, it is most explicit in her *Todesarten-Projekt*. Decades after writing about Wittgenstein, Bachmann continued to engage with his ideas in literary terms; in the case of the *Todesarten* texts, this engagement serves in part[87] to portray trauma perpetrated by an entire society's thought and language.

As the only novel completed and published during her lifetime, *Malina* may be the most definitive example of what Bachmann hoped to accomplish in *Todesarten*. Its web of language games, seemingly seeking to convey something unsayable, offers rich possibilities for analysis.

Sigrid Weigel argues that the most marked caesuras in Bachmann's poetics are due not to genre shifts, but rather to changes within her prose itself through an increasingly complex engagement with narrative perspective and a refinement of dialogicity and polyphony, and that this development culminates in *Malina* (see Weigel 227-230). These very elements – the complex narrative perspective, dialogicity and polyphony – create greater creative and expressive possibilities at the same time as they create prominent gaps, silences and caesuras in the text. Indeed, Stoll aptly describes *Malina* as a text that struggles for language using every possible narrative means while the very loss of language and voice is its most real theme (Stoll 2000, 250). Seemingly contradictory lines dance along the boundary of what can and cannot be

"What does it actually mean to describe a whole society, the consciousness of an era? It surely does not mean that one repeats the sentences this society utters; rather, it must be revealed differently, and radically differently, because otherwise no one will ever know what our time was. And the sickness, the torture therein, the sickness of the world and the sickness of this person, is for me the sickness of our time. And if one cannot see it that way, then my book has missed its mark. But if it can indeed be seen, then perhaps not" (my translation).

[87] I say 'in part' because despite the present focus on trauma, one should not overlook Bachmann's sophisticated engagement with other aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy that are not particularly related to trauma.

said: "Ich muß erzählen. Ich werde erzählen. (…) Ich kann nicht erzählen, es stört mich alles in meiner Erinnerung" ("I must tell. I will tell. (…) I can't tell, everything in my memory disturbs me") (see Stoll 2000, 250, Göttsche 198-200). There is a painful tension between telling and not telling, and a vacuum between what can and cannot be said. In attempting to say something perhaps unsayable, the novel creates its own language – a language rich in codes, double-meanings, koan-like constructions and hidden references. This layering of language and silence surrounding trauma makes *Malina* ripe for my analysis.

It is widely acknowledged that Bachmann wanted to spotlight certain societal problems in *Todesarten*, that she was processing ideas such as the limits of language and logic, and that her own experiences are woven into the narrative. However, *Malina* should not be treated like a didactic text containing a prescriptive message. Wittgenstein wrote in his preface to *Philosophical Investigations*: "It is not impossible that it should fall to the lot of this work, in its poverty and in the darkness of this time, to bring light into one brain or another – but of course, it is not likely. I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own" (*PI* preface). I advocate an approach *Malina* much like Wittgenstein hoped readers would approach his *Investigations*: If the novel can throw light on a dark mind in dark times and spur us to thoughts of our own, it will have succeeded, and we as readers will have done it some justice.

D. Dynamics of Discourse in *Malina*

1. Diverse Genres

Much of *Malina* consists of first-person present-time narration, with exceptions serving as counterpoint in the fugue.[88] The following examples will illustrate the breadth of the genres Bachmann employs. Collectively, they will also reveal that within this seemingly open creative space, all roads lead to gaps and silences.

The novel opens with a list of the main characters formatted as if for a play, noting the time as 'today' and the place as Vienna.[89] Of Ivan, we learn his country of origin and profession, but the name of his office is withheld. Of Malina, we learn his age, occupation, and the title of an out-of-print book he has authored. Of the Ich-figure, we learn only what can be seen on her passport, minus her name: She has brown eyes and blonde hair (among the few physical descriptors given in the novel). The fields for profession and address have been crossed out and written over several times, making the narrator a palimpsest of obscured and lost meaning and suggesting that personal details which do not fit within the strictures of a government-issued identification document (the embodiment of a ruling order) cannot be said. This theatrical opening establishes Vienna as a *Schauplatz* (stage or crime scene) for murder.

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[88] Although the term 'fugue' in the context of post-1945 German literature is automatically associated with Celan, a fugue is an apt metaphor for *Malina*. Musically speaking, a fugue is a contrapuntal composition characterized by simultaneous overlapping voices. The Latin root, *fuga*, relates to both *fugere* (to flee) and *fugare* (to chase). An earlier term for the fugue was *ricercar*, meaning 'to search out.' Finally, fugue is a term in psychology linked to dissociation. The narrator in *Malina* is often fleeing invisible pursuers, chasing after an impossible utopia (or mere safety), searching for her lost history and identity, and competing to have her voice heard over Malina's. She is ultimately psychologically traumatized to the point of 'fleeing' and vanishing.

[89] The novel's geographic specificity is important. Bachmann's years in Vienna were traumatic in a number of ways; consider the eerie post-Nazi intellectual environment at the university; the mixing of former perpetrators and victims in café circles; the pattern du jour of women forming exploitative relationships with older men. Vienna reappears in *Malina* as a locus of trauma; the narrator eats, drinks, smokes, walks, and has panic attacks amid the city's parks, streets, cafes and monuments. The sounds and sites conjure the ghosts of history, from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Ständestaat to the Holocaust and Cold War. Krylova (2013) interprets the geography of *Malina* and shows how Vienna's topography is interwoven with trauma and silence.

Further formal deviations soon appear in the telephone conversations between the Ich-figure and Ivan. Their exchanges, set apart from the text by line breaks and indentation, are characterized by truncated sentences, virtually no punctuation, ambiguity and confusion. The lovers say what any couple would when making a date, but there are marked oddities (see also Perloff 168). Their inability to understand one other translates into the reader's inability to fully make sense of the exchange. The only clear message is that the message is garbled. The subtext of these conversations, to be elaborated in section IV(c), suggests a sick game in which humor melts into tragedy.[90]

In contrast to the Ivan telephone sentences, the dialogues between the Ich-figure and Malina usually clarify the speaker and feature full sentences with punctuation. The *Entfremdungseffekt* (alienation or estrangement effect) in these dialogues derives not from cut-out words but from a simultaneous closeness and distance between the two speakers. Their responses do not seem to follow from one another, yet both appear to understand and accept the other's words as normal. Their conversations grow increasingly strange, and difficult to imagine playing out between a traditional couple. The intimacy of the domestic sphere is revealed as a treacherous battleground as Malina turns out to be one of the narrator's murderers, menacing and finally silencing her.

[90] As Steutzger points out, the telephone scenes contain intertextual references to Jean Cocteau's 1930 play "La voix humaine" ("The Human Voice"), later adapted for opera by Francis Poulenc in 1959. "La voix humaine" is a monologue in which a woman speaks on the phone with her former lover who is about to marry another woman. It is the drama of a woman's destruction and breakdown, told by a male playwright, highlighting one of the key problems raised by Bachmann's later work: The search for female expression through language, voice and writing (see Steutzger 175-182).

A new genre appears when the Ich-figure reluctantly agrees to be interviewed by the persistent Herr Mühlbauer[91], a journalist who works for the *Wiener Nachtausgabe*[92] after 'unscrupulously switching' from the *Wiener Tagblatt.*[93] Herr Mühlbauer's questions are not recorded in the text and can only be inferred from the narrator's responses, which suggest alternately inane and invasive prompts. In a nod to technological advances, the interview is recorded, but in a nod to prevailing power structures, the journalist erases segments his readers might find problematic. We read the narrator's exact words as if from a transcript, including statements that get erased, while parenthetical descriptions of Herr Mühlbauer's words and actions relegate him to the realm of reported speech. This genre is neither a first-person narrative, nor a dialogue, nor a play. It incorporates all these above elements into a hybrid form that remains nonetheless marked by gaps and erasures.

Another genre consists of the letters the Ich-figure struggles to compose. Some are long, emotional and cryptic while others break off after a salutation or an opening sentence. Many appear in multiple drafts, revealing painful efforts to say something urgent without ever revealing what. Most end up crumpled in the wastebasket.[94] The few completed letters are signed, *eine Unbekannte* (an unknown woman), effacing the writing subject, although the narrator is clearly an accomplished author who is sought after for interviews. The phrase *eine Unbekannte* can also be read as an allusion to Stephan Zweig's story *Brief einer Unbekannten*

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[91] In German, *die Mühle* means the mill. *Der Müll* means trash or waste. *Der Bauer* means farmer or peasant. To a German speaker, the name "Herr Mühlbauer" looks something like "Mr. Mill-farmer." Phonetically, however, it might also sound like "Mr. Garbage-Farmer."

[92] The *Wiener Nachtausgabe* is an evening edition newspaper that was published briefly during fall 1932.

[93] The *Wiener Tagblatt* first appeared in 1867. Following the Anschluss, it was appropriated as an instrument for Nazi propaganda. The last issue was published as the Russian Army approached and 'liberated' Vienna. Given its role in the Nazi propaganda machine, mention of this paper is an unsubtle dig at Herr Mühlbauer.

[94] After her relationship with Fisch, Bachmann wrote him letters; she would vary the greetings and closing, anticipate his answers, and throw them all away without sending (Stoll 2013, 276).

(1922; *Letter from an Unknown Woman*), in which a woman devotes her love and life to a famous author who cannot even recall the few nights they spent together. This intertext suggests a transhistorical perspective on the socially acceptable (and worse yet, romanticized) destruction of women.

Still another genre is comprised by the narrator's own writing. Her fairytale-like story of the Princess of Kagran and her attempts to draft a 'happy' book for Ivan, set apart from the text in italics, employ a tone yearning and lyrical imagery not found in the rest of the novel.[95] Some examples:

> *Einmal werden alle Frauen goldene Augen haben, sie werden goldene Schuh und goldene Kleider tragen (...)*
> *Ein Tag wird kommen, an dem die Frauen rotgoldene Augen haben, rotgoldenes Haar (...)*
> *Ein Tag wird kommen, an dem die Menschen rotgoldene Augen und siderische Stimmen haben, an dem ihre Hände begabt sein werden für die Liebe...* (*IBM* 448-451)

> *One day all women will have golden eyes, they will wear golden shoes and golden dresses (...)*
> *A day will come when all women will have redgolden eyes, redgolden hair (...)*
> *A day will come when all people will have redgolden eyes and starry voices, when their hands will be gifted for love…* (*IBMB* 87-88)

The fabled women at first have golden eyes and garb, then redgolden eyes and hair, and then they are just 'people' whose hands are gifted for love – or is it goodness? These visions function like myriad photographs of a single object from different angles, offering multiple sketches of an imagined utopia or perhaps dreamlike memories of an unspoiled state before the narrator's victimization by society.[96] The repeated scratching out and writing-over of drafts forms

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[95] Weigel writes: "Da diese Passagen aber nicht in das Geschehen integriert, sondern von im abtgesetzt und aus dem Schriftbild herausgehoben sind, werden sie als Einbruchstelle einer anderen Sprache lesbar" (Weigel 483).

[96] Weigel believes Bachmann is over- and often misinterpreted through a utopian lens. She argues that different and evolving concepts of utopia are discernible in Bachmann's early versus later works and must be distinguished from one another. She cautions that it is a mistake to view Bachmann's work as 'utopian literature' because her version

palimpsest whereby the utopian vision or dreamlike memories remain out of reach while her nightmares intrude.

The novel's use of musical motifs has garnered attention (see for example Achberger 1995).[97] Music appears in different forms including a Hungarian children's song, phrases from the popular French song "Auprès de ma blonde," allusions to operas, excerpts from Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* written on a musical staff, and Italian dynamic instructions in dialogues with Malina. By including not only lyrics but the technical features of musical notation (its own kind of foreign language), Bachmann seems to be reaching beyond words and text for a form of expression that otherwise eludes the narrator.

The sequence of nightmares comprising the novel's middle chapter forms its own genre and a negative image of the Kagran fairy tale. The dreams create a web of images and words that forms a kind of private code into which the narrator's buried memories, fears and traumas are encrypted. Despite the dream chapter's garbled and surreal first impression, it is consistent in theme and form. Certain storylines are dropped and later resumed (such as the Russia/ice sequence). The words themselves create a scaffolding, allowing a kind of coherence to emerge from an otherwise jumbled narrative that collapses time and place. Recurring words and phrases in the chapter include *Krieg und Frieden*; *nie*; *wahnsinn[ig]*; *drei/dritte*; *Friedhof*; *Krokodil* (war and peace; never; mad[ness]; three/third; cemetery; crocodile). This is complemented by other recurring words and phrases like *ich will dir/ihm einmal/endlich [etwas] sagen/erklären* (I want

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of 'hope' only stems from a negation of utopia, or *Ent-Täuschung* (a de-illusioning; a pun on *Enttäuschung*, the German word for 'disappointment') (Weigel 482-6).

[97] Achberger's main thesis about *Malina* is that "music functions in the novel as a source of hope and salvation, an antipode to the death and destruction that looms large at its core" (Achberger 113). She presents music as offering refuge while language poses danger. However, in some cases music may be read as part of the danger suffusing the novel, appearing instead to portray darkness and sickness.

to finally tell/explain [something] to him/you), Eleanor, and the number 26[98] that constitue threads running throughout the novel.

2. Genres Interpreted

In the opening cast of characters, the narrator's identity is obscured and crossed out. In the phone conversations with Ivan, no real communication occurs. In the dialogues with Malina, the narrator is often menaced and dominated. In the journalist interview, she is objectified and ignored. Music often acts to silence her, and in her desperate unmailed letters, she silences herself. The dream sequences carry her silencing to nightmarish extremes. Her utopian fairytales waver and falter, leaving an impression like a shooting star that has faded from vision. *Malina* inverts the traditional poetry/prose relationship, in that the Ivan sentences which are set apart and written like poetry contain quotidian language while the prose passages with the narrator's utopian visions and nightmares unfold in a highly lyrical manner.

Is this intricate collage of genres purposeful on Bachmann's part? If so, what does it mean and how does it relate to my thesis that one of the most destructive aspects of trauma occurs through silencing? Assuming the mix is the result of both intent and an unconscious process,[99] the view that it was in part deliberate is supported by the fact that *Malina* is the only Bachmann text with such a potpourri of genres (other stories written around the same, namely *Simultan*, do not share this feature). In her interviews of 1971, Bachmann talks about a

[98] The number 26 makes whimsical and cryptic appearances throughout *Malina* – as an address on Beatrixgasse that used to be the narrator's lucky number, as a hotel room in Paris, as the score in a magazine quiz, as the date of a prediction mentioned in a dream. While Firges calls this "hardly decipherable" (Firges 112), the number has roots in Bachmann's biography and geography. In 1933 her family moved to a house at Henselstrasse 26 in Klagenfurt, and her first Vienna address was Beatrixgasse 26. The displacement and transmutation of the number suggest a distancing from the narrator's (and perhaps Bachmann's own) childhood and early adult life, alongside a repetition compulsion – she cannot get away from 26.

[99] Ilse Aichinger once described her writing process as, 'one word follows the other.' ("Meine Sprache und Ich" / "My Language and I," 1978).

composition process that is deeply musical and biblical in its goal of having every sentence connect to the entire work.[100] Theoretically she could have achieved that goal in a traditional narrative, yet she chose to use a dizzying array of genres. While the reason for this choice remains open, it tells a fractured trauma narrative. The genres, taken individually and collectively, express information impossible to convey in traditional narrative modes. The genres *show* rather than tell, along the lines of Wittgenstein's notion of the mystical as that which cannot be expressed but reveals itself.[101] What, then, do they show?

The mixing of genres seems to create a private language for the narrator. With the term 'private language,' I imply that she is inwardly pointing to a sensation while saying, '*This* is what I mean.' The sensation is that of being murdered and silenced by invisible powers; an experience that calls for extraordinary forms of expression because it cannot be stated in everyday language or ordinary modes of writing. The 'private language' implies, in a Wittgensteinian reading, that the narrator's language fails to refer. That seems to be a valid account of the novel's inner world, as the Ich-figure fails to land her message with the characters around her. However, to call the novel itself a private language does Bachmann a grave injustice. As I shall argue of Celan, Bachmann's writing constitutes an attempt to broach 'unspeakable' concepts by rendering them in language that other people *could potentially* understand. This is precisely the opposite of a private language.

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[100] "Composition has always played a big role for me (something that I find lacking in so any), and it is actually the case that I did not see how interconnected it is until I tried to correct or delete a few things, that there is hardly a sentence that does not relate to another sentence; thus in that respect one could use that word composition in its double meaning." From an April 1971 interview, quoted in Achberger 119.

[101] *Tractatus* 6.522: "Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies *zeigt* sich, es ist das Mystische" / "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself, it is the mystical" (my transl.).

IV. THE LANGUAGE OF TRAUMA IN BACHMANN'S *MALINA*

This chapter maps out how the trauma embedded in *Malina* relates to the historical context in which Bachmann wrote the novel and how it problematizes unspoken trauma. Section A details how Bachmann's pathology of trauma relates to medical paradigms of trauma from Freud through the present and how the motif of a split personality, with its undertones of trauma, drives the novel's plot. Section B analyzes language games and semi-direct connections to Wittgenstein in *Malina* and other texts. Section C takes up the themes of silence, repression, secrecy and the unsayable as they manifest in *Malina*.

A. Bachmann's Pathology of Trauma

1. Looking Back: Satires and Reworkings of Freud in *Malina* and the *Franza* Fragment

Bachmann's relationship with Freud is a complex one. On the one hand, she frequently employs psychoanalytic commonplaces which owe their prevalence to Freud. The opening of *Malina* presents a classic Freudian model of trauma: *occurrence* (the narrator suffers from troubling but unspecified memories), *latency* (years elapse without her naming or processing the trauma) and *return* (in the form of panic attacks, chain smoking, and other symptoms) (Krylova 142). Krylova maps out how the Ich-figure's dreams are subject to Freudian *Entstellung* (distortion and/or displacement), for their site is often a distorted and coded Vienna (see Krylova 161-3). The use of dreams as a locus of repressed trauma has come to be a Freudian motif,[102] and Freud himself turned to literary sources such *Oedipus Rex, Hamlet* and *The Brothers*

[102] Predating Freud, the Romantics and Russian novelists (notably Tolstoy, who is referenced in *Malina*) made use of dreams.

Karamazov for his theories about dreaming and the unconscious.[103] Critics have noted Freudian threads in the *Franza* fragment, such has Franza's embodiment of trauma returning as physical symptoms in a manner recalling *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (see Weigel 518-524). Franza's desire for Doctor Körner to reenact euthanasia on her is a classic performance of *Wiederholungszwang* (repetition compulsion), and in banging her own head against a pyramid wall she exemplifies *Wiederholung* and *Stellvertretung* (repetition and substitution; see Schlipphacke 47-49).

On the other hand, criticism of Freud also lurks between Bachmann's plotlines. Bachmann, who viewed gender relations in terms of fascism and war, would have good reason to be critical of Freud. His early 'seduction theory' had posited that repressed trauma, specifically early childhood sexual encounters (read: abuse), lay at the root of hysteria and neuroses (*Studies on Hysteria*, 1895; *Etiology of Hysteria*, 1896). In 1897, however, he amended this nascent theory in favor of the idea that his patients' recovered memories were actually imagination and fantasies (letter to William Fliess, September 21, 1897; *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905). While the original seduction theory would have entailed that the fathers of his hysterical patients had actually raped or molested them – a socially unacceptable conclusion – its retraction meant that abuses of young women were chalked up to lively imaginations and seduction fantasies of 'hysterics' and 'neurotics.' This was a theory of knowledge that denied standing and *voice* to those women. They were no longer valid witnesses to their own experiences and stood little chance of bringing their abusers to justice, while the fathers and male doctors remained in an unassailable position of power.[104]

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[103] *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899); *Dostoyevsky and Parricide* (1928).

[104] Leys has argued that Freud's seduction theory was never the simple causal theory of trauma that contemporary critics portray. He stressed the role of *Nachträglichkeit* and his equation involves two events – first, a not-necessarily-traumatic early childhood event that perhaps cannot be understood given the child's development, and second, a not-necessarily traumatic event in adolescence or adulthood which triggers a memory of the first – that could combine to result in traumatic meaning. Latency, repression and interpretation are essential ingredients are

That the protagonist of *Malina* is dubbed *Ich* – the term for Ego in Freud's structural model for the psyche – suggests that the novel is weighing and processing Freud. Psychoanalysis plays an implicit role in the middle chapter as Malina 'helps' the narrator to interpret her dreams. However, his manner of questioning her is at turns cold, clinical, interrogational and domineering, suggesting a steep power imbalance between patient and analyst. He later turns out to be one of the narrator's murderers, casting a shadow over his attempts to help or treat her.

In the *Franza* fragment, this doctor-murderer archetype is even more pronounced as Franza's prominent analyst husband Leo Jordan tries to murder her by analyzing her to death. In a nod to the Bluebeard motif (and perhaps to Freud's work with fairy tales), she is his third wife; the first went insane and the second committed suicide. Jordan subjects Franza to a kind of emotional torture through a destructive 'treatment' regimen in which he attempts to erode her sanity in order to analyze her breakdown as a medical case. He even, the text suggests, gives her pills that sedate and disorient her, then uses those symptoms to convince her she is losing her mind. Ironically, Jordan has built his professional reputation on publications about Nazi medical experiments which Franza devotedly helped him edit. Unable to find a single doctor in Vienna who would not defer to her influential husband, Franza flees to her childhood house in the Galician[105] woods where her brother finds and tries in vain to help her. Her narrative unfolds in

essential components of this model, which eschews a straightforward causal view of the traumatic event as an assault on the subject from the outside (Leys 19-20).

[105] 'Galicia' can refer to both a region in the northwest corner of Spain and a region of Eastern Europe. The latter belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire until its dissolution in 1918, and today straddles the border between Poland and Ukraine. Historically an ethnically diverse and highly contested region, it was home to Poles, Ukranians, and– until the Second World War – a thriving Jewish community. By situating Franza's childhood home in the Galician woods, Bachmann links her with peoples the Nazis considered inferior (Jews and Slavs). This plays into the novel's political aesthetic, which overtly conflates gender oppression, fascism and colonialism (see Schlipphacke 37).

a fractured, achronological manner, interrupted by moments of terror (flashbacks) and a choking inability to speak.

One particular episode illustrates Jordan's sadistic emotional abuse doled out under the guise of psychoanalysis, as well as the critical role played by language. As a young teenager at the end World War II, Franza fell in love with a British soldier stationed in her town (as in Bachmann's romance with Jack Hamesh). Before returning to England the soldier briefly kissed her on the lips, but his mouth remained closed. Franza, aware that most people opened their mouths to kiss, struggled to make sense of this. She tells her husband years later during one of their 'sessions': "(…) dass das doch keine Küsse waren, darum nannte sie sie die englischen Küsse" ("(…) that they were not real kisses, therefore she named them the English kisses"). Jordan's response is crushing.

> ...sie sagte laut was sie damals nur gedacht hatte. Das waren englische Küsse. Jordan, der ohne Interpretation keinen Satz durchgehen liess, unterbrach sie, das ist allerdings interessant, was du da sagst, englische Küsse, das ist eine Fehlleistung, denn du wirst gemeint haben angelische, und sie sagte heftig, nein, aber nein, und er sagte, unterbrich mich bitte nicht immer, und er studierte das kleine Problem und analysierte ihre Küsse, von der sprachlichen Seite her und dann von der Erlebnisseite, und Frieden und Sire fielen nun endgültig unter den Tisch, unbrauchbar. Franza liess sich, angestrengt zuhörend, analysieren und unterbrach ihn nicht mehr, bis sie ihre englischen Küsse gewogen, zerlegt und pulverisiert, eingeteilt und untergebracht wusste, sie waren nun säuberlich und sterilisiert an den richtigen Platz in ihrem Leben und mit dem richtigen Stellenwert gekommen. (Bachmann 1988, 52)
>
> She said aloud what she had then only thought. Those were English kisses. Jordan, who let no sentence pass without interpretation, interrupted her, that is certainly interesting, what you just said there, English kisses, that is a mistake, for you must have meant angel kisses, and she said fiercely no, but no, and he said, please do not always interrupt me, and he studied the little problem and analyzed her kisses from the linguistic side and then the experiential side, and 'peace' and 'Sire'finally now fell uselessly under the table. Listening tensely, Franza let herself be analyzed and interrupted him no more, until she saw her English kisses weighed, dissected, categorized and situated, they were now neat and sterilized in the proper place in her life, accorded the correct value. (my translation)

In Franza's private language – "was sie damals nur gedacht hatte" ("what she had then only thought") – the term *Englische Küsse* (English kisses) made perfect sense; the captain was English, so those must have been English (in contrast to French) kisses. However, her husband not only questions her word use but calls it a mistake and tells her what she must have meant. Thus her reality is taken from her one word at a time until she conforms to the 'correct' usage as determined by Jordan. Her private language does not hold up in the face of the psycholanalyst's authoritative 'knowledge.'

Two groups of words emerge from this paragraph:

(1) *Studieren / analysieren / einteilen / unterbringen / säuberlich / steril / richtigen Stellenwert*

(study / analyze / categorize / situate / neat / sterile / correct value)

(2) *Fehlleistung / pulvisiert / fielen unter den Tisch / unbrauchbar / zerlegt*

(Mistake (as in a Freudian slip) / pulverized / fell under the table / unusable / dissected)

The passage thus combines (1) medical and scientific terms with (2) threatening and violent words, lexically merging Jordan's analysis with his destruction of his wife. That Bachmann transposed Freud's "talking cure" –a purported healing treatment – into murder shows the degree of her mistrust of his theories and methods. His repression of women's real traumas, an inglorious piece of psychoanalytic history, hovers darkly in the background of Franza's undoing.

Yet, as already noted, the *Franza* fragment and *Malina* employ Freudian concepts about the psyche and unconscious that to this day provide paradigms for viewing trauma. This seeming contradiction is an invitation to read Bachmann carefully, questioningly, and against the grain.

2. Looking Forward: Prefiguring Modern Understandings of Trauma in Malina

Malina contains highly clinical depictions of trauma. The narrator suffers from insomnia, panic attacks, flashbacks and horrific nightmares. From her troubled relationship with time (the novel opens with troubled reflections on the word 'today,' which the narrator finds almost impossible to say) to manifest addiction problems, the Ich-figure conjures the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[106] When Ivan jokingly raises his hand as if to her, she suffers an hour-long crying and shivering attack:

> Ivan hebt im Scherz die Hand, um nach mir zu schlagen, da kommt die Angst wieder, ich sage erstickt: Bitte nicht, nicht nach meinem Kopf. / Der Schüttelfrost geht vorbei nach einer Stunde und ich denke, ich sollte es Ivan sagen, aber Ivan würde etwas so Irsinniges nicht begreifen, und weil ich von Mord zu ihm nichts sagen kannn, bin ich zurückgeworfen auf mich. (*IBM* 367)
>
> Ivan raises his hand in jest, as if he were about to hit me, there comes the fear again, I say chokingly: Please don't, not my head. / After an hour the shivers are gone and I think I should tell Ivan, but Ivan wouldn't understand something so insane, and because I cannot talk to him about murder, I have to depend on myself. (*IBMB* 46, partly my translation)

The particular memory triggered by Ivan's playful threat is not described (though a number of scenes in the dream chapter could serve as possibilities). Instead, it is circumscribed as something *irrsinnig* (crazy) that the Ich-figure cannot tell Ivan and that has to do with murder – the final word and overarching theme of the novel. Her trauma appears to be unsayable because her suffering and silence are tied up in a murderous experience that would be deemed mad by society (represented by Ivan in this case).

