

**The Settler Colonial Family as a Site of Trauma for Women**

**in**

**Selected Novels by**

**New Zealand Women Writers**

By

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In the stirrings of the unhomey, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomey is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world.

HOMI BHABHA  
“The World and the Home” (1992)

“[T]he personal is political” was originally used to emphasize that one’s own experience is important and is, in some measure, caused by external factors. Currently, feminist psychologists use this notion as a starting point for understanding the formative influence of sociocultural structures and forces on the individual and his or her sense of self, hence the reformulation: “the political is personal.”

LAURA S. BROWN AND MARY BALLOU  
*Personality and Psychopathology: Feminist Reappraisals* (1992)

[T]rauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available.

CATHY CARUTH  
*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996)

Social and psychological theorists caution us not to accept the family system as a natural structure, but as socially mediated, absorbing, and perpetuating ideologies that reinforce social and economic structures.

LAURIE VICKROY  
*Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (2002)

## Abstract

This thesis examines the depiction of the settler colonial family as a site of trauma from a female-gendered perspective in selected novels by New Zealand women writers. I argue that women are vulnerable to psychic trauma through their subordinate and marginalized positions in the heteropatriarchal formulation of the settler colonial family and the sociocultural, economic and political structures and norms of settler colonialism. I use the relationships and affective dimensions of family as the lens to examine the ideological and material manifestations of settler colonialism in New Zealand society and culture, focusing on their impact on women.

The temporal timespan of the selected novels – *The Story of a New Zealand River* (1920) by Jane Mander, *The Butcher Shop* (1926) by Jean Devanny, *Wednesday's Children* (1937) by Robin Hyde, *The Book of Secrets* (1987) by Fiona Kidman, *Enemy Territory* (1997) by Elspeth Sandys, and *Rain* (1994) by Kirsty Gunn – demonstrates that settler colonialism is a persistent structure that continues to exert a pervasive influence on the family in the postcolonial period. Each of the novels depicts not only how trauma impacts on an individual woman, but also what it reveals about the interrelationships between trauma experienced in the interpersonal affective intimacies of the family and the broader sociocultural and historical context.

I draw on trauma theory to examine the manifestation of traumatic symptomology and sequelae, and to situate the interpersonal locus of individual trauma in its sociocultural and historical context. Structural, non-event-based trauma theories which encompass relational, inter-generational, cumulative and insidious trauma open up ways of exploring the selected novels as trauma narratives. Feminist trauma theorists expand contemporary understandings of trauma through their foregrounding of female experiences of trauma in the interpersonal realm. Their contributions are important for the theoretical frame of my argument that the trauma women experience in the familial locus needs to be understood within its wider context. The novels call attention to the importance of examining how the power relations of the settler colonial family continue to render women vulnerable to psychic trauma.

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## Introduction

This thesis examines novels by women writers that depict the New Zealand settler colonial family as a site of trauma from a female-gendered perspective. Drawing on trauma theory and exploring the modes, tropes and figures of trauma in the novels, I argue that settler colonialism's sociocultural structures and norms contribute to making the settler colonial family a site of trauma for women. I situate interpersonal or individual trauma in its social and historical context by examining how the ideological and material manifestations of settler colonialism in New Zealand society and culture impact on women in the context of family.

The settler colonial family has been a patriarchally-engendered ideological construct objectifying and commodifying women as homemakers, child-bearers and rearers, and placing domestic management at the centre of efforts to shape and control societal and cultural norms. It is emblematic of the interpenetration of the private and public spheres. I use structural, non-event-based trauma theories which encompass relational, inter-generational, cumulative and insidious trauma to open up ways of exploring the selected novels as trauma narratives. I contend that too narrow a focus on a traumatic event or traumatizing circumstances has the potential to overlook the wider sociocultural and historical context. In each chapter I examine the dimensions of settler colonialism as they bear upon the trauma depicted. My aim is not to invalidate other readings of the novels. Rather, it is to examine the settler colonial family as a site of trauma for women and as an affective lens into settler colonialism in New Zealand.

I have chosen the following novels to exemplify the central argument of my thesis: *The Story of a New Zealand River* (1920) by Jane Mander, *The Butcher Shop* (1926) by Jean Devanny, *Wednesday's Children* (1937) by Robin Hyde, *The Book of Secrets* (1987) by Fiona Kidman, *Enemy Territory* (1997) by Elspeth Sandys, and *Rain* (1994) by Kirsty Gunn. They represent a temporal span from the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century settings of the novels by Mander, Devanny and Kidman through to the postcolonial period depicted in the novels by Sandys and Gunn. Kidman's postcolonial engagement with the settler colonial as an historical period distinguishes it from the other novels. She depicts the persistence of settler colonialism and its hegemonic norms and structures across time (1812-1955) and space (Great Britain to Canada, Australia and New Zealand). The temporal span of the novels supports my

argument that settler colonialism is a persistent and pervasive structure whose legacies I examine in the depiction of family and female gendered trauma in twentieth-century fiction. Each of the selected novels reflects the importance of examining the “political-ideological context within which traumatic events occur” (Kaplan 2005, 1). Through its figurative motifs and devices and their associations, trauma-writing has the ability to express the violence and founding historical trauma<sup>1</sup> of New Zealand’s settlement/invasion by Europeans in the nineteenth century and its interconnections with violence and trauma in its postcolonial condition.

Lorenzo Veracini uses the terms “founding violence” and “foundational traumas” (2008, 364) in relation to settler colonial contexts: “A settler society is by definition premised on the traumatic, that is, *violent*, replacement and/or displacement of Indigenous others” (ibid.). He refers to the idealization of peaceful settlement and a “settled” (ibid.) settler society as defensive mechanisms to obscure and disavow<sup>2</sup> a traumatic past, and observes: “Even when trauma is effectively repressed, [...] [it] remains in a latent state and can emerge in varied forms” (ibid.). Using Freudian terminology, he describes the violent act of invasion as the primal scene and the fantasy of a peaceful and settled community as a screen memory, and argues that the resulting contradiction between these “opposed impulses produces long lasting psychic conflicts and a number of psychopathologies” (365). He characterizes “ongoing concerns with existential threats and a paranoid fear of ultimate decolonization” (368) as constituent features of the settler colonial situation, citing “stubborn and lingering anxieties over settler legitimacy and belonging” (364), and uneasiness about the landscape/land and whether it will “ultimately turn against the settler project” (368). Veracini extends his discussion about the settler-indigenous relationship, and the conflicted and repressed memories of this relationship in settler society to include reference to the “varied forms” in which the disavowed and repressed trauma of founding violence can reappear. He cites screen memories of a settled past and the idealization of an egalitarian society as obscuring “a remarkably gendered history [...], a dramatically stratified social body” (373), and “narratives of ethnic success and integration concealing trauma, poverty and

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<sup>1</sup> Dominick LaCapra defines historical trauma as related to particular events that involve losses: “[T]he historical past is the scene of losses that may be narrated as well as of specific possibilities that may conceivably be reactivated, reconfigured, and transformed in the present or future. [...] Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or symptomatic revenant” (2001, 49). He cites the historical traumas of the Holocaust, slavery, and apartheid as examples of founding traumas, which become “the basis for collective or personal identity” (81; see also 80, 82-85).

<sup>2</sup> See also Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson (2000, 369) on disavowal of founding violence against the Indigenous people.

ongoing exclusion” (ibid.). I shift Veracini’s argument about the “varied forms” in which the repressed traumas of the past are manifest to my examination of the settler colonial family as an important site of exploration for what it obscures or conceals about the past, and also reveals about the postcolonial present.

