"Kränkung" and "Verdrängung": The Metaphor of Hysteria in Marlen Haushofer's *Die Mansarde* and Ingeborg Bachmann's *Der Fall Franza*

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Marlen Haushofer (1920 - 1970) and Ingeborg Bachmann (1926 - 1973) were contemporaries, but their paths seem seldom to have crossed. Haushofer, born in Frauenstein in Oberösterreich, grew up in the country and (from 1934 on) attended a boarding-school in Linz; Bachmann spent her first 18 years in Klagenfurt in Kärnten, followed by a semester in Innsbruck and Graz respectively, before moving to Vienna in 1946 for the remainder of her university study. Haushofer studied in Vienna too, but had already moved to Graz in 1943, before Bachmann's arrival in Vienna. The common element in their life experience was the war. The impression made on the twelve-year-old Bachmann by the entry of German troops into Austria is well-known from her own words.[1] In Haushofer's work it is the experience of the war, particularly the air raids, that has made its mark.

The genesis of the two works chosen for discussion here must have run parallel, but the authors would not have known of the other's work. The fragment *Der Fall Franza*[2] was written earlier than *Malina,*[3] on which Bachmann worked intensively after moving permanently from Berlin to Rome in 1966. After that move she visited Austria only occasionally and so was not in Austria when *Die Mansarde*[4] was published in 1969. Haushofer, who fell ill with cancer in the mid-sixties, seldom left Steyr, where she continued to live in her husband's house, even after their divorce. She had, according to Dagmar Lorenz, "nur beschränkten

[1] "Es hat einen bestimmten Moment gegeben, der hat meine Kindheit zertrümmert. Der Einmarsch von Hitlers Truppen in Klagenfurt." Christine Koschel und Inge von Weidenbaum (Hg.): *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden. Gespräche und Interviews.* München 1983, p. 111.

[2] Ingeborg Bachmann: *Der Fall Franza. Requiem für Fanny Gold-mann.* (dtv 1705, 7. Auflage), München 1988.

[3] Kurt Bartsch: *Ingeborg Bachmann,* Stuttgart, 1988, p. 158.

[4] Marlen Haushofer, *Die Mansarde,*(Fischer Tb 5459), Düsseldorf 1984.

Kontakt mit befreundeten Schriftstellern und Kritikern."[5] She belonged to the circle around the critic Hans Weigel, who was her literary mentor, while Bachmann kept her distance from Viennese literary circles after earning a reproof from Weigel in 1958 for signing a petition against the equipping of the German Bundeswehr with atomic weapons.[6] One can assume, therefore, that the two writers scarcely knew each other personally, although they probably knew each other's work. Haushofer's works were appearing at regular intervals from the mid-fifties onward. *Die Wand* (1963) in particular was received with interest and was reprinted as early as 1968. At that time the only prose work of Bachmann's published was the collection of short stories *Das dreißigste Jahr* (1961), which did not enjoy much favour with the critics.[7] Haushofer would have known Bachmann principally as a poet. Thus one could scarcely speak of a direct influence of the one on the other, and if so, it would presumably be of the older, Haushofer, on the younger, Bachmann.

Nevertheless, a striking number of motifs are common to both. It could well be that Bachmann knew Haushofer's work and felt moved to make use of this and that for her own work. While there is no suggestion of plagiarism in any form whatsoever, there are fascinating details that overlap, which suggest that Bachmann might have read *Die Mansarde* while working on *Malina*. For example, there is a relatively unimportant figure in *Mansarde,* an old school friend of the husband Hubert, who has the unusual name Malina. He is described as an "Innenarchitekt" and "großer Damenfreund" (186); perhaps even more remarkable is Hubert's great preference for the Arsenal-Museum in Vienna. The couple visit it almost every Sunday. Bachmann's Malina is "aus Gründen der Tarnung Staatsbeamter der Klasse A, angestellt im Österreichischen Heeresmusem" (8), where he is responsible for the procedures and written exchanges between the Ministry of Defence and the Museum in the Arsenal. The latter is described as belonging to "den merkwürdigsten Einrichtungen unserer Stadt."(8)

Such significantly congruent details have been noted before. Irmela von

[5]Dagmar Lorenz, "Marlen Haushofer - eine Feministin aus Österreich" in: *Modern Austrian Literature* 12, Nos. 3/4 (1979), p. 174.

[6]Bartsch, op. cit., p. 180.

[7]Ibid, p. 181.

der Lühe, writing on Haushofer, does not mention *Die Mansarde* in this context, but comments on the striking similarity between motifs in Haushofer's *Die Tapetentür, Wir töten Stella,* and *Die Wand,* and Bachmann's *Malina.*[8] She does not, however, consider them to be of any great literary significance, writing: "Es sei ausdrücklich vermerkt, daß es sich um motivbedingte und um Parallelitäten in erzählthematischer, keineswegs jedoch in literarischer oder poetologischer Hinsicht handelt."[9] Despite these warning words - and one might query her criteria for what is of literary relevance - it seemed that there might be something to be gained from the process of comparing how the two writers make use of one of the motifs common to both: that of hysterical illness.