Some of the ways in which Bachmann wrote trauma prefigured subsequent developments in the clinical understanding of specifically domestic trauma. Judith Herman (1992) emphasizes that there is a particular set of problems tied up in secrecy and the inability to verbalize trauma,

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[106] In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) added PTSD to the third edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III). The definition has been revised in subsequent editions and is currently in the DSM-V. See Chapter II for further discussion.

and when secrecy prevails, the story of the traumatic event often surfaces not as a verbal narrative but as a symptom (Herman 1). This dynamic is perpetuated and exacerbated because in order to escape accountability, a perpetrator will do everything in his power to promote forgetting: "The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his *prerogative to name and define reality***,** and the more completely his arguments prevail. (…) When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place *outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable*" (Herman 8, my emphasis).

It was not until the women's liberation movement of the 1970s that the most common post-traumatic disorders came to be recognized not as those of war veterans but of women in civilian life. These traumas had long remained hidden because they were couched in the privacy and secrecy of the home: "The real conditions of women's lives were hidden in the sphere of the personal, in private life. (…) Women were silenced by fear and shame, and the silence of women gave license to every form of sexual and domestic exploitation. Women *did not have a name* for the tyranny of private life" (Herman 28, my emphasis). Here, then, is a picture in which perpetrators of domestic violence hold not only physical power, but also a power specifically related to language: The power to name and define reality. That which lacks a name, by definition cannot be told. Whatever lies outside the realm of socially validated reality becomes effectively unsayable.

In a similar vein, Dennemarck-Jäger describes how, in contrast to repeatedly told memories which become elaborated or condensed into short stories, untold traumatic events are eventually relegated to scraps of sense-memory. "Was aber nicht erzählt werden darf, hat von sich aus die Tendenz, immer unwirklicher zu werden" ("What may not be said has the inherent

tendency to grow evermore unreal“ (Dennemarck-Jäger 70). We thus see a connection between language and reality that appears to play a crucial role in trauma.

Dennemarck-Jäger's suspects that a personal experience with incest of sexual violence underlies Bachmann's work, noting that sexual violence lies at the core of what brutalizes and traumatizes protagonists in *Malina* and the *Franza* fragment. However, she fails to account for Bachmann's *Simultan* collection, written roughly contemporaneously, which portrays the destruction of women through different and subtler means. A rigid interpretation of Dennemarck-Jäger's theory might force us to conclude that in *Simultan*, Bachmann was purposely abstracting and distracting from a supposed personal experience with sexual violence; a dubious claim. Alternatively, if instead of sexual violence we take trauma (in a more general sense, though largely still gender-specific) to be her primary focus, the *Simultan* stories continue and reinforce a pattern of juxtaposing problems of language and trauma.[107]

3. Looking Inward: *Malina*'s Inner Duel and Dissociative Identity Disorder

Another thread of pathology may be seen in the motif of a split persona that drives the novel's plot (to the extent one can speak of plot in *Malina*). The meaning of this motif is multivalent. Firstly, it is pointedly gendered. The narrator tells Ivan:

> Es ist ein Anderer in mir (…)
> Soll es nicht heißen, die Andere in dir?
> Nein, der Andere, ich bringe das nicht durcheinander. Ein Anderer. (*IBM* 454)

> There is another man in me (…)
> Shouldn't it be 'her'?
> No, him, I don't mix that up. Him. (My translation)

[107] See Heidelberger-Leonard for a reading of trauma in "Drei Wege zum See."

She clarifies through the masculine article (*der*) that the 'other' within her is male.[108] This image is elaborated during her visit to a fortuneteller who sees in her an image of not one but two people, male and female, locked in mortal combat.[109] With the rise of Second Wave feminism in the late 1970s, Bachmann's reinscription of the classic Doppelgänger motif into a psychological conflict along gendered lines made *Malina* a proto-feminist classic (see Krylova 137-139).

Secondly, the protagonist's divided personality bespeaks trauma. In the later chapters, the Ich-figure's dialogues with Malina can increasingly be read as an inner duel between two opposing selves in which the narrator fears annihilation and the other (male) voice embodies that threat. Their duets crescendo, quite literally with the use of musical notation, into a hostile take-over that finally silences the ich.[110]

> Malina: (…) Du wirst kaum beteiligt sein, nicht mehr hier.
> Ich: (abbandonandosi[111]) Warum nicht hier? Nein, ich verstehe dich nicht! Aber dann verstehe ich gar nichts mehr… Ich müßte mich ja selber beseitigen!
> Malina: Weil du dir nur nützen kannst, indem du dir schadest. Das ist der Anfang und das Ende aller Kämpfe. Du has dir jetzt genug geschadet. Es wird dir sehr nützen. Aber nicht dir, wie du denkst.

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[108] The grammar of German is such that female experiences are at times made secondary or irrelevant when women must, due to the language structure, speak of themselves as '*der*.' Some professions have genders coded into their titles; *Professor*, *Richter* (judge) and *Chirurg* (surgeon) are by default masculine, while *Krankenschwester* (nurse) is feminine. Bachmann almost always chose to narrate in a male's voice and often had trouble finding a female voice (*GuI* 99-100). Barbara Köhler plays on gendered aspects of the German language; see for example, "Als ich um die Ecke bog, traf ich eine Entscheidung." In: Barbara Köhler. *Wittgensteins Nichte* (1999), pp. 76-92.

[109] The fortune teller visit reads as follows:

> sie sagte, eine unheimliche Spannung sei schon auf den ersten Blick daraus zu lesen, es sei eigentlich nicht das Bild von einem Menschen, sondern von zweien, die in einem äußersten Gegensatz zueinander stünden(…) Getrennt, meinte Frau Novak, wäre das lebbar, aber so, wie es sei, kaum, auch das Männliche und das Weibliche, der Verstand und das Gefühl, die Produktivität und die Selbstzerstörung träten auf eine merkwüdige Weise hervor. (*IBM* 579-80)
>
> she said that first glance it shows an incredible tension, it's really not a picture of one person but of two people standing in extreme opposition to one another (…) If they were separated it would be livable, maintained Frau Novak, but scarcely the way it is, furthermore male and female, reason and feeling, productivity and self-destruction also appear in an unusual manner. (*IBMB* 163).

[110] In this duet, the Ich-figure is the only one whose voice is given Italian dynamic instructions. Achberger argues that while this has often been interpreted as an expansion of the narrator's spoken range, in fact it does precisely the opposite:. By showing a human – female – voice forced to respond to pedaling marks, the dynamics reveal the Ich-figure to be more limited in her expressive possibilities than her male counterpart, offering a metaphor for female alienation in patriarchal language structures (Achberger 152-3).

[111] "Abandoning oneself."

Ich: (tutto il clavicembalo[112]) Ach! Ich bin eine Andere, du willst sagen, ich werde noch eine ganz Andere sein!
Malina: Nein. Wie unsinnig. Du bist ganz gewiß du, das änderst du auch nicht mehr. Aber ein Ich ist ergriffen, und ein Ich handelt. Du aber wirst nicht mehr handeln. (*IBM* 662)

Malina: (…) You'll hardly be participating, you'll hardly be here any longer.
Ich: (abbandonandosi) Why not here? No, I don't understand you! But then I don't understand anything anymore… I'd have to get rid of myself!
Malina: Because you can only be of use to yourself by hurting yourself. That is the beginning and the end of all struggle. You have hurt yourself enough. It will help you a lot. But not the you you're thinking of.
Ich: (tutto il clavicembalo) Oh! I'm somebody else, you're trying to say that I'll become someone completely different!
Malina: No. What nonsense. You most certainly are yourself, and you can't change that either. But a self is moved, touched, and a self does things, it acts. However, you will act no longer. (*IBMB* 206-7)

Malina tells the narrator she 'will act no longer' and she assumes (correctly) that she will be gotten rid of. By situating this threatening exchange between two lovers in their home, Bachmann invokes the ancient motif of home and family as battleground and casts heterosexual and familial relationships as a surreal mafia execution. The speakers are shown to be engaged a mortal combat, and their confused lines about self and identity evoke two dueling personalities within the same individual. That in turn corresponds to a clinical condition with a rich history.

The so-called 'multiple personality disorder' was a topic of fascination for psychoanalysts in fin-de-siècle Vienna and persists in contemporary literature and popular culture.[113] Known today as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), the condition has long been

[112] "The whole keyboard." This instruction is associated with Beethoven's later piano sonatas which were composed after he had begun introducing atonal techniques (see Achberger 2004).

[113] The phenomenon interested Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Eugen Bleuler, Adolf Meyer, and of course Freud. It appears in works of literature and popular culture including Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde;* Nunally Johnson's 1957 film *The Three Faces of Eve*; Robert Bloch's 1959 novel and Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film *Psycho*; and Flora Rheta Schreiber's ostensibly non-fiction book *Sybil* (1973). The latter, published shortly after *Malina*, sparked fascination and controversy and garnered two films, suggesting a Zeitgeist in which multiple personality disorder resonated on both sides of the Atlantic.

associated with traumatic childhood experiences, and this linkage is borne out in contemporary research (though not without controversy).[114] It is apt, and likely not by chance, that Bachmann used it to structure a novel in which the predominant theme is trauma.

Bachmann appears to be grappling with Freud. At the same as she takes up his notion that trauma shows itself through symptoms, she critiques psychoanalysis' mishandling of female experience (i.e., 'hysterics' who recalled childhood sexual violations were merely voicing their fantasies). The protagonist in *Malina*, whose non-name of 'Ich' points to Freud, has clearly been traumatized and as a result suffers in her tortured 'today.' The novel's very premise is that something *did* happen to her, not of a fantasy nature but a nightmare, and no one around recognizes it. The multiple personality plot in *Malina*, if viewed as a sign of trauma, serves as an argument against Freud's cover-up and a reassertion that patriarchal order is the real cause of psychological trauma.

B. Language Games and Connections to Wittgenstein in *Malina* and Other Texts

Bachmann said in an interview: "ich habe nie beim Schreiben von Gedichten an Ludwig Wittgenstein gedacht" ("I have never thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein while writing poems"). Sigrid Weigel gives this statement full credence and disparages overly philosophical readings of Bachmann for losing sight of her literary goals. In so doing, Weigel prematurely dismisses philosophical dimensions of Bachmann's work and overlooks a vibrant tradition of philosophical poetry and literature. Without boiling Bachmann's lines down to prepositions and truth values,

[114] Brand et al. (*Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 2016) address the 'myth' that DID is iatrogenically created, i.e., spawned by irresponsible doctors and images from popular culture which are in turn taken up by fantasy-struck patients. They note two current lines of research refuting the iatrogenic theory and supporting a link betwen DID and trauma: Firstly, many studies show a srong relationship between DID and history of childhood abuse, secondly, research conducted in cultures where DID is not well-known (such as China, or central-eastern Turkey in the 1990s) reveals the condition to be nonetheless present.

showing the ties with Wittgenstein enhances our understanding of *Malina* precisely as a literary work with philosophical and social critical dimensions. This will be my aim in the following sections.

As I began compiling Wittgenstein-related passages in *Malina*, it became clear that there were too many to include. I limited myself to those relevant for my thesis on language and trauma. I expand in part on the work of Steutzger, who has linked the notion of a private language with the question of literary expression (see Steutzger 119-121).[115] Steutzger notes that certain passages in *Malina* play with pain expression, yet more evidence is needed to tie these references to Wittgenstein specifically and for the examination of what function they serve in Bachmann's novel.

1. Language Games: Passages that Playing with Language and Behavior in a Wittgensteinian Way

In the second paragraph of *Philosophical Investigations* (hereafter *Investigations*), Wittgenstein presents a scenario in which a builder and his assistant communicate about what part is needed next using a language consisting of the words "block," "pillar," "slab" and "beam." When the builder calls out one of these four words, the assistant brings the stone he has learned to fetch in response. This 'primitive language' is based on a notion of reference theory found in Augustine's *Confessions* in which the meaning of a word lies in the real-world object it designates. Wittgenstein goes on to show that while this paradigm is not wrong, it is not

[115] This study includes scholarship on Wittgenstein and Bachmann from approximately 1990 on. For a discussion of earlier work, see Steutzger 14-23.

comprehensive. It is but one example of a *Sprachspiel* (language game),[116] a phenomenon with myriad variants.[117]

Much of what Wittgenstein does in his *Investigations* is to illustrate, using various language games, the manifold ways in which people use language – and how philosophers often fall into error.[118] To the frustration of many readers, he withholds a straightforward definition of 'language game.' However, he does so explicitly because the totality of language games has no single common denominator but rather is bound together by various similarities akin to family resemblances.[119] In place of a unifying definition, he offers the image of a thread spun of various fibers all twisting together: "the strength of the thread does not lie in the fact that some single fiber runs through its whole length, but in the consistent overlapping of many fibers" (*PI §*67).

The diversity of language games in *Malina* rivals that of *Investigations*. The present section will consider two examples: First, the dialogues between the narrator and Ivan stand out conspicuously for their game-like qualities. Second, several passages play on the link between pain and behavior, harkening back to a Wittgensteinian sensation-expression game.

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[116] The term 'language game' is first introduced in *PI* §7: "We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "*language-games*."

[117] *PI* §22 lists language games such as describing an object, speculating about an event, play-acting, guessing riddles, telling jokes, and translating from one language into another.

[118] "For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*" (*PI* §38).

[119] Consider that families do not share exact physical features, but family members may have similar eyes, noses, etc., in such a way that they all appear related. In *PI* §65, Wittgenstein explains that the language game has no ready definition but is based on this kind of relatedness: "For one could now object to me: 'You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language game, and hence of language, is.' (…) And this is true. – Instead of stating something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, – but that they are *related* to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all 'language.'"

a. Dangerous Games: The Ivan Sentences

The narrator and Ivan have various 'sentence sets' that they 'practice.' The narrator gamely lists the sentence sets – *Kopfsätze* (head sentences), *Telefonzätze* (telephone sentences), *Schachsätze* (chess sentences)[120] and others. She also notes a set that is missing: *Gefühle* (feelings).[121] Like games, these sentence sets have linguistic rules (usually a repeated word or motif) that must be followed – and perhaps a winner and a loser. Marjorie Perloff hones in on the Ivan sentences as Wittgensteinian language games that show a communication breakdown between the two lovers. Closer observation reveals that this banter between Ivan and the Ich-figure is a special kind of game: Whereas Wittgenstein uses language games to illustrate how language works, Bachmann uses them to illustrate how relationships work. They do not work out well for the narrator.

The Ich-figure does not actually want to play games with Ivan: „Ich will kein Spiel / Es geht aber nicht ohne Spiel" (*IBM* 377) ("I don't want a game / But it doesn't work without a game"; *IBMB* 51). Yet she plays; a decision which serves Bachmann's character development (the narrator will 'go along to get along' and does not stand up for what she wants) and narrative strategy (the sentence sets become a crucial window into this relationship). Furthermore,

[120] The chess board, with is militant and competitive qualities as a metaphor, can be linked with Cold War power struggles. It also embodies a war between the narrator and Ivan and more broadly between men and women. Steutzger, pointing to an earlier draft of *Malina* in which chess is overtly linked with sex, argues that Bachmann is subtly critiquing Wittgenstein by taking a game he used to illustrate ideas about language and refashioning it as a power struggle between the sexes demonstrating male dominance (Steutzger 168-170). While she is fundamentally correct that Bachmann takes up philosophemes like the language game to explore problematics of female speech and language, I would not call this critique. Rather, the prominent recurrence of the chess metaphor in *Malina* mirrors that of *Investigations*, as Bachmann is elaborating and repurposing Wittgenstein's original insights on language for her own ends.

[121] "Kopfsätze haben wir viele, haufenweise, wie die Telefonzätze, wie die Schachsätze, wie die Sätze über das ganze Leben. Es fehlen uns noch viele Satzgruppen, über Gefühle haben wir noch keinen einzigen Satz, weil Ivan keinen ausspricht, weil ich es nicht wage, den ersten Satz dieser Art zu machen" (48). / "We have a lot of head-sentences, hordes of them, just like the telephone sentences, the chess sentences, or the sentences about life in general, but we're still missing a lot of sentence sets, we don't have a single sentence about feelings, since Ivan never pronounces one and since I don't dare create the first" (26).

beneath their playful and clever surface, Bachmann has given the games a destructive undercurrent that signals Ivan's true role in the narrator's life. The 'swearing sentences' are a good example of how these games form a kind of verbal dance around the Ich-figure's destruction.

> Durch Ivan, der das Spiel will, habe ich deswegen auch eine Gruppe von Schimpfsätzen kennengelernt. Über den ersten Schimpfsatz bin ich noch sehr erschrocken, aber nun bin ich fast süchtig geworden und warte auf die Schimpfsätze, weil es ein gutes Zeichen ist, wenn Ivan zu schimpfen beginnt.
>
> Ein kleines Aas bist du, ja du, was sonst?
> (...) Ein kleines Luder bist du
> (...) Dich haben sie ja ganz verdorben
> Ja, das bist du, erschrick doch nicht über jedes Wort
> Hast du denn das Gesetz nicht verstanden?
>
> Die Schimpfsätze bestreitet Ivan allein, denn von mir kommen keine Antworten, nur Ausrufe oder sehr oft ein ‚Aber Ivan!,' das jetzt nicht mehr so ernst gemeint ist wie im Anfang.
> Was weiß Ivan von dem Gesetz, das für mich gilt? Aber es wundert mich doch, daß Ivan in seinem Wortschatz das Gesetz hat. (*IBM* 378-9)

> Because of Ivan, who wants the game, I have thus gotten to know a set of swearing sentences. I'm still very shocked at the first swearing sentence, but now I've almost gotten They've addicted and wait for the swearing sentences, because it's a good sign when Ivan starts to swear.
>
> You're a little bitch, that's right, you, what else?
> (…) You're a little hussy
> (…) They've really ruined[122] you completely
> That's what you are alright, don't get so upset over every word
> Don't you understand the rules?
>
> The swearing sentences are Ivan's sole domain, since I don't respond with any answers, only outcries, or very often with a 'But Ivan!" which is now not meant as seriously as it was in the beginning.
> What does Ivan know of the rules which apply to me? But I'm still amazed Ivan has 'rules' in his vocabulary. (*IBMB* 51-2, partly my translation)

Because the purpose of the game is to be insulting and it is supposedly just a game, the words are not meant to be taken at face value. In philosophical terms, they have no truth value. On another level, however, this is part of an established misogynistic discourse. The phrase *ganz verdorben*

[122] *Verdorben* is a word used to describe food that has spoiled and gone rotten.

(completely ruined) could point at earlier sexual events that 'ruin' a woman. The words *Aas* and *Luder* (bitch and hussy) are suggestive of pornography in which women are abused and denigrated but must pretend to like it. Moreover, nearly every sentence in this set drives at some wound the Ich-figure already bears, from the name-calling over her genuine protests to telling her she has been ruined to reproaching her not to get so upset. Ironically, because the swearing sentences signal Ivan's good moods, the narrator becomes 'addicted' to the hurtful words and does her best to convince herself they are harmless. Bachmann, who struggled with alcohol and drug abuse, could have chosen a far prettier metaphor than addiction had she wished to suggest anything positive or even harmless about this game.

The Ivan sentences embody and reveal a power dynamic in which the woman yields to male power that is exercised through language. As Bachmann said in an oft-quoted 1973 interview, fascism does not begin with bombs but with the relationship between people; "fascism is the first thing in the relationship between a man and a woman" (*GuI* 144).

Finally, a word on rules. While Ivan's last sentence above refers to the rules of this particular language game, the narrator's thoughts are of other rules. Although those rules are not named, they likely pertain to relationships as she experiences them and/or the world as she experiences it. The word *Gesetz*, which can also mean 'law,' suggests a powerful outside force that dominates her life. Her final comment on this game expresses astonishment that Ivan even has the word 'rules' in his vocabulary. Why is this astonishing? With the aid of the word *Gesetz*, and without realizing that he himself is part of an ominous law governing her life, Ivan names the source of her trauma (this *Gesetz*) while playing his own easygoing role in her destruction. One can easily use a word in a language game without knowing explicitly which rule one is following, but a certain irony may arise.

The Ich-Ivan sentences form a Wittgensteinian language game with a Bachmann twist: They use rules and moves to portray a power dynamic in which the Ich-figure is on the losing end, forced to engage in a game she does not want to play.

b. Pain Behavior: Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Améry Between the Lines

I will proceed by considering two passages in *Malina* that explicitly deal with pain behavior.

(1) Es war der erste Schlag in mein Gesicht und das erste Bewußtsein von der tiefen Befriedigung eines anderen, zu schlagen. Die erste Erkenntnis des Schmerzes. Mit den Händen an den Riemen der Schultasche und *ohne zu weinen und mit gleichmäßigen Schritten* ist jemand, der einmal ich war, den Schulweg nach Hause getrottet (...) und manchmal weiß man also doch, wann es angefangen hat, wie und wo, und *welche Tränen zu weinen gewesen wären*.
Es war auf der Glanbrücke. Es war nicht die Seepromenade. (*IBM* 295, my emphasis)

(2) Schon damals, in Paris, nach der ersten Flucht aus Wien, hatte es angefangen, mit dem linken Fuß konnte ich vorübergehend nur schlecht auftreten, er schmerzte, und *der Schmerz wurde von einem Stöhnen begleitet, ach Gott, o Gott. So kommt es oft im Körper zuerst zu diesen gefährlichen, folgenreichen Anwandlungen, die einen gewisse Worte aussprechen lassen,* denn vorher hatte ich nur in einigen philosophischen Seminaren eine begriffliche Bekannschaft mit Gott gemacht, wie mit dem Sein, dem Nichts, der Essenz, der Existenz, dem Brahma. (*IBM* 600-601, my emphasis)

(1) It was the first time I had been hit in the face and my first awareness of someone else's deep satisfaction in hitting. The first recognition of pain. Holding the ties of her satchel, *without crying and with measured steps*, someone who was once me trotted home (…) and so sometimes one really does know exactly when it began, how and where, and *which tears were meant for crying*.
It was on the bridge. It was not the promenade. (*IBMB* 10, my emphasis)

(2) It began as early as Paris, after my first escape from Vienna, for a while I couldn't walk very well on my left foot, it hurt, and *the pain was accompanied by groaning, oh God, oh God. Thus these dangerous impulses of great consequence are often first felt in the body, where they cause certain words to be pronounced*: previously my only acquaintance with God was a conceptual one from philosophical seminars, along with being, nothingness, essence, existence, the Brahma. (*IBMB* 174, my emphasis)

These quotes show a progression over time. The first scene, in which the narrator is a child, features an identifiable crime and a muted reaction: She is slapped in the face by a schoolboy, whereupon she does *not* cry the tears that were 'meant for crying,' trots home a different person, *and* shifts to the third person in talking about herself (a distancing technique). Her outer calm and inner transformation in response to this 'first blow' recall Jean Améry's 1966 essay on torture,[123] which Bachmann cites in her story "Drei Wege zum See" ("Three Paths to the Lake"; 1972). The narrator's emphatic geographical pinpointing of the incident – it was on the bridge, not the promenade – evinces the certainty of a traumatically imprinted vision and calls to mind Améry's conspicuous repetition of "Breendonk," the name of the prison camp in Belgium where was tortured.

The second scene, in which the narrator is a young adult, features an idiopathic pain and a generalized reaction: Her foot mysteriously hurts, the cause remains obscure, there is no identifiable culprit, and only then does she voice the pain. But it is too late because she no longer recognizes who is hurting her, or when or how. The pain of unknown origin suggests an unnamed trauma manifesting as a physical symptom, while the word that expresses it – "God," one of the most abstract intangibles known to man – suggests the impossibility of locating either cause or cure for her pain.[124]

Distinctively Heideggerian terms like 'being' and 'nothingness' invite a philosophical view of this moment, in which a formerly conceptual acquaintance with God is replaced by

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[123] Améry writes, of the man who is tortured: "with the very first blow that descends on him he loses something we will perhaps temporarily call "trust in the world" (…) The blow acts as its own anesthetic. A feeling of pain that would be comparable to a violent toothache or the pulsating burning of a festering wound does not emerge. For that reason, the beaten person thinks roughly this: well now, that can be put up with; hit me as much as you want, it will get you nowhere" (Améry 28-9).

[124] In *The Philosophy of the Unsayable,* Franke writes: "the unsayability of the Name of God, which is enshrined in religious traditions and eminently in the unpronounceable Tetragrammaton (JHWH), a name for the Unnameable, stands for the impossibility of encompassing God's infinity within any finite structure of human language or consciousness" (Franke 24-5).

something else. What is this new form of acquaintances? The Ich-figure has not come to know God as some higher power, whether a vengeful or benevolent or indifferent one, but rather as a *word* – one that accompanies pain. This suggests the limits of philosophical postulates to explain overwhelming experiences like pain. Améry's essay returns to mind, as he writes about the impossibility of describing pain in any language available to us.[125] Wittgenstein's beetle also creeps in, reminding us that we can never actually know what pain feels like to another.

To pursue the Wittgensteinian thread further: These passages harken back to a series of ideas and loose arguments in *Investigations* that deal with sensations and their expressions (especially *PI* §244-315). Time and again, Wittgenstein uses the example of pain to frame his inquiries into how words for feelings and sensations work. How, for example, is the link between a word and its sensation formed? One possibility is that the connection is established via primitive expression of the sensation, like a child crying when it is hurt (*PI* §244). What, then, about a sensation that had no natural expression, if one can imagine such a thing? Wittgenstein puts forward the notion that if a group of human beings had no outward expression for pain, it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word 'toothache.'[126] This is partly

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[125] Améry writes: "It would be totally senseless to try and describe here the pain that was inflicted on me. Was it 'like a red-hot iron in my shoulders,' and was another 'like a dull wooden stake that had been driven into the back of my head'? One comparison would only stand for the other, *and in the end we would be hoaxed by turn on the hopeless merry-go-round of figurative speech*. The pain was what it was. Beyond that there is nothing to say. *Qualities of feeling are as incomparable as they are indescribable. They mark the limit of the capacity of language to communicate*. If someone wanted to impart his physical pain, he would be forced to inflict it and thereby become a torturer himself" (Améry 33, my emphasis). Améry also cites Wittgenstein in this piece when he writes, "The limits of my body are the limits of my self."

[126] "What would it be like if human beings showed no outward signs of pain (did not groan, grimace, etc.)? Then one could not teach a child the use of the word 'toothache'." – Well, let's assume the child is a genius and invents a name for the sensation himself! – But now indeed he could not make himself understood with this word. – So does he understand the name, without being able to explain its meaning to anyone? – But what does it mean to say that he has 'named his pain'? – How has he done this: naming pain?! And whatever he did, what was its purpose? – When one says "He gave a name to his sensation," one forgets that a great deal of stage-setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. And when we speak of someone giving a name to pain, grammar of the word "pain" is what is presupposed; it indicates the position where the new word is placed" (*PI* §257, partly my transl.).

because there would be no way to indicate the pain, and partly because even if the child thought up a name for his toothache, the act of naming alone is insufficient to create meaning. This latter point plays a pivotal role in the private language argument (discussed in Chapter II). Namely, for Wittgenstein, naming something pre-supposes a place for the new word in the grammar of that language. A private language thus falters because the inner attempt to ostensively define a term – to privately name a thing by mentally 'pointing' at it – cannot establish reference.