Stephen Turner also uses the terminology of trauma<sup>3</sup> to describe settlement. He attributes “an insecurity of place, an anxiety of settlement manifested as reactive forgetting” (1999, 28) to the “insecure foundation of white settlement in New Zealand” (33). He posits that “settlement may well require forgetting, a constitutive occlusion of the trauma of dislocation and unsettlement” (20), resulting in a “troubled cultural psyche” (23), which finds it “easier to forget than to acknowledge the pain of the past” (ibid.). The danger of forgetting/repressing/denying the past, and of living “ahistorically” (21), has led, Turner argues, to a will to ignore the “pervasive effect of contemporary settler culture in New Zealand” (ibid.). The deconstruction of foundational narratives/myths of settlement, which Turner describes as an “older monumentalizing history with its significant events and important figures” (20), draws attention to what they have occluded or silenced, and places importance on the exploration of the affective and experiential dimensions of the historical past. The gendered experience of trauma in the settler colonial family and in its postcolonial formations offers one such site of exploration.

The term settler colonialism, in its historical specificity, refers to a form of British imperialism that reached its height in the nineteenth century, whereby settler colonies were established with the aim of long-term settlement (see Slemon 1990, Lawson 1991, Wolfe 1999, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000 and 1989, Johnston and Lawson 2000, Veracini 2014.1, 2010 and 2008, and Bell 2014 and 2004). The aforementioned scholars differentiate the settler colonists from, for example, the career administrators and military personnel from Britain who worked in India, and emphasize that the European settler colonists moved to the European colonies with the intention of remaining and transforming the new colony into ‘home.’ Significantly, this process of transformation included the transplantation of a social world with its political, economic, legal, social and cultural institutions and practices, and the goal of making a better version of the society they had left. Australia, Canada, and New Zealand are acknowledged by

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<sup>3</sup> Marc Delrez draws attention to the use of the “terminology of trauma” to describe the Australian settler population’s awareness of the nation’s violent and genocidal foundations (2011, 195). He refers to Australia’s contemporary violence as an echo of an earlier disruption, “thus bringing into play a pattern of endless repetition which is interestingly reminiscent of trauma” (192).

scholars (see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000 and 1989, Johnston and Lawson 2000, Whitlock 2000, and Bell 2014 and 2004) as “settler colonies,” though Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson note that “it is possible to make more complex arguments about the inclusion of nations such as the US or South Africa, for example” (2000, 361; see also Bell 2014, 6-7 and 12-15).

In the settler colonies like New Zealand, the indigenous people came to be outnumbered by the ever-increasing number of settlers who “came to stay” (Wolfe 1999, 2). The anodyne etymologies of the words ‘settler’ and ‘colony’ obscure the political act of invasion of another’s land by white Europeans, and the physical violence and representational erasure done to indigenous peoples in order to create a ‘white’ colony. Critics such as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, and Johnston and Lawson make a distinction between “colonies of occupation” (such as India and South Africa) where the indigenous people were subject to the military power and political régimes of the invading power but remained in the majority, and “settler colonies” in which the predominantly British settlers positioned the indigenous peoples as minorities demographically as well as politically, economically and culturally.

Existing emphases in the critical literature on settler colonialism include a focus on the acquisition and settlement of land (see Johnston and Lawson 2000, Belich 2009, and Bell 2014). The desire for land was the primary motivation for the mass migration of settlers to colonies like New Zealand that took place during the second half of the nineteenth century. The discourse on the primacy of land includes an examination of the settlers’ desire to make the land of the indigenous peoples into a “settler *homeland*” (Bell 2014, 7), and the relationship between the settlers and the indigenous peoples as “one in which the settler seeks to replace the indigenous as *the* people of the land, to become indigenous themselves. Either indigenous peoples must disappear (literally or symbolically) or the two people must be merged [...]” (ibid.).

The concept of erasure of the indigenous people occupies a significant place in settler colonial critical discourse and reflects the discursive focus on methods of displacement of the indigenes, not just of their land, but culturally, spiritually and symbolically, by white settler colonists (see Veracini 2011, 4-7, 8-9). ‘Erasure’ in colonial discourse is the term used to refer to methods of displacement of the indigenes – physical, cultural, spiritual and symbolic – evident in settler societies. Discursively, it is apparent in the white settlers’ use of the words ‘new’ and ‘newly discovered’ with reference to the country they occupy, and in the fatal impact of tropes of the ‘sickly

indigene' and a 'dying' race (see Belich 2001, 193-194), which sought to position the 'indigenized' settler in the place of the 'dying' indigene.

The discursive pre-eminence of land is evident in the masculinist processes of mapping 'empty space,' and naming and inscribing a relationship to the land.<sup>4</sup> The settlers' engagement with the land is often expressed in early New Zealand fiction in masculinist metaphors such as 'battling with the land.' The use of expressions like 'taming,' 'opening up' and 'breaking in' reflects the depiction of land as a gendered site of male endeavour and mastery.<sup>5</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin draw attention to the masculinist nature of such expressions and "their associations with sexuality and exploration and conquest" (2000, 97). Johnston and Lawson comment: "One of the principal functions of the indigenizing narrative is to legitimize the settler: to put the settler in the cultural and discursive place of the indigene whose physical space has already been invaded" (2000, 364). Surveying, Simon Ryan observes, is premised on "the construction of land as a blank sheet" (1994, 127); previous ownership and occupation are ignored, and "the land itself is inserted into a particular narrativization of history" (ibid.), which denies or represses a previous history in its arrogation of male power and dominance (126) over the land.

Following the understanding of settler colonialism produced in the works of the various scholars mentioned, I situate my project in the recent theorizing of the settler colonial condition by scholars who argue that settler colonialism is a structure and a "particular mode of domination" (Veracini 2016, 174). Veracini contends that the "settler colonial paradigm remains a heuristic tool" (2014.2, 312), and that "settler colonial studies is [...] an interpretative tool" (ibid.). He states that "settler-colonial forms fundamentally inform *current* circumstances" (2012, 323). Veracini, Slemon, Lawson, and Patrick Wolfe emphasize that settler colonialism is a structure,<sup>6</sup> not an

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<sup>4</sup> See Simon Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness: Cartography, exploration and the construction of Australia" (1994), 115-130. Ryan comments that the "cartographic practice of representing the unknown as a blank [...] actively erases (and legitimizes the erasure of) existing social and geo-cultural formations in preparation for the projection and subsequent emplacement of a new order" (116).

<sup>5</sup> Sue Kedgley's comments about the predominant literary valorization of heroic masculine endeavours to 'break in' the land reflect what she sees as the "cultural bias of an era which held that what men did was important and heroic and what women did was unimportant and trivial" (1989,13). Alistair Fox (2008) attributes the origins of masculinity as a predominant trope in New Zealand literary fiction to the physical exigencies of colonial settlement. He describes the "necessities of pioneer life" (24), which demanded hard physical labour on the land by men and a concomitant masculinist emphasis on economic survival and profit, leading to a literary valorization and heroization of male endeavour. See also Katie Pickles (2009) on masculinist myth-making and the primacy of masculinity in New Zealand historiography, and Turner (1999) on New Zealand's male culture (27-29), and emphasis on sport (21, 29-31).

<sup>6</sup> See also Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill (2013, 12-13).

historical event that can be relegated to the past; rather, it continues to exert a powerful and persistent effect on the present as a contemporary sociocultural and political order and structure. Wolfe states: “Settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies. The split tensing reflects a determinate feature of settler colonization. The colonizers came to stay – invasion is a structure not an event” (1999, 2).