In the preface to *Der Fall Franza,* Franziska Ranner-Jordan's journey to Egypt with her brother Martin is called "eine Reise durch eine Krankheit." During her journey across the Sahara Franza mentally retraces step by step the path of the marriage she has just left, and analyses the psychological damage it has done to her. The same metaphor of travel could be applied to Haushofer's novel. Haushofer's unnamed narrating I undergoes a similar process, taking a journey seventeen years back in time, parallel to the chronological sequence of eight days which structures the narrative present. During the eighteen-month period of her illness she had kept a diary; now she "journeys" through that period as she reads daily instalments from the journal, which are sent to her anonymously in the mail. In this way she too is confronted with her past. Her reflections on it are reserved, leaving it in the main to the reader to deduce any causal connection between her past experience and her evident present state of emotional paralysis and self-alienation, because she herself appears not to suffer from or perceive any abnormality in the emptiness of her marriage relationship.

In the case of each of these female figures the cause for her present disturbed emotional state is to be found in a "Kränkung" at the hands of her husband. In the case of Haushofer's protagonist, it took the form of rejection and banishment from normal home life at the time she suffered a sudden onset of deafness for which the doctors could find no physical

[8]Irmela von der Lühe: "Erzählte Räume - leere Welt" in: *Oder war da manchmal noch etwas anderes?" Texte zu Marlen Haushofer von Anne Duden et al.,* Frankfurt a.M., 1986, p. 82.

[9]Ibid., p. 105, footnote 13.

cause. Although she recovers her hearing after a period of about eighteen months and returns to her husband and child, the marriage is thereafter emotionally barren and survives only by the care each partner takes not to recall the past. In Franza's case the "Kränkung" comes with the realisation that her psychiatrist husband has been using her as a case study. Her illness is the direct result of the psychological damage this abuse of their marital relationship has done her. It manifests itself in a multiplicity of somatic symptoms, pain that moves from head to respiratory organs, to heart and to every extremity.[10] She herself makes the connection between the psychological abuse and the physical symptoms: "mein Körper, er ist ganz beleidigt, an jeder Stelle beleidigt. Ich kann so nicht weiterleben. Ich kann das nicht. Wie oft muß ich noch in den Nil tauchen, damit das abgewaschen wird von ihm" (102).

The term "Kränkung", which, if translated into English, loses its etymological connection with "krank" or "Erkrankung", was used by Freud and Breuer in their *Studien über Hysterie.* They observed physical symptoms occuring in hysterical illnesses which appeared to be the symbolic expression of an insult or psychological injury experienced many years earlier, the memory of which had been repressed by the patient, because it was not possible, or was socially inappropriate, to react to it openly.[11] The two important factors in their early analyses of hysteria cases are the "Kränkung" and the repression of the memory of it, the failure to "abreagieren" adequately. The case of Franziska Jordan has already been

[10] "Ich bin in der Wüste, um meinen Schmerz zu verlieren, und verlier ich ihn nicht, der durch meinen Kopf, durch meine Atemorgane, durch die Herzcoronarien wütet und bis in die verdrehten Extremitäten, dieser wahnsinnige Schmerz, der sich alle paar Stunden ein anderes Feld aussucht, um mich auszuprobieren, meinen Kiefer, um ihn zu sperren, meine Zähne, um sie klappern zu lassen, meine Hände, damit sie taub werden, fremd an mir weghängen und mir die Schale aus der Hand gleitet, und wenn ich den nicht mehr verliere, nicht in diesen Knien, die einsacken, diesen Augen, in denen nach dem vorübergehenden Tod die Pupillen schaukeln und schief stehen. " (107).

[11] "Zur ersten Gruppe rechnen wir jene Fälle, in denen die Kranken auf psychische Traumen nicht reagiert haben, weil die Natur des Traumas eine Reaktion ausschloß, wie beim unersetzlich erscheinenden Verlust einer geliebten Person, oder weil die sozialen Verhältnisse eine Reaktion unmöglich machten, oder weil es sich um Dinge handelte, die der Kranke vergessen wollte, die er darum absichtlich aus seinem bewußten Denken verdrängte, hemmte und unterdrückte". Sigmund Freud. Josef Breuer: *Studien über Hysterie,* Frankfurt a. M. (Fischer Tb), 1970, p. 12f.

examined in these terms.[12] The theory is of particular interest in respect to Franza's loss of language, which will be discussed later.

Both Bachmann's and Haushofer's female protagonists appear to fit the pattern of hysterical illness. But the case of Haushofer's narrating I, read as a case of hysterical illness, raises a problem. A clear instance of a "Kränkung" can be identified, as outlined above, but the apparently hysterical symptom, deafness, was of course present prior to the "Kränkung", which therefore cannot be seen to be the cause of it. The questions that arise for the reader are thus what caused the deafness, and why the narrator returns to her marriage after the recovery of her hearing. The answers to both of these questions are connected to the central issue of repression.