The narrator in *Malina* cannot effectively refer to and discuss her sufferings. Wittgenstein's ideas about pain and behavior are useful in suggesting that this disconnect occurs because her natural pain-expressions have been so repressed and muted that the words cannot enter into the language game. To give a routine example of how this might be caused by trauma structured into the narrator's society, consider a school-aged child in the early post-war years would also most likely have been subject to corporal punishment in school.[127] If a teacher's blows are legitimate discipline that is part of the established order, they cannot be complained about, and there is no language for this abuse that validates the child's experience.

2. Ways of 'Seeing': The Duck-Rabbit and Revealing Dreams

Most of the drawings in *Investigations* are as memorable as diagrams in a geometry textbook. There is one image, however, which has become famous. Tucked unassumingly into the second part of the book,[128] it blinks out at us with an eye that is infinitely fascinating.

[127] Corporal punishment in Austrian schools was banned in 1974. (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. "Corporal Punishment of Children in Austria. April 2016. Web. http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/assets/pdfs/states-reports/Austria.pdf, accessed 12/27/16)

[128] *Investigations* is made up of two parts, the first consisting of 693 numbered paragraphs and the second consisting of 14 sections labeled with roman numerals.

> I shall call the following figure, derived from Jastrow, the duck-rabbit. It can be seen as a rabbit's head or as a duck's head.
>
> 
>
> And I must distinguish between the 'continuous seeing' of an aspect and the 'dawning' of an aspect.
> The picture might have been shown to me, and I never have seen anything but a rabbit in it. (…) That is to say, if asked "What's that?" or "What do you see here?" I should have replied: "A picture-rabbit." (..) I should not have answered the question "What do you see here?" by saying: "Now I am seeing it as a picture-rabbit. I should simply have described my perception. (*PI* IIxi, p. 194-5)

This image is a bistable object.[129] The line drawing itself is ambivalent and may be viewed as either animal. Once one comes to understand that it can be either a duck or a rabbit, one may come to view it as a third object, a duck-rabbit. This example tells us something about language in that it portrays two different types of seeing' – a static type of viewing and a dawning recognition of something new – that often masquerade under the same word.

At the heart of this section is the experience of seeing something in a new way for the first time. The *thing* does not change, but our *vision* of suddenly shifts. To explore this shadowy moment, Wittgenstein repeatedly plays with the dawning of an aspect, the lifting of a curtain, the recognition of something that was not formerly seen. He is not interested not in the causes of this experience (those are of concerns for psychologists), but its place in language.[130] His goal is not to draw fine distinctions (*PI* 200), nor to arrive at some comprehensive definition (*PI* 206);

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[129] In picture theory, one property of bistable objects is their inherent reflexivity; that is, their ability to comment on their nature as images by drawing attention to their own viewing. This is interesting in light of the question of whether and how dreams can comment on themselves.

[130] "I contemplate a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not changed, and yet I see it differently. I call this experience 'noticing an aspect.' / Its causes are of interest to psychologists. / We are interested in the concept and its place among the concepts of experience" (*PI* 193).

rather, he seeks to show how many ways the word 'see' may be used and how slippery it is to define and distinguish the various meanings.

The section itself resembles a composition with recurring themes and variations, all based in some way around seeing, seeing differently, understanding, understanding anew, and what people utter in such situations. At 36 pages, it is by far the longest in Part II; all other sections are 1-3 pages. Wittgenstein knew how to be concise when he wished, suggesting that what he wanted to convey in the duck-rabbit section required this kind of repeated layering and variation, as if working to slowly effect a change in a *reader's* perception of *his* picture. Much like the dream chapter in *Malina*, he weaves a web of images that play with and complement one another, branching out into something that looks confusing and yet manages to convey a distinct impression.

I will return to that impression in a moment. First, let us turn to *Malina*. In the last dream of the middle chapter, the Ich-figure sees a bistable object, also a head:

> "Mein Vater hat diesmal auch das Gesicht meiner Mutter, *ich weiß nie genau, wann er mein Vater und wann er meine Mutter ist*, dann verdichtet sich der Verdacht, *und ich weiß, daß er keiner von beiden ist, sondern etwas Drittes*" (*IBM* 562, my emphasis)
>
> This time my father again has the face of my mother*, I don't know exactly when he is my father and when he is my mother,* then the shadow takes a shape, *and I know that he is not either one, but rather a third thing*" (*IBMB* 153, my emphasis, partly my translation)

These lines echo the uncertainty of someone confronted with an ambivalent image ("I'm not sure whether it's a duck or a rabbit") followed by the dawning recognition of a third possibility ("Ah, now I see a duck-rabbit"). The recognition of the bistable object as such creates a sudden awareness, a new concept that was not there before.[131] The narrator's recognition of this 'third

[131] *PI* 199: "The change produces an astonishment that the recognition did not produce."

thing,' suggestively mirroring the chapter title and authoritatively stated with an "I know," has the certainty of a vision or revelation. It is cemented with her final line in the dream, spoken to her father: "Ich weiß, wer du bist. Ich habe alles verstanden" (*IBM* 564) ("I know who you are. I have understood everything"; *IBMB* 155)). It does seem that there has been some change, perhaps even a revelation, for unlike the perturbed and panicked interludes between other dreams, this time she wakes up calm. The following dialogue with Malina ensues:

> Ich: Es ist nicht mein Vater. Es ist mein Mörder. (...)
> Malina: Warum hast du immer gesagt: mein Vater?
> Ich: Habe ich das wirklich gesagt? Wie konnte ich das nur sagen? Ich habe es doch nicht sagen wollen, *aber man kann doch nur erzählen, was man sieht, und ich habe dir genau erzählt, wie es mir gezeigt worden ist*. Ich habe ihm auch noch sagen wollen, was ich längst begriffen habe – daß man hier eben nicht stirbt, hier wird man ermordet. (...) Es ist der ewige Krieg. (*IBM* 567)
>
> Me: It's not my father. It's my murderer. (…)
> Malina: Why were you always saying: my father?
> Me: Did I really say that? How could I possibly say that? I didn't really want to say it, *but you can only tell what you see, and I told you exactly what was shown to me*. I also wanted to tell him what I have understood for a long time now – that people don't die here; here they are murdered. (…) It is the eternal war. (*IBMB* 155, my emphasis)

As Wittgenstein describes, a person shown the duck-rabbit for the first time would simply say he sees a rabbit; he would not report *seeing* it *as* a rabbit, for his is a kind of seeing that takes its object for granted. Malina's question to the narrator is much like asking someone who has just grasped the duck-rabbit as a bistable object, "Well why were you calling it a rabbit before?" To which he might respond, "That's just what I *saw*." The Ich-figure's response is an echo of this idea: "You can only tell what you see, and I told you exactly what was shown to me." She could previously report only what she saw, even though she *now* recognizes the father as her murderer. Both the dream chapter and the film cited in its title (Carol Reed's famed 1949 film noir, *The Third Man*) have as their central outcome the realization that someone who had been

close and trusted was, in fact, a murderer (Achberger 103). I wish to posit that the *nature* of this revelation (seeing something in a new way) is just as important its *content* (i.e., "father = murderer").

The concluding sentence of the chapter, "It is the eternal war," may be the most frequently quoted line in all of *Malina*. It contains the crux of Bachmann's *Todesarten* thesis: That people are perpetually at war and are being murdered in plain sight. This may be as close as Bachmann comes in the novel to explicitly articulating it (though it lurks between every line), and I propose that it is significant that these lines occur right after the Ich-figure's sighting *and seeing* the multi-stable head in her dream. One cannot prove the pun was intended on Bachmann's part, though the bistable head conjures the duck-rabbit for anyone familiar with it. Regardless, the following consideration remains: The overwhelming impression left by the duck-rabbit section in *Investigations* is that time and time again, our language games surrounding the word 'to see' deceive us. The overwhelming impression left by the middle chapter of *Malina*, culminating in the narrator's dream of a father-mother-murderer head, is that the narrator is finally able to *see* that she is being brutalized, murdered and silenced. The enabling societal structures, reinforced by her own ego in waking life, are thrown off in the primal visions of the dream world, leading her to finally see (in the sense of a dawning recognition) that "people don't die here, they are murdered." While this dream is not exclusively about Wittgenstein – each of the narrator's dreams is highly layered and textured – I have sought to show that this revelation has a Wittgensteinian build-up.

3. Limits of Language and Logic

"Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen."

"Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." (*Tractatus* 7)

Bachmann's reception of the famous closing proposition of *Tractatus* is multivalent. As discussed in the first part of this section, she sometimes sees in Wittgenstein's silence a path to the mystical. At other times, as discussed in the second part of this section, she views it as a form of protest against political and historical atrocities and/or an appropriate reaction for philosophy in the face of phenomena that lie beyond language. As Lennox points out, both Bachmann and Wittgenstein believed that in order to heal the sickness of their time, a new language and ways of thinking were required (see Lennox 2006, 210). In Fäcke's reading, Bachmann and Wittgenstein have different views of borders: For Wittgenstein, the limits of the world, which coincide with the limits of language and logic, cannot be overstepped, whereas for Bachmann, they are fortress walls one should try to surpass (Fäcke 108). While Fäcke draws a valid distinction, this apparent tension may be resolved. As Daniel Roth has pointed out, Wittgenstein's philosophical silence need not apply to literature (Roth 37). Indeed, in order to express profound trauma – and on the other hand, a mystical or transcendent experience – we must go beyond the limits of language and logic. Where philosophy must properly fall silent, art may proceed.[132]

Adorno is relevant to Bachmann's processing of the limits of language and logic, and issues as to what can be said in poetic language. In one of history's minor ironies, Adorno, who criticized Wittgenstein's statement as vulgar and anti-philosophical, had his own over-quoted

[132] 'Art' here includes music, which Achberger views as a key metaphor in *Malina* for female absence in patriarchal culture, as well as a way to transcend the limits of language. She finds that musical cues in the novel "allow that which cannot be spoken to show itself" and that musical countertexts serve to transcend of the limits that language and thought impose (see Achberger 124-125).

and oft-misread sound bite concerning silence: Namely, his remark in *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (1951) that to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric. Bachmann and Celan were both concerned with this statement, as were countless writers and critics who developed a contentious relationship with it in the ensuing decades. Though it is often (mis-)taken as an assertion that one should not or somehow *cannot* write poetry after Auschwitz, I concur with Ryland that his remark means something different when considered in context. Its real concern has to do with the reification of culture and the nature of art as a commodity in late modern capitalist society. Given that art and cultural criticism cannot separate themselves and rise above the society in which they are embedded, any attempt to write poetry is rooted in society's constant march toward downfall, and as such carries within it the seeds of its own barbarity. Hence Adorno was not telling Bachmann or Celan they *could not* write poetry after Auschwitz; rather, he was advocating dialectical thought as the only mode of dealing with the aporia of modern society (Ryland 144). The misreading of Adorno's dictum as a prohibition on poetry after Auschwitz became the focus of much misplaced controversy and helped to foster the commonplace that the Holocaust constitutes an unspeakable. The notion of language's impotence in the face of the horror can in turn drift over into silencing victims by not allowing their (poetic) speech or implying that they are barbarians if they speak their pain – which is not to say Adorno himself intended that, and both Bachmann and Celan had friendships with Adorno that no doubt transcended his controversial statement.

a. <u>Bachmann's Early Notion of a Positive, Mystical Silence</u>

Bachmann valued Wittgenstein's logical, scientific analysis of language. On the other hand, she found in his work mystical components paving the way to a utopian transcendence of

scientific thinking.[133] These two apparent opposites may be mutually constitutive in that the mystical becomes a backdrop before which logical analysis can take place. Put another way, the unsayable is a foil from which the sayable appears (see Fäcke 106-7). As Weigel notes, Bachmann's concept of limits evolved considerably, from a site of separation at the end of her dissertation (logic v. metaphysics; language v. the unsayable; philosophy v. art) to a dialectical threshold – ein "Ort, der eine Möglichkeitsbedingung fur die 'Einbruchstellen des sich Zeigenden' darstellt" (a "locus representing the conditions for 'incursions of that which shows itself'"; see Weigel 94-7). Bachmann's interest in the limits of language and logic and the silence that lies beyond lasted throughout her life, while her treatment of the topic shifted from philosophical to literary and lyrical. Her 1953 essay and radio essay offer evidence of her early ideas. She writes, of *Tractatus*:

> Nicht die klärenden, negative Sätze, die die Philosophie auf eine logische Analyse der naturwissenschaftlichen Sprache beschränken und die Erforschung der Wirklichkeit an die naturwissenschaftlichen Spezialgebiete preisgeben, sondern seine verzweifelte Bemühung um das Unaussprechliche, die den '*Tractatus'* mit einer Spannung auflädt, in der er sich selbst aufhebt, – sein Scheitern also an der positive Bestimmung der Philosophie, die bei den anderen Neopositivisten zur fruchtbaren Ignoranz wird – ist ein erneutes, stets zu erneuerndes Mitdenken wert. (Bachmann 1978b 65).
>
> It is not the clarifying, negative sentences, which limit philosophy to a logical analysis of scientific language and reveal the exploration of reality in scientific subspecialties, but rather its desperate attempt at the unspeakable that charge *Tractatus* with a tension with which it raises itself up – its rejection of the positive position of philosophy that grows to fruitful ignorance among the other neopositivists – that is worthy of renewed, perennially renewing consideration. (My translation)

This passage highlights two key aspects of Bachmann's reading of *Tractatus*. The first is an epistemological point: Because there is so little we can truly know, we must exercise utmost

[133] Steutzger notes the following characteristics of *das Mystische* (the mystical) in *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein's diaries: (1) an ineffable knowing; (2) a unified view of reality; (3) a timelessness marked by an exit from linear time; and (4) a recognition of dichotomies like good v. evil as treacherously rooted in subjective world views (Steutzger 94-6).

caution in our assertions (and here even the neopositivists fell into error). Secondly, Wittgenstein's 'desperate attempts at the unspeakable' are what sets *Tractatus* apart as seminal work. The 'unspeakable' presents itself as the impossibility of capturing something in logical forms. It cannot be said but must be shown. Practicing silence in the face of such cases stands against a more positive positioning of philosophy, but is also itself a positive act which in itself: It leads out beyond the limits of logic, language and the quotidian world and into to the realm of the mystical,[134] to a position from which one can paradoxically regard the world from outside itself.[135]

Bachmann's fascination with limits appears reworked in her poetry and prose. In her 1958 radio play "The Good God of Manhattan," [136] for example, which won her the Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden (Radio Play Prize of the War Blind), a pair of lovers tries to transcend the limits that society places on ecstatic experiences. Their passionate love, rising to the level of the mystical and sublime, fails when the young woman is killed by a bomb sent by

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[134] In Bachmann's own words (from the 1953 essay):

> Von der klaren Darstellung des Sagbaren ausgehend, verweist Wittgenstein unvermutet darauf, daß die Philosophie damit das Unsagbare bedeute. Was ist nun dieses Unsagbare? Zuerst begegnet es uns als Unmöglichkeit, die logische Form selbst darzustellen. (...) Was sich zeigt, kann nicht gesagt werden; es ist das Mystische. Hier erfährt die Logik ihre Grenze, und da sie die Welt erfüllt, da die Welt in die Struktur der logischen Form eintritt, ist ihre Grenze die Grenze unserer Welt. So verstehen wir den Satz: „Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt" ([*Tractatus*] 5.6. (Bachmann 1978b 72)
>
> Taking the clear representation of the sayable as a point of departure, Wittgenstein unexpectedly points out that philosophy thereby means the unsayable. What, then, is this unsayable? It first confronts us as the impossibility of representing logical form itself. (…) That which shows itself cannot be said; it is the mystical. Here logic encounters its limit, and as it fills the world, as the world enters the structure of logical forms, its limits are the limits of our world. That is how we are to understand the sentence: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" ([*Tractatus*] 5.6). (My translation)

[135] Hence *Tractatus* 6.45, which Bachmann cites: "The conception of the world sub specie aeterni is its conception as a – confined – whole. The feeling of the world as a confined whole is the mystical."

[136] Daniel Roth has argued that many of Wittgenstein's ideas about time, the limits of logic and the metaphysical are woven into this play, and even "that Bachmann took the conception of the Good God *directly* from Wittgenstein's diaries" (Roth 25). While it is delicate to ascertain exactly what Bachmann took from Wittgenstein, clearly the radio play grapples with notions of limits rooted in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as well as Musil's "andere Zustand" (other condition).

the so-called "Good God" who represents societal order. [137] The young man, who has avoided the bomb by going out for a walk because he needed some space, leaves on a ship without so much as burying her, adding to the woman's specific victimization (Achberger 41). In the end, the limits of logic, law and society succeed in violently destroying the love affair as if to say, 'Yes, this is the way of the world.' However, upon closer examination the play's conclusion is more nuanced, for listeners are left with a compelling image – the couple rising sky-high together (up through successive the floors of a Manhattan tower), transcending all worldly limits, fainting from love and indeed dying from it – that is not easily dissolved. While this love cannot survive in the world of the play, one is left wanting to believe it exists somewhere. A similar tension exists in *Malina* between the utopian fragments ("Ein Tag wird kommen" / "a day will come") and the traumatic reality of the narrator's life.

b. Wittgenstein's Abyss: Traumatic Silence

Trauma played a role in the formulation of Wittgenstein's early views on the limits of logic. In its early (1916) form, *Tractatus* was a treatise on the nature of logic. This changed with key passages that were added while Wittgenstein was a soldier in the trenches of World War I. His combat experiences transformed it into a work containing remarks about ethics, aesthetics, the soul and the meaning of life. The publication of his *Geheime Tagebücher* ('secret' wartime journals) in 1985 revealed a personal aspect to this phase in his development; the journals contain prototype sentences for the more esoteric propositions in *Tractatus,* showing

[137] Bachmann's short story "Simultan" ("Word for Word") also displays her fascination with limits. The protagonist, a simultaneous interpreter who dances between languages, and a man named Ludwig Frankel 'travel out of the world' together. As they drive through a barren stretch of Italy, Ludwig casually uses the word "abyss." Bachmann, in her Wittgenstein essay, writes that Wittgenstein moves about in his own abyss – in the sense of Baudelaire's poem, "*Le gouffre*." Perhaps when one tries to exit this world, be it through romantic love or any other form of *andere Zustand* (other circumstance), a gaping traumatic abyss threatens.

a genealogy of thought that developed out of his combat experiences and suggesting that the origins of his philosophy (which cannot after all be summarily separated into 'early' and 'late') are not far afield from the horror and trauma of war.[138]

Trauma is also a key thread in Bachmann's reading of Wittgenstein. Near the end of her Wittgenstein radio essay, the second speaker asserts:

> Der Grund zu seiner Haltung haben wir in der historischen Situation zu suchen, in der Wittgensteins sich fand. Sein Schweigen ist durchaus als Protest aufzufassen gegen den spezifischen Antirationalismus der Zeit, gegen das metaphysisch verseuchte westliche Denken, vor allem das deutsche... Freilich ist er ohne das billige Rezept für die oft verlangte Synthese gekommen, aber mit dem zur Heilung – als Therapeut. (Bachmann 1978a 126-127).
>
> We should seek the reason for his position in the historical situation in which Wittgenstein found himself. His silence is to be thoroughly understood as protest against the specific anti-rationalism of the times, against the metaphysically contaminated Western thinking, especially the German… Admittedly he arrives without a prescription in hand for the oft-demanded synthesis, but rather with a prescription for healing – as a therapist. (my translation)

Here, Bachmann takes Wittgenstein's silence as something other than a path to the mystical. Terms like 'the historical situation' and 'metaphysically contaminated Western thinking' refer to Heidegger, Nazism and the Holocaust. Words like healing and therapist convey a longing for a cure, but both Wittgenstein and Bachmann know that philosophy cannot provide the comfort of a comprehensive synthesis. What Wittgenstein offers instead is a way of *living with* existential angst and trauma. Bachmann saw Wittgenstein as having grappled deeply with his own personal abyss as well as a more universal abyss – the 'cardinal drama' at the heart of Baudelaire's poem '*Le gouffre.*'[139] She cites his poem at the close of her dissertation to represent unspeakable

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[138] See for example Monk ch. I, Perloff 28-9, Macho 46-62.

[139] Bachmann writes in her 1953 essay:

> Die Bewegung, die hinter diesem Philosophieren steht, das nicht zur Lösung unserer Lebensprobleme beitragen kann, das in seiner Leidenschaft nach der Ganzen Wahrheit nur die dürre, formelhafte, „ewige" Wahrheit der Logik zu bieten hat – Sätze die wir überwinden müßen, um die Welt richtig zu sehen –, ist die

"traumatic experience in art and literature" (Höller 67), and again in her radio essay. She believed that it was not the clarifying, negative sentences of philosophy, but rather the act of engaging in and with this abyss, that could bring a kind of healing.

Trauma beyond words manifests in *Malina* when the Ich-figure says, "Es ist furchtbar, es ist die Furchtbarkeit noch gar nicht enthalten in einem Wort, es ist zu furchtbar" ("it's terrible, it is terribleness not even remotely contained in one word, it is too terrible") (317, my transl.). The narrator here is stuck in a circular logic, trying to use language for something that is explicitly beyond words. In a nod to where such a trap leads, she then registers the crack in the wall of her apartment into which she will ultimately disappear, sealing her voiceless trauma.

A subtler play on the limits of logic when it comes to trauma occurs in the middle chapter when the narrator dreams that screams to her father, "Ich hasse dich mehr als mein Leben!" ("I hate you more than my life"; *IBM* 520, my translation). Upon waking, she grapples with this strange utterance:

> Warum habe ich das gesagt, warum? Mehr als mein Leben. Ich habe ein gutes Leben, immer besser geworden durch Malina. Es ist ein trüber Morgen, aber doch schon Licht. Was für Sprüche mach ich da, warum schläft Malina jetzt? Gerade jetzt. Er soll mir miene Worte erklären. Ich hasse mein Leben nicht, warum kann ich also mehr hassen als mein Leben. Ich kann es nicht. (*IBM* 520-1)
>
> Why did I say that, why? More than my life. I have a good life, it's getting better all the time thanks to Malina. It is a dreary morning, but there is still some light. What am I saying, why is Malina asleep now? Precisely now. He should explain my words to me. I don't hate my life, so how could I hate more than my life. I cannot. (My translation)

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gleiche, von der Baudelaire in seinem Gedicht ‚*Le gouffre*' spricht. Wie Pascal bewegt sich Wittgenstein in und mit seinem Abgrund; von allen Grenzen strömt, was er nicht nennen darf, auf ihn ein und setzt ihn dem „drame cardinal" aus. (Bachmann 1978b 73).

The impulse behind this philosophy, which cannot lead to a solution of our life problems, which in its passion for the whole truth can only offer the thin formulaic "eternal" truth of logic – sentences we must overcome in order to see the world rightly – is the selfsame one Baudelaire speaks of in his poem '*Le gouffre*.' Like Pascal, Wittgenstein moves in and with his abyss; from all borders, that which he may not name flows upon him and inflicts upon him the "cardinal drama." (my transl.)

The narrator struggles to apply the rules of logic to her dream speech. 'Greater than' (>) and 'less than' (<) are comparative concepts in logic used to convey relationships on a spectrum. If the Ich does not hate her life, it is nonsensical to speak of any spectrum on which she could hate something 'more than' her life. Malina, the rational one, is supposed to explain this riddle, but he is asleep on the job, so she dutifully makes breakfast while letting him rest. Alas, the egg is too hard and the milk is spoiled and she concludes, "alles sauer" ("everything sour"). This dismal moment actually implies the answer to the puzzle: She does indeed hate her life, or at least her unconscious dream-self does. Dreams do not constitute logical proofs or evidence before the law. Yet the realm of dreams – where logical language falls short – is precisely where the narrator's trauma resides. That is where literary language can step in, allowing *Malina* to give voice to the trauma.

4. Themes of Public versus Private

Near both the beginning and end of *Malina* there appears a song line, "O alter Duft aus Märchenzeit" ("O ancient scent of fabled times"). This phrase complements a recurring fairytale motif throughout the novel and bookends a series of references to the music of Arnold Schoenberg.[140] Drawn from the final poem/song of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and written out on a musical staff, it 'pops' from the pages of text. What might make *Pierrot Lunaire* worthy of serving as an alpha and omega of the novel? First and foremost, just as Bachmann wished to create new ways to use language, she admired the way Schoenberg had developed a new language for music. A second reason is hinted at by Bachmann's extensive play with the word 'moon' alongside citations of *Pierrot Lunaire*.[141] The moon points to multiple themes important to the novel including the Cold War space race, an undercurrent of incest,[142] and the opposition between public and private. The latter will be my focus at present.

Pierrot Lunaire contains a sun/moon duality suggestive of divisions between public and private, just as the ich-figure's world is painfully divided into public and private spheres. She shuns parties and events, is loath to make phone calls in public, and detests Herr Mühlbauer's journalistic, voyeuristic intrusion into her home. She prefers night (also associated with the moon) over day, or is condemned to do so by her insomnia (which engenders a sleeping pill

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[140] The numerous Schoenberg references throughout *Malina* have rightfully drawn critics' attention. Achberger notes parallels between the novel's three-chapter structure and the three poem groupings in *Pierrot Lunaire* (Achberger 111), and Lennox suggests that the *Pierrot Lunaire* motif hints at utopian possibilities (Lennox 2006, 103).

[141] When Ivan tells the narrator, without inviting her, that he plans to vacation at the Mondsee, she says to save face that she must herself visit the Altenwyls on the Wolfgangsee. While at Wolfgangsee, pining away for Ivan and the *Mond*see, she finds a piano and taps out a line from Schoenberg's "*Mond*estrunken." The Mondsee and other lakes in the Salzkammergut area were rumored to be burial sites of Nazi gold. Wolfgangsee is associated with the sentimental operetta "Im weißen Rößl," which premiered in 1930 and enjoyed a revival in the 1950s when audiences were content with light entertainment featuring Austria as an Alpine idyll.

[142] Malina is the name of a sister in a Nordic legend who is raped by her brother; she becomes the sun and he becomes the moon, eternally and remorselessly chasing her (von Hoff 136-4). See also Windows to the Universe.

addiction that she struggles to keep a secret even from Malina). She writes countless letters that never see the light of day, instead finding their end the wastepaper basket; a kind of private speech underscoring a fiercely private existence. Panic attacks in public spaces send her running for home. However, precisely that home is revealed to be the most unsafe place of all when the narrator disappears into a crack into the wall and Malina annihilates all traces of her.

This disappearance into a crack in the wall is reminiscent of two poems that Bachmann drafted in the wake of her break-up with Max Frisch (1962-63), both working with the image of a beetle in a crack in a wall. Consider the following excerpt from "Daß es gestern schlimmer war, als es heute ist" ("That it was worse yesterday than today").