The work of Veracini, and that of Stephen Slemon on reading “Second World”<sup>7</sup> texts for the forms of anti-colonialist textual resistance to “modes of power” (1990, 40) in all their iterations, has influenced my argument that the settler colonial family construct constitutes a mode of power in which women are vulnerable to psychic trauma. The concerns these critics foreground about settler colonialism as perpetuating imbalanced relations of power address the heteropatriarchal family only indirectly as one such mode of power and subsume gender through the masculinist discourse of colonial taming of the land. I use their points about settler colonialism as an ongoing structure and the settler colonial paradigm as a “heuristic tool” (Veracini 2014.2, 312) in my argument while focusing on what is overlooked in their work, namely the settler colonial family as a site of gendered trauma.

Slemon contends that the postcolonial critical field should be concerned with identifying and analyzing resistances to colonialism “*wherever* they lie” (1990, 32). He is concerned to preserve “the concept of cultural difference in the critical articulation of literary post-colonialism” (35), and to include in the signifier postcolonial “the project of articulating the forms – and modes, and tropes, and figures – of anti-colonialist textual resistance, *wherever* they occur, and in *all* of their guises” (ibid.). In a transnational postcolonial field that encompasses all the ‘Worlds,’ while allowing for cultural difference, Slemon sees the potential for postcolonial literatures and criticism to extend nation-based studies into “the figurative domains of other modes of power as they appear in and are contested through the field of literary writing” (40). He writes: “Post-colonial texts are *also* concerned with the problem of privilege through racism and patriarchy, also at work contesting the kinds of hierarchical exclusion which operate through homophobia, and nationalism, and adultism [...]” (ibid.). I read the selected novels for their instantiation of resistance to “modes of power” as they appear in the

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<sup>7</sup> In his article, “Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World” (1990, 38), Slemon acknowledges Alan Lawson’s coinage and application of the term “Second World.” See Lawson, “‘There Is Another World but It Is In This One:’ A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World.” Paper presented at ‘Intercultural/Intertext,’ The Badlands Conference on Australian and Canadian Literatures, University of Calgary, Alberta, 29 August 1986. See also Lawson, “A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World,” *Australian-Canadian Studies*, 1991 (9) 1-2, 67-78.

construct of the patriarchal family. Through their examination of what is behind gendered and family-based individual or interpersonal trauma and exposing its interconnectedness with social factors and cultural contexts, they depict the imperative to decolonize the family from imbalanced relations of power and exemplify the form of anti-colonialist textual resistance that Slemon describes.

The use of topography and landscape in figurative descriptions of trauma in the novels resonates with Turner's work (2002) on settler dislocation and displacement. Turner sees historical discontinuity, a dialectic of unsettlement, in the settler's conflicted sense of 'home' being both there, and here. He describes this contradiction as the "settler's burden" (40), and "colonial being" as "a mode of being in a place which is discontinuous with its past (the past of place)" (ibid.). In the absence of historical and cultural referents that hold meaning for her/him, the settler is confronted with an alien landscape, and a past which will not die and which is present in the "tapu of place" (42), which Turner defines as "the force in the present of the history of a place that is older than you" (61). He uses the term "colonial being" to describe inhabiting an unstable place whose history cannot be fully known to the settler and which the settler can never fully possess. I use Turner's conceptualization of colonial being and its relationship to the "unstable ground of place" (63) in my examination of the narrative methods the novelists use to portray the effects of traumatic experience and suffering. The idea that the "force of the tapu of place remains palpable" (58) and that the land holds the 'ghosts' of the foundational trauma of indigenous dispossession and its repressed violence maps on to the use of landscape imagery to express the emotional, psychic experience of trauma, the persistence of traumatic memory across time and generations, and the return of suppressed material.

New Zealand's unstable landscape signifies metaphorically, and materially, a potential for disturbance from an unresolved historical trauma specific to the New Zealand settler colonial context. Adapting slightly Doreen D'Cruz and John C. Ross's use of Margaret Atwood's<sup>8</sup> concept of "an 'informing symbol' or idea" (2011, xvi) in relation to the topos of isolation in New Zealand literature, I suggest that New Zealand's unsettled landscape functions as an "informing symbol" or representational referent for the trauma of its unsettled and violent past and its power to disturb the present. The phrase, "lava flow[ing] through suburban valleys" (Sandys 1997, 135) is suggestive of

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<sup>8</sup> See Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972, 31-32).

an unsettled settler family not on solid foundations and therefore vulnerable to disturbance. Gunn takes the concept of an unstable landscape further in *Rain* in her depiction of the ancient flooded caldera of the Taupo Volcano as a traumascapes, a term coined by Maria Tumarkin to convey her sense of the “powerlines running between trauma and the lived experience of place” (2019, 6). The physical wounds to the landscape, and the land’s potential to erupt, underscore the pervasive presence of an unresolved past and its power to trouble the present, situating individual trauma within a larger cultural and historical context. The terms “colonial being” and “tapu of place” bring the physical trauma of unsettlement and dislocation into relation with psychic trauma as the settler struggles to make sense of the place that was/is Māori and to rationalize the experience of unsettlement or displacement. Such struggles instantiate the close connection or “powerlines,” to use Tumarkin’s analogy, between trauma and the place of the originary event/s or experience/s. My thesis examines these kinds of struggles as emblematic of the trauma of New Zealand’s founding violence and its ability to erupt and disturb the present, and the violence with which trauma can break through the mind’s defences. Tumarkin’s comment that in “places [...] marked by traumatic legacies of violence, suffering and loss, the past is never quite over” (2005, 12) is apt for the novels’ handling of trauma’s anachronic intrusion into the present – the traumatic past’s insistent and troubling *presence*.

The recovery of women’s history by feminist historical scholars in the 1970s and 1980s contributed significantly to the inclusion of gender as a crucial dimension in colonial and settler colonial studies.<sup>9</sup> Second-wave feminism saw gender as a key axis of power in society and recognized that “*sexual politics*, the politics of power relations between men and women, is part of everyday personal life” (Hall 1992, 15). Catherine Hall writes:

Feminist politics in the 1970s was inevitably very preoccupied with the place of the family, attempting to understand the extent to which women’s oppression, to use the language of the 1970s, was rooted in the family. The recognition of the myth of the happy nuclear family, often starting with women’s experiences of motherhood and

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<sup>9</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, writing on how differently colonialism operated for women and men, observe that “feminism has been concerned that categories like gender may sometimes be ignored within the larger formation of the colonial, and [...] post-colonial theory has tended to elide gender differences in constructing a single category of the colonized” (2000, 103). Their term, “double colonization,” describes the double subjection of European women through colonialism, as colonial subjects and as women, while also noting the tension or “ambi/valence” (Lawson 1991, 69) inherent in occupying the dominant position of the colonizing culture/race *vis-à-vis* indigenous women.

childcare, the beginnings of work on the representations of the family, the gradual discovery of the extent of violence within the family, the understanding that ‘there is nothing wrong with thinking that there’s a great deal wrong with the family,’ the realization of the particularities of the Western nuclear family and the discovery of possible alternatives, the attempt to create and live with such alternatives – all this was part of the feminist politics of the 1970s. (15-16)

Writing about the notion of a “dominant ideology” (7) in Victorian England, Hall observes that “[t]o be a middle-class man was to be a somebody, a public person, while the essence of middle-class femininity was being constructed as private and domestic. Such oppositions acquired their meanings ideologically, but that ideology had material effects of the most immediate and concrete kind” (17). She cites the institution of the patriarchal family as “not only central to women’s subordination but also to economic, political and social life” (16), contextualizing women’s subordination within the family in a wider sociocultural and historical frame.<sup>10</sup> Hall’s view that the hegemony of the nuclear family is oppressive of women echoes that of prominent early feminist, essayist and poet Adrienne Rich.