In *Die Mansarde* the young husband, confronted by the social embarrassment of a wife who - according to medical specialists - simply refused to hear, had done the "sensible" thing and sent her off into paid care, disregarding the trauma the separation was likely to cause mother and child alike. It seems to the young woman, recording her experience in her diary, that she is being punished for disobedience, instead of receiving the sympathy and support she might expect. The inference she is forced to draw from the medical diagnosis that there is nothing organic the matter with her (52), is that *she* is responsible for her deafness. The double meaning implicit in the verb "hören" is clearly evoked through the personification of the deafness: "Warum will ich oder jenes fremde Wesen in mir nicht mehr hören?" (55) She perceives herself as being incomprehensibly divided against herself, as harbouring an inner, rebellious monster over which she has no control. She has in all innocence become guilty of something socially unacceptable. On the surface she accepts the rational decision her husband has made, but emotionally she feels betrayed and recognizes that her husband Hubert has revealed who he

[12]Eva Christina Zeller: *Ingeborg Bachmann: "Der Fall Franza"*, Frankfurt a. M./Bern/New York/Paris, 1988. Zeller notes the obvious relevance of Freud's analysis of the nature of hysteria, but comes to the conclusion that Bachmann's own concept of illness is more closely related to that of Georg Groddeck. cf. pp. 57f. She also relates the notion of "Kränkung" to the statement Bachmann makes in the "Vorrede" that the book is a book about a "Verbrechen" as well as about a "Krankheit": "Die Kränkung, in die sprachlich Krankheit und Verbrechen eingegangen sind, weil Kränkung bei [Bachmann] Krankmachen bedeutet, ist eine Problemkonstante ihres Werks." (p. 58)

really is - his allegiances lie with a society that judges all things on the basis of "Vernunft": "Indem er mich abgeschoben und verraten hat, ist er sich selber treu geblieben" (123). Repeatedly she affirms the rationality of his decisions - "Eine taube Mutter wäre ja wirklich nicht gut für [Ferdinand]" (53). "Er tut ja alles, was für mich gut ist" (120). "Was sollte ein junger Rechtsanwalt wohl mit einer tauben Frau, was kann überhaupt irgendein Mann mit einer tauben Frau anfangen [...]" (120). The particles "ja" and "wohl" she uses here reinforce the conventionality of the rational point of view. Nevertheless, she resents his inability to cope with the consequences that her deafness has for their relationship, and his failure to recognize the irreversible significance of his decision: "Vielleicht weiß Hubert wirklich nicht, daß nie mehr etwas werden wird wie früher" (53).

Despite the peacefulness of their marriage since her recovery, the underlying resentment has remained over the years and is reactivated by reading the journal. Rejoining Hubert in the sitting-room after reading the first instalment in her attic room, her eyes fall on a heavy ashtray on the table and she comments laconically: " Ich hätte Hubert ganz leicht damit erschlagen können, aber ich spürte nicht das geringste Verlangen, es zu tun" (57); and the following day, while washing his socks, "[...] merkte ich, daß ich auf Hubert sehr böse war. Das geschieht noch immer, ohne daß ich es will. Es ist so ungerecht von mir. Hubert mußte doch wirklich eine Existenz aufbauen [...] Er tat genau das, was damals notwendig und unvermeidlich war. Aber es hätte mich auch umbringen können" (67). Once again, the particle "doch" reveals the subjective state of the narrator. The sense of "Kränkung" is still very strong, or has been revived by the reading of the journal.

Hubert's betrayal lies in his acceptance of what society determines is reasonable, acceptable and appropriate. Prior to this event Hubert had been an atypical man. Although little is told of the early stages of their relationship, the description of their first encounter indicates what has attracted her to him: "Wir redeten wirklich miteinander, nicht nur so nach den üblichen Spielregeln, sondern ganz ohne Hintergedanken und Vorbehalte, wie vielleicht zwei Kinder miteinander reden, die sich auf dem Spielplatz kennengelernt haben" (73).

The ingenuousness of their comunication then might have been retained, "wäre Hubert eine Waise gewesen wie ich" (74). But Hubert is not an or-

phan. He has a mother, who is described always in terms of her social status as "die Hofrätin"; she represents society, and the forces of "Vernunft":

> Als ich sie kennenlernte, wußte ich noch nicht viel von Menschen, ich spürte nur ihre Ausstrahlung, und die Hofrätin besaß die Ausstrahlung geschliffenen Marmors. Ich kann nicht sagen, daß ich sie gehaßt oder verabscheut hätte. Sie war für mich ein unange-nehmes, aber faszinierendes Bild, und ich starrte sie oft lange an, wenn ich sicher war, daß sie es nicht merkte. Böse war ich nur, weil sie Hubert unglücklich gemacht hatte, denn als ich ihn kennen-lernte, war er unglücklich. Er verbrauchte viel zuviel Kraft in seiner Jugend, um sich von ihr frei zu machen, und sie war natürlich die Stärkere (103).

That the forces of reason ultimately hold sway over Hubert is reflected in the narrator's comment on his present state of health: "Hubert, der früher gesundheitlich etwas anfällig war und oft unter Husten und Schnupfen litt, hat diese Schwäche mit der Zeit ganz verloren" (71). Read metaphorically, it must be inferred from this that his health has improved as he has conformed socially.