Gestern, da ging der ganze Regenguß mit einmal
in meinem Hals, ich konnte nicht schreien.
Ich bin froh, daß ich rufen kann heute,
aber es ist ja besser, das Schweigen ein Leichtes.

[...]

In der Mauerritze[143] habe ich,
in der Schrecksekunde,
einen schwarzen Käfer gesehen,
der stellt sich tot.

[...]

Mich endlich ganz zu zertreten
ist auch in seinem Sinn, in meinem
Wahnsinn, ich selber bins, der mich und den Käfer anstarrt
Ich habe ein Romanebuch in der Hand,
genug schwer, um diesen Käfer zu töten

Yesterday the entire downpour fell at once
into my throat, I could not scream.
I'm happy that I can call out today
but it is indeed better, the silence an easy one.

[...]

In the crack in the wall I saw
in a moment of panic
a black beetle
who is playing dead.

[...]

To finally trample me
is also in his mind, in my
madness, it is I myself who stare at myself and the beetle
I have a novel in my hand
heavy enough to kill this beetle

(Bachmann 2006, 530-32, my translation)

[143] The words used in *Malina* for the crack in the wall are *Sprung* and *Riß*. *Ritze* has a similar meaning in this context, and the image of a creature perishing inside a crack in a wall is consistent between the poems and the novel.

Glimpsed in the speaker's moment of panic (*der Schrecksekunde*), on a day so bad she cannot even cry out, the beetle seems to embody the lyrical speaker's most primal panic and self-loathing. Playing dead in a crack in the wall, it represents her own annihilation – one for which silence (the word *Schweigen* appears twice early in the poem) has paved the way. At the same time, the speaker identifies with the beetle so that it mediates her empathy. Like other prominent insects in literature such as in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, it elicits disgust and a desire to kill. Yet quashing it would constitute a violent act within the poem's moral compass. Identification with animals, especially those considered lowly or repulsive, is a theme for several other Jewish writers including Canetti and Gertrud Kolmar. In Lorenz' reading, Kolmar's unusual use of animals offers a foil for the Nazi likening of Jews to rats or vermin to be annihilated and shows that the first step toward the degradation of human beings is brutality against animals (Lorenz 1998).

Another draft of this poem with the same beetle image ("An das Fernmeldeamt Berlin" / "At the Berlin Telephone Exchange") contains lines about being alone "without a child, without a lover, without a radio, without a telephone, inside this crack" that cement the lyrical self's privately suffered destruction. The narrator in *Malina* lives through fleeting contacts with Ivan via the telephone; a connection eliminated at the novel's end. Thus, alongside silence, isolation plays a role in the speaker's suffering in these poems and the ich-figure's death in *Malina*.

This poetic image may be alluding to §293 of *Investigations* (see Chapter II). Wittgenstein uses the image of a beetle in a box – or rather, the notion of an *unseen* object that is *called* a beetle but is concealed in individual boxes which only each owner may open – to get at the idea of pain as a private sensation. He questions how we know what 'pain' means to another,

since we cannot get inside his body and feel it ourselves. How, then, can we can speak of something when the referent is unknown and unknowable? We *do* speak of pain, to be sure, but the word is only problematically linked to its referent. (The same would be true for other sensations like joy, anger, taste, and seeing colors.)

Bachmann, familiar with *Investigations*, created a poetic beetle standing for a kind of private agony or *Schrecksekunde*. Years later, she wrote the fate of *Malina*'s traumatized narrator: To ultimately merge with that beetle, concealed in the wall and unable to cry out; identifying and finally becoming the animal, as in Kolmar. Despite Bachmann's claim that she never thought about Wittgenstein while writing a poem (and one need not trust statements by the author), this convergence of novel and poem upon a concealed beetle make a powerful intertextual statement about the lethal nature of pain condemned to remain private.

C. Silence, Repression, Secrecy and the Unsayable

Malina is rife with passages in which the Ich-figure tries to cry out but cannot, tries to write but falters, tries to find words for her terror but fails, or wants to say something but is kept silent. All three 'leading men' in the novel – Malina, Ivan, and the father figure of the dream chapter – as well as various other (mostly male) characters with whom the narrator has passing contact attempt to silence her. Her perpetual return to men who silence and kill her constitutes a *Wiederholungszwang* that may stem from early trauma (whatever it is that she must – and yet cannot – tell). As Achberger rightly notes, a common thread throughout the narrator's dreams is the many ways in which she is silenced. Moreover, I will argue, the narrator ultimately internalizes these strictures to the point that she censors herself.

The present section considers motifs of silence in *Malina* before turning to Foucauldian notions of discourse control and exploring a silence specifically associated with madness. The consistent take-away point from each episode is that the narrator's voice is taken away. That this linguistic oppression issues largely from men supports a reading of *Malina* as an indictment of a patriarchal and essentially fascist society.[144] The association of the father figure with Nazism via the imagery of gas chambers links him with the Holocaust crimes. While the other two men are not German (Malina bears a Slavic name and Ivan is Hungarian[145]) and do not physically abuse the narrator, theirs is a softer violence. They prove equally capable of abusing and silencing the ich-figure, suggesting that while Nazism has gone underground in post-war Austria, it has by no means disappeared and is present in the sense of an *alltäglicher Faschismus* (everyday fascism).[146] Finally, Bachmann's staging of *Malina* and other *Todesarten* stories largely in the domestic and interpersonal realm should not be mistaken for depoliticizing their content. As Achberger puts it:

> Bachmann's focusing on the interpersonal was less a retreat from the political sphere to the private than it was an attempt to expose what she perceived as the primary source of

[144] Lennox, for example, believes that Bachmann's unique insight, building on ideas of Adorno and the Frankfurt School, was to recognize and portray the situation of women in her time and place through female characters who "have access to no language whatsoever that would allow them to speak either about their own condition or circumstances outside the purview of women" (Lennox 2006, 15-16).

[145] The Slavic and Hungarian identities of Malina and Ivan are sometimes read as representing lost pieces of the Austro-Hungarian empire. They could also represent Hungarian and Slavic Nazi collaborators; there were major sites of the Holocaust in the respective countries, and Celan and Hilsenrath for example experienced persecution through Romanian henchmen.

[146] There are, however, exceptions to this rule. There are male victims like Marcel, the Parisian beggar, who died when welfare workers and police forced him to shower. There are also female figures like Antoinette Altenwyl, who form part of a social order that ignores fascist and post-war crimes alike and proves unbearable for the narrator. I note these exceptions in order to avoid a radical and overly simplistic reading such as, "all men are evil." We are meant to draw conclusions not about individuals of a specific gender, but about an entire social order. To situate my point within the evolving feminist reception of Bachmann: The mid-1970s to mid-1980s saw a feminist rediscovery of Bachmann, with readings dominated by a radical feminist analysis alleging that all women were victims of men. In the late 1980s this model was thrown into question, largely due to critiques of implicit racism, leading to a period of uncertainty during which gender and feminist issues in Bachmann's receded in feminist scholars (Lennox 2006, 19). Recent analyses such as Schlipphacke (2010) return to questions of gender oppression but trade the radical, reductive paradigm for a more nuanced reading. For an innovative study of how Bachmann interpretation has tended to reflect larger developments in feminist theory and the broader sociopolitical context, see Lennox 2006.

> political oppression. She saw fascism as originating in interpersonal relationships (…) Being made into a psychological case study by your psychiatrist husband, or into the subject of a book by your former lover, or into an invisible, silent consciousness lost behind the crack in the wall at the hands of your lover, your father, and your male alter ego – all these "murders" will go undetected. (Achberger 98-99)

1. The Violence of Silence

While the Ich-figure is struggling to recount the *Todesart* ('manner of death') of Marcel, a beggar in Paris,[147] Malina cuts her off:

> Malina unterbricht mich, er schützt mich, aber ich glaube, sein Beschützenwollen führt dazu, daß ich nie zum Erzählen kommen werde. *Es ist Malina, der mich nicht erzählen läßt*. (*IBM* 602, my emphasis)
>
> Malina interrupts me, he is protecting me, but I think his wanting to protect me will mean I never get around to telling. *It's Malina who isn't letting me tell*. (*IBMB* 175, my emphasis)

In the name of protection – the very essence of paternalistic reasoning – Malina thus prevents the narrator from speaking. As Göttsche correctly notes, Malina's logical disposition and sober approach to language are far from benevolent.[148] Over the course of the novel, the limits of *his* language progressively come to dictate the limits of the Ich-figure's world, just as he counts and limits her sleeping pills – and there is no one to say his numbers are wrong.

Even when no one is actively silencing her, the Ich-figure often elects not to speak. Even in the supposedly happy beginning, she describes a vacuum of silence between her and Ivan:

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[147] The name Marcel may be a reference to Proust, on whom Bachmann wrote a radio essay. He also shares an umistakable syllable with Celan, lives in Paris (Celan's home-that-was-never-fully-home), and dies in water – the victim of a forced shower – because someone wanted to wash him of his wounds for a new life that did not exist.

[148] "Malina steht für eine leidenschaftslose, aber konsequente begriffliche und diskursive Vermittlung der Todesartenproblematik. (...) So schlagen Malinas Überlegenheit und sein 'klarer' Erzählbegriff ins Bedrohliche um, werden selbst zu einem Grund von Errinerungs- und Erzählstörungen. (...) Malinas Vertrauen auf eine verläßliche Faktenwelt (...) bezeichnet jedoch auch die Grenzen des von ihm verkörperten Erzählbegriffs." / "Malina represents a passionless but consistently conceptual and discursive mediation of the *Todesarten* problematic. (...) Thus Malina's dominance and 'clear' narrative perspective become threatening and themselves become grounds for disturbances of memory and narrative. (...) Malina's trust in a reliable world of facts (...) delineates, however, the borders of the narrative perspective he embodies" (Göttsche 198, my translation).

> Ehe Ivan geht, sitzen wir beide auf dem Bett und rauchen, er muß wieder für drei Tage nach Paris fahren, es macht mir nichts aus, ich sage leichthin: ach so, weil zwischen seinen und meinen sparsamen Äußerungen und dem, was ich ihm wirklich sagen möchte, ein Vakuum ist, ich möchte ihm alles sagen, sitze aber nur hier, drücke peinlich genau das Zigarettenende in den Aschenbecher und reiche ihm den Aschenbecher, als wäre es sehr wichtig, daß er keine Asche auf meinen Boden fallen läßt. (*IBM* 327)
>
> Before Ivan goes we both sit on the bed and smoke, he has to go back to Paris for three days, I don't mind, I say casually: okay, because between his and my sparse utterances and what I would really like to tell him there is a vacuum, I'd like to tell him everything, but I just sit here, press the cigarette butt painfully precisely into the ashtray and pass him the ashtray, as if it were very important that he not let any ashes fall on my floor. (my translation)

In cinematic language, the prototypical post-coital cigarette often portrays intimacy and satisfaction while also reestablishing distance. In this scene, it reveals underlying tensions. Ivan's upcoming trip clearly upsets the narrator but she cannot say so because there is a 'vacuum' between their casual words and any would-be authentic speech. In lieu of expressing herself (*sich ausdrücken* – literally an expressing-outward) there is only a pressing (*drücken*) as she grinds the cigarette butt into the ashtray. In a post-Holocaust literary world and particularly in Bachmann's work, no mention of falling ash is incidental; here, they conjure heinous crimes and serve to raise questions about Ivan's identity in the novel. Is he her lover or one of her murderers, and does he belong in a collective of murderers?

Hane (2015) also notes that an intimate brand of violence-through-silence between Ivan and the Ich-figure materializes in the omission of questions. When Ivan tells narrator she *need not* (*muss nicht*) explain herself, he effectively does not let her speak – but does so while maintaining a cover of friendliness and respect for her privacy, making his crime all the more invisible and untellable.[149] Thus a double-layer of linguistic destruction is formed on the one

[149] "Ivans rhetorische Strategie besteht darin, sein aggressive Schweigen zu verschweigen. (...) Bei der Vergewaltigung durch das doppelte Schweigen Ivans handelt es sich nicht bloß um Verschweigen der Gewalt,

hand by violence through silence, and on the other hand by the denial of that very violence through silence.

Finally, an old piece of Bachmann's history makes a belated (as in *nachträglich*) appearance in the phrase "peinlich genau" ("painfully precisely"). When Paul Celan dedicated his poem "In Ägypten" to Bachmann days after they first met in 1948, he addressed and signed it thus: "der peinlich Genauen (…) Der peinlich Ungenaue" (*HZ* letter 1, p. 7) ("To the painfully precise one (…) From the painfully imprecise one"; *HZH* letter 1, p. 4). Given the recurrence of selected lines in their correspondence and the significance of that particular missive, this phrase in *Malina* seems connected with Celan. Celan's sign-off may form part of a flirtatious banter between the soon-to-be lovers. However, just as "In Ägypten" portrays a dialectical struggle between the lyrical speaker's attraction to a strange woman and the unbridgeable gap created by her very otherness, his closing words to Bachmann have a dark side. The only rhyme in "Todesfuge" is "sein Auge ist blau …. Er trifft dich genau" ("his eye is blue… he precisely shoots you"), in which the appearance of the privileged Aryan Nazi 'Meister' evokes the stereotypical German precision (in contrast, perhaps, to stereotypical the Eastern European Jewish imprecision). This connection lends Celan's '*(un)genau*' wordplay with Bachmann a deeply insulting undertone.

2. A Right to Kill

The narrator also speaks of mere thoughts and words which would give her housekeeper Lina[150] the right to kill her:

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sondern auch um die Gewalt des Verschweigens, das die verübte Gewalt leugnend den Anschein eines Friedens erzeugt" (Hane 80). [***English only? Even necessary?***]

[150] Lina shares the last four letters of Malina's name and their characters may are closely related. Her practical skills and pragmatic outlook, which echo Malina's attributes, alternately assist and oppress the narrator.

> Im Café Heumarkt bin ich noch immer böse auf Lina, denn sie ist die gefährliche Mitwisserin mancher meiner Gedanken, sie hört mich auch manchmal Sätze am Telefon sagen, die für sie die reine Häresie sind und die es ihr erlauben würden, mich sofort aus dem Fenster zu stürzen, mich auf die Guillotine zu schicken, in die Garrotte, mich auf einem Scheiterhaufen zu verbrennen. (*IBM* 427)
>
> At Café Heumarkt I am still mad at Lina because she is the dangerous accessory to my thoughts, she also sometimes hears me say sentences on the telephone that are the purest heresy to her and which would give her the immediate right to throw me out the window, send me to the guillotine, the garrotte, to burn me at the stake. (my translation)

The religious imagery of a heretic burning at the stake suggests ideas proscribed by the highest social authority. The heretical ideas themselves are not made explicit but are hinted at by way of the telephone, which her love for Ivan has transformed into her Mecca and Medina. This paragraph is also nestled between two utopian '*Ein Tag wird kommen*' ('A day will come') drafts, thus interrupting and encroaching upon her lush imagery of beauty, freedom and peace. One reading, then, might be that the narrator's heretical thoughts are her (unrequited) love for Ivan and her (impossible) visions of a better world. The more important point is that her words and thoughts, whatever they are, would give someone else the right to kill her.

Even nonverbal sounds can be deadly. While the narrator is visiting her friends the Altenwyls[151] in the Austrian resort region of Salzkammergut, she imagines that at night there will be a moth flapping around in her room and that specifically its sound will make her want to hunt it down and kill it:

> ich werde aus dem Bett steigen, herumgehen, ein brummendes, summendes Insekt suchen, es doch nicht finden, und dann wird sich ein Falter still auf meiner Lampe wärmen, den könnte ich erschlagen, aber gerade der tut mir nichts und darum kann ich es nicht, er müßte schon Laute von sich geben, ein marterndes Geräusch machen, um mich mordlustig zu machen. (*IMB* 162-3)
>
> I'll get out of bed, walk around, look for a humming, buzzing insect but not find it, and then a moth will quietly warm itself on my lamp, I could kill it, but it's not doing

[151] The name "Altenwyl" recalls Hugo von Hofmannsthal's three-act comedy "Der Schwierige" ("The Difficult Man"; 1921), about Viennese aristocracy in post-Habsburg Austria.

> anything to me and therefore I can't, it would have to make noises, some agonizing sounds, in order to make me thirst for murder. (*IBMB* 105)

This passage is written in the future subjunctive tense, giving the moth encounter an air of fantasy. Perhaps that is because there is something highly uncharacteristic about this scenario: Whereas the narrator usually assumes a 'victim' role within the victim/perpetrator dyad omnipresent throughout the novel, here she takes on the perpetrator role of the moth's would-be murderer. But the grounds for murder are mere noise. The Ich-figure thus takes the societal censorship inflicted upon her and in turn acts it out on the moth, punishing it as she has been punished for speaking. This device recalls moments of Freudian repetition (*Wiederholung*) and substitution (*Stellvertretung*) present in the *Franza* fragment, such as when Franza repeats the violence perpetrated upon her by her rapist by banging her own head against the pyramid[152], or when she effectively asks a former Nazi doctor in Egypt to reenact Nazi euthanasia on her.[153]

3. Foucault and the Order of Discourse

There is no evidence to date that Bachmann engaged directly with Foucault, but she would have been familiar with poststructuralist theoretical debates and read the magazines *Critique* and *Tel Quel* in which Foucault published (Jäger 4). Born in the same year, Bachmann and Foucault were contemporaries attempting to untangle relationships between language, knowledge, power and social control, paying particular attention to the division between reason and madness.[154] It is fitting to explore connections between the two writers and thinkers, while

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[152] As Weigel discusses, Franza can be seen to manifest the Freudian notion of a bodily memory found in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Weigel 518). *Malina* also portrays trauma returning as physical symptoms, as discussed in section IV(c)i.

[153] At points throughout the novel, Franza problematically conflates herself with Holocaust victims and displaces her experience onto them; see Schlipphacke 47-49.

[154] Foucault's *Folie et déraison* (1961) examined in detail the rise and evolution of mental illness as a social construct in Western European society. Though Derrida criticized this work for advocating metaphysics and

of course granting that Bachmann did not see her writing as a mere transposition of philosophical theories.

a. Things One May Not Say

In his lecture "L'ordre du discours" ("The discourse on language"), delivered at the Collège de France on Dec. 1, 1970, Foucault posits that in in every society the production of discourse is controlled, organized and distributed by a number of procedures whose function it is to summon that society's powers and dangers, to tame chance events, and to avoid the heavy, dreadful reality.[155] *Malina*, taken as a document left behind by the muted and murdered Ich-figure, is a clear testament to the societal control of discourse. As such, it contains explicit references to this phenomenon, such as the following description of post-war Vienna:

> Du wirst dich nicht mehr erinnern können an die ersten Jahre nach dem Krieg. Wien war, gelinde gesagt, eine Stadt mit den sonderbarsten Einrichtungen. Diese Zeit ist aber aus ihren Annalen getilgt worden, es gibt keine Leute mehr, die noch darüber sprechen. Verboten ist es nicht direkt, aber man spricht trotzdem nicht darüber (...) Aus dieser Seuche hervorgegangen muß man sich die Verhältnisse denken, die heute herrschen. (*IBM* 614-616)

> You probably can't remember the first few years after the war. Vienna was, to put it mildly, a city equipped with the strangest features. But this time has now been expunged from its annals, nobody talks about it anymore. It's not exactly forbidden, but even so people don't talk about it… The prevailing relations today must be seen as stemming from this epidemic, for instance. (*IBMB* 181, partly my translation)

Bachmann was critical of metaphysics for her own reasons, she would likely have been intrigued by Foucault's investigation of the socially constructed nature of madness and the accompanying control over lives, thoughts and words.

[155] As Foucault is particularly vexing to capture in English, I provide the original French for key passages.

> "je suppose que dans toute société la production du discours est à la fois contrôlée, sélectionnée, organisée et redistribuée par un certain nombre de procédures qui ont pour rôle d'en conjurer les pouvoirs et les dangers, d'en maîtriser l'événement aléatoire, d'en esquiver la lourde, la redoutable matérialité" (Foucault 10-11).

The Ich-figure then describes post-war Vienna as the site of a universal prostitution in which everyone is sleeping with and using everyone else, but this 'prostitution' has been covered in a veil of silence to the point that it was erased from the annals of history. Importantly, it is not outright forbidden to speak about the past, *yet no one does*, and after all, a rule is a practice. This collective silence creates a taboo strong enough to erase the past, with the narrator alone fighting to retain the integrity of her memory. She knows that the present is by no means divorced from the past but indeed stems directly from it, and the word *herrschen* (to dominate or rule over) point to the ruling order. She mentions Franziska Ranner (a.k.a. Franza), Fanny Goldmann and Elisabeth Mihailovics – female characters in other Bachmann stories making up an elaborate fictional Viennese social circle – all of whom meet their demise at the hands of a fascist, patriarchal social order.

b. Things One May Say, But They Will be Erased

Amid her powerful indictment of corrupt post-war Vienna, the narrator simultaneously trivializes her own words.[156] In other cases, her controversial or subversive statements are more directly dispatched. The journalist, Herr Mühlbauer, controls her discourse by encouraging, discouraging and deleting:

> Denken Sie bloß an das Wort 'Palast' im Zusammenhang mit der Justiz, es warnt, es kann dort nicht einmal wirklich Unrecht gesprochen warden, wieviel weniger dann Recht! In einer Entwicklung bleibt ja nichts ohne Folgen, und dieser tägliche Brand des Justizpalastes . . .
> (Flustern von Herrn Mühlbauer: 1927 15. Juli 1927!)

[156] At the outset she says to Malina: "Ich will dich nur unterhalten und dir sagen, was alles komisch* ist" (273) ("I'm only trying to keep you entertained and tell you whatever is funny*" (180)). *Boehm translates *komisch* as 'amusing,' which has the benefit of allowing this to seem like idle chatter. However, the German word *komisch* is less innocent, as it also refers to things which are strange, peculiar and unsettling. This is thus a doubly-coded statement; benign at face value, but indicting just below the surface.

> Der tägliche Brand eines so gespenstischen Palastes mit seinen Kolossalstatuen, mit seinen kolossalen Verhandlungen und Verkündigungen, die man Urteile nennt! Dieses tägliche Brennen . . .
> (Herr Mühlbauer stoppt und fragt, ob er das letzte Stück löschen dürfe, er sagt 'löschen' und er löscht schon.)
> . . . Welche Erlebnisse zu meiner...? Welche Dinge mich am meisten beeindruckt haben? Einmal ist es mir unheimlich erschienen, daß ich ausgerechnet auf einer Geosynklinalie geboren bin, ich verstehe ja nicht allzuviel davon, aber ein Geotropismus muß dann auch für den Menschen unvermeidlich sein, er bewirkt doch eine Richtungsumstellung sondergleichen.
> (Betroffenheit von seiten des Herrn Mühlbauer. Hastiges Abwinken.) (*IBM* 384-5)

> Just consider using the word 'palace' in connection with justice, it's a warning, not even injustice can really be administered there, let alone justice! In a development nothing is without consequence, and this daily burning of the Palace of Justice. . .
> (Herr Mühlbauer whispers: 1927, July 15th, 1927!)
> The daily burning of such a ghastly palace with its colossal statues, with its colossal deliberations and pronouncements they call judgments! This daily burning. . .
> (Herr Mühlbauer stops and asks if he might erase the last bit, he says 'erase' and is already erasing.)
> . . . Which experiences have made me. . . ? Which things have made the most impression on me? I once thought it very strange that I was born right on top of a geosyncline, of course I don't know too much about those things, but where people are concerned a certain geotropism is inevitable. It really does affect the way we change direction more than anything else.
> (Perplexity on the part of Herr Mühlbauer. Hasty signaling to stop.) (*IBMB* 54-55)

Throughout the interview, the Ich-figure speaks directly while Herr Mühlbauer is granted only reported speech. At first glance, this gives her more power in their dealings. However, the function of Herr Mühlbauer's parenthetically reported actions and words belie their peripheral guise: His primary task is to regulate the narrator's discourse and render it fit for public consumption.

Some historical context will elucidate why these particular words of the narrator words might require regulation. The Palace of Justice,[157] built from 1875-1881 by Emperor Franz Josef I, is an elaborate and imposing structure in central Vienna serving as the seat of the Supreme

[157] Photo source: Der Oberste Gerichtshof. The Palace of Justice: The 1927 Fire. Web. http://www.ogh.gv.at/en/palace-of-justice/the-1927-fire, accessed March 2016.

Court of Austria and other legal bodies. In July 1927, in so-called the July Revolt, the Palace of Justice was set on fire during a riot. Police who had been ordered to clear the crowd by force fired on the crowd and killed 89 people. In historical hindsight, the July Revolt has come to be seen as a precursor to the rise of Austrofacism, the collapse of the First Republic in 1934 and the Anschluss with Nazi Germany four years later. By referencing this incident, the Ich-figure conjures an uncomfortable reminder of Austria's fascist history. Moreover, by speaking of the *daily* burning of the palace, she and implies that the ironic travesty of the Austrian state killing its own citizens on the steps of its "Palace of Justice" is ongoing.

Returning to Herr Mühlbauer's reactions embody the social control of discourse: He first corrects her speech, frantically whispering the right date – "July 15, 1927!" When the narrator nonetheless continues to speak of the daily burning, he simply erases her words in an altogether routine manner.

The Ich-figure then proceeds in a different and baffling direction. 'Geosyncline' is a term from an outmoded geological theory about how mountains and other topological features are formed. 'Geotropism' refers to the ability of plans to grow away from gravity (up towards the sun) while their roots grow with gravity (down into the earth).[158] The two words bear no relation to one another beyond their similar-sounding syllables and geotropism, a technical term for plants, has naught to do with *humans* changing direction. She thus resorts to a language game of spewing pseudo-scientific babble, perhaps to test whether anything at all will be

[158] This could be a reference to Benjamin's *Über den Begriff der Geschichte (Theses On the Concept of History*, 1940), with which Bachmann engaged in her 1955 essay, "Was ich in Rom sah und hörte" ("What I saw and heard in Rome"). In Thesis IV, Benjamin writes: "Wie Blumen ihr Haupt nach der Sonne wenden, so strebt kraft eines Heliotropismus geheimer Art, das Gewesene der Sonne sich zuzuwenden, die am Himmel der Geschichte im Aufgehen ist." / "Like flowers turn their heads toward the sun, so by virtue of a secret kind of heliotropism, that which has been strives to turn towards the sun that is dawning in the sky of history" (my transl.). Numerous scholars including Lennox, Krylova, Perloff, Steutzger, and Weigel have investigated Benjaminian threads in Bachmann's work.

acceptable.[159] Herr Mühlbauer hastily waves her off; his reaction to statements he does not understand again amounts to censorship. This time, though, it is perhaps censorship of a different sort. Her words are no longer dangerous; instead they are devoid of *reason*.

4. Madness and Excluded Discourse

Turning to finer gradations of silencing, Foucault lays out three main methods by which discourse may be excluded in a society: (1) Prohibition (on who may speak and what may be mentioned); (2) the division of reason versus folly (which not a prohibition, yet is just as powerful a means of exclusion); (3) the 'will to truth' (in short, what we consider truth, what that includes and what it excludes). The second of these – the division between reason and folly – is of particular interest in my reading of *Malina*. Foucault writes:

> From the depths of the Middle Ages, the madman was he whose discourse could not be said to form part of the common discourse of men. His words become null and void. (…) In all events, whether excluded or secretly invested with reason, the madman's speech did not strictly exist. It was through his words that one recognized the madness of the madman; they were certainly the locus for exercising the division; but they were never received nor listened to.[160] (Foucault, my transl.)