Rich states that she regards the nuclear family<sup>11</sup> as “a principal form of social fragmentation” (1979, 83), and not as a mutually nurturing haven:

At the core of patriarchy is the individual family unit with its division of roles, its values of private ownership, monogamous marriage, emotional possessiveness, the “illegitimacy” of a child born outside legal marriage, the unpaid domestic services of the wife, obedience to authority, judgment, and punishment for disobedience. (78-79)

She refers to the woman’s dichotomous double bind, caught between the role of angelic preserver of the sanctity of home and family – which can be essentialized to that of a socially and culturally inscribed cypher – and the role of quasi-servant to her family’s needs: “[F]undamental to women’s oppression is the assumption that we as a group

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<sup>10</sup> See also Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall (1987) on the development of separate gendered codes in Victorian England.

<sup>11</sup> Rich acknowledges that the feminists of the 1970s were continuing a long tradition of at least three centuries of women critiquing and challenging the institutions of marriage and the patriarchal family. She quotes Elizabeth Carey, Mary Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf, among others, as precursors of the women’s movement in the 1970s and 1980s (1979, 73).

belong to the “private” sphere of the home, the hearth, the family, the sexual, the emotional, out of which men emerge as adults to act in the “public” arena of power, the “real” world [...]” (215). Scripted as an “Angel in the House,”<sup>12</sup> a woman who transgressed patriarchally mandated sexual codes, which institutionalized male ownership of women and children, by asserting a sexuality not confined to the procreation of children within marriage was cast as ‘mad’ or ‘bad’ for attempting to live beyond the familial/domestic sphere. Rich describes it as a struggle for a woman to find “the [...] sense of *herself*” (36), separate from her functions as a civilizing influence and child-bearer/homemaker/housekeeper, and refers allusively to the family’s potentiality for traumatization: “[T]his tiny unit, presumed as a sheltering environment, a safe harbor from the violent and aggressive world of the Strangers, is in fact often also dangerous for the psyche” (83). She references specifically wife-battering, conjugal rape, and father-daughter incest as sources of psychic disorder for women, which became feminist issues, and the focus of attention of feminist psychoanalysts and trauma theorists, notably Maria P. P. Root, Laura S. Brown, Mary Ballou, and Judith Herman. Their work in the 1980s and 1990s highlighted the imbrication of a wider social and historical frame with the interpersonal locus of individual trauma and the importance of including an examination of the dominant culture in the aetiology of psychic trauma experienced by women in familial contexts.

New Zealand historian Raewyn Dalziel, commenting on the embodiment of gender in the New Zealand context, describes how women’s roles in the nineteenth century were perceived reductively: “Women were seen solely in the roles of wives, mothers, homemakers and housekeepers – not as individuals” (1977; 2001, 186). She uses the term ‘helpmeet’ (188) to encapsulate and circumscribe the function of colonial women. Barbara Brookes sees the long shadow cast by this reductionist and depersonalizing role ascribed to women in the twentieth-century welfare state: “The nineteenth-century ideal of woman as the ‘colonial helpmeet’ was continued in the twentieth century by the creation of the welfare state, predicated on the woman at home, servicing the needs of her husband and children” (1981; 2001, 197). Angela Wanhalla refers to the ‘social laboratory’ era of social experimentation in New Zealand (1890-1940), which she sees as a response to increasing industrialization and urbanization. She contends, like

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<sup>12</sup> The “Angel in the House” trope is derived from Coventry Patmore’s poem, “The Angel in the House” (1854), in which he extols the virtues of his wife and holds her up as an example of pure, devoted, and submissive Victorian womanhood.

Brookes, that the state's increasing intervention in social policy and the creation of the welfare state in effect perpetuated the ideology of the 'separate spheres.' She explains: "With the establishment of a minimal welfare system in New Zealand, the ideal family and gender roles within it were established by the state, and based around the male breadwinner wage in which the employed man and the mother were the ideal citizens" (2009, 461-62).

The shift in the location of the family from a predominantly rural society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to an increasingly urbanized society with proliferating suburbs underscores the continuation of the settler colonial heteropatriarchal family structure, and its clearly demarcated gendered roles and spaces. Veracini's comments on the family in post-war suburbia highlight that while a structure may assume different and changing formations, its underlying structure remains intact. He correlates suburbia to settler colonialism, contending that they share structural similarities, namely a "type of social organization and a concern with stability and control" (2012, 340). He argues that they are both characterized by displacement, "an "outward" movement" (339) from the metropole/metropolis, and distancing, which he describes as premised "on the exclusion of the variously racialized indigenous and exogenous alterities" (348). Commenting on the growth of suburbia in the years after the Second World War and the "anxious escape" (340) of the nuclear family to suburbia, he observes:

[T]he suburban and settler moves reassert patriarchal orders, and this reassertion is premised [...] on the re-constitution of distinct gendered spheres. The homesteader and the homeowner are male; they *represent* their family. They don't merely own: they reproduce in the house and the house is surrounded by a lot – the symbolic representation at once of their independence and of their capacity to isolate their women. (345)

The suburbs isolated women in their roles as wives and mothers, making "suburban forms, like settler colonial ones, [...] inherently gendered" (ibid.). In his discussion of the links between suburbia and settler colonialism, Veracini refers to the continuation of settler structures in the suburban nuclear family in a domestic ideology premised on separate spheres. Post-war suburbia effectively perpetuated patriarchy's stake in the continuation of an oppressive power structure that confined women within the domestic

realm as wives and mothers, and isolated them in a world based on boundaries between the private and public.

Suburbia's reenactment of settler structures in "distinct gendered spheres" reflects patriarchy's strict control of a woman's sexuality and its circumscription within the procreative and nurturant roles of wife and mother. In my examination of settler colonialism as a "mode of domination," I pay attention to women's transgression of gendered codes of sexual behaviour and the patriarchal prohibitions imposed upon the female body, and their psychic and emotional consequences. The dominant culture's continuing investment in the ideology of motherhood and the patriarchal family as mechanisms of social control and stability connects with the settler's disavowal of the indigenous presence, and the difference that Alan Lawson sees between settler colonial desire and other theorizations of colonial desire.<sup>13</sup> He writes:

The settler's desire to stand in for the Native produces the inadmissible desire for miscegenation [...]. The insertion of the settler self into the (physical and discursive) space of the Indigene is simultaneously characterized by desire and disavowal. The movement into indigenous space must be asymptotic: indigeneity must be approached but never touched. (1995, 27)

Lawson's observation on asymptotic relationality references settler colonialism's libidinal investment in the outnumbering/elimination of the Indigene through the expansion of the white settler population, and the crucial role that white settler women played in the organized settlement of New Zealand by Great Britain. As Veracini observes, "a settler project is crucially premised on a reproductive economy" (2011, 8). Miscegenation by unmarried and married white women constituted a threat to a settler colony's "reproductive economy" and to the settler project, and to patriarchy's

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<sup>13</sup> Discourse about the role of gender in colonial literature includes in its compass the term 'colonial desire' which Robert Young uses in his 1995 publication to convey the pervasiveness of sexuality in colonialist discourse. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin explain: "The idea of colonization itself is grounded in a sexualized discourse of rape, penetration and impregnation, whilst the subsequent relationship of the colonizer and colonized is often presented in a discourse that is redolent of sexualized exoticism" (1989, 40-41). For further discussion on colonial desire and miscegenation, see Martin and Mohanty 1986, Minh-ha 1989, Whitlock and Tiffin 1992, Sharpe 1993, Davidoff, Doolittle, Fink and Holden 1999, Whitlock 2000, Wiesner-Hanks 2004, Stoler 2006 and 2002, Ballantyne and Burton 2009 and 2005, and Arvin, Tuck and Morrill 2013. The aforementioned scholars include in their discussion encounters between women and racial 'Others,' the complex relationships that result from these encounters for women caught between gender and race, and "the leakage between what might seem to be secure gendered, national and racial identities" (Whitlock 2000, 3).

investment in a family structure in which “males hold dominant power and determine what part females shall and shall not play” (Rich 1979, 78).