Symptomatic of Hubert's loss of the innocence of his younger days, when his language still had that childlike directness, is the adoption of the language of "Vernunft", which, as embodied in the "Hofrätin", is cold and unloving. Haushofer in this way hints at an idea on which Bachmann's work reflects at much greater depth. Franza's husband, Professor Leo Jordan, also speaks a language which dominates, is cold and analytical. His is the language of "die Weißen", the language of the colonisers and the modern men of science in their white coats.

Franza identifies a parallel between her fate at the hands of Jordan and that of the Papuans at the hands of the nineteenth-century colonists. The Papuans believed "die Weißen hätten sich aller ihrer Güter auf magische Weise bemächtigt"; Franza continues: "Er [Jordan] hat mir meine Güter genommen." She names her "Güter" or "Schätze" "[m]ein Lachen, meine Zärtlichkeit, mein Freuenkönnen, mein Mitleiden, Helfenkönnen, meine Animalität, mein Strahlen" (81). She might also have included amongst

her *taonga* or treasures, as the Maori do, her language. Critics have pointed to Franza's loss of language as an indicator of the loss of her childhood relationship to the world.[13] Externally, this is signified by her acquisition of a Viennese accent in place of her local one after she moves to Vienna from Galicien, her fictitious home village in Kärnten; but psychologically, her "Verstummung" occurs as a result of the way her husband reduces her to a psychiatric case study. The language of analysis turns her into an abstraction, denies her her individuality, is used as an instrument of power to dominate and destroy her otherness. The language of science is the language of rationality that excludes any other mode of perception.[14] After receiving a desperate telegram from her, the first clues Franza's brother Martin finds as to the state of affairs between Franza and Jordan are the letters she has attempted to write to him, which tell only of her inability to articulate her trouble: "Lieber Martin, ich weiß nicht, wo ich anfangen und wie ich es sagen soll... "(22).

Silence, as Marlis Gerhardt points out,[15] is also characteristic of the

[13]Sigrid Weigel: "[E]benso kann man davon ausgehen, daß [Bachmann] die These kannte, daß mit der Entstehung der Sprache die Magie liquidiert wurde. Auch Franzas "Magie" ist durch die Schrift der Weißen ausgemerzt. Erst auf dem Weg durch die Wüste, wenn die Buchstabenschrift verlassen und die Symbole der Weißen zerstört werden, gewinnt Franza ihre Magie zurück. Es ist die Wiederherstellung "ihrer" Bedeutungen." (Weigel: "Ein Ende mit der Schrift. Ein andrer Anfang" in: Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Hg.), Gastredaktion Sigrid Weigel, *Text + Kritik, Sonderband Ingeborg Bachmann,* München 1984, p. 84.) In the same volume, Sara Lennox describes the relationship between Martin and Franziska as that of a pre-patriarchal society, relating the sentence "Unter hundert Brüdern dieser eine. Und er aß ihr Herz. Und sie das seine," which reflects the closeness of the bond between Martin and Franza in their childhood, to the Isis and Osiris myth. Sara Lennox: "Geschlecht, Rasse und Geschichte in *Der Fall Franza* ", p. 167.

[14]Further telling examples of the controlling power of Jordan's language are to be found in the excerpts from Bachmann's unpublished typescript quoted by Zeller. eg: "Damals sagte ich doch etwas, einmal in der Nacht: Ich denke anders, ich denke nicht wie du, obwohl ich wußte, daß es jetzt keinen Zusammenhang ergab, aber das war in mir zusammengelaufen, dieser hilflose Satz, mit dem ich plötzlich auf mir bestehen wollte. Ausgezeichnet, sagte er, dann einmal los, dann wollen wir uns das einmal anhören, was du denkst." (Typ. 2746, quoted in Zeller, op. cit., p. 62).

[15]The interest in Freud and Breuer's studies on hysteria has been revived in recent years in the context of feminist literary studies. Marlis Gerhard, for example, takes the relationship between "Kränkung" and "Erkrankung"

hysteric whose "Kränkung" must remain, in Freud's words, "ohne Satisfaction."[16] Franza's silencing is so complete, that she cannot utter the scream of protest that might have been life-saving. Her experience during the Egyptian journey of suffocating and being buried alive in the mud of the Nile brings on another extreme anxiety attack, because she recognizes the experience as the objective correlative to what she experienced in her marriage. Lying helpless in the baking mud, she relives her helplessness within her marriage: "Ich wollte ja schreien, immer wollte ich schreien. Aber ich habe ja nie schreien können" (102). The only improvement in her ability to resist comes too late: when the white man in the desert rapes her, an act which prompts her recall of her rape at the hands of Jordan, the ultimate "Kränkung", whose memory she had repressed, she is still unable to verbalise any resistance. Only after the white man has gone does she utter the words "Nein. Nein". Even then, the "no" represents capitulation and despair, not resistance, because as she says the words she beats her head against the stone of the pyramid, administering to herself the blows which lead to her death some hours later.

Common to both writers, then, is a cultural scepticism which highlights the social control of the individual by the principle of rationality. In Haushofer's text, acting rationally means disregarding human feelings in the interests of economic effectiveness: "Was sollte ein junger Rechtsanwalt wohl mit einer tauben Frau?" (120) In Bachmann's work, rationality means the dominance of the scientific, the analytical, the apparently objective approach to the world to the exclusion of all other types of interpretation of man's relationship to the environment. Any other view of the world is regarded as abnormal, as sick. Only at the end does Franza realize that Jordan is the one who is sick. He has used his analytical techniques to gain control over what is threatening, because it is different. As with the colonists, the fear of the other arouses in him the desire to repress, indeed to annihilate it.