Moreover, despite what might seem like significant developments in medicine and its institutions, Foucault posits that those institutions retain their full power, with doctors listening to patients across a carefully maintained caesura (see Foucault 14-15).

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[159] Hane analyzes this interview scene by way of Barthes' *The Neutral* (1977-78), in which he posits that every question implies power and violence but one may challenge the power dynamic by giving irrelevant or subversive answers. Per Hane, the narrator does precisely that in answer to Herr Mülbauer's first question, employing a potpourri of subversive strategies: She repeats only fragments of his question, declines to answer ("dann möchte ich lieber nicht" / "then I'd rather not"), undermines her own authority as a speaker, denies she has any opinion, and finally reuses his own phrase "eine große Zeit" ("a great era") in an ironic manner (Hane 83).

[160] "Depuis le fond du Moyen Age le fou est celui dont le discours ne peut pas circuler comme celui des autres: il arrive que sa parole soit tenue pour nulle et non avenue. (…) De toute façon, exclue ou secrètement investie par la raison, au sens strict, elle n'existait pas. C'était à travers ses paroles qu'on reconnaissait la folie du fou; elles étaient bien le lieu où s'exerçait le partage; mais elles n'étaient jamais recueillies ni écoutées" (Foucault 12-13).

Bachmann uses the motif of madness extensively and purposefully throughout the *Todesarten*. Oftentimes a 'diagnosis' of madness becomes a means of oppression and silencing by a dominant social order. This is most pronounced in the *Franza* fragment, in which Leo Jordan diagnoses and treats his wife's neuroses while simultaneously bringing about her breakdown himself. Jordan's authority makes Franza's predicament deadly; if he, a renowned Viennese psychiatrist declares he insane, no one in Vienna will believe otherwise. The narrator of *Malina*, though not married to a Leo Jordan, suffers under similar societal strictures and often remains silent for fear of not being understood or believed. As discussed above (section IV(b)ii), she silences herself before Ivan by branding her thoughts mad: "Ivan würde etwas so Irsinniges nicht begreifen" "Ivan wouldn't understand something so crazy").

Madness and silence intertwine with a particular fierceness in her dreams:

> Wenn es anfängt, ist die Welt schon durcheinandergekommen, und *ich weiß, daß ich wahnsinnig bin.* (...) Ich kann ja nichts sagen, weil ich weg von meinem Vater und über die Marmormauer muß, aber in einer anderen Sprache sage ich: Ne! Ne! Und in vielen Sprachen: No! No! Non! Non! Nyet! Nyet! No! Ném! Ném! Nein! Denn auch in unserer Sprache kann ich nur nein sagen, sonst finde ich kein Wort mehr in einer Sprache. (…) Ich lächle also, weil mein Vater nach meiner Zunge langt und sie mir ausreißen will, damit auch hier niemand mein Nein hört, *obwohl niemand mich hört.* (*IBM* 503-4 my emphasis)

> When it begins the world is already mixed up, and *I know that I am crazy*. (…) I can't say anything, since I have to escape my father and get over the marble wall, but in another language I say: Ne! Ne! And in many languages: No! No! Non! Non! Nyet! Nyet! No! Ném! Ném! Nein! For in our language, too, I can only say no, I can't find any other word in any language. (…) So I smile, since my father is reaching for my tongue and wants to pull it out to stop anyone here from hearing my no, *despite the fact that there's no one to hear me*. (*IBMB* 114-115, my emphasis)

It is no coincidence that in this dream-world the Ich-figure who is presumably crazy cannot effectively protest in any language. She has her tongue torn out by her father, and to add a final

layer of silence, no one can hear her anyway. The irrelevance of her words and the mutilation of her body are part and parcel of her being branded as mad.[161]

The leading women in *Todesarten* all share the predicament that they are being slowly murdered in *and by* a society which does not recognize their murders as such, and simultaneously dismisses their would-be testimony as unreliable. French psychoanalysts Francoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudrillière, in their (2004) study of trauma in history and literature, draw frequent connections between trauma and madness, emphasizing that those people whose understanding lies beyond the bounds of socially acknowledged reality risk being perceived by others – and themselves – as insane.[162] Foucault would no doubt concur. Philosophy, psychology and literature, then, converge on the notion that there is a link between madness, trauma and the unsayable.

5. Discipline of the Disciplines

Foucault lays out a set of internal procedures in which discourses actually exercise control over themselves. This occurs in part through discipline-specific rules and norms

[161] Dennemarck-Jäger finds the narrator's self-identification as 'crazy' to be a move typical of incest victims in which they take the guilt for the abuse upon themselves because they cannot stand to conclude that their abuser (often a parent) is the disturbed one (Dennemarck-Jäger 103). While this view has psychological validity, I take this scene to be about experiencing a trauma one cannot formulate in words, or even thoughts. The narrator's 'craziness' is less about protecting her from the conclusion that that her father is disturbed and more about the impossibility of having her experience entered into the annals accepted of social discourse.

[162] Davoine and Gaudillière view trauma as inevitably linked to larger histories. In an interview with Cathy Caruth, they elaborate on what it means to bear witness to a traumatic event that is never inscribed in history. They believe such witnesses become 'people arrested in time,' meaning they bear witness by remaining in a time that has been crossed out or circumscribed but never *in*scribed. When asked what 'being out of time' means, and Davoine explains, "These histories have been expelled from time by denial. And then we go to perversion. Which is *an active discourse*, which is *an active erasure of the social link*" (Caruth 2014, 90, my emphasis). The victims of never-inscribed trauma thus embody the cut-out parts of history and the cut-out parts of social discourse. While not tantamount to madness, this state of limbo is closely linked. Davoine goes on: "When it's madness, the track of trauma is lost. You just have a witness of what you don't know. Perhaps a lot of time has passed, or the trauma area has been so wiped out, as in the mass graves, where there is grass and they say, 'Nothing happened. It's all fantasy.' And so madness happens when the tracks are lost" (Caruth 2014, 95).

governing who is authorized to speak and under what circumstances, and what constitutes valid speech. These rules are often not explicit, yet are widely understood to the point of being taken for granted.

In the early 1950s, Bachmann had planned to write a monograph on Wittgenstein. However her correspondence with the editors of the *Merkur* magazine reveals her ambitions tempered by concerns that she was not active within the established *Zunft* (guild) of philosophers and so would be in the marginal position of an 'unauthorized' author. She abandoned the project in 1955, marking a final turn away from academic philosophical writing (Weigel 85-7). In her discussion of the academic power structures that helped discourage Bachmann from the Wittgenstein monograph, Weigel cites Foucault's *L'ordre du discours*, noting that the ritualistic powers of academic institutions find their way into *Malina* when the Ich-figure describes receiving her doctorate. "Kurze Zeit später mußte ich zwei Finger auf einen Stab legen und ein lateinisches Wort sagen. Ich hatte ein von Lily geliehenes, zu kurzes schwarzes Kleid an, im Auditorium Maximum standen aufgereiht einige junge Männer und ich" (*IBM* 657-8) ("A short time later I had to place two fingers on a staff and say something in Latin. I was wearing a too-short black dress I had borrowed from Lily, a few young men and I were standing in a row in the Auditorium Maximum"; my translation). Seemingly trivialized by mention of a too-short black dress, this moment is significant. Unlike men, women have no academic or professional uniform. They necessarily show up in attire unfitting for the occasion, and their outfit then discredits them as serious intellectuals. In conjuring the imposing physical structure of the University of Vienna and the Latin words of an academic ceremony, Bachmann points to trappings of academic discourse control that go beyond words to include gender, dress and body language. This formal discourse is welcomed and indeed revered by members of the disciplines,

but – and this is precisely the point of the initiation ritual – it is a club with exclusive membership, and violations of the rules result in censure.

6. Paradigm of the Author

Another device that exercises control over the ways in which we think and speak, particularly within literary discourses, is the concept of the author. Foucault writes that in the Middle Ages, *scientific* work drew validity from its author (as opposed to institution or method) while the author of a *lyric* work was considered less important. Originality was considered 'lying,' so bards gave sources even if they had to invent them. Today this is reversed; we want to know the individual author of every poem or play while science is supposed to be objective and independent of identity (at most, we want to know if there a name-brand institution behind it). As Foucault writes, "We ask authors to answer for the unity of the works published in their names; we ask that they reveal, or at least display the hidden sense pervading their work; we ask them to reveal their personal lives, to account for the experiences and the real story that gave birth to their writings."[163] This 'author paradigm' in turn dictates the terms in which we understand and speak about authors and their works of literature or art.[164]

Bachmann incisively satirizes this author paradigm in the scene with Herr Mühlbauer, as he asks alternately stupid and inappropriate questions but does not want to hear what the narrator actually has to say. She is temporarily caring for Ivan's children's cats, and when they wander into the room a humorous but telling moment plays out between parentheses:

> (Herr Mühlbauer deutet aufmunternd auf Frances, die leise hereingekommen ist, gähnt, sich streckt und dann mit einem Satz auf den Tisch springt. Herr Mühlbauer muß das

[163] "on demande que l'auteur rende compte de l'unité du texte qu'on met sous son nom ; on lui demande de révéler, ou du moins de porter par-devers lui, le sens caché qui les traverse ; on lui demande de les articuler, sur sa vie personnelle et sur ses expériences vécues, sur l'histoire réelle qui les a vus naître" (Foucault 29).

[164] See Weigel 312-313 for how this paradigm is (mis-)applied to Bachmann.

> Band wechseln. Kleine Unterredung mit Herrn Mühlbauer, der nicht gewußt hat, daß ich Katzen habe im Haus, Sie hätten so nett über Ihre Katen sprechen können, sagt Herr Mühlbauer vorwurfsvoll, mit den Katzen hätte es eine persönliche Note gegeben!) (*IBM* 387)
>
> (Herr Mühlbauer points encouragingly at Frances, who, having entered quietly, yawns, stretches and then leaps with one bound onto the table. Herr Mühlbauer has to change tapes. Small conversation with Herr Mühlbauer who didn't know I had cats in the house, it would have been so nice if you'd spoken about your cats, says Herr Mühlbauer reproachfully, the cats would have added a personal note!) (*IBMB* 57)

The narrator then shoos the cats away because they are not hers and not relevant for her. But Herr Mühlbauer's encouragement – delivered in a reproachful tone no less – belies the crass public imagination of the author: He has come there to pry into her personal life (read: what the public imagines it to be) and an affectionate anecdote about her charismatic cats would be just the thing. This is an absurd and parodical trivialization of a female writer.

Another way in which *Malina* questions and undermines the notion of the author is through the letters signed *eine Unbekannte* (an unknown woman). This illustrates the impossibility of the Ich-figure signing her letters with a name and thus signals the absence of subject and authorship (see Weigel 554).[165]

7. Bachmann, Foucault, and the Problem of Address

Cathy Caruth describes a difficulty that arises when someone wishes to tell a story but has no audience to hear it. The absence of any listening other leads to what may be termed a *problem of address* that is of particular relevance for trauma (Caruth 2016, 116-140).

Freudian trauma, as Caruth understands it, is not about [non-]representability but rather about something never fully integrated into consciousness. Trauma thus calls into question what

[165] Rejection of authority as speaker is also to be found in Bachmann's own public speeches, such as the Anton-Wildgans-Preis speech (Hane 84).

experience is and the very possibility of 'knowing' what happened. In the face of an inability to distinguish truth from falsity, can we even have a history? As Laub puts it, if there was no reliable witness, then there is no Self to tell the 'real' story. Thus traumatic stories are often address in a disjointed manner or are simply not addressed to anyone, for how does one establish address if the Self is not actually there to speak?

In interviews conducted by Caruth (Caruth, *Listening to Trauma*, 2014), several leading theorists note that traumatic symptoms are often tied up in parts of the narrative where it is assumed that no one will listen; an *a priori* lack of address. This raises the question of where trauma is located. Is it at the moment of the traumatic event itself, or later when no one listens? Naturally, it can be and likely is both. But given the gravity of the latter predicament, the problem of address constitutes a useful theoretical framework for examining the intersection between language, trauma and silence in *Malina* – and, perhaps, for understanding a slim but important frame enclosing Foucault's *L'ordre du discours*.

Foucault opens the lecture by lamenting his difficulty in finding the words to begin, quoting from Beckett's *The Unnamable* to conjure the impossibility of speech precisely where it is most needed. He concludes the lecture by discovering (or in any case revealing to the audience) the reason for those desperate constraints on his own speech. After expressing his deep intellectual debt to Jean Hyppolite, he voices a humble sense of inadequacy to succeed him at that very podium in the Collège de France and closes with the following remark:

> And I understand better why I experienced so much difficulty with beginning just now. I now know which voice it was that I had wanted to go before me, to carry me along, to invite me to speak and lodge itself in my own discourse. I know what was so formidable about taking up this speech, for I was doing it in the place where I heard him, and where he no longer is, to hear me.[166]

[166] "Et je comprends mieux pourquoi j'éprouvais tant de difficulté à commencer tout à l'heure. Je sais bien maintenant quelle est la voix dont j'aurais voulu qu'elle me précède, qu'elle me porte, qu'elle m'invite à parler et

While one could seek to situate this inhibition within his multi-tiered schema for the exclusion of discourses, it is remarkable for something highly personal at play. There is someone to whom Foucault would wish to speak, that person – a dear teacher and mentor – is *not there to listen*, and this causes him painful difficulty in finding words. His opening and closing remarks come together to exemplify a problem of address, bookending the lecture with what Foucault himself cannot quite say because it will not find its listener. Bachmann's ill-fated *Todesarten* protagonists share a similar problem; there is something they must say but they cannot find an audience because society's eyes and ears are closed. This is also the predicament Celan, as a Jewish poet, faced after the Shoah; his audience had been murdered.

qu'elle se loge dans mon propre discours. Je sais ce qu'il y avait de si redoutable à prendre la parole, puisque je la prenais en ce lieu d'où je l'ai écouté, et où il n'est plus, lui, pour m'entendre."

V. CELAN'S POETICS OF ADDRESS AND BERNHARD'S LANGUAGE OF MADNESS

A. Poetics of Address in Paul Celan's *Meridian*

Paul Celan said after a missed get-together with Samuel Beckett, "That's probably the only man here I could have had an understanding with" (Felsteiner 282). He felt an affinity for the author of *The Unnamable* and perhaps the very lines Foucault cited in a lecture laced with his own traces of trauma – "I must go on, I can't go on, I must go on." While Celan is widely recognized as 'the poet of unspeakability par excellence,' the nature of his silence remains controversial.[167] His poems are not summed up by any single terminological catchphrase (hermeticism, Holocaust verse, political *Engagement*), nor can any one country or language can lay claim to him. Critics have often turned to his October 22, 1960 *Meridian* speech, delivered upon receiving Germany's prestigious Georg Büchner Prize, to seek insight into Celan's poetics. Some readings treat the *Meridian* purely as a poetological statement, brushing over its status as a public address; a move Mendicino criticizes, arguing that it is first and foremost a speech and must be considered as such (Mendicino 633). Most critics do acknowledge the *Begegnung* (encounter) aspect in the speech, though interpretations vary widely as to who or what is being encountered. I approach it as an address (in the sense of a speech as well as an encounter) that attempts to broach unsayable trauma in a self-reflexive manner, using carefully choreographed language to dance around what cannot be said in words.

[167] For a discussion of the poetics of Celan's poetic silence, see Franke 2013. Franke takes an Adornian or negative dialectic view, arguing that Celan's language is a mimesis of its own destruction.

This section provides relevant biographical information before turning to the question of how unsayable trauma functions in Celan's *Meridian*. Using his notes and drafts[168] to flesh out thought processes between the lines, I will argue (i) that the theme of madness, implicit in *Meridian*, occupied Celan for personal reasons while he was writing the speech; (ii) the *Meridian* functions as a productive silence, one that marks the start of a journey; and (iii) Celan's language is the vehicle for a journey intended to encounters others and perhaps ultimately – but in an important way unintentionally – himself. His is not a private language, but precisely the opposite, for it intends to address.

Celan was born in 1920 to a German-speaking Jewish family in Czernowitz, Bukovina, a region formerly ruled by the Habsburg Monarchy, then part of the Kingdom of Romania, and now part of Ukraine. His parents were murdered in the Holocaust, and he survived in forced labor camps. He spent the immediate post-war years in Bucharest, fled as the curtain of Communism descended, and arrived in Vienna in late 1947. As Celan arrived, Austria's superficial denazification process was already nearing its end, with amnesty granted to all 'minor offenders.' Post-war Vienna, without a Jewish community because of the deportation program coordinated by Eichmann's operative Alois Brunner, was "not congenial" for Celan and other returning refugees (Felsteiner 55). His momentous encounter with Bachmann took place in spring 1948. Shortly thereafter he moved to Paris.

Unlike Elie Wiesel and other well-known survivor authors, Celan seldom discussed his own fate or personal reactions to it, and the effects of the Holocaust remain indirectly reflected in his poetry (Glenn 1972, 30). To reconstruct something of a factual trauma narrative, I refer to

[168] I have used the 1999 Tübingen edition of Paul Celan's *Meridian* speech and accompanying materials, hereafter *PCM*. English is Pierre Joris' translation. Quotes from the final speech are cited by paragraph numbers in **bold**; all other quotes (e.g. from Celan's notes) are cited by page number (identical in the English edition).

Felsteiner's biography. On July 5, 1942, the German army reached Czernowitz, where the Romanian police and army aided them in obliterating a six-hundred-year Jewish presence by "burning the Great Synagogue; imposing the yellow badge; plundering, torturing and slaughtering community leaders and three thousand others during the first twenty-four hours; driving Jews into a ghetto; and later deporting tens of thousands" (Felsteiner 12-13). On the evening of June 27, 1942, while Celan was away from home, his parents were deported east to Transnistria where his father died from typhus and his mother was shot as unfit for work. For the remainder of his life he would regret that he not been there to help them or die with them. Celan was in a forced labor camp from July 1942 until February 1944, and returned home shortly before the Soviets reoccupied Czernowitz. He shared little of his hardships during that time; twenty years later he drily referred to "the war years, which off and on I 'spent' in so-called labor camps in Romania" (Felsteiner 12-23).

While Celan's it is difficult to categorize nationality (labels like Romanian, Austrian or French miss the mark)[169] there are reasons to place his work among Austrian literature. A gifted polyglot with roots in multicultural Habsburg culture, he chose as his literary language the German idiom of that cultural sphere (one that Friedrich Torberg considered to have died in 1938). [170] Celan spent nearly a year in Vienna and continued to visit Austria with his wife in

[169] Felsteiner sums up Celan's complex origins and hybrid identities:

> Two years in Bucharest (1945-47) solidified a Romanian dimension. A 1948 sojourn in Vienna and his family's Hapsburg Empire origins have led some to call him an Austrian writer. His perfect French, his mature decades in Paris, and his marriage to the artist Gisèle de Lestrange gave him a connection with France, though that country never embraced him. His frequent trips to Germany and regular publication there make it easy to label him a German poet. His long-deferred visit to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in 1969, where he was welcomed fervently by the German-speaking community, and some lyrics he wrote immediately thereafter tightened a link with Israel. His youthful leanings toward socialism, his solidarity with Republican Spain, his mystical tendencies, and his closeness to certain literary and philosophical doctrines have each gained him adherents. (xvii-xviii)

[170] For example, he engages in wordplay with *Zwetschkenröster* (a specifically Austrian word for plum compote) in a 1962 letter to his Viennese friend Reinhard Federmann (Fetz et al. 63-65), and uses *Jänner* instead of *Januar*.

later years. Awards such as the *Literaturpreis der Stadt Bremen* (1958) and the *Georg-Büchner-Preis* (1960) attest to his importance in West Germany. There is a consensus among critics that his life and work were tied up with the Austrian literary scene, as evidenced by his inclusion in anthologies of Austrian and Austrian-Jewish writers.[171]

Competing linguistic and national identities are mere prelude to the debates about Celan. Is he a 'Holocaust poet'? Klink finds a reasonable middle ground, arguing that he is not *only* a Holocaust poet but cannot be separated from the Holocaust experience.[172] Is he a 'Jewish poet'? Glenn strikes a balance between essentializing Celan's Jewishness and universalizing his work, noting that while his poems contain frequent allusions to Jewish scripture and literary traditions, he was also grappling with the horror of his time and of human existence in general, so his work should not be confined to a single historic moment (Glenn 1973, 155). Is he a hermetic poet, as many have claimed? Not entirely. Influenced by Russian Acmeists such as Osip Mandelstam (whom he translated), dialogue was central to Celan's idea of poetry. His conception of the poem as a *Flaschenpost* (message in a bottle) makes him germane to a project concerned with the testimonial and dialogical aspects of narrating trauma.

1. Lucile and Lenz: Madness in *Meridian*

Though Celan refers in passing to several Büchner works and characters, the two figures that stand out in detail are Lucile and Lenz. In *Dantons Tod*, Lucile goes singingly mad after her husband's arrest and beheading, and Lenz' descent into mental illness is the basis for Büchner's

[171] See for example Eshel and Sparr (1996) and Lorenz 1999.

[172] "Celan's practice locates him in the company of other poets – so-called difficult poets, like Mallarmé and Hart Crane (…). The extreme doubt that propels their poems is doubt about the stability of the external world, about language, and especially about sources of meaning which might authorize poetic practice. Celan's doubt cannot be separated from his experience of the Holocaust, but the poems which arise out of this doubt should be understood as contending with ontological issues which include and exceed those raised by the Holocaust" (Klink 1-2).

Lenz fragment. Curiously, the *Meridian* speech does not mention either of these characters' madness. The reason for this omission could be that either (1) their madness was incidental to Celan's agenda, poetological or otherwise, or (2) it was important in some way best left between the lines. I will argue for the latter, revealing an added layer of meaning encoded in Celan's choice of Büchner figures.

In his notes and materials for *Meridian*, Celan found it significant that Lucile – one who sees and hears but does not *understand* the talk about art – takes the real step with her cry of 'long live the king': "Sie, Lucile, tut den wirklichen Schritt: ihr Tod ist ein Freitod; die andern gehorchen den Eckenstehern der Gechichte (und haben Worte für die Kunst – " ("She, Lucile, takes the real step: her death is a free-death; the others obey the bystanders of history (and have words for art – "; *PCM* 178). Where others have words for art, Lucile – who does not know intellectually what "art" is – lives, breathes and embodies poetry. After Camille's theatrical death, it is she who appears with a *Gegenwort* (counter-word) paying tribute to the majesty of the absurd; *that*, Celan emphasizes to the listening 'ladies and gentlemen,'[173] is *die Dichtung* (poetry; *PCM* **7b-9**).

This liberating tribute to the majesty of the absurd has undertones of madness. In Celan's radio essay on Mandelstam, from which he borrowed for the *Meridian* speech, he writes of an absurd laughter that leads to a breaking-free of contingency: "So kommt es zum Ausbruch aus der Kontingenz: durch das Lachen. Durch jenes, uns bekannte, 'unsinnige' Lachen des Dichters – durch das Absurde" ("That's how to escape contingency: through laughter. Through what we know as the poet's 'senseless' laughter – through the absurd"; *PCM* 221). The opposite of

[173] The phrase *Meine Damen und Herren* (ladies and gentlemen) appears 18 times in Meridian. Glenn reads Celan's excessive use of thanks and politeness as markers of irony, effectively "telling the members of his German audience that they, like Brutus, are honorable men" (Glenn 42).

contingency implies necessity and purpose. Absurd, uncanny laughter conjures the image of a madman. The two do not fit together at first glance. They merge, however, in Celan's portrait of Mandelstam, whose work he deeply admires and whose eccentricities he affectionately highlights. His radio essay describes Mandelstam's laughter as strange and disconcerting,[174] and a note jotted in a book pointedly asks, "is he not ill?"[175] Mandelstam's idiosyncrasies ostensibly appealed to Celan, and his fate as a victim of the 20th century's other totalitarian regime lends his artistic output, in Celan's reading, qualities of testimony.

Lucile's last words also constitute a kind of testimony. She has seen and witnessed the events of the revolution from a unique vantage point. Celan paints as *die Kunstblinde,* one blind to art in the sense of artifice (*PCM* **6c**). She is someone who hears and listens and looks… and then doesn't know what the talk was all about (*PCM* **5b**). This refers to a scene in *Dantons Tod* which contains a salient comment on words and language. While Camille and Danton are discussing art, Danton is momentarily called away. Camille turns to his wife and asks: "Was sagst du, Lucile?" ("What say you, Lucile?") She responds not with a comment on their lofty intellectual discussion, but rather: "Nichts, ich sehe dich so gern sprechen" ("nothing, I so like to see you speak"). Camille plays with her words by asking whether she *hears* him talk as

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[174] Etwas Befremdendes, nicht ganz Geheueres, etwas Ungereimtes. Plötzlich hört man ihn auflachen – bei Anlässen, die eine ganz andere Reaktion erwarten lassen; er lacht viel zu oft und viel zu laut. Mandelstamm ist überempfindlich, impulsiv, unberechenbar. Außerdem ist er von einer nahezu unbeschreiblichen Furchtsamkeit: führt der Weg z.B. an einem Poleizeigebäude vorbei, so schlägt er einen Haken. (*PCM* 215)

Something strange, somewhat uncanny, slightly absurd. Suddenly you hear him break into laughter – on occasions where a completely different reaction is expected; he laughs much too often and much too loudly. Mandelstamm is oversensitive, impulsive, unforeseeable. He is also nearly indescribably fearful: if, for example, his route leads past a police station, he'll make a detour.

[175] The following note on Mandelstam was found in Celan's copy of Georgi Ivanov's *Petersburger Winter*: "Er lacht schallend bis zur Atemnot. Sein Gesicht wird rot, seine Augen füllen sich mit Tränen. Der Gesprächspartner ist erstaunt und schockiert […] Ist er nicht krank?" ("He laughs uproariously until he is out of breath. His face grows red, his eyes fill with tears. His conversation partner is astonished and shocked […] Is he not sick?"; *PCM* 250, my translation).

well.[176] She replies to the affirmative, but when he asks whether she knows what he has said, she replies: "Nein, wahrhaftig nicht" ("no, verily not"; Büchner 1985, II.3). Lucile has seemingly bypassed Camille and Danton's concocted words and ideas about art. Various characters in *Dantons Tod* explicitly point out the deceptive or incomprehensible nature of words, particularly Danton and St. Just, but also Lucile.[177] At the same time, words are acknowledged to have real power. Consider Mercier's lines linking the grisly manifestations of the revolution to the words of its leaders: "Blickt um euch, das alles habt ihr gesprochen; es ist eine mimische Übersetzung eurer Worte. Diese Elenden, ihre Henker und die Guillotine sind eure lebendig gewordnen Reden" ("Look around you, you spoke all of this; it is a mimetic translation of your word. These miserables, your executioners and the guillotine are your speech brought to life"; Büchner 1985, III.3). Reading Lucile as an uncannily canny character, her refusal to buy into the meaning of Camille and Danton's words contains a skepticism for language and underscores the problem of words losing their meaning and/or leading to gruesome consequences.