The organised settlement of New Zealand in the nineteenth century by families from Great Britain was the aim of the New Zealand Company established in 1830 by its British founder, Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Michael King<sup>14</sup> observes: “Much of the initial settlement of New Zealand in the 1840s was the result of private-enterprise immigration company schemes” (2003; 2004, 170). Brookes comments on the impetus to planned settlement: “[Y]oung married couples in their twenties and thirties were, from the outset, the focus of immigration policies aimed at creating a stable and productive labour force in New Zealand” (2016, 71). She quotes from Wakefield’s *Letter from Sydney* (1829): “‘A new colony,’ he wrote, ‘is a bad place for a young single man. To be single is contrary to the nature of a new colony where laws of society are labour, peace, domestic life, increase and multiply’” (46). Brookes writes:

As well as rapidly increasing the population of the new colony, promotion of a domestic life would have other important benefits, which Wakefield articulated in subsequent publications. A balance of the sexes would stem the tide of prostitution – a natural consequence, he believed, of men’s aggressive sexuality – while a wife halved a man’s labour by attending to ‘household cares,’ thus freeing him for productive work. [...] He recognized that the engine of colonial success lay within the private sphere of the family. (46-47)

Keith Sinclair describes the presence of women as a “civilizing influence” (1991, 105) in a young settler colony in which systems of law and order were not yet established. While individual women took advantage of the new opportunities that life in the settler colony offered (see Brookes 2016, 65-70), emigration to the settler colonies did not liberate women from their patriarchally-scripted roles. The “civilizing influence” that Sinclair attributes to the presence of women is enshrined in the domestic ideology of the Victorian family, which was part of the cultural baggage brought by settlers to the

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<sup>14</sup> King comments on the impact of organized immigration schemes on the increase in the Pākehā population of New Zealand: “The number of Pakeha living in New Zealand in 1830 had been just over 300. [...] The total number of Pakeha settlers in 1840 was a little over 2000. By 1858 they would outnumber Maori by approximately 3000: 59,000 to 56,000. And by 1881 there would be around 500,000 of them” (2004, 169). For further commentary on the New Zealand Company and Edward Gibbon Wakefield, see King 2004, 156, 171-172, 181, and 204, and Brookes 2016, 27, 32, 48, 50-52, 58, 70-71, and 85. See also Belich 2009, 145-176 for a discussion of organized emigration schemes to the Anglo settler colonies. He makes particular reference to Wakefield on pp. 146-147.

colonies in the nineteenth century. It cast women in the roles of home-maker, child-rearer and the upholder of civilized and moral standards of conduct. Dalziel writes:

Women were essential to the business of colonization as homemakers, the upholders of moral values and social purity and as the agents of civilization. [...] In the new country woman's function would be to create and care for house and home, thus freeing men for the work of production: it would be her duty to guard the virtue, morality and gentility of the settlers [...]. (2001, 186)

Gillian Whitlock comments on “the fusion of emigration with maternity” (1995, 352), and the expectation that women would give birth to large families so that the settlers would outnumber the indigenous peoples as quickly as possible: “[I]n settlement colonies the fertility of European women and the welfare of mothers and children were vital to the colonizing project” (ibid.). Physical and emotional severance from extended family networks and their support with the demands of constant child-bearing and raising large families contributed, however, to women's experiences of displacement and disjunction, of being *between* the imperial centre and colonial periphery, of being both colonized and colonizing. It invoked uncertainty about the meaning of ‘home’ and feelings of being ‘unhomed’ in the settler colony.

Heteropatriarchy was integral to the nineteenth-century settlement of New Zealand by the British Empire. It is the overarching foundational ideology, and *modus operandi* of settler colonial culture, society, legal systems, economy and politics. Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill (2013) explore two key ideas in settler colonialism, “heteropatriarchy” and “heteropaternalism,” which they describe as “intertwined,” and exemplifying a “continuing relationship.” Elaborating on the continuation of the two concepts (heterosexual patriarchal social systems and a heteropaternalistic family structure) in the postcolonial period, they explain:

By heteropatriarchy, we mean the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent. By heteropaternalism, we mean the presumption that heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements, in which the father is both center and leader/boss, should serve as the model for social arrangements of the state and its institutions. (13)

The naturalization of heteropatriarchy and the heteropaternal organization of citizens into nuclear families is seen by Arvin et al. as a “cornerstone in the production of a citizenry that will support and bolster the nation-state” (14), institutionalizing the subordination of women within familial and sociocultural settings, enforced through legal, political and economic processes relating to marriage and property. Institutionalizing the heteropatriarchal family as a cornerstone of the nation-state situates family in a sociocultural and political context. It draws attention to the interrelatedness of individual trauma in the domestic locus with patriarchy’s dominant ideologies, and the wider social context.

While trauma still refers to bodily injury in medicine, Roger Luckhurst and other scholars<sup>15</sup> date its conceptual use as a psychic scar or mental wound to the late nineteenth century and to industrial traumas such as the railway accident. Trauma’s progressive extension as a concept includes the broadening of the range of traumatic sequelae and symptomology, and the categories of sufferers/victims. Feminist trauma theorists, feminist psychoanalysts and critics have contributed significantly to the expansion of contemporary understandings of trauma through their foregrounding of female experiences of trauma in the interpersonal realm, and through moving “the analysis of the problem beyond an individual perspective to a larger sociopolitical, systemic framework of conceptualization” (Root, 1992, 238).<sup>16</sup> Their contributions are important for the theoretical frame of my argument that the trauma experienced by women in the familial locus needs to be understood and explored within the “larger structural forces of sociocultural systems” (Brown and Ballou 1992, xiii), and my understanding that settler colonialism is such a structure and “mode of power.” The feminist perspective is concerned to reveal the “complex interrelatedness of the [female] subject with the powerful [...] historical and political forces with which she is inescapably caught up” (Kaplan 2005, 20). It exposes the relationship between trauma

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<sup>15</sup> See Judith Lewis Herman 1992; 2001, 7-32, Cathy Caruth 1995, 3-12, Laurie Vickroy 2002, 1-35, Roger Luckhurst 2006, 497-507, 2008, 19-76, 2010, 191-206, Jean-Michel Ganteau and Susana Onega 2009, 7-19, and Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone 2014, 1-8 for the genealogy of trauma as a concept and the development of trauma theory and studies. Michael Rothberg (2014, xi-xvii) comments on the continuing expansion of the field of trauma studies and its conceptual understandings to include, for example, systemic sweatshop exploitation and factory fires in an age of globalized neo-liberal capitalism, and the accretive violence of climate change in the Anthropocene. Stef Craps (2014, 45-61) emphasizes the need to broaden and differentiate the Eurocentric orientation of trauma to encompass other geo-cultural locations and cultural understandings of trauma and healing.

<sup>16</sup> See also Michelle Balaev 2012, E. Ann Kaplan 2005, Anne Whitehead 2004.1, Laurie Vickroy 2002, Leigh Gilmore 2001, Deborah Horvitz 2000, Suzette Henke 1998, Kalí Tal 1996, Judith Lewis Herman 1992; 2001, and Laura S. Brown 1991.

and women's experiences of oppressive social, legal, and political processes and structures. Maria P. P. Root emphasizes that "the individual is rooted in a sociopolitical context" (1992, 230), and that "[f]eminist theory always considers the interplay between sociopolitical factors and phenomenological experience" (236). Feminist trauma scholars emphasize that "trauma is never exclusively personal" (Gilmore 2001, 31). They see trauma as "relational and positioned within a social setting that is framed by a specific culture, historical period, geographic place, and community" (Balaev 2012, 67). They draw attention to the interconnections between the psychic damage women experience from cumulative and insidious trauma within the family and an oppressive dominant culture.