The "Mansarde" of Haushofer's title is the narrating I's "room of her

much further in her book *Kein bürgerlicher Stern,* arguing that the ideal of femininity in the western cultural tradition, "die die Frau auf Rätselhaftigkeit, Schwäche, Abhängigkeit und Seele festlegt," is a culturally institutionalised "Kränkung" that has contributed to what she describes as "die ewig-weibliche Krankengeschichte". *Kein bürgerlicher Stern, nichts, nichts konnte mich je beschwichtigen,* Neuwied & Darmstadt 1982, p. 141.

[16]Ibid., p. 81.

own", where she pursues her work as a book illustrator. But it is not just the creative space necessary to an artist. It is also the place to which she banishes what she calls her "unbürgerliche Gedanken". Her need for a place in which she can give way to such thoughts arises from fear: she fears the potential of such thoughts to destroy the security she possesses as long as she observes the rules of middle-class life. It becomes apparent that the narrating I has only been able to maintain the stability of her marriage by imposing a strict discipline on herself, denying her own feelings by avoiding thinking about taboo issues anywhere but in the "Mansarde". What she calls "Mansardengedanken" are ones which would undermine the domestic structure in which she lives if she were to pursue them outside the attic room, in that they question the validity of rational principles. The "Mansarde", as Irmela von der Lühe has expounded in detail,[17] is the locality of her otherness, which she must keep separate in order to survive in a conventional world. The "bürgerliche Ordnung" can only be maintained by the repression of anything that might put into question the assumptions upon which it is constructed.

The effort that is required to maintain the "bürgerliche Ordnung" of her divided life is made apparent in the choice of syntax and vocabulary: "Dinge und Gedanken, die mein Mansardenleben betreffen, *haben nicht in das übrige Haus einzudringen"* (24), or: "Der Gedanke war schrecklich, ich *beschloß* ihn zu vergessen." (109).[18] Much of the action of the narrative present describes her performance of household tasks, which she chooses to do, because of the hard physical labour they require. The effort they demand of her prevents her from thinking too much.

There are signs, however, that the narrator's ability to maintain this artificial order in her life is breaking down. On a number of occasions she reproaches herself for indulging in "Mansardengedanken" outside the "Mansarde"; another time she describes a spell of musing as "hemmungslos" (34). The choice of this word reveals how her control mechanism works. "Verdrängung" is a practice she has indeed perfected over the years since her illness:

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[17]"In ihren Bewegungen, ihren Handlungen und in ihren Gedanken und Empfindungen ist diese Mansarde der Raum ihres eigenen, ihres aber auch bewußt abgespaltenen Selbst", op. cit., p. 83.

[18]Emphasis added by AFG.

> Es war mir gelungen, den Gedanken [...] zu verdrängen, denn darin bin ich schließlich sehr geübt. Man kann das wirklich erlernen. Und ich hatte es erlernen müssen, um mein Leben nicht ganz und gar in ein Chaos münden zu lassen. Ich habe einen bürgerlichen Mann geheiratet, führe einen bürgerlichen Haushalt und muß mich entsprechend benehmen. Der Abend in der Mansarde genügt für meine unbürgerlichen Auschweifungen (43).

What she only indirectly hints at here is the nature of the inner chaos, which she so fears that she must at all costs shelter from it, remaining for that reason in a marriage that can only be described as emotionally dead: "[Ä]ußere Erstarrung war die einzig mögliche Form geworden" (101). To that end she has repressed her anger towards Hubert, but not only that. The repressed past which could give rise to chaos, were it released, conceals matters of much wider significance than for their personal relationship alone. The narrating I adopts a protective role towards her husband in this, viewing him as a vulnerable individual. Her caution in her interaction with Hubert is out of sympathy, understanding and even solidarity with him. The past being repressed is one which threatens them both and hence they collude in repression. It has become the central mechanism in their personal and their public lives.

The personal history of the narrating I and her husband is intended to be read as symptomatic of their generation, as the narrator herself indicates: "Die Verrücktheit, die meine ganze Generation befallen hat, ist die Folge von Ereignissen, denen wir nicht gewachsen waren" (95). Surviving the trauma of inadequacy in the face of the experiences they have lived through has required the devising of "Schutzmaßnahmen", whether in the form of work (71), the careful skirting around of potentially dangerous topics, which is characteristic of their marriage (95), or the shoring up of memories in a separate space where they can be carefully controlled. Irmgard Roebling has pointed out the pervasiveness of references to the past in the text.[19] All the major figures are pursued by an "unbewältigte

[19]Irmgard Roebling: "Drachenkampf aus der Isolation oder Das Fortschreiben geschichtlicher Selbsterfahrung in Marlen Haushofers Romanwerk" in: Mona Knapp, Gerd Labroisse (Hrsg.): *Frauen-Fragen in der deutschsprachigen Literatur seit 1945.* [Amsterdamer Beiträge 29], Amsterdam 1989, p. 316 ff.