The historical Lucile was arrested for attempting to intervene in her husband's detention and later guillotined. Büchner's Lucile develops a madness that has been likened to that of Ophelia (see for example Grimm 306, Peyrache-Leborgne 87) and ultimately provokes her own death. Given Büchner's extensive use of historical sources and events, his departure in the case

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[176] For a discussion of differing senses between the sexes in the Marion scene of *Dantons Tod*, see Fortmann 2013.

[177] Several examples:

I,1: Danton: "Das »und« dazwischen ist ein langes Wort."

II, 6: Danton: "Ich verstehe das Wort Strafe nicht."

II, 7: St. Just: "Es scheint in dieser Versammlung einige empfindliche Ohren zu geben, die das Wort »Blut« nicht wohl vertragen können."

III, 1: Ein andrer: "Laßt ihn! Das sind die Lippen, welche das Wort »Erbarmen« gesprochen."

III, 2: Herman: "Beide öffnen den Mund nur, um das Wort »Schuldig« zu sagen."

III, 6: St. Just: "Wagt! Danton soll uns das Wort nicht umsonst gelehrt haben."

IV, 4: Lucile. "Sterben! Was ist das für ein Wort?"

of Lucile is significant. Curiously, despite her ostensible madness, Lucile's words and actions in the play contain an underlying lucidity and prescience,[178] and she is arguably one of the most important characters in the play.[179] Perhaps, in a play about a violently failed utopian vision, her character functions as a suggestion that in times of madness, those who appear mad may in fact be the sanest. Indeed, despite her delirious singing in the final scene of the play (and who might not be a little delirious after seeing her husband beheaded), Lucile's final lines are spoken with clarity and intent; as the stage directions say, "Sinnend und wie einen Entschluß fassend" ("reflective and as if making a decision"; Büchner 1985, IV.8). She who earlier professed not to understand her husband's words deliberately uses words to seal her fate.[180]

Celan also points to an underlying lucidity in Lenz' madness. His reading of Büchner's *Lenz* seems improbable at every step – but perhaps this unlikely path is the one a poem must travel to cleave to its meridian and reach its goal. Lenz' madness is characterized by erratic behavior, paranoia, hearing voices, breaks with reality, and suicide attempts. The following passages are illustrative:

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[178] The first mention of Lucile's madness occurs when, upon hearing of Danton's impending arrest, Lucile concludes – quite rightly – that Camille will follow: "Wenn ich denke, daß sie dies Haupt! Mein Camille! das ist Unsinn, gelt, ich bin wahnsinnig?" (When I think, that this head! My Camille! That's nonsense, right, I am crazy?"; Büchner 1985, II.3, my translation). Contrary to the allusion to madness, these lines actually follow a structured 'if *p* then *q*' logic: She fears for Camille's head (*dies Haupt!*), decides perhaps wishfully that this is nonsense (*Unsinn*), and concludes that *if* she is thinking nonsense, *then* she must have gone mad. The logic embedded in her thought is one way in which Büchner may be undermining the 'diagnosis' of madness. Later, she has a premonition that Camille will return no more and will move farther and farther away from her. This is indeed borne out; they never meet again in freedom, not counting the scene outside his prison window when he does not speak directly to her. That her 'delusions' are accurate likewise undermines her supposed madness.

[179] Several measures of that importance: She speaks the play's second-to-last line; she is the last named character onstage; and the curtain falls not when Danton dies (as might befit a work so titled) but when Lucile commits ostensible treason and effective suicide.

[180] Her suicide is carried out through what J.L. Austin would term a felicitous speech act. Building on Wittgenstein's paradigm of rule-based language and socially verified reality, Austin developed a theory of 'how to do things with words,' taking pains to define highly specific types of speech within the broad spectrum of human language that qualify as so-called speech acts. If we consider Lucile's closing lines as occupying that very place on the spectrum where one may accomplish a clear task using words (a speech act), then despite whatever madness she suffers, she clearly remains savvy about the language needed to accomplish her final act.

(a) Es war finster geworden, Himmel und Erde verschmolzen in eins. Es war, als ginge ihm was nach, und als müsse ihn was Entsetzliches erreichen, etwas das Menschen nicht ertragen können, als jage der Wahnsinn auf Rossen hinter ihm. (Büchner 2015)
It had grown dark, sky and earth melted into one. It was as if something was pursuing him, and as if something horrible would surely catch him, something unbearable to man, as though madness were hunting him down on its steed. (My transl.)

(b) Hören Sie denn nichts? hören Sie denn nicht die entsetzliche Stimme, die um den ganzen Horizont schreit und die man gewöhnlich die Stille heißt? Seit ich in dem stillen Tal bin, hör' ich's immer, es läßt mich nicht schlafen. (Bücher 2015)
So you really hear nothing, you don't hear the terrible voice screaming across the entire horizon, which people commonly call the quiet? Since I am in the quiet valley I hear it constantly, it does not let me sleep. (My transl.)

Celan does not directly discuss Lenz' increasingly weak and anguished grasp on reality, though Büchner portrays it with pathos. He focuses instead on Lenz's own Lucile-like moment in which he is able to set himself free as an – estranged – I, quoting from the *Lenz* fragment: "nur war es ihm manchmal unangenehm, daß er nicht auf dem Kopf gehn konnte" ("except sometimes it annoyed him that he could not walk on his head"; *PCM* **25b**). Lenz' head is the source of both his inspiration and his problems. If he could walk around upside-down, perhaps he could see the world right-side-up, i.e., the way most people experience it. Celan, however, takes a different tack. He points out, with another "ladies and gentleman" for emphasis, that whoever walks on his head has the sky (or heavens) below as an abyss. This reading of Lenz' would-be inversion does not leave him right-side-up, but even more at a loss. Celan goes on to speak of an impossible path that a poem must travel – later revealed to be a meridian – and there is something very special about this path. An abyss implies a one-way trip – an infinitely terrifying fall. A meridian, by contrast, is a *unidirectional and circular* trip from point A to point A. Geometrically speaking, such a trajectory is impossible – except in the unique case of a sphere. Just as some pictures and events make sense only when regarded from the right angle, there is

something in this speech that emerges only when viewed through the right lens. What, then, is the proper lens for Lenz and Lucile?

Returning to the question of why Celan would focus on the two ostensibly mad characters in Büchner, we can begin to close the circle. Two happenings in Celan's life offer clues. Firstly, while Celan was preparing the speech, his close friend and 'sister-poet' Nelly Sachs was suffering from a persecution mania in which she was plagued by auditory hallucinations of vicious electronic voices. Celan wrote her frequently in Stockholm attempts to lift her spirits; she continued to write him of "frightful radio traffic above my house," the fears bloomed into a nervous breakdown, and Sachs finally hospitalized herself in August 1960 (Felsteiner 156-166). Secondly, while Celan could reassure Sachs the voices were not real, he could relate all too well to her paralyzing fears. On May 3, 1960 Celan had read Claire Goll's defamatory article in the Munich literary review *Baubudenpoet*, making public her accusations of plagiarism. The accusations caused Celan terrible distress, affected his personal relationships (he felt betrayed by friends he felt were not quick or forceful enough in coming to his aid) and led to a deterioration of his mental health.[181] He was seized by oppressive fears that a Neo-Nazi element in Germany was plotting against him. The affair cast a shadow over the time during which he composed *The Meridian* and played into his analysis of contemporary issues in art. Despite the deletion of

[181] A letter from Celan's wife to Bachmann later that year portrays him in dire straits:

> Ingeborg, Paul est désespéré, Paul est très fatigue, Paul ne va pas bien. Il n'a plus aucun courage (…) Je vous le redis, Ingeborg, Paul n'en peut plus. Il attend chaque courier, chaque parution de journal, sa tête es pleine de tout cela. Il n'ya de place pour rien d'autre (…) Si vous saviez combine Paul est seul, malheureux, complètement anéanti par ce qui lui arrive (…) Voilà la situation, Ingeborg, elle est très mauvaise. Permittez-moi de vous le dire à noveau, il faut agir très vite… (December 2, 1960, *HZ* letter 226, p. 191-3)
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> Ingeborg, Paul is desperate, Paul is very tired, Paul is not well. He has lost all courage. (…) Let me repeat, Ingeborg: Paul cannot go on like this. He waits for every letter, every newspaper, his head is filled with all this. There is no room for anything else (...) If only you knew how alone Paul is, how unhappy, how completely annihilated by what is happening to him. (…) That is the situation, Ingeborg, it is very bad. Allow me to tell you once again: it is vital to act, to act very quickly… (December 2, 1960; HZH letter 226, p. 290-291)

many more personal and direct formulations, the speech and the encounter with Büchner "represented an opportunity for Celan to express very personal conflicts" (Felsteiner xvii) – including, I posit, his own mental state.

While a psychiatrist might diagnose Celan and Sachs as suffering from a persecution complex or paranoid delusions – thereby labeling them, if not insane, out of touch with intersubjective reality – they were arguably displaying a normal response to abnormal circumstances. They *had* been persecuted; there *had* been a horrific attempt to annihilate their people; the perpetrators of the Holocaust *were* largely at large in Germany and Europe; anti-Semitism *was* alive and well only thinly beneath the surface. By extension: Is Lucile mad, or is she the sane one in mad times? Is Lenz mad, or does he suffer in part from his insight into a deeper artistic truth?

2. <u>"Verstummen" in *Meridian*: Das Gedicht als "verzweifeltes Gespräch"</u>[182]

Lenz, says Celan, goes a step farther than Lucile: "Sein 'Es lebe der König' ist kein Wort mehr, es ist ein furchtbares Verstummen, es verschlägt ihm – und auch uns – den Atem und das Wort" ("His 'Long live the king' is no longer a word, it is a terrifying falling silent, it takes away his – and our – breath and words"; 29a). Where Lucile's moment of *Dichtung* involved a speech act, Lenz' poetry is a falling silent. Perhaps he is struck dumb by the spinning void beneath his feet. In any case, his – and our – catching of breath and words is key for Celan's ensuing remarks about the contemporary poem. "Gewiß, das Gedicht – das Gedicht heute (…) zeigt, das ist unverkennbar, eine starke Neigung zum Verstummen ("Certainly the poem – the poem today (…) shows, unmistakably, a strong tendency to falling silent"; *PCM* **32a**). What kind of

[182] "Falling Silent" in *Meridian*: The Poem as "Desperate Conversation"

Verstummen (falling silent) is this? It is not a pure absence, nor a nihilistic void. Consider how Celan speaks of poetry as an *Atemwende* (breath-turn) that travels a certain route (*PCM* **29b**). The poem's silence is a productive one; a present absence that starts it along the path to an encounter.[183]

After gesturing to the abyss that Lenz would have below his feet if he could indeed walk on his head, Celan turns to the so-called 'darkness' of poetry that facilitates this encounter. He cites Pascal by way of the Russian Jewish philosopher Leo Shestov in a pattern of multilayered quotation that repeats throughout *Meridian*[184]: "Ne nous reprochez pas la manque de clarté puisque nous en faison profession!" ("Do not reproach us for lack of clarity, for we make a profession of it!"; *PCM* **25-26**). This multilayered reference to Pascal, Shestov, and indirectly Baudelaire is a gesture to a traumatic abyss that lies at the heart of Celan's poetics. The quote originates in Pascal's *Pensées*, his notes for a never-completed work intended to defend Christianity and the pursuit of faith based on a kind of reason. However, Celan appears to have drawn it from Shestov's *Potestas Clavium*,[185] a work seeking to dismantle Western logic and reason in favor of something more God-like and spiritual. The lines also appear in other Shestov works in Celan's library, underlined by a hand seemingly seeking to trace out a train of thought.

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[183] Another poetic *Verstummen* is expounded in Levine's reading of Celan's poem "Die Winzer" ("The Vintagers"). Levine detects between the lines the term *stummer Wein* (mute wine), which refers to wine that is motionless and flat because it has either ceased to ferment or has not yet begun fermenting. This mute wine "persists as a traumatic subtext, as a silence around and against which the text gathers itself together" (Levine 2004, 163), and the importance of this poem for Celan is supported by the fact that he returned to its theme in the last poem he wrote before his suicide, "Rebleute" ("Vintagers"). Levine's analysis is informative despite the questionable achronological reading of the poem as a before-the-fact work of mourning for the death of Celan's first son.

[184] As Felsteiner has pointed out, Celan cites several intermediate sources seemingly incidentally on his way to another point. However, these sources (Heimann, Shestov, Benjamin, Franzos) form a trend of Jewish and often other exile authors; references that in turn point back to Celan's own history and, given the audience before whom he was speaking, become *acérées* (pointed, abrasive). See Felsteiner 164.

[185] While the quote can be found in several volumes by Shestov that were owned by Celan, it appears the source for this citation in *Meridian* was the French edition of Shestov's *Potestas Clavium*, in which Celan had underlined the quote where it appears as the second epigraph for the preface essay, "Mille et une nuits" ("A Thousand and One Nights"; PCM 227).

Indeed, Celan's notes for *Meridian* show him grappling with the notion of an abyss through Pascal and Baudelaire, whom he quotes by way of Hofmannsthal:

(a) Pascal – Abgrund // Aug-in-Aug mit dem Nichts (*PCM* 91)
(b) Das Abgründige (ist tatsächlich) das <u>Bodenlose</u> → Abgrund – Pascal (*PCM* 91)
(c) In der Verendlichung spüren wir das Infinitivische, spüren wir jene ˽ – von Hofmannsthal oft beschworene – ˼ "scharfe Spitze des Unendlichen" Baudelaires.[186] Es ist, wo Welt gebannt werden will[187]; der uralte Traum: gleichz. weltfrei zu werden – (*PCM* 126)

(a) Pascal – Abyss // Eye-to-eye with nothingness (*PCM* 91)
(b) The abysmal (is in fact) the <u>bottomless</u> → Abyss – Pascal (*PCM* 91)
(c) In the finite-making we feel the infinitiveness, we feel that ˽ – so often invoked by Hofmannsthal – ˼ "sharp point of the infinite" of Baudelaire. It is there where world wants to be banned; the ancient dream: simult. to become world-free –) (*PCM* 126)

Celan's focus oscillates between the infinite and nothingness, poised perhaps at the point where *les extrêmes se touchent* – where the extremes of everything and nothing merge into one bottomless abyss. This precipice in turn becomes the jumping off point for the ancient dream to become *weltfrei* (world-free). If we understand the abyss as a linguistic void (among others), the vacuum that takes the place of speech is a terrible but also liberating one.

Celan's speech and notes show him processing through Pascal, Shestov and Baudelaire what happens when we lose our footing in numbers and beings[188] and *das Bodenlose* (the bottomless) opens up beneath us. In this web of images and allusions, it grows treacherous to attempt to stabilize meaning. I will instead proceed intertextually, for the notes weave a web that extends to include Bachmann and her ideas about existential trauma. To follow the threads: In the *Pensées*, Pascal famously spoke of an infinite abyss in man that could only be filled by an

[186] "A la pointe acérée" is the title of a poem in Celan's *Die Niemandsrose* (1963). The 'sharp point of the infinite' stems from Baudelaire's poem "le Confiteor de l'artiste" (*Le Spleen de Paris*, 1869) and is cited in Hofmannsthal's posthumous fragment *Andreas oder die Vereinigten* (1932).

[187] "Welt in deinen Blick zu bannen" is the title of an early Celan poem.

[188] The last line of "Le gouffre" reads: "– Ah! ne jamais sortir des Nombres et des Êtres!" ("Oh! to never depart from number and beings!")

infinite God.[189] Pascal's name opens Baudelaire's poem "Le gouffre" ("The abyss," *Les fleurs du mal*, 1857), in which fear and existential anguish threaten the lyrical speaker from every side. Bachmann cites "Le gouffre" in her 1949 dissertation and 1953 Wittgenstein essay, bringing together Pascal and Baudelaire around the notion of a traumatic abyss that she views as the impetus driving Wittgenstein's philosophy of the unsayable. Celan, having recognized Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal* as a radical point of departure in rethinking the relationship between ethics and poetry, reflects in *Meridian* on the Baudelairean idea of freedom from the world and beauty's indifference to morality (see Eshel 62). The question of whether and how autonomous art can maintain the mark of history and thus an ethical component goes beyond philosophical reflections on art; it is a deeply personal question for Celan, whose poems are inscribed with their 'January 20' – the historical seat of his own trauma.[190]

His overlap with (if not citation of) Bachmann is both fitting and telling. Silence is a prominent feature of the pair's correspondence from the start; there are silences between them, references to one or the other's silence, and frequent allusions to things they cannot say. As Maedling has argued, silence between Bachmann and Celan is not empty, but appears representative of something that is absent. Rather than a mere interruption or absence, silence forms an integral part of their conversation (see Maedling 99, 108[191]). Bachmann writes Celan,

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[189] Pascal writes: "What is it, then, that this desire and this inability proclaim to us, but that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present? But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself" (*Pensées* 425)

[190] Büchner's *Lenz* fragment opens on January 20, 1778, when Lenz set off into the mountains for his stay with Pastor Oberlin. January 20, 1942 is the date of the Wannsee Conference, where Nazi leadership decided on a 'final solution to the Jewish question.'

[191] "Vor allem aber offenbaren die Briefe den unauflösbaren Zusammenhang von Gespräch und Schweigen – im Medium des addressierten Gedichts. Keineswegs handelt es sich dabei un ein Phänomen, dessen Ziel darin bestünde, ein negative besetzes Schweigen im Versuch eines Gesprächs zu überwinden. Vielmehr zeigen die Gedichte, wie auch die Briefe, dass Verstummen, Schweigen und Zum-Sprechen-Ansetzen unabdingbare und jeweils neu auszuhandelnde Bestandteile eines dialogischen Zugangs zur welt sind" (Maedling 108).

for example, a little over a year after their first meeting, with the relationship on uncertain footing:

> Paul, ich möchte Deinen armen schönen Kopf nehmen und ihn schütteln und ihm klarmachen, dass ich sehr viel damit sage, viel zu viel für mich, denn Du must doch noch wissen, wie schwer es mir fällt, ein Wort zu finden. Ich wünsche mir, dass Du alles aus meinen Zeilen herauslesen könntest, was dazwischen steht. (Written August 25, 1949, sent 24. November, 1949; *HZ* letter 10.1, p. 16)

> Paul, I want to take your poor, lovely head and shake it, and make it understand that I am saying a great deal, much too much for me; for you must still know how hard it is for me to find any words. I wish you could read everything that lies between these lines of mine. (Written August 25, 1949, sent 24. November, 1949; *HZH* letter 10.1, p. 17)

And Celan writes Bachmann in fall of 1957, after their relationship was rekindled at the Wuppurtaler Bund conference:

> Du bist der Lebensgrund, auch deshalb, weil Du die Rechtfertigung meines Sprechens bist und bleibst. (…) / Aber das allein, das Sprechen, ists ja gar nicht, ich wollte ja auch stumm sein mit Dir. October 31, 1957; *HZ* letter 53, p. 64)

> You are the reason for living, not least because you are, and will remain, the justification for my speaking. (…) / But that alone, my speaking, is not even the point; I wanted to be silent with you too. (October 31, 1957; *HZH* letter 53, p. 86)

Like Lenz' simultaneous abyss and *Atemwende* (*PCM* **43**), silence between Celan and Bachmann is a void that affirms, albeit often painfully. It is a productive silence; a first step on journey**.** If so, where to?

3. *Meridian's* poetics of address

> "Das Gedicht will zu einem Anderen, es braucht dieses Andere, es braucht ein Gegenüber. Es sucht es auf, es spricht sich ihm zu" ("The poems wants to head toward some other, it needs this other, it needs an opposite. It seeks it out, it bespeaks itself to it"; *PCM* **35a**).

There is clearly an 'other' lodged in Celan's poetics. Unsurprisingly, the critical literature has unearthed multiple ways to construe that other,[192] partly due to Celan's ever-multivalent language and partly because there is much Celan seek to confront: His gentile lovers. The language of the perpetrators. The Germans and Austrians who could and did go on as if the Shoah never happened. The loss of his parents, especially his mother. Individual and collective experiences of the Shoah. Unsayable trauma more broadly. Other writers and thinkers, from Büchner to Heidegger. Himself… While all these threads are detectable in *Meridian* and its accompanying notes, if any one encounter is given primacy, it is that with oneself. This requires that a person (or poem) depart from one point and undertake a circular journey, creating in the process a distance or estrangement from the self, so that the arrival back at the starting point (that self) may constitute an encounter. Below I discuss several key 'addressees' of Celan's *Meridian* speech before returning to the importance of the self-encounter, its relationship with the notion of a private language, and implications for speaking about trauma.

The most obvious encounter inherent in *Meridian*, given its nature as an acceptance speech for a literary prize, is that with the audience and the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung* (German Academy of Language and Literature, which bestows the prize). This was a fraught encounter for Celan. He knew that many of the attending dignitaries had participated passively or actively in the Nazi endeavor, most belonged to the conservative cultural elite of Adenauer's Germany, and many rejected everything his poetry stood for (Eshel 59). He concludes his speech by calling the event a *Begegnung* and thanking the audience for their presence (*PCM* **52b, 53**). He graciously thanks Hermann Kasack, whom he would soon lambast

[192] See for example Meyerhofer (1981), Eshel (2004), Mendicino (2011), Karr (2014).

for his collaboration with former NSDAP member Fritz Martini and his contribution to the Goll affair (*HZ* letter 185, see also letter 209 notes). This is no friendly *Begegnung*; accusation lies latent beneath the overabundant niceties. The phrase "in der Luft, die wir zu atmen haben ("in the air we have to breathe"; *PCM* **18c**) has long been read as a Holocaust reference, echoing the phrase "ein Grab in der Luft*"* ("a grave in the air") from "Todesfuge." The ashes of the Ho locaust are in the air Celan has to breathe, and *Meridian* exhibits an impulse to make especially *this* audience aware of the particles. The speech thus functions as a vessel for historical traces which politeness and protocol – the Foucauldian order of discourse for this occasion – dictate Celan not openly name.

The speech contains no explicit mention of Judaism, perhaps in a dark nod to his audience which is uncannily *Judenfrei*. The notes, however, openly contemplate Jewishness, through language in particular. Celan considers *Verjudung* (roughly, "Jewification") a recommendable path to understanding poetry (*PCM* 131). This line of thought, developed in Celan's *Gespräch im Gebirg* (*Conversation in the Mountains*) text, represents a grappling with Heidegger, for whom all roads lead back to the native home, leaving no place for the other and her jargon-language. Celan's counter-word to Heidegger casts light on the concrete places "where the terror of monolinguism and racism led to the extermination of human beings" (Eshel 71).

Büchner represents for Celan a German poet who combined ingenious aesthetics with a sense for the ethical (Eshel 60). Celan's encounter with Büchner begins by way of *Kunst* versus *Dichtung* (art versus poetry) – art being something *künstlich* (artificial) and *Dichtung* being something pure, free, non-contrived, a moment of *Atemwende*. However, the need for that *Atemwende* so crucial to Celan's poems work stems from his own traumas. As Müller-Sievers

writes, the encounter with Büchner was so compelling for Celan because Büchner's staging of the French Revolution not only ended in the exhaustion of language but also resulted in a in a holocaust with one survivor – Lucile, who bears witness to the destruction by quoting the royalist slogan. Büchner and Celan are thus united by their shared insight in the exhaustion of language and a simultaneous desperation to forge poetry out of the leftover shards (see Müller-Sievers 148).

Gottfried Benn, who was awarded the Büchner prize in 1951, is another node of encounter. Celan's *Meridian* speech is often seen as a rejection of Benn's concept of *Lyrik* and 'the absolute poem.'[193] Meyerhofer transcends the dichotomy between Benn's monological framing of poetry and Celan's dialogical view, pointing out that Celan's 'message in a bottle' formulation (from his 1958 Bremen Literature Prize speech) conveys a *fragile attempt* at the *possibility* of communication. A third possibility, then, is that the recipient may either be the reader, or may be constituted through the poem itself. I.e., there is some process of naming that happens in the poem which constitutes the addressee, making that which is named into a 'thou' (see Meyerhofer 78-79).

How do Celan's poems encounter their reader or addressee? Karr offers a *ménage à trois* metaphor for understanding his love-focused poems, positing that they construct a triangle between the lyrical speaker, the victims of the Shoah, and the non-Jewish lover who becomes a screen onto which the memory is projected. Faced with the conundrum of how to reconcile the memory of Shoah victims with love as an essential theme of his poetry, Celan's solution was that love could no longer be an innocent theme of poetry; it falls under the shadow of the Shoah and must yield to the Shoah's primacy. Ergo, the portrayal of love becomes a projection screen for

[193] See for example Mendicino 631, Maedling 96, Eshel 61.

past trauma and loss rather than an end in and of itself, and the poems become a form of *dialogische Totengedenken* (dialogical commemoration of the dead). The non-Jewish lover, who neither experienced the Shoah nor grew up in Jewish traditions, becomes what Geoffrey Hartman terms the 'intellectual witness' as she takes part in the intimate conversation and legitimizes the primary witness (the *Dichter-Ich* or poetic 'I') (see Karr 172-175). This is a useful premise for interpreting "In Ägypten," Celan's first poetic encounter with Bachmann: The lyrical 'Du' is commanded to adorn the 'Fremde' (his foreign lover) with pain over the murdered Jewish women Ruth, Mirjam and Noëmi, eclipsing her role as love object with that of witness to trauma and loss.

Contrary to the common view of Celan's work as hermetic (see for example Glenn 1972, 25), Celan did intend – even in his later work – to address. He has insisted that his poetry was not hermetic, and inscribed Michael Hamburger's copy of *Die Niemandsrose* with the phrase *ganz und gar nicht hermetisch* (utterly not hermetic; Klink 2). Perhaps what critics tend to characterize as hermetic is something else altogether that inheres in Celan's use and view of language. He said in an interview with Hugo Huppert in December, 1966:

> As far as my supposedly encoded language is concerned, I prefer to describe it as unabashed ambiguity, since this corresponds to my feeling for the overlapping of relationships, conceptual overlay. (...) Since I am unfortunately unable to present things from all angles, I attempt to reproduce segments from the spectral analysis of things and to show them in different aspects and permeations, with the similar, the consequent and the opposite. I remain in these matters attentive to meaning; they have no aspirations to the "transcendental" (…) I am trying to show you why I contend that my so-called abstractness and actual ambiguity is a slice of reality. (quoted in Meyerhofer 82)

This is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's preface to *Philosophical Investigations*:

> "After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole, I realized that I should never succeed (…) And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction. – The philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long and

> involved journeyings. / The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new sketches made (…) so that if you looked at them you could get a picture of the landscape. (*PI* preface)

Wittgenstein and Celan have in common a 'compound eye' approach: Faced with something impossible to represent as an intact whole, they use an indirect, interative, many-angled approach. This strategy is not a private language. It uses no journal with symbols known only to the diarist. Rather, it represents an attempt to broach difficult concepts by rendering them in language that other people *could potentially* understand. It is an attempt undertaken with the most vague and pessimistic hope that the reader may glimpse a picture the author wished to convey. That message must first travel, in its fragile bottle, across the uncertain seas of language.