Laura S. Brown acknowledges Root's work in developing the concept of "insidious trauma" (1991, 128): "By this, [Root] refers to the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment, but which do violence to the soul and spirit" (ibid.). Brown states:

[A] feminist analysis calls us to look beyond the public and male experiences of trauma to the private, secret experiences that women encounter in the interpersonal realm and at the hands of those we love and depend upon. [...] The private, secret, insidious traumata to which a feminist analysis draws attention are more often than not those events in which dominant culture and its forms and institutions are expressed and perpetuated. (122)

Feminist trauma theorists do not discount the significance of event-based trauma and its occurrence (such as rape or, for example, of work done by scholars on the traumas of war, the Holocaust, Vietnam war veterans, and large-scale disasters). The feminist conceptualization of psychic trauma is concerned to broaden the experiences that are considered traumatic to include "all of those everyday, repetitive, inter-personal events that are so often the sources of psychic pain for women" (129).

The home's cultural signification as a private space operates to 'invisibilize' and keep from public scrutiny the traumas experienced by women within the family, increasing the difficulty of gaining access to women's history. As Herman notes, "[t]he real conditions of women's lives were hidden in the sphere of the personal, in private life" (2001, 28). Through their focus on insidious, cumulative trauma experienced by women and children in interpersonal relations in everyday contexts, feminist trauma

theorists<sup>17</sup> make an important contribution to the work of other feminist scholars. Similarly, New Historicists seek to redress the privileging of certain stories over others and to foreground seemingly forgotten stories, silenced voices, and marginalized lives and their interconnections with patriarchal and hegemonic contexts. My investigation into the settler colonial family as a site of trauma for women uncovers the settler colonial family with its differential power relations as one such ‘invisibilizing’ site. It not only rendered women vulnerable to psychic trauma, it also functioned to conceal their experiences in the private sphere from the scrutiny that traumatic events in the public sphere attracted.

My analysis of trauma in the selected novels has been guided by the development of trauma theory from a late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century focus on a psychoanalytic, individual, event-based approach to a theoretical understanding that includes feminist conceptualizations of trauma, relational, cultural and historical trauma, and contexts beyond Europe and North America. Nevertheless, Freud’s early psychoanalytic work on trauma remains foundational for theorists like Cathy Caruth who defines trauma as the “wound of the mind – the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world” (1996, 4), traumatic experience as “an experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs” (5) and which belatedly “repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly” (2). Caruth’s description of trauma’s insistent return as a mode of haunting is integral to my understanding of trauma: “To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event” (1995, 4-5). Her point references Freud’s concept of *Nachträglichkeit* which relates to the belated appearance, and re-appearance, of traumatic symptoms and the disruption of linear time through the irruption of one time into the other. Luckhurst describes such depictions of trauma’s anachronic recurrence as “cut[ting] across the narrative in distinct typographic intrusions that collapse linear temporality into the insistent presence of traumatic timeless time” (2008, 100).

Anne Whitehead comments on Caruth’s formulation of the structure of trauma as a disruption of history or temporality:

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<sup>17</sup> Prominent male trauma scholars have also contributed to the expansion of trauma theory to include the experiences of women and children, and other non-dominant groups, notably Geoffrey Hartman (2003 and 1995), Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone (2014), Dominick LaCapra (2013, 2001, and 1999), Stef Craps (2013), Roger Luckhurst (2010 and 2008), and Kai Erikson (1995 and 1991).

For Caruth, trauma is not a symptom of the unconscious but of history. The experience of trauma has not yet been assimilated by the individual and so cannot be possessed in the forms of memory or narrative. On the contrary, trauma assumes a haunting quality, continuing to possess the subject with its insistent repetitions and returns. (2004.1, 12)

Whitehead refers to the ghost's symbolic valence to represent trauma's haunting quality, and describes Caruth's figuration of "[t]he irruption of one time into another [...] as a form of possession or haunting. The ghost represents an appropriate embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present" (6). Luckhurst, in his definition of psychological trauma, references the concept of the ghost. He writes: "[A] psychological trauma is something that enters the psyche that is so unprecedented or overwhelming that it cannot be processed or assimilated by usual mental processes. We have, as it were, nowhere to put it, and so it falls out of our conscious memory, yet is still present in the mind like an intruder or a ghost" (2006, 499). I investigate the concept of haunting in relation to individual psychic trauma, and the figurative ghostly return of an unresolved or silenced past trauma, and examine the interconnections between the repressed violence of settlement and its "uncanny return" (Kavka 2011, 149) and the symbolic violence inherent in structures of patriarchal domination like the settler colonial family.

The new historicist concern of postcolonial novelists to "rescue previously overlooked histories and to bring hitherto marginalized or silenced stories to public consciousness" (Whitehead 2004.1, 82) aligns with my project to examine twentieth-century novels that depict the settler colonial family as a site of trauma for women, to draw attention to the reasons for and circumstances of their traumatization, and to contextualize it in relation to settler colonialism. As Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué explain, "[a] focus on an individual/psychological perspective may pose the danger of separating facts from their causes, thus blurring the importance of the historical and social context, which is particularly relevant in postcolonial trauma narratives. [...] In postcolonial literature, the personal and the social are inextricably linked, and trauma should be studied in a specific context" (2011, xi). Stef Craps's criticism of a failure to situate trauma in its social and historical context and "to leave unquestioned the conditions that enabled the traumatic abuse" (2014, 50) highlights the importance of my own project of examining, through the selected novels, the links

between the present and the past, and interrogating a sociocultural and historical construct like the family and its interconnections with gendered trauma.

In Chapter One, I discuss Mander's *The Story of a New Zealand River*, and the belated manifestation and revelation of the central character's traumatic experiences in England over twenty years after their occurrence when she has settled in an isolated bush settlement in Northland. The novel's location in settler colonial New Zealand heightens the delayed impact of the events Alice Roland experiences in England (an illegitimate pregnancy at eighteen years of age, desertion by her lover, rejection by her puritanical and authoritarian father and family, and emigration to Australia where she gives birth to her daughter Asia). The significant time lapse and different location instantiate one of trauma theory's central insights, namely the atemporal, non-linear structure of traumatic experience.

I draw attention to another important concept in trauma theory, namely that events/experiences are not necessarily inherently traumatic or equally traumatizing for everyone. As expressed by Caruth, the pathology of trauma consists "in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it" (4). The novel portrays the long-term psychic harm from the precipitating causes of Alice's traumatization through her possession by the past, and the delayed manifestation of her traumatic symptomology in a loveless marriage in New Zealand and in a situation of physical and emotional isolation. The power of the traumatic past to haunt the present is prefigured and encoded in scenes/actions that are triggered by stimuli associated with Alice's traumatic memories, and in her impaired emotional, psychic, and bodily functioning. They assume retrospective significance when Alice finally reveals the secrets in her past.

I refer also to the mother-daughter dyad in the relationship between Alice and Asia and its potentiality for the transmission of trauma from mother to daughter. The transmissibility of traumatic affect is another primary concern of the trauma literature.<sup>18</sup> While the aetiology of a mother's traumatization varies according to individual circumstances, the replay of her traumatization on the next generation is characterized by her extrusion of traumatic affect and its absorption by her child/ren, meaning that

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<sup>18</sup> The transmission of the psychological burden of unresolved trauma of Holocaust survivors to their children has been the subject of extensive research. See, for example, Elie Wiesel 1970, 1968, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub 1992, Luckhurst 2008, 63-64, 65-71, and LaCapra 2016, 375-400, 2001, 86-140. The subject of the traumatic effects of slavery infusing relationships between mothers and children, in colonial and postcolonial situations, has also received significant scholarly attention. See, as an example, Vickroy on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) 2002, 55-64, 167-191, and also Luckhurst 2008, 90-97 and 1996, 243-260.

legacies of trauma can be passed on over generations. The transgenerational transmission of trauma over three generations is a dominant theme in Kidman's *The Book of Secrets*, which I examine in greater detail in Chapter Four.