Vergangenheit" - the Baronin, the cook Serafine and in particular the "Mann X", who embodies the unspeakable past that yet remains unspoken: "Ganz offenbar steht das Schreien des Mannes auch für einen Teil sie betreffender Vergangenheit, der individuellen wie der kollektiven, die sie nicht herauslassen kann und die keiner hören will. Ihre Taubheit vertritt damit auch die Stummheit und Taubheit der anderen."[20]

In a similar way, the family history of the narrating I mirrors the nation's history and loss of innocence. The guilt in which all the nation's citizens are implicated, unless they were born after the war, is embodied in the "before" and "after" relationship of Ferdinand and Ilse to the caesura that marks the breach in their parents' marriage. Ferdinand, whose name links him both to the family's past (he has been named after his grandfather) and to the nation's past, the "Kaiserzeit", was born before the event and knows there was a time when things were different between his parents. Physically he takes after his grandfather, whose person expressed the melancholic sensitivity and ambivalence of the turn-of-the-century: "sehr dunkel, hager und von eleganter Haltung. Er sah eher düster aus, konnte jedoch sehr charmant sein, und er war auf jeden Fall ein wenig undurchsichtig" (100). The younger Ferdinand is also "musikalisch und hat für Mißtöne ein empfindliches Ohr" (31). Although too young to have understood what had happened between his parents, Ferdinand understands that his presence must always remind them of their "Vorzeit [...] die nicht grau war, sondern schön, bunt und leuchtend" (113), and that it is less painful for them, if they are not reminded of it by his presence (31). His charm and "savoir vivre" are deployed to avoid disturbing the fragile peace of his parents' arrangement. Although too young to be implicated in any historical guilt, he is "knowing" and affected by it. It is said he "bewegt sich leicht und elegant durch die Welt" (31), but he can only maintain the serenity of his relationship to his parents by practising the repression of unpleasant knowledge as they do. Consequently, their relationship to him lacks spontaneity, and their knowledge of him is limited; he refrains from communicating anything personal about himself (113).

Ilse, however, was born after the event and cheerfully makes her own way in the world, apparently secure in herself and indifferent to the emotional dissonances of her environment. To her mother this is a great relief, but

[20]Ibid., p. 318-9.

at the same time Ilse is a puzzle to her, because she and her friends are so totally different from the parents' generation. "Sie sehen auch ganz anders aus, als die Mädchen zu meiner Zeit aussahen, die meisten sind groß und üppig und völlig unbekümmert [....] Sie scheint alles zu wissen und nicht besonders daran interessiert zu sein" (112). Her innocence is thus not that of "before the Fall" - she doesn't lack knowledge - rather, it is the indifference of the self-centred and ahistorical belief of the young in their own separateness and inviolability.

Yet the narrator's confidence in Ilse's apparent emotional security may be ill-founded. At another point in the novel her mother comments on the time she spends with her "Stofftieren, die überall im Zimmer herumsitzen. Sehr merkwürdig ist das alles, Ich verstehe davon überhaupt nichts" (112). While the narrating I seems not to know what to make of this, the animals can be seen to be a substitute for the warmth Ilse's emotionally disabled parents are unable to give her. Ilse too has suffered emotional damage as a consequence of the dysfunctionality of her parents' life. In their own ways both children share in the emotional "Erstarrung" of their parents. One may infer that in Haushofer's view the sins of the parents are visited upon their children: the failure of the war generation to bring the issues that burden their past into the open, has resulted both in the breakdown of their relationship to their children and in a crippling of the latter's ability to relate to their own present.

The confidence the narrator mistakenly feels in Ilse's invulnerability is perhaps founded in her appearance, which connects her to the lost security of the narrator's own childhood. Physically, Ilse takes after her maternal grandmother and great-grandfather, i.e. she is associated with the world the narrator calls "meine erste Heimat" (31), the "heile Welt" of her childhood. That world is locked into her memory as an indestructible image of happiness and natural order (147). Yet there is a suggestion that it was just as corruptible as the rest of the world. A chance encounter of the narrator with the boyfriend of her early adolescence leads her to muse that, had it not been for the war, she might well have married this man and consequently have escaped the experience of rejection: "er war robust genug, auch mit einer tauben Frau leben zu können" (146). Nevertheless, she is glad that she hadn't married him, commenting, "Er sah aus wie ein guter Onkel Doktor und gleichzeitig wie ein Mann, *der über Leichen geht*" (146),[21] an anticipation of the "Mann X". Even the "heile Welt"

harboured the potential for the violence and betrayal which marks the lives of all the characters in one form or the other. By contrast, Hubert is not a man's man, like the man in the café, or the hunter[22] in whose care she was placed while deaf; nor is he a lady's man like his friend Malina. His vulnerability and emotional inadequacy are more sympathetic to the narrator - even though they have made him betray her - than the solid reliable citizen in whom the potential for violence slumbers.
Yet Hubert also has had his part in the nation's violent past. At the time the couple met Hubert was a soldier. His wartime experience is something he has never talked about, and the narrator has refrained from pressing him to do so:

> Was weiß ich denn von seinen Schutzmaßnahmen? Was weiß ich von seinen Erinnerungen, die er ganz fest abgekapselt hat und die immer wieder einmal durchzubrechen versuchen? Er hat mir nie über gewisse Zeiten seines Lebens erzählt, Zeiten, die ich im Luftschutzkeller verbrachte und er im Schützengraben. Lebenslang arbeitet er daran, diese Dinge zu vergessen; wenn er dabei ein bißchen seltsam wird, wer könnte es besser verstehen als ich? (95)

An obsessive fascination with war is indicative both of his and the nation's neurosis. Hubert's chief interest is the history of wars, and he spends much of his leisure hours studying the strategy of all the old generals. His neurotic need for order, which parallels the narrator's attempts to obliterate her thinking by energetic assaults on dust and dirt in the house, is reflected in his desire to improve on the failed efforts of the generals, to win all the battles that were lost, "[n]icht aus Patriotismus [...], nur aus einem brennenden Verlangen nach Perfektion. Ihn kränken die verlorenen Schlachten sämtlicher Nationen" (7). His neurosis, in its causes as well as its manifestations, is shared by the whole population: "Kein Museum in dieser Stadt ist so gepflegt und mit Liebe betreut wie das Arsenal. Man staunt darüber, aber im Grunde ist es ganz

[21]Emphasis added by AFG.

[22]The "Jäger" figure is common to many of Haushofer's works and has been identified as having negative associations for her. He is not the man of nature but the killer of animals with whom man should be living in harmony.

natürlich und einleuchtend" (17). It is "einleuchtend", because the nation as a whole is engaged in repressing the questions that need to be asked.
In the need to "warm her feet", as the narrator puts it, she has thrown in her lot with Hubert, despite the implicit warning she might have taken from the cold that emanates from his mother, the "Hofrätin". In so doing, she has acquiesced in the personal and national pattern of repression. She too admits to feeling more at home in the Arsenal museum amongst the fossilized attributes of war than out in the hurly burly of life (17). Both she and Hubert have preferred silence out of fear of the chaos they might release, if they dared speak of the past. The narrator attributes to the ingenuousness of their first encounter the power of a very old legend, the belief in which was strong enough to motivate them "aus den Trümmern unserer untergegangen Welt wieder ein kleines Haus zu bauen, überall gekittet, die Sprünge mit Werg verstopft, daß man nicht hören kann, wie draußen der Wind heult" (75). Read allegorically, the image here suggests the parallel situation of the rebuilding of the Austrian nation after the war. The legend of its innocence as an invaded country provided the nation with a means to avoid self-examination and enable some temporary repairs to be carried out on the national house, so that it could be re-erected on the old foundations, without the need for starting anew. Just as the "schöne Geschichte" the couple tried to live might have been sustainable, had Hubert been an orphan, not dominated by his mother, the "Hofrätin", so too might the Austrian legend have been convincing, but for the undeniability of the close relationship and influence of the "Hofrätin" - Germany.
The narrator's reflections on Hubert's need to forget occur at the half-way point of the novel, which may in itself be taken, in the context of this very tightly structured work, as an indication of their centrality to its thematic material. The passage from page 95 quoted at length above continues with the following: "Ein paar Jahre lang hat uns unsere Jugend und das Glück des Überlebthabens darüber hinweggetäuscht. Aber wir sind nicht jung geblieben, und ich habe als erste versagt. Hubert hätte übrigens nie Aufzeichnungen über sein Unglück gemacht, dafür muß ich ihn sehr bewundern" (96). She thus makes an explicit connection between Hubert's wartime experience and the onset of her own traumatic experience. Her "Unglück", i.e. her deafness, is evidently a "Spätschaden"

- to use the term used in *Der Fall Franza* - a delayed reaction of the shared wartime experience. That is made further explicit in the function of the "Mann X" in the novel.

The narrating I's encounter with the "Mann X" is the pivotal experience that finally releases her from her hysterical deafness. To judge from his appearance and behaviour, he is a war criminal, one who indeed "über Leichen ging ". His hands have obviously performed deeds equivalent to those of the Nazi doctor Körner whom Franza seeks out in Cairo. In the process of "listening" while the "Mann X", a madman possessed like the Ancient Mariner by the need to confess, soundlessly harangues her, the deaf young woman begins to absorb his words, as it were, through her skin. In her dreams she becomes his mirror image: "Heute nacht träumte ich, daß wir einander durch eine schwarze Glaswand anschrien [...]" (175). Unconsciously she has acknowledged in herself a likeness to him. Moved by the need to change something in her situation, she is tempted to throw in her lot with him (193), to continue to be the unhearing listener for this man, who is living in the hell of his tormented conscience. At one point that seems preferable to rejoining the normal world as represented by the hunter, whom she has just seen heartlessly slaughtering a family of newborn kittens. But unlike Franza, just as she is at the point of handing herself over into the power of the "Mann X", she is saved by her capacity to scream. The violent language of his hands evokes a memory in her that provokes her to scream in horror and to act. That scream simultaneously releases the block that has prevented her from hearing; her deafness, her "Unglück," is overcome.