Suppose the *Flaschenpost* (message in a bottle), after being cast out on its lonely voyage, travels for a long time and finally floats back to the very shore whence it came, where its original sender unexpectedly finds it. In *Meridian*, Celan says of a four-line verse he had penned several years earlier and *Gespräch im Gebirg* (which was dedicated to Bachmann, his consummate other): "Ich hatte mich, das eine wie das andere Mal, von einem "20. Jänner", von meinem "20. Janner", hergeschrieben. Ich bin … mir selbst begegnet" ("In both cases I had written myself from one '20th January,' from my '20th January,' toward myself. I had … encountered myself"; *PCM* **45e-f**). Drafts of this paragraph elucidate a *nachträglich* (belated) aspect to this encounter; Celan originally included but later removed the phrases, "ich sah es erst viel später" and "Ich hatte mich, ohne es zu wissen…" ("I only saw it much later," and "I had, without knowing it…"; *PCM* 40-41). This of course conjures the belated effects of trauma. Moreover, however, in the image of traveling a path to himself *without knowing it at the time,* Celan portrays a self-created distance enabling, at the end of the circular journey, a genuine encounter. This must be the case

if the path one travels through poetry is to be "eine Sichvorausschicken zu sich selbst, auf der Suche nach sich selbst… Eine Art Heimkehr" ("a sending oneself ahead toward oneself, in search of oneself… A kind of homecoming"; *PCM* **46**).

Celan's *Meridian* encounters multiple 'others' before culminating in an encounter with an – alienated – self, and his language is the vehicle for this journey. What are the implications of saying that, in the end, he needed the words for himself? Firstly, what is not implied: This is not a private language, like using 'S' for a sensation known only to the speaker. While every writer has personal associations with words and phrases, many of which remain unknown, they are after all using common words and language. Even neologisms like *Sprachgitter* (Speech-grille) or *Niemandsrose* (No-one's-rose) can seem meaningful without signifying because they are constructed from familiar component parts. Rather than creating a private language, Celan puts trauma into public language with the intent to address both outward and perhaps – though only unintentionally – back to himself.

B. Moonlighting in the Ludwig Pavilion: Philosophy, Madness and Trauma in Thomas Bernhard's *Wittgensteins Neffe*

This project is concerned with questions of unsayable trauma, both personal and collective, which I approach via Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and its reception by postwar Austrian authors. Berhard's *Wittgensteins Neffe: Eine Freundschaft* (1982) is appropriate for close reading because it deals with illness (which is traumatic) and madness (which can be both traumatic and a symptom of trauma) while engaging with Wittgenstein, albeit in Bernhard's roundabout dance. Bernhard's 1988 play *Heldenplatz* helps to flesh out these themes. Frau Schuster's auditory hallucination (a form of madness, or is it?) of the teeming

throngs welcoming Hitler in 1938 embodies the lingering trauma of the Holocaust in Austrian society and the play ends with the forceful return of the repressed.

Bernhard was known for scathing critiques and merciless diatribes. Yet he reserved a respect verging on reverence for Wittgenstein. He wrote Hilde Spiel in 1971: "Wittgenstein is a question that cannot be answered (...) I do not write about Wittgenstein, because I cannot do it, because I do not have an answer for him that would make everything fall into place." Though Bernhard demurred to write *about* him, elements of Wittgenstein's biography and thinking permeate his work.[194] Thus Bernhard places himself in dialogue with both the philosopher and his reception.

In contrast to Bachmann, Bernhard rarely engages directly with Wittgenstein's ideas. His approach is rather to play with the *language* of said ideas. Like Samuel Beckett, with whom he is often compared,[195] Bernhard creates a situation described in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* in which his words build a ladder one must discard after climbing it; language can be transcended after it has carried the writer to its utmost limit (Esslin 73). I focus on Bernhard's language games with the goal of shedding light on the relationship between language, madness and trauma. I will show that these games serve to question what outward signs or symptoms justify the labels of 'crazy' or 'mentally ill,' leading us to critically examine how definitions of those word are formed and used in societal language games. A similarly inductive method features in *Philosophical Investigations*, in which rather than stating things outright, Wittgenstein presents puzzles or anecdotes that leave the reader to draw her own conclusions.

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[194] Elements of Wittgenstein biography or thinking have been noted in "Amras," "Ungenach," "Watten," "Der Wetterfleck," "Am Ortler," "Gehen," "Ritter, Dene, Voss," *Korrektur* and *Kalkwerk* (see for example Honegger 150-165, Klebes 49-86).

[195] See Esslin for a measured consideration of this pervasive comparison.

Bernhard's works show madness and trauma in several ways. They are characterized by a collapse of traditional form and narrative time. *Wittgensteins Neffe* has no paragraph breaks, *Heldenplatz* lacks punctuation, and both shun a chronological approach, instead developing their own logical structure.[196]

In *Wittgensteins Neffe* and *Auslöschung* (*Extinction*, 1986), in lieu of chapters or even paragraph breaks, the narrator usually transitions between topics via fleeting reference to some present situation (such as sitting in the Hermann Pavilion and thinking about Paul). In *Heldenplatz*, lack of separation between thoughts is mirrored on a formal level by lack of punctuation. Stage cues or recourse to what characters are looking at serves a similar function. The result is an uncomfortable sensation of being trapped in time – possessed by the past, fleetingly visiting the present, occasionally glancing toward a (surely bleak) future. *Wittgensteins Neffe* and *Heldenplatz* revolve around traumatic events, both historical and personal, that seem impossible to fully articulate and are instead *shown* through roundabout references and aberrational use of language itself. Some words do of course denote trauma, referentially speaking, but they appear in a compulsively repetitive form, suggesting that the characters can never fully explain the trauma.

In Section 1 below, I discuss the role of trauma in Bernhard's life, his position in postwar Austrian literature and his relevance to a study on language and trauma. Section 2 contains my analysis of philosophy, insanity and trauma in *Wittgensteins Neffe*. Through an examination of the threads of philosophy, insanity and trauma in *Wittgensteins Neffe*, I argue that Bernhard's

[196] These features can also legitimately be read as *Sprachskepsis* (language skepticism). Here, Bernhard is in good company with Canetti, Handke, Nestroy, Karl Kraus, and others making up Austria's long tradition of *Sprachskepsis* (Honegger 1985), as well as with other Austrian avant-garde authors such as the authors of the Wiener Gruppe, Jandl, Mayröcker, Jelinek and Streeruwitz, who signal authorial resistance by disregarding language conventions.

definition of madness involves being labeled (or even becoming) insane when one cannot or will not participate in communal language games.

1. Background and Approach

a. Biography

Thomas Bernhard was born on February 9, 1931 in the Netherlands and grew up in rural Austria on the fringe of wealthy Salzburg. His childhood was marked by poverty, illness, illegitimacy, frequent moves and changing of caretakers. He hails from a trauma-laden family tree, of which a few highlights will suffice. His mother, Herta Bernhard, was an illegitimate child of *Heimat* writer Johannes Freumbichler. Bernhard's biological father, Alois Zuckerstätter, died in Berlin without ever meeting Bernhard. That illegitimacy ran in the family was not unusual for rural settings, where as a byproduct of poverty, parents had no money to marry.

The family moved frequently, and both Herta and her mother and worked as a domestic servant to support Freumbichler's writing aspirations and unconventional lifestyle. Herta Bernhard had her son Thomas out of wedlock, and his sense that she never wanted him is written into his plays. Bernhard never knew his biological father, and repeatedly kills him in different ways throughout his books (Honegger 2001, 24-7, 32-35). As an infant in Holland, Bernhard stayed with foster families and a home for illegitimate children while his mother worked as a domestic servant. They moved to Vienna in 1933, and for a time Bernhard lived with his grandparents, developing a close bond with his grandfather. In 1936 Herta married Emil Fabjan, a hairdresser's apprentice, but Bernhard's step-father never adopted him legally or emotionally.

Bernhard attended boarding school under the auspices of National Socialism, which would have been all the more traumatic for a sickly child who was not clearly heterosexual.[197] Throughout his life he suffered from lung disease, which eventually caused his early death. He spent much of his later teen years (1945-1951) in the Grafenhof sanitorium in Sankt Veit im Pongau, where he met his *Lebensmensch*[198], Hedwig Stavianicek, 37 years his senior (Honegger 2001, 25). Bernhard studied music and acting at the Mozarteum in Salzburg from 1955–1957, and although his lung condition ruled out a singing career, he retained a lifelong interest in and love for music. He worked briefly as a journalist and courtroom reporter[199] before turning to full-time writing.

Bernhard wove personal and national trauma into his works. His youth was marked by poverty, illness, instability, Nazi boarding school, Allied bombing raids, and belatedly discovering the crimes of his parents' generation. He belongs to the generation of Austrians who came of age under National Socialism, were children or teenagers during the war, and were then left to their own devices to make sense of things. As Posner notes (*Hitler's Children*, 1991), the generation responsible for the Holocaust and war crimes effectively closed the discussion, and their silence infiltrated the children' psyche. "Since the perpetrators remained silent, the burden of seeking truth and acknowledging the responsibility was passed to another generation" (quoted in Lorenz 32).

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[197] Like Bachmann, Bernhard strove to keep his private life from the public eye, and those he trusted guarded his secrets. Longtime friends allude to his homosexuality only indirectly and his sexuality remains relatively unexplored by scholars, perhaps for lack of information (see Honegger 2001, 61-63).

[198] An Austrian word for life companion, or the most important person in one's life.

[199] Naqvi connects Bernhards' experience as a courtroom reporter to *Heldenplatz* as she argues convincingly that the play undermines the opposition between victims and perpetrators through its use of juridical language to raise issues well beyond jurisprudence.

Bernhard's turning point is marked by his "Politische Morgenandacht" article (*Wort in der Zeit*, 1966), which takes a hammer to the myth of Austria's greatness. His critique, though furious, is a generalized attack on Austrian political, social and cultural structures. The Holocaust is there only between the lines, if one wishes to read it. Later works like *Auslöschung* and *Heldenplatz* took up Holocaust themes more explicitly, exposing those who had invented and endorsed the *Geschichtslüge* (historical lie) that Austria was Hitler's first victim (Lorenz 33). However, they "foreground predominantly Austrian issues and personal concerns, while the Shoah remains for the most part in the background" (Lorenz 41).[200]

In 1965, Bernhard won the Bremen literature prize for his novel *Frost*. The money from the award enabled him to buy a large farmhouse in Obernathal, Ohlsdorf, Upper Austria, which he outfitted in a rustic décor fitting Austria's landed gentry.[201] Like Bachmann, Bernhard was very conscious of the significance of an address. The sites mentioned in *Malina* lie in Vienna's prestigious Third District, while Bernhard situates *Heldenplatz* close to the Hofburg and Nationalbibliothek, the most noble part of the First District and the infamous site of Hitler's visit. In his fame and infamy, Bernhard proved an elusive conquest for journalists hoping to gain (and publish) insight into the life and work of Austria's most controversial figurehead. He and Bachmann perhaps also overlapped in their attitudes toward journalists and interviews; Bernhard adeptly evaded, manipulated and set traps for his interviewers and interlocutors in a manner recalling the Herr Mühlbauer scene in Bachmann's *Malina*. Honegger writes, "His unwitting

[200] See Lorenz for a discussion of how Bernhard articulates the psychological wound of the Austrian mainstream as opposed to the destruction of Ashkenazi culture by the Shoah. "The dilemma of being raised the ally and accomplice of his elders is paradigmatic of Austrians his age and younger. The traumatic process of recognizing the implications of Austria's recent is history is expressed through the self- and other-directed aggression in Bernhard's writing, pointing to an outrage over having been misled and shamed by one's own gullibility" (Lorenz 44). Olson, taking one step further, has argued that by historicizing the Jewish experience and situating it within universal human experience, Bernhard places himself in the realm of moral equivalence (Olson 45).

[201] http://www.ooemuseumsverbund.at/museum/40_bernhard-haus

partners in conversation would find themselves splashing about in the deep, chill waters of utter nonsense. Any attempt at a meaningful, in-depth literary or personal conversation was parried with deadpan humor" (Honegger 2001, 194-5).[202] Those who did manage to navigate Bernhard's labyrinthine walls of babble to a more personal, private side (and here one hesitates to say 'authentic,' for the linguistic antics represent their own form of authenticity) appear to have kept his confidence.

Bernhard died of lung disease in Gmunden, Upper Austria in 1989, having carefully arranged that the public not learn of his death and funeral until after the fact. His final will prohibited all further publication and production of his works in Austria until the expiration of the copyright; an explosive posthumous publicity stunt that ensured him the last laugh until the lawyers had their way with his wishes. As is the case with Bachmann, Bernhard-legends abound and controversies continue.

b. Bernhard's Position in Postwar Austrian Literature and his Relevance to a Study on Language and Trauma

After the Second World War, just as after the fall of the Habsburg Empire, Austrian authors turned to the past to create a sense of continuity and national identity.[203] Alexander

[202] Honegger wrotes of the 1981 *Mallorca Monologues*: "Behind his gentlemanly, worldly demeanor was the fool waiting in ambush to send up his interlocutor's adoringly trusting sincerity. Her questions, those not edited from the film altogether, were reduced by Bernhard's maneuvers into timid cues for his stream-of-consciousness performance (…) The published version of the unedited conversation in the original sequence over several days testifies to Bernhard's masterful dramaturgy in leading his partner on through mock-serious, mock-flirtatious, and downright nonsensical free association, from which there was no return" (Honegger 195). One question on dreams and nightmares, for example, led him to the topic of Freud and from there on to a rant about beards and fame.

[203] Daviau argues that "Most of the major writers tried to avoid political reality by addressing the past rather than the present" (Daviau 13). He cites Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler* and *Der Tod des Vergil* and points out that Musil devoted 1931-42 to writing *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* which is also set in the Austrian past. Without disputing this general trend, I find *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* to function in precisely the opposite capacity. That a work is set in the past does not preclude it from making a contemporary indictment, and Musil's unfinished

Lernet-Holenia wrote that Austria need only "resume at the point where the dreams of a madman interrupted us" and should to look to its past in order to become great in the future ("Gruß des Dichters", *Der Turm*, 1945; cited in Daviau 33-4). The very *Heimatdichter* who had supported Nazism and Austrofascism over the preceding two decades continued to serve on literary prize and fellowship committees. The predictable outcome was that state prizes in the 1950s went to authors such as Rudolf Henz, Max Mell, and Franz Karl Ginzkey who had also supported those regimes. Conspicuously absent were Jewish and exile authors like Hermann Broch, Max Brod, Elias Canetti, Friedrich Torberg and Alfred Polgar (Honegger 2001, 53).

Austria's silence about wartime atrocities thus extended throughout its literary and cultural apparatus. In this climate, Bernhard could create a great deal of chaos. He has been called "the first writer of his generation to unrelentingly expose Austria's pathology of denial" (Honegger 2001, ix). He broke taboos by denouncing the role of the Nazi legacy in the Second Republic, pointing out latent anti-Semitism and commenting on fascist and authoritarian structures in public and private life. By giving collectively repressed fascist impulses patterns of representation, he made these phenomena accessible for debate (Lorenz 45).

By the time *Heldenplatz* premiered in 1988, Bernhard had a longstanding reputation as a *Nestbeschmutzer* (one who soils his own nest) and a lightning-rod for conflict. The controversy surrounding *Heldenplatz* escalated into a political showdown in which culture and art became a battlefield for Austria's memory wars.[204] *Frankfurter Rundschau* Critic Peter Iden credited Bernhard and Burgtheater director Peymann with exposing the debased state of public discussion

magnum opus certainly addresses his distress with contemporary events, albeit through the veil of a historical setting.

[204] Menasse (*Das Land ohne Eigenschaften*, 1995) drily details Austria's penchant for debates over theater, art, coins and flags instead of weightier historical issues; yet these lighter topics are all symbolic of repressed history.

in Vienna. Ironically, as Honegger notes, the fears and the rhetoric of the surrounding debates reinforced the ugly reality depicted in the world of the play (Honegger 2001, 292-4).

All the same, Bernhard's criticism and scandals made for a symbiotic relationship with Austria. Indeed, Heiner Müller declared that by offending Austria Bernhard was providing a public service, without which Austria would never make it to West German stages or news.[205] Lorenz writes that despite his criticism of the Second Republic, his writing was clearly paradigmatic of Austrian literature post-1945 (Lorenz 29). Bernhard, the wayward son, was both a product and an integral part of the Austria he lambasted, and could only have waged his withering attacks from precisely such a position.

c. Scholarship on Bernhard and Wittgenstein

Just as Bernhard eluded and manipulated his interviewers, his work appears to be written against scholars and critics and their analyses (see Hens 6). This is not to say it cannot be studied, but it should be approached with an awareness that the text (if one may ascribe it agency) seeks to outmaneuver its analyst.

Two recent monographs have examined Bernhard's work specifically for its connections with Wittgenstein. Steutzger (*Zu einem Sprachspiel gehört eine ganze Kultur: Wittgenstein in der Prosa von Ingeborg Bachmann und Thomas Bernhard*, 2001) takes up Bernhard's philosophy and therapy references, but does not go much beyond noting that they exist. Perloff (*Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary*, 1996) finds that

[205] "Offending Austria is a public service. It's exactly what Austria needs and the two complement each other fabulously: Bernhard's subjective sense or feelings or consciousness that he is fighting against Austria and Austria's interest in being fought, in the theater (…) The disturbance can be articulated that loudly and clearly because it doesn't disturb. That's part of it all, it's part of the way things work. They wouldn't work without it. Austria without Bernhard wouldn't even get mentioned in any West German paper. It's almost like an advertisement. There is no better advertising for Austria than Bernhard…" (quoted in Honneger 295).

Bernhard frequently takes a word or phrase (*die Neue Zuercher Zeitung,* for example) and employs it in perfectly ordinary ways, but repeats it to the extent that it becomes bizarre and absurd, sometimes using it to reveal the hypocrisy of Austrian society (Perloff 159-60). I concur with this in my analysis of the words philosophy and madness, insofar as the extraordinary amount of repetition serves to break down existing meanings. Perloff also traces frequently repeated word pairs such as *Lungenkranken*/*Geisteskranien*, *Philosophie*/*Verrücktheit*, noting that no sooner are *links* established between the word pairs than another wave of repetition *differentiates* them, ultimately undermining any definitions. In my reading of *Wittgensteins Neffe*, not only are definitions maddeningly elusive, but those who find themselves alone in their definitions are liable to suffer from (so-called) madness.

2. Key themes in *Wittgensteins Neffe*

Wittgensteins Neffe, a kind of memorial for Bernhard's friend Paul Wittgenstein,[206] recounts a period in 1967 when Bernhard and Paul were hospitalized at Vienna's famous Steinhof clinic for lung tumors and mental illness respectively. When it was founded, Steinhof housed the mentally disabled under a program that had them live and work and produce art according to their abilities. During the Nazi era, it was the site of deportations of the mentally ill. After the war, it was a mental hospital of a different nature, where pharmaceuticals and shock therapy were employed to pacify the inmates.

The narrator and Paul, acquainted through Viennese society, are brought together at Steinhof by the shared trauma of illness along with a kindred *Weltanschauung*. The book falls

[206] Mark Anderson describes how *Wittgensteins Neffe* in a sense accomplishes what Bernhard failed to do in real life: It is "the funeral oration [Bernhard] never delivered, the ritual catharsis of his spiritual relative, the textual visiting of [Paul's] grave (…) a jubilant act of semi-public *Trauerarbeit*" (Anderson 122).

imperfectly into the genre of autobiography, playing fast and loose with facts, as does much of Bernhard's autobiographical work. For example, Paul was actually Wittgenstein's *great*-nephew, making the very title a misnomer, and Paul was not actually there at the time of Bernhard's surgery.[207] To maintain distance between author and text, I will refer to "the narrator" (a literary figure) when referring to the Bernhardian speaker of *Wittgensteins Neffe*, and "Bernhard" (the person) when referring the author.

Bernhard's writing suggests trauma in both form and content. His works depart from traditional form and narrative time; *Wittgensteins Neffe* has no paragraph breaks, *Heldenplatz* lacks punctuation, and both shun a chronological approach, instead developing their own logical structure. In *Wittgensteins Neffe* and *Auslöschung*, in lieu of chapters or even paragraph breaks, the narrator usually transitions between topics via a fleeting reference to some present situation (eg., sitting in the Hermann Pavilion and thinking about Paul, when some detail leads the narrator to recall yet another anecdote). In *Heldenplatz*, a similar function is served by stage cues or objects in characters' line of sight. In all cases, the result is an uncomfortable feeling of being trapped in time – possessed by the past, fleetingly visiting the present, and occasionally glancing toward a future that is already contaminated by the past.

Lorenz describes Bernhard's protagonists as "case studies of individuals and groups deeply traumatized by past guilt and historical lies" (Lorenz 40). Both *Wittgensteins Neffe* and *Heldenplatz* revolve around traumatic events, whether historical or personal, that seem impossible to fully articulate and are instead *shown* through roundabout references and aberrational use of language itself. Some words do of course denote trauma, referentially speaking, but they appear in a compulsively repetitive form suggesting that the characters can

[207] According to Honegger, there is not actually any such Ludwig Pavilion in Steinhof (Honegger 2001, 167). However, Diersch writes that the Hermann and Ludwig Pavilions did actually exist (Diersch 149).

never fully explain the trauma. Through an examination of the threads of philosophy, insanity and trauma in *Wittgensteins Neffe,* I argue that Bernhard's definition of madness involves being labeled or even becoming insane when one cannot participate in communal language games.

a. *So verrückt wie sein Neffe Paul*: Bernhard's Philosophical Language Games

The words *philosophy* and *philosophical* punctuate and penetrate *Wittgensteins Neffe* with an almost violent frequency: Late in life, Paul develops into an 'actual philosopher'; Paul calls the narrator his 'philosophical role model'; a Grillparzer prize acceptance speech is 'a short philosophical digression;' Paul is often described as 'philosophical,' and philosophical conversations are one basis for his and the narrator's bond. (Other overlaps include music, illness, and critical views of society – though the men are hardly carbon copies, and Bernhard takes linguistic delight their contrasts; see for example *WN* 147.) Bernhard, who has been called an unphilosophical author,[208] often mentions conversations about Schopenhauer or Pascal, but invariably moves on without divulging specific content. Behind the philosophical motif, if we look to the text to show and not tell, few passages show concrete evidence of Paul's philosophical nature.

To unpack Bernhard's uptake of philosophy, one must look beyond content to consider form and above all language. As Hens notes: "Für Bernhard besteht Philosophie in erster Linie aus der Vertextung von Denkprozessen. Philosophie und 'Poesie' berühren sich in der sprachliche Ausübung" ("For Bernhard, philosophy consists first and foremost of turning thought process into text. Philosophy and poesy touch in the linguistic praxis"; my translation, Hens 24).

[208] Hens writes: "Gerade Bernhard, der – trotz gegenteiliger Behauptung allerseits und trots seines unausgesetzten *name-dropping* von Pascal bis Heidegger – eigentlich ein unphilosophischer Autor ist, ein Autor, dem die großen Ideen erst Spaß machen" (Hens 7).

The present section considers how the term 'philosophical' departs from its usual meaning to take on a different function in this text. I find that Bernhard's discourse surrounding the terms *Philosophie* and *Verrücktheit* undermines normal or typical use of both terms, leaving room for new meanings, as well as for skepticism about behavioristic approaches to mental phenomena. I also argue that Bernhard's characterization of Wittgenstein as crazy belies a subtle but deep respect for the philosopher.

Bernhard often links philosophy and insanity, juxtaposing the terms in a language game that leaves only a flimsy line separating the two.

> [Ludwig und Paul], den berühmten epoche-machenden **Philosophen** und den (…) **Verrückten**, der im Grunde genauso **philosophisch** war wie sein Onkel Ludwig, wie umgekehrt der **philosophische** Ludwig so **verrückt** wie sein Neffe Paul, der eine, Ludwig, hatte seine **Philosophie** zu seiner Berühmtheit gemacht, der andere, Paul, seine **Verrücktheit** (…) Der eine hat sein Gehirn *publiziert*, der andere hat sein Gehirn *praktiziert*. Und wo liegt der Unterschied (…) (*WN* 45, my emphasis in bold, italics in original)
> [Ludwig and Paul], the famous **philosopher** of his epoch and the (…) **madman**, who in principle was just as **philosophical** as his uncle Ludwig, just as vice versa the **philosophical** Ludwig was as **mad** as his nephew Paul, the one, Ludwig, made his **philosophy** into his fame, the other, Paul, his **madness** (…) The one published his brain, the other practiced his brain. And where lies the difference (…) (my transl.)

A strange series of relational propositions results from this and related passages: Paul, *der Verrückte*, is as philosophical as Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein, *der Philosoph*, is as crazy as Paul. The narrator is as crazy as Paul, and by extension Wittgenstein.[209] Publishing his brain made Wittgenstein a philosopher. Practicing his brain made Paul a madman, and – rhetorical question – where indeed lies the difference.

This *philosophisch/verrückt* discourse has multiple functions. One is to undermine normal or typical use of both terms, leaving room for new meanings. *Heldenplatz* employs a

[209] "der Paul ist nicht verrückter gewesen, als ich selbst bin" (*WN* 35).

similar tactic in which 'philosophical' seems to be a virtuous quality of Professor Schuster and Frau Zittel, insofar as it is contrasts with National Socialist and Catholic thinking. It appears to have a non-conventional meaning in the world of the play that must be gleaned from its uses in the text. A second function is to question notions of behaviorism and truth criteria, casting doubt on the notion that one may discern a person's mental state from his outward behaviors.[210] Thirdly, by calling Wittgenstein crazy, Bernhard may be bestowing his version of a compliment. Within the book, 'crazy' is a form of *praise* the narrator reserves for himself and Paul. Moreover, the absence of scathing criticism of Wittgenstein – a kind of silence from Bernhard, who does not hold back with negative opinions – is itself a form of praise.

There are reasons why Bernhard may have held Wittgenstein in high regard. Firstly, Wittgenstein went to extreme efforts to throw off his aristocratic roots, from giving away his family wealth (as did his great-nephew Paul) to working as a schoolteacher in an unknown village. Perhaps Bernhard admired this and saw in it a precursor to his own social critique.[211] The philosophers who most appealed to Bernhard – Pascal, Schopenhauer, Montaigne, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Novalis – were for the most part outsiders, counterfigures and lone

[210] Behaviorism, briefly put, is the view that any statements about human experience can be reduced to statements about observable behavior. Because of certain passages focusing on outward signs and manifestations of sensations, Wittgenstein is sometimes ascribed this view. However, branding him a behaviorist is inconsistent with other parts of *Investigations* in which he maintains, for example, that it does not make sense to say one is mistaken about one's own sensations or feelings, implying that they cannot amount *merely* to patterns of behavior (*PI* §307-308). Wittgenstein himself rejects the behaviorist label and clarifies that he does not deny the existence of inner processes. He also points out, however, that the Cartesian view is misleading and we should not think of sensation words as straightforwardly referential: "We talk of processes and states (…) Sometime perhaps we shall know more about them – we think" (*PI* §308).