In Chapter Two, I move the argument to an examination of the psychological fragmentation and shattering of a woman's patriarchally-constructed identity. In *The Butcher Shop*, Devanny addresses the construction of a woman's identity as a wife and mother, and as 'Angel in the House,' which is compounded in the central character through her interpellation as a "Lady," namely the "Lady" of a prosperous sheep and cattle property. Devanny depicts the sociocultural indoctrination of Margaret Messenger from girlhood by her family and society into marriage and motherhood, her over-investment in her physical beauty, and her awareness that it secures her social elevation through marriage to a wealthy man. "Lady," and the social context into which marriage places her, are critical components of her investment in her patriarchally-scripted identities and constructed notions of the feminine. As Eva Figes states, "Woman, presented with an image in a mirror, has danced to that image in a hypnotic trance. And because she thought the image was herself, it became just that" (1970, 15).

Devanny emphasizes the destructiveness of the hegemonic structures and norms that prescribe a woman's agency and identity, underscoring the traumatic moment of the "blow to the tissues of the mind [...], an assault from outside that breaks into the space one occupies as a person and damages the interior" (Erikson 1991, 455), and ruptures a sense of an integrated or coherent self. Henke describes such a traumatic moment or experience which generates psychic rupture as "a disruption and dismemberment of the imaginary subject, the version of an integrated self that emerges from *méconnaissance* or misrecognition of one's valorized mirror image" (1998, xvi). Margaret's terrible 'awakening' to the realization that in the eyes of men and society her identity is defined by the marital relationship, and that she is the commodified property of her husband leads to her psychic rupture, her deteriorating and disorganized state of mind, and the novel's aporetic and tragic end.

In Chapter Three, in my discussion of Hyde's *Wednesday's Children*, I introduce the concept of dissociative identity disorder and shift the focus of the argument to early relational and cumulative trauma experienced through an absent mother and deficits in environmental care. I offer a reading of the novel which references "the whole new emphasis on infant-mother relationship [that] changed our very frame of reference for the discussion of the nature and role of trauma" (Khan 1963; 1974, 44). M. Masud R.

Khan acknowledges the research of D. W. Winnicott, an English paediatrician and psychoanalyst, who developed the concepts of the “good-enough mother” and the “holding environment.” Winnicott describes the “good-enough mother” as one “who makes active adaptation to the infant’s needs” (1971; 1974, 11), and uses the term “holding environment” to denote not only the physical holding of the infant, but also the total environmental provision and its function to reduce to a minimum the number of impingements to which the infant must react (1965, 37-55). Khan extended Winnicott’s work on the maternal care of the infant to include the concept of “continuous impingement” (1972; 1974, 293) from an uncaring family environment and the effect of cumulative trauma on the child right up to adolescence.

The novel signals that Wednesday’s experience of relational trauma reaches back to inadequate nurturance from an absent or unavailable mother, and to cumulative impingements from her familial environment. Her gradual psychic erosion and negative self-ideation militate against the establishment of a firm cathexis to the external world and lead to the defence mechanism of dissociative identity disorder, “derived from the specific nature of the cumulative trauma experienced [...] in childhood *vis-à-vis* [the] primary object” (Khan 1974, 69).

Hyde contextualizes Wednesday’s experience of relational and cumulative trauma in a family whose way of life reflects the patriarchal sociocultural and gendered codes of settler colonialism, in a society which still looks deferentially to England as the ‘mother country,’ where the Law and the Church privilege and protect male interests, and reflect the prevailing view that a woman’s transgression of patriarchally mandated sexual codes constitutes a threat to the construct of the heteropatriarchal family and the power of the Father.

In Chapter Four, I examine the intergenerational transmission of trauma through the recovered stories of three generations of women. In *The Book of Secrets* Kidman situates the depiction of trauma and its transmissibility in the wider narrative of the Scottish diasporas, exile from home, and dislocation. The situation of trauma in a larger historical, geographical, and cultural context through the trope of diaspora reinforces its transmissibility and demonstrates how profoundly events in the past can affect families over several generations.

The novel extends the perspective on trauma by looking beyond the one-generation, nuclear family or mother-daughter dyad, and demonstrates through its narrative structure how trauma is transmitted between the three generations of one family. The

non-linear narrative, which moves between different periods of time and physical locations, uses the ‘indirect telling’ of the grandmother’s journals to reveal the secrets of the past to the third generation. The novel’s self-reflexivity is enacted in its structural strategy of combining two inter-related narratives to signify their inter-implication. Extracts from the journals, and letters, which reveal the secrets of the family history, are embedded throughout the novel.

I draw on the theories of French psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok for their conception of secrets from the past as phantoms which haunt the present: “The phantom is a formulation of the unconscious that has never been conscious – for good reason. It passes [...] from the parent’s unconscious to the child” (1994, 173). Secrets regarded as shameful, such as rape and adultery, beyond another generation’s knowledge, are transmitted without being stated, and assume a haunting presence in the psyche. The concept of secrets of the past as a form of phantomatic haunting extends the examination of a trauma’s aetiology and symptomology to a consideration of the family history. It requires, Esther Rashkin states, tracing trauma back to a “transphenomenal source [...] situated in an ancestor’s psychic history” (1992, 158) and “construing a character’s symptoms as the ciphered inscriptions of her or his unarticulated but ever-present prehistory” (ibid.).

I examine the processes of transmission from one generation to the next, using the theory developed by Jill Salberg and Sue Grand, namely that “the attachment relationship is the mode of trans-generational transmissions and carries the presence and absence of parental dysregulation resulting from traumatic experiences” (2017, 2). As Salberg expresses it, “parents extrude the traumatic contents of their minds into their children” (78). I interpret Maria’s decaying childhood home in which she decides to remain after the death of her still-born child until her own death as emblematic of the psychic crypt in which she incorporates<sup>19</sup> and memorializes her lost loved objects. Abraham and Torok, who developed the concept of the psychic crypt, saw incorporation, the act of swallowing the dead, as blocking mourning and gradual decathexis from the internalized lost object/s who assume a living presence within their sealed crypt.

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<sup>19</sup> J. Laplanche and J.-P. Pontalis define incorporation as the “[p]rocess whereby the subject, more or less on the level of phantasy, has an object penetrate his body and keeps it ‘inside’ his body” (*The Language of Psycho-Analysis* 1967; 1973, 211). Abraham and Torok developed the concept of incorporation to include the notion of an intrapsychic crypt where the lost object is buried alive. They write: “Grief that cannot be expressed builds a secret vault within the subject. In this crypt reposes [...] the objective counterpart of the loss, as a complete person with his own topography” (1994, 8).

In Chapter Five on Sandys's *Enemy Territory* I extend my argument to introduce the concepts of acting out and working through trauma. The novel portrays the tragic failure of a teenage girl, Kay Dyer, to move beyond a traumatic shock involving her father, its harmful impact on her trust in and sense of connectedness with her family, and on her life and marriage, and depicts her eventual engagement with working through her trauma. In traumatic shock, Caruth explains, "the outside [goes] inside without any mediation" (1996, 59). The event or shock is not integrated into consciousness; it is instead denied and repressed in ways or forms that LaCapra associates with acting out.