Bachmann's references to war crimes are much more explicit than Haushofer's. The term "Spätschaden" first occurs in connection with the research Franza's husband Jordan has been doing into the longterm effects of the experiments carried out on concentration camp inmates by Nazi doctors. Franza, as Jordan's research assistant, has become very familiar with the material. In the course of the Egyptian journey she comes to see her present illness as a "Spätschaden", a consequence of the equally inhuman and unethical experiment Jordan has carried out on her. The roots of fascism, in Bachmann's view, are to be found in socially reinforced power structures such as the institutionalised dominance of male over female. In an extreme form, as in the figure of Jordan, these can lead to the desire to

eliminate - the choice of the verb "ausmerzen" underscores the connection - the group declared to be too different to be tolerated, whether they be Jews or women.

To Bachmann the non-dominant groups in a social order that vests power in "die Weißen," be they colonists or professors, are exposed to a structurally inherent "Kränkung". Consequently, the emphasis she places in using the metaphor of hysteria, is on the "Kränkung" rather than on its repression. Franza's speechlessness is a metaphor for her loss of power in the relationship to her husband; it signifies her status as a victim, manipulated by a language she does not master. Although an implicit acknowledgement that she bears some responsibility for her position as victim can be read into her decision to marry Jordan, which she describes as "eine Schande, eine Schandgeschichte, die sich zuzutragen beginnt" (70),[23] the real responsibility for the"Schande" is made clear in the later use of the verb "schänden", referring to the act of violation: "sie haben die Gräber geschändet", Franza says of the white archaeologists who have removed the dead from their tombs in Egypt. "[E]s ist eine Schande, das alles ist eine große Schande [...] So sind sie. Ich kann das gar nicht ansehen. Die ganze Schande kommt in mir zusammen, weil sie sonst niemand spürt" (104). She identifies with the Queen Hatschepsut from whose tomb Tuthmosis the Third attempted to expunge every trace of her. Hatschepsut's presence through absence parallels Franza's absence from the work she has researched for Jordan, who failed to name her in the acknowledgements at the front of his book. Franza too is figuratively "ausgemerzt", even though Dr Körner fails to meet her request for a lethal injection when she goes to him, desiring liquidation.

Haushofer chooses loss of hearing rather than loss of speech as the metaphorical symptom of her protagonist's dysfunctional relationship with the rational world. The significance of her narrating I's psychosomatic deafness is quite different from that of Franza's speechlessness. Deafness also inhibits a person from participating in social commu-

[23]Zeller expounds the dialectical "Täter-Opfer" relationship which is implicit in Bachmann's explanation that the "Schauplätze" of her novel are "[e]inmal in dem Denken, das zum Verbrechen führt, und einmal in dem, das zum Sterben führt" (10). The sadistic tendency of the perpetrators are complimented by the masocistic tendency of the victim. (cf. Zeller, op. cit., p. 60ff.).

nication, but in this case it must be seen as the expression of a desire to absent herself from social interaction, and in so doing to avoid the human games for which language is the medium. Thus the reason that must be inferred for the narrator's onset of deafness is that she did not want to hear the pretence, did not want to be a party to the self-deceptive "legend" on which Austrian society was insisting, and hence withheld her participation. Her body became the physical symbol of her refusal to accede to the repression of the past.

At the same time, her deafness does not absolve her of her responsibility. Although unable to hear, she is still able to talk, but by absenting herself from human society she avoids doing so. Haushofer's narrator is not powerless in the way Franza is; indeed, she achieved power over the "Mann X" the moment her hearing returned, that is, the moment she "decided" - however unconsciously - to participate in communication again. That moment might also be interpreted as a sign of her willingness to share in collective social responsibility, even though it is not until she goes through this process a second time, allowing the repressed past to come to consciousness as she reads the pages of her journal, that that willingness begins to be translated into action. Not until she has read the final instalment does she begin to change the forms of her interaction with her husband: she disrupts the verbal patterns of their Sunday routine by refusing to say what is expected of her, as they make their plans for the day. This suggests that she may begin to query other aspects of their life as a couple and as citizens. At the close of the novel there is a hint that she may even leave Hubert. She does so at least for the moment, as she goes eagerly upstairs to the "Mansarde" and the world of her creative imagination.

Thus Haushofer can be seen to emphasise to a greater degree the female protagonist's power to influence her situation. She is not just a victim, although she suffers "punishment" for her unwillingness to participate in society in a socially acceptable form; her absence from society and from making a creative contribution to it is ultimately only by choice. Bachmann's work is much blacker. Franza does achieve understanding of the process of victimisation, but her enlightenment comes too late to be able to reverse its effects. The "talking-cure" she begins with her brother Martin is able, as in the case of Breuer's Anna O., to uncover "die Wurzel

der ganzen Erkrankung,"[24] and she recognizes that Jordan, and the society he represents are the ones who are really sick. It is the two-fold "Kränkung", his repression of her otherness and the sexual violation, that have been the cause of her illness: "Er muß ja krank sein, ich bin nur davon krank geworden" (134). But the damage that has been done to her psyche is nevertheless irreversible, and fatal.

[24]Cf. the case of Frl. Anna O., Freud & Breuer, op. cit., p. 35.