[211] Bernhard's origins of course lay at the opposite end of the social spectrum. In his success, he despised yet courted the aristocracy. "Among his preferred hosts were the descendants of European aristocracy. In their company, Bernhard could avail himself of the aura of pedigreed lineage. Paradoxically enough, while his writing mercilessly dragged the skeletons of history out of the most respected Austrians' closets, he let their dust settle on the construct of his persona like the patina of cultural authenticity" (Honegger 2001, 79).

wolves (Klug 36), and Bernhard himself was "part of a notable line of Austrian outsiders" including Grillparzer and Nestroy (Lorenz 29-30).

Secondly, while it is unclear how much of Wittgenstein's work Bernhard read, he appeared to see in the philosopher a greatness and truth that would be adulterated if put into words. This view is suggested by his 1971 letter to Hilde Spiel:[212]

> "Wittgenstein is a question that cannot be answered – that puts him on the level that excludes answers (and answering). Our contemporary culture in all its unbearable manifestations is one that would be easy to answer, if one wanted to get into it – it is different only with Wittgenstein. (…) I do not write about Wittgenstein, because I cannot do it, because I do not have an answer for him that would make everything fall into place." (Cited in Honegger 2001, 154-155)

Bernhard seems to fear that in writing about Wittgenstein, he would either fail to do him justice or perhaps do both of them an injustice. Honegger frames Bernhard's position in terms of his preoccupation with performance and the performative aspects of writing. In her reading, the letter reveals Bernhard's deep affinity for Wittgenstein's demand that language show rather than tell, and Bernhard would need to enter into Wittgenstein's private language – an impossibility – in order to perform the movements of his mind (Honegger 2001, 157). Klebes reads Bernhard's demurral to write 'about' Wittgenstein as arising from the impossibility of positing any subject in writing without it being subject to the self-referential loop of language, and from liabilities inherent in viewing the brain as a locus of thought and language (Klebes 52-58). Both readings are plausible, albeit more explicitly "philosophical" than Bernhard himself cared to be. Between the lines of the letter, however, Bernhard appears mindful of the final proposition of *Tractatus*.[213]

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[212] Spiel had invited Bernhard to contribute to a piece on Wittgenstein to the publication *Ver Sacrum*, which she edited; the letter was written in response.

[213] "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen." / "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent."

If Wittgenstein is a question that cannot be answered, the wise man will remain silent. The narrator in *Wittgensteins Neffe* puns on this proposition: "Ich habe mit dem Paul niemals über den Ludwig gesprochen, *geschweige* denn über dessen Philosophie" (*WN* 102-3, my emphasis). The function of *Tractatus* as an intertext is multivalent. On one hand, Bernhard gamely sidesteps serious debates on the book's meaning that occupied academic and social circles by pointedly using it for a pun. On the other hand, in drawing one of the key texts of the Vienna Circle, Bernhard circles back to a heritage situated in that very city half a century earlier, after one world war but before another, continuing to process a historically loaded intellectual and cultural legacy. Finally, by invoking a seminal text concerned with logic, Bernhard perhaps invites us to consider its opposite: illogic. Or ill logic. I.e., mental illness.

b. *Eine sogenannte Geisteskrankheit*: Portrayals and Functions of Mental Illness

The second sentence of *Wittgensteins Neffe* mentions the narrator's "moonface," which develops in response to his cortisone treatment and in accordance with the doctors' wishes ("mein *Mondgesicht*, wie von den Ärzten gewünscht," *WN* 7, emphasis in original). Through the association between lunar and loony, this "moonface" opens up the theme of insanity in the book.

References to insanity in *Wittgenstein's Neffe* serve (at least) three main purposes: They bring Paul and the narrator together structurally, content-wise and linguistically; they serve to undermine the medical establishment's and common societal labels of mental illness; and they reveal problems of voice for those labeled mentally ill. The present section details each of these three functions.

In life and in literature, mental pathology manifests in language. Throughout his life, Paul's impending manic episodes are signaled by language anomalies: "Seine Anfälle (…) hatten sich immer schon wochenlang vorher angekündigt, wenn er auf einmal mit den Händen zu zittern anfing, keinen Satz zu ende sprechen konnte, aber ununterbrochen redete, studenlang, seine Rede nicht abzubrechen war" ("His attacks (…) announced themselves weeks in advance, when his hands suddenly began to tremble, he could not finish a single sentence, but spoke uninterruptedly, for hours on end, his talking was not to be stopped;" *WN* 68, my transl.). Towards the end of his life, Paul's speech patterns reveal his decline: "Es war aber auch kein tatsächliches Gespräch mehr zustande gekommen, er redete nurmehr noch in Satzfetzen, die beim besten Willen keinen Zusammenhang mehr ergeben konnten" ("But no more actual conversation was to be had, he now spoke only in sentence scraps that with the best of intentions yielded no coherence;" *WN* 152, my transl.). Uninterrupted speech and incoherent sentence fragments thus form part of Paul's symptomatic profile.

While uninterrupted speech is indeed characteristic of a manic state, and sentence scraps severed from context can indeed suggest an impending leave-taking of logic and even life, these descriptions apply equally well to the narrator's prose. One sentence relating the narrator's sleepless nights in the Hermann Pavilion covers well over a page with the aid of 35 commas and a semicolon (*WN* 22-24). This is hardly atypical, and in fact constitutes a structural feature of the text which serves to bring Paul and the narrator closer together, as well as to dissolve the boundaries between the mentally ill and broader society. Linguistic moves and content complement this tendency; the narrator paints himself and Paul as birds of a feather through a litany of "wie der Paul" sentences, likening or contrasting himself to Paul some twelve times in

three pages and repeating that although Paul is considered insane *by society*, he (the narrator) is equally insane (*WN* 32-35).

The narrator writes that both he and Paul "play" the *Lungenkranken* and *Verrückten* respectively, conjuring the theater as well as the notion of a game (*WN* 36). His sarcastic formulation of Paul's illness as "eine *sogenannte* Geisteskrankheit" (*WN* 12, emphasis in original) demonstrates a critical examination of how societal definitions of 'crazy' are formed and practiced. This complements passages revealing the physical and psychological violence inflicted upon people labeled crazy. Malicious and monstrous "so-called psychiatric doctors" are painted as exacerbating the marginalization and abuse of the mentally ill.

> Als eine tatsächlich unsichtbare, aber doch wie keine andere undurchdringliche Mauer schieben sie das Lateinische zwischen sich und ihre Opfer schon gleich zu Beginn ihrer Behandlung, deren Methoden in jedem Fall nur die unmenschlichen und die mörderischen und die tödlichen sein können, wie wir wissen. Der psychiatrische Arzt ist der inkompetenteste und immer dem Lustmörder näher als seiner Wissenschaft. (*WN* 12-14).
> They shove the Latin between themselves and their victims, in an effectively invisible, yet singularly insurmountable wall, right from the start of their treatment, whose methods can in all events only be the most inhumane and murderous and deadly, as we know. The psychiatrist is the most incompetent and always closer to the sex murderer than to his science. (my transl.)

The narrator mistrusts and despises these doctors for using Latin words as a tool for oppression, for their charlatanistic diagnoses and inhumane 'treatments.'[214] His use of *Opfer*, *unmenschlich, mörderisch* and *tödlich* – words associated with discourses on the Holocaust – is a provocative way to underscore the violence and trauma wrought by psychiatrists. A similar pattern appears in *Heldenplatz*, as characters use loaded words like *Opfer* and *Vernichtung*

[214] Bernhard's memoirs contain gruesome depictions of his own medical traumas at the hands of doctors. As a young man with tuberculosis at the Grafenhof Sanatorium, he describes a pneumoperitoneum procedure performed in a primitive and barbaric fashion by an inexperienced assistant (cited in Honegger 2001, 30).

(victim and annihilation) in ostensibly non-Holocaust contexts to reveal an underlying and pervasive theme of trauma. Part of that trauma arises from being deprived of a voice.

The medical establishment deprives mentally ill persons of agency and voice: "Die Kranken sind durch ihre Krankheit Entmündigte" ("The sick are disenfranchised through their sickness;" *WN* 79, my transl.), the narrator writes, playing on the connection between *Entmündigen* and *Mund*. At the same time, his own language upends this power dynamic by undermining doctors through references to *so-called* mental illness and by portraying the sick as "hellsichtig" (clairvoyant, *WN* 80). Paul's *Hellsichtigkeit* is, in the end, tragically misunderstood.

The book closes with an episode leading to Paul's final hospitalization and death. As a joke, Paul stages a hold-up of his cousin's jewelry store with a loaded revolver. The cousin, however, misapprehends his humor, calls the police, and has Paul once again committed:

> Der Juwelier und Vetter hatte den Spaß **nicht verstanden** andererseits aber sofort erkannt, daß sein Vetter, wie gesagt wird, auf einmal wieder *unzurechnungsfähig* geworden, in eine Anstalt gehöre. Er hatte den, wie berichtet wird, *Tobenden* festhalten können und die Polizei **verständigt**, die ihn nach Steinhof gebracht hat. (*WN* 164, my emphasis in bold, italics in original)
>
> The jeweler and cousin did not **understand** the joke, but rather immediately recognized that his cousin, as is said, had once again suddenly become *incompetent* and belonged in an institution. He managed, as is reported, to secure the *mad man*, got the **understanding** of the police, who brought him to Steinhof. (my transl.)

This scene implies a notion of madness which involves being labeled and even becoming insane when one cannot participate in communal language games. The reported speech of others' gossip (*wie gesagt wird, wie berichtet wird*), the subjunctive mood in the narrator's rendering (*gehöre*), and the italicized words in the text (*unzurechnungsfähig*, *den Tobenden*) undermine societal judgment of Paul as incompetent. The words *verstanden* and *verständigt* in this context imply precisely the opposite of understanding; whereas broadly held societal concepts of

(in)sanity make it rational to confine Paul in his so-called madness, the narrator sees a person beneath the sickness – one unjustly locked up because his message was misunderstood. Paul is the victim of a cycle of violence that exacerbates and even causes the very insanity it purports to contain. This problem of mixed-up and missed messages returns us to the role of language for trauma in the text.

c. *Ohne auch nur ein Wort zu sprechen*: Unspoken Trauma and Private Language

Wittgensteins Neffe frequently hints at trauma that cannot be brought into language.[215] The narrator and Paul find comfort in silence and a kind of shared private language. Paul's sobbing spells, breakdowns and '*Umarmungsanfälle*' (hugging-attacks, experienced by both Paul and his target as unbearable) constitute traumatic moments in themselves and suggest past trauma. Paul's attempts at an autobiography falter, so his life story remains untold (*WN* 95-97). Of his stays in mental hospitals, Paul gives "die unglaublichsten Berichte (…) wofür aber hier nicht der Platz ist" (*WN* 73). The narrator mentions yet passes over Paul's 'horrible, mean, vile, inhumane electroshock treatments,' suggesting that much is left unsaid and perhaps cannot be said (*WN* 51). Readers are not privy to the violence, receiving it only through the filters of time (Paul's delayed recounting) and the author's coy reported speech (he knows more than he shares). While the unsaid is not necessarily the unsayable, narrative mediations of this kind can mark a divide between what is amenable to representation and what is not directly representable.

[215] This holds for many or most of Bernhard's works. *Heldenplatz* is marked by silence where there should be words, as when nothing is said at Professor Schuster's grave, and Robert keeps silent in the face of plans to destroy the garden in Neuhaus. When they do speak, characters fail to *hear* one another: Frau Zittel ignores Herta's statements and follows them with non-sequiturs from her own thoughts; the Schuster daughters ignore Robert's points; and Josef refuses to hear his wife's pain. The very premise and opening of the play, with the clothes and shoes of a deceased man and a bloody suit demanding explanation, spotlights unknown trauma, and suicide is an inherently untellable story.

As Gruber notes, "the absence of direct representation defines another reality somewhere that is or was more 'real' than what exists 'here and now' before spectators" (Gruber 93-4).[216]

Bernhard's withholding of the full details and pathos of Paul's traumas mimetically reproduces society's silencing of the mentally ill. On the other hand, it may be read as an ironic critique of that very silencing. Based on Lyotard's concept of the *différend*, and Wittgenstein's idea of the language game, Ludden constructs such reading of Bernhard's story *Ja* (1978) in which a male narrator alludes to a Persian woman's suffering and despair yet does not allow her a voice with which to articulate it directly. Ludden interprets this silence as a textual practice of anti-ventriloquism regarding others' suffering.[217] Accordingly, the absence of Paul's voice in *Wittgensteins Neffe,* could serve to acknowledge the impossibility of rendering his experience in the narrator's language.

Based on the narrator's portrayal (insofar as it may be trusted), he and Paul share a common language. Certain conversations about music, philosophy, politics and mathematics are possible only with Paul (*WN* 46). The narrator seems to thrive on Paul's ability to speak his language. They echo one another's words, sharing a penchant for the adjective "grotesque" and both using the phrase "*die haben dir auf den Kopf gemacht*" ("they pissed on your head," *WN* 108-113) to describe the Grillparzer award ceremony debacle. Their voices are so similar as to

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[216] Gruber argues that the very absence of the determining event – its apparent non-representability – helps makes Bernhard's work so compelling: "Violence and death pervade all of Bernhard's works for the stage; rarely addressed, never actually represented, these events nevertheless contaminate everything in the plays. In most of the dramas one finds at the absent center some enormity, some trauma, some act of violence that has been all but torn from conscious memory and yet governs events nevertheless" (Gruber 95).

[217] Ludden elaborates: "There is less of a clash [of languages] in Lyotard's sense than a self-conscious underscoring of one language's absence. This is accomplished through the narrator's own accounts of his relations with the Persian woman and the absence of her own account. Thus the text draws attention to what Lyotard would term the injustice of this linguistic domination by interrogating the meta-language while not countering this with a new meta-language. (…) Put simply, the language of the victim cannot be heard by the dominant language because it cannot simply be translated into this language and there is no neutral language with which one might arbitrate" (Ludden 12).

invite suspicion that Bernhard is writing words into Paul's mouth. If so, this could belie the narrator's egoistic perspective and/or betray the limits of the narrator's language to tell another's story.

The narrator's spoken bond with Paul is complemented by a wordless one: "Wir hörten stundenlang zusammen Mozartmusik, Beethovenmusik, ohne auch nur ein Wort zu sprechen" ("We listened for hours to Mozart and Beethoven music together, without ever saying a word" *WN* 57, my transl.). This wordless, music-mediated connection demarcates a boundary beyond which language is not appropriate. (Wittgenstein viewed music as containing what cannot be said in words or even expressed through other arts; see Steutzger 98). The friendship thus invokes a shared understanding based on both language and silence.

Finally, I would like to suggest that the friends share a kind of private language which helps relieve the trauma of so-called madness.

"Nach vielen Jahren der ungewollten Freundschaftsabstinenz hatte ich auf einmal wieder einen tatsächlichen Freund, der auch die verrücktesten Eskapaden meines doch recht komplizierten und also gar nicht einfachen Kopfes verstand" (*WN* 37-8). The word 'abstinence,' nestled in one of Bernhard's trademark neologisms, refers to refraining from pleasure, especially sexual. This is not to say the two men enjoy a sexual liaison, but to suggest that their coming-together, enabled by Paul's ready understanding of the 'crazy escapades' in the narrator's 'complicated head,' affords a fulfillment on the level of a consummation. If this is so, what accounts for the power of their connection?

The narrator finds another person who can plays his language game – and one is infinitely more than none. Having at least one other person understand his inner world rescues the narrator from being trapped in his head. This harkens back to the notion that madness

involves being labeled (or even becoming) insane when one cannot participate in communal language games.[218] The two friends do not have a private language in a strictly philosophical sense, because once language is shared by more than one individual it is no longer private.[219] However, if Paul and the narrator are taken as a kind of unit, they may be said to have a mutual private language that outsiders cannot grasp. Using ostension and language games (methods also favored by Wittgenstein) to *show* the reader into Paul and the narrator's world world, *Wittgensteins Neffe* serves as an ode to this shared private language.

Frau Schuster, plagued by the (re)surging cries welcoming Hitler to Heldenplatz in 1938, offers an informative contrast. Because only she hears this *Geschrei* (screaming), it functions like a private language and ultimately, in concert with the insensitivity of her family who cannot hear the sounds nor speak her language, destroys her. Frau Schuster exemplifies Klug's reading of Bernhardian figures' communication struggles as marking the impossibility of sharing some inner truth, which perforce remains private because it cannot be said.[220] In *Wittgensteins Neffe,* by contrast, Paul and the narrator are afflicted by a similar inner torture but are able to communicate with one another about it. Even if this communication occurs through a language only the two of them can understand, it spares them from Frau Schuster's demise.

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[218] Lorenz offers a closely related reading of the narrator Murau in *Auslöschung*. "Bernhard's protagonist seeks as well as abhors isolation. The author suggests through Murau's persona that it might be possible to isolate oneself rom one's contemporaries and live outside the fold. At the same time, Bernhard constructs a position of authority through the amorphous use of 'we' and the appeal to like-minded readers, *conceding that total isolation is synonymous with insanity*" (Lorenz 37, my emphasis).

[219] Wittgenstein's private language argument queries whether it is possible for there to be a language that is essentially private – that only one person can speak and no one else can understand – and concludes that such a private language is impossible.

[220] "Vor dem Hintergrund der Existenzdialektik interpretiere ich das von Bernhards Figure immer wider besprochene Problem, daß sich die Wahrheit nicht sagen lasse, als *Problem der Mitteilung von Innerlichkeit*. Entegen bisherigen Auffassungen hat das Wahrheitsproblem bei Bernhard weder mit Erkenntnistheorie noch mit der 'Sprachkrise' der Jahrhundertwende etwas zu tun hat" ("Against the backdrop of the dialectic of existence, I interpret the problem, recurrently mentioned by Bernhard's characters, that the truth cannot be spoken, as a *problem of communicating inwardness*. Contrary to conceptions thus far, the truth problem with Bernhard is neither about theories of cognition nor the 'language crisis' of the turn of the century;" Klug XII, my emphasis, my transl.).

3. Conclusion

Beneath the narrator's cynical, cantankerous demeanor, there is a softness in his depiction of Paul. His account of avoiding Paul towards the end of Paul's life seems true to form for a Bernhardian character,[221] yet his remorse about it also rings true. *Wittgensteins Neffe* is a memorial for Paul as well as a testament to trauma – Paul's and the narrator's own:

> "der Mittelpunkt dieser Notitzen ist mein (…) Freund Paul, den ich mir mit diesen Notitzen noch einmal deutlich machen will, mit diesen Erinnerungsfetzen, die mir im Augenblick nicht nur die auswegslose Situation meines Freundes, sondern meine eigene damalige Auswegslosigkeit verdeutlichen sollen." (*WN* 32).
>
> "the focal point of these notes is my (…) friend Paul, whom I want to make once again visible with these notes, with these memory scraps, which at the moment are meant to illustrate not only the hopeless situation of my friend, but also my own hopelessness at that time." (my transl.)

I have shown that Bernhard's language games with *Philosophie* and *Verrücktheit* undermine normal or typical use, leaving room for new meanings, as well as for skepticism about behavioristic approaches to mental phenomena. References to insanity bring Paul and the narrator together structurally, content-wise and linguistically, while undermining societal labels of mental illness and revealing problems of voice for those labeled mentally ill. Finally, the text frequently hints at trauma that cannot be brought into language, yet the narrator and Paul find some comfort in a kind of shared private language. Viewed in light of Wittgenstein's works as intertexts, *Wittgensteins Neffe* embodies a concept of so-called madness that involves being labeled or even becoming insane when one cannot participate in communal language games.

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[221] Tangled involvements and truncated friendships were characteristic of Bernhard's personal relationships. He was known to carry on years-long close friendships before summarily severing them, such as with Karl Ignaz Hennetmair. He also liked to insert himself into couples' relationships, causing excitement and strife, as was the case with Christa and Franz Josef Altenberg and Victor and Grete Hufnagel. In his works, he would then take "brutal revenge on those who had done nothing but play into his infantile needs and cunningly exploitative manipulations" (Honegger 2001, 61-80).

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Summary of Findings

This dissertation began with the questions, most broadly speaking, of why it is important to put trauma into words and what happens to trauma that is never verbalized. I hypothesized that Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument (PLA) carries implications for trauma which is never verbalized: If trauma lacks a place in public language games it will remain outside the realm of intersubjective reality, making the survivor privy to an experience no one else acknowledges and thereby compounding the trauma. I have shown how this reading fits with key interpretations of the PLA, and that it can be defended against accusations of memory skepticism, verificationism and behaviorism.

To test my argument in the arena of literary imagination, I have examined how selected works by Ingeborg Bachmann, Paul Celan and Thomas Bernhard engage the interface between language and trauma and how Bachmann and Bernhard engage with Wittgenstein. The language games in Bachmann's *Malina* suggest that one of the most destructive aspects of trauma occurs when one is unable to voice trauma to a listening other. The narrator's trauma is not inherently unsayable, but becomes so in the context of the fascist, patriarchal society Bachmann is critiquing. Madness, a motif common among my selected authors and works, consistently goes along with something that cannot be said. I reveal an underlying theme of madness in Celan's *Meridian* and argue that his approach to language in the speech involves an encounter – the opposite of a private language. I show how Bernhard's language games in *Wittgensteins Neffe* serve to undermine the labels of 'crazy' and 'mentally ill,' and argue that Bernhard's definition of madness involves being labeled (or even becoming) insane when one cannot or will not

participate in communal language games. In sum, I find that each work, in its own way, reveals the destructive effects of silencing trauma.

B. Implications

a. Postwar Austrian Literature

Within present-day Austrian studies, there is a prevailing narrative about postwar Austria's historical narrative; namely, in the decades following World War II, Austria preferred not to discuss the years 1938-1945 and downplayed its role in the Holocaust. My dissertation offers a close look at the effects of that silence on literary production, analyzing texts by Bachmann, Bernhard and Celan that bump violently against the boundaries of what it was possible to say in such an environment. Wittgenstein has long been associated with postwar Austrian literature, silences therein, and specifically with Bachmann and Bernhard. That said, the focus of such studies often lies on his ideas on the limits of language (*Tractatus*) and the final proposition of *Tractatus*. Worse, the idea of a private language is occasionally subject to superficial passing references, such as unproblematized claims that an author develops her own "private language." The present study grants a prominent position to Wittgenstein's later work, specifically the private language argument (PLA) sections of *Philosophical Investigations*. This is fitting given that Bachmann was familiar with *Investigations* and followed further posthumous publications of Wittgenstein's work with interest. I show that the PLA, in all its detail and nuance, is relevant to the problem of repressed and unspoken trauma in postwar Austrian literature and demonstrate that it can be a useful lens through which to reconsider the work of Bachmann, Celan and Bernhard.

b. Trauma Theory and Trauma Literature

Chapter II presented a number of existential questions that plague theories of trauma and studies of trauma narratives. One contribution of this dissertation is to suggest that in order to adequately understand the function or purpose of a trauma narrative (to the extent we may speak of such a thing without objectifying or instrumentalizing the narrative), we must go beyond testimonial models like that employed by Felman and Laub. I claim that one key function of narrativizing a trauma is to make it more real for the survivor by bringing it into language. This narrativization *may* be therapeutic, but *need* not be; the individual may merely go from one painful state (living with unsayable trauma) to another (having words for the trauma, but being in no way healed). It would be valuable to consider this idea alongside the theory and clinical research in the developing field of Narrative Exposure Therapy.

Like other scholars why study trauma literature (Vickroy, Whitehead, Ramazani and Robinett), I analyze the content, structure and context of the selected works, consider literary tools and techniques that code for trauma, and ask why the narrative was written. I eschew the quasi-activist stance that a story must be told in order to raise awareness – "giving voice to the denied, repressed and forgotten stories" (Whitehead 82) – and focus instead on the role of narrative for the author as an individual and as a survivor. Of course, if a narrative is published and widely read, discussions among critics and the broader public will help usher so-called unsayable trauma into accepted discourses. My argument, however, about a subset of trauma narratives written by survivors, holds that the act of narrativizing trauma is important for the individual regardless of who reads a narrative or deems it valid. This is because the act of putting the experience into language helps bring it into intersubjective reality.

c. Wittgenstein and Literature

This dissertation marks a new point on the landscape in studies of Wittgenstein and literature. Existing studies show lines of influence from Wittgenstein to selected authors (with Perloff and Steutzger focusing on Austrian literature) and/or affinities between Wittgenstein and literature (as in Schuman and Lemahieu's respective studies of Kafka and Bellow). While I partly continue in these lines of research, I further carry my analysis back into a philosophical inquiry in order to ascertain whether Wittgenstein's PLA and my 'extension' thereof are validated or otherwise informed by the literary works.

One assumption underlying my effort is that we can rightly expect literature to reflect philosophical postulates or phenomena. This assumption is in premised on the views that (1) philosophical insights into the human condition will hold across different times and places (although not necessarily universally), and (2) literature, though it lies in a fictional realm, is a use of language that intertwines with the human condition.

In passages and features of the selected texts dealing with the relationship between trauma, language and silence, I find support for my hypothesis that trauma which is never verbalized is damaging because language itself is of paramount importance in granting legitimacy to experience. I do not impute clinical or philosophical motives to authors and texts, nor undermine their literary nature. In my view, a text can be simultaneously a testimony of trauma; a literary statement about the nature of trauma; and an instantiation of the philosophical notion that for an experience to be fully real, one must have language with which to describe it.

d. Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument and Trauma

I concur with a subset of orthodox readings of Wittgenstein's PLA such as that of Kenny, in which Wittgenstein is seen to make a *reductio*-style argument in which a private language is found to be impossible because a private ostensive definition is insufficient to confer meaning on a sign. However, I go beyond this interpretation of the PLA to make a novel claim about its implications for trauma: If one remains silent about a traumatic experience, never verbalizing it even to oneself, a problem arises related to the impossibility of a private language; namely, one becomes privy to an experience no one else acknowledges, and this undermines the reality of the experience, which compounds the existing trauma. I do not ascribe Wittgenstein a positive position on trauma; rather, I claim that the PLA contains implication for trauma which remains unspoken.

My dissertation expands the reach of the PLA beyond the domains in which it has been traditionally taken up (debates on linguistic rules and meaning, behaviorism, solipsism, phenomenalism, philosophy of mind, Cartesian dualism) and places it in proximity to defining questions in psychology, psychoanalysis, and trauma theory. I argue that the impossibility of a private language helps us to understand the drive to render trauma in words and the effects of creating a narrative.

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	M.P.H. and M.S. in Urban Planning, Columbia University, 2008
	Ph.D., Germanic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2017
TEACHING:	The German School, Middlebury College: Beginning and Intermediate German Culture; Yoga. Summer 2017.
	Department of Modern Languages, DePaul University: Intermediate German language. 2017.
	Department of Germanic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago: Beginning and Intermediate German language; German Film; Teaching assistant for Nazi Era Cinema; Teach Assistant for German Jewish Literature. 2012-2017.
HONORS:	UIC Robert Kauf Teaching Award for Curriculum Development: 2017 and 2015
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PUBLICATIONS:	"Leo Perutz, from Celebrated Novelist to Forgotten Author: A Remigration Enigma." In: Katharina Prager and Wolfgang Straub (eds.): Bilderbuch-Heimkehr? Remigration im Kontext. Vienna: Arco Verlag. January 2017.
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