Freud's theories on melancholia and mourning, and LaCapra's on acting out and working through provide a number of critical perspectives with which to interpret the novel as a narrative with a healing trajectory in which Kay emotionally confronts and explores the repressed past in order to move beyond trauma. Conceptually, melancholia and acting out are characterized by an inability to get over loss and grief, and take the form of self-damaging behaviours and compulsive repetition-compulsion, in a constant replay of "attempt[s] to [retroactively] master the traumatic material that has pierced protective filters" (Luckhurst 2006, 500). Mourning, however, involves a process of coming to terms with the past, which LaCapra terms working through. He describes it as a process in which "the past becomes accessible to recall in memory, and when language functions to provide some measure of conscious control, critical distance, and perspective" (2001, 90).

Telling the story of trauma involves the critical distance and perspective LaCapra, describes and which are characteristic of French psychologist Pierre Janet's conception of narrative memory. In contradistinction to traumatic memory's lack of coherent, verbal narrative and its encoding in sensations and images, narrative memory places the traumatic event or experience in a chronology of the past and integrated in the individual's life history.

I consider the important role of the empathic listener in relation to the process of working through trauma, and draw on Herman's psychotherapeutic processes of recovery (1992; 2001, 155-213) to portray Kay's growing sense of empowerment and control over her life.

In Chapter Six on Gunn's *Rain* I explore the concept of "endlessly melancholic, impossible mourning, and a resistance to working through" (LaCapra 2001, 23) and the textual figuration of post-traumatic effects in relation to the trauma experienced by twelve-year-old Janey Phelon over the drowning of her younger brother Jimmy in Lake

Taupo. I contextualize Janey's traumatization in my analysis of her and Jimmy's childhood experiences of emotional harm and neglect from parents who fail to keep them safe and protect them from sexually predatory adults. The family holiday house in Taupo represents, for the children, an unsafe adult world and a place from which to escape.

I examine the text as an instantiation of unresolved childhood trauma and its indelible wound. For Janey, the adult autodiegetic narrator, the past is the present. Her narration of the past with its shifting time-frames and her fixation to the traumatic event signal that recovery from the past is not always possible and that survival is not recovery. Her blurring of past and present constitutes what Caruth describes as a "double telling" (1996, 7) in its "oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (ibid.). The rupturing or dislocation of temporal boundaries, and the repetitive and fragmented nature of the memories heighten the profound and unresolved nature of the psychic rupture experienced, and signify an inability, or resistance, to work through trauma. Janey's incorporation<sup>20</sup> of her brother indicates what LaCapra describes as a "bond with the dead" (2001, 22), which "may invest trauma with value and make its reliving a painful but necessary commemoration or memorial to which one remains dedicated or at least bound" (ibid.).

I discuss the importance of place in the depiction of trauma, and refer to Tumarkin's concept of traumascapes, material sites of violence and loss and marked by traumatic histories, which she defines as "haunting and haunted places" (2005, 233), comparing them to palimpsests with "marks and traces of the past overwritten by the present [...] still there" (225). The ancient caldera of Lake Taupo, and its submerged volcanic vents is one such traumandscape, "constituted by experiences of particular events and their aftermath" (2019, 5). Tumarkin emphasizes that "[i]t is the nature of experiences *after the event* traumascapes anchor and/or trigger that distinguishes this distinct category of places from other physical sites of tragic events" (ibid.). Gunn figures the affective experience of trauma, its "endlessly melancholic, impossible mourning," in her material and metaphoric use of the lake and in the pervasiveness of *leitmotifs* associated with water. The novel exemplifies Rick Crownshaw's observation on a text's ability to

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<sup>20</sup> See footnote on page 22.

directly reflect or transmit trauma through “the conflation of the representation of affect and the nature of the experience” (2010, 13).

The novels depict a wide range of traumas that range from relational, insidious, cumulative (dating from infancy), and inter-generational trauma to the event-based, and they demonstrate how one type of trauma is frequently imbricated with another. Their representation of trauma reflects the two poles of trauma writing – the depiction of the possibility of healing and the portrayal of the tragic consequences of unresolved trauma. The novels by Mander (1920) and Sandys (1997) depict a healing trajectory which gestures towards recovery. They portray characters acknowledging, exploring and narrating the past as a critical process in recuperating from trauma and for reconstituting the self. They highlight the beneficial impact of an empathic listener in re-establishing relationality and intersubjective connection. By contrast, the impossibility of healing is depicted in the novels by Devanny (1926), Hyde (1937), Kidman (1987), and Gunn (1994). They present the shattering of a constructed identity, severe dissociative identity disorder, the intergenerational transmissibility of trauma and endless melancholia, and the subjective isolation of the traumatized victim as psychic traumas or conditions from which their victims cannot recover.

All of the novels engage critically with what is behind the individual suffering of their central female characters. In their depiction of the root causes that underlie their familial contextualization of gendered trauma, they call attention to the larger oppressive structures and norms of settler colonialism, and to the intersections of the private and familial with the historical and political. They bear witness to the impact of the colonizing past and its violence which, like New Zealand’s unstable topography, metaphorically threatens to disturb and disrupt the present. Both poles of trauma-writing, healing and irresolution, articulate the damage that unresolved trauma causes and testify to the critical importance of acknowledging and interrogating the past in order to retrospectively understand it, rather than repressing or suppressing it. Scholars such as Veracini, Turner and Delrez emphasize the necessity of examining the unresolved traumas of the settler colonial past as essential to any possibility of reconciliation or recuperation from past damage. According to Veracini, the decolonization of imbalanced relations of power is an ongoing process of interrogation and negotiation (2016, 178).

The *working* through of psychic trauma is also not a completed process. Trauma scholars like Herman emphasize that “[t]he reconstruction of the trauma is never entirely completed; new conflicts and challenges at each stage of the lifecycle will inevitably reawaken trauma and bring some new aspect of the experience to light” (2001, 195). Kalí Tal describes trauma as a “transformative experience, and those who are transformed can never return to a state of previous innocence” (1996, 119), while LaCapra argues that it is impossible to transcend or gain total mastery of trauma (2001, 71). Critically, the recuperative processes of an individual’s recovery from trauma do not bring about change to the wider sociocultural structures and norms which engender and perpetuate trauma. Through their depiction of women’s vulnerability to psychic trauma in the settler colonial family, the novels address the imperative of decolonizing settler colonialism’s hegemonic and patriarchal structures and its sites of gendered relations of power like the family.

## Chapter One

### *The Story of a New Zealand River* by Jane Mander

#### The Steel Ring<sup>1</sup> of Blood and Contract

‘Well, my home has been the sort of place one could move in, if one could move at all,’ replied Asia grimly. ‘Isn’t mother enough to make you think? And is there anything slow about Tom Roland? Why don’t our parents realize that we children have eyes to see and ears to hear? I slept for years with only a thin wall between my parents and me. Slept, did I say? I sat up for hours shivering, sick and faint. I cried, I prayed, I raged. I grew old listening to them. I grew to have a pity and then a contempt for them both, and then just a tolerance. I couldn’t understand, and I don’t understand now how human beings can be so stupid, and so cruel, and make so much unhappiness for each other. Why did mother stand it? What good does it do to stand things? She never made him any better. Oh, she’s a mystery to me.’

JANE MANDER

*The Story of a New Zealand River* (1920)

While the precise definition of post-traumatic stress disorder is contested, most descriptions generally agree that there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. This simple definition belies a very peculiar fact: the pathology cannot be defined by the event itself – which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally [...]. The pathology consists, rather, solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event.

CATHY CARUTH

*Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995)

Jane Mander’s *The Story of a New Zealand River* portrays the traumatization of her central character, Alice Roland, within the context of marital and family relations. Mander uses the family to question and challenge the social conventions and cultural norms of the era, particularly as they impact traumatogenically on women. Existing critical readings of *The Story of a New Zealand River* have not interpreted Alice in terms of trauma, but instead focus on the social and subjective impacts of puritanism (Stevens 1961; 1966, 37; Turner 1976, 4-6, 8-10, 13-15; Wevers 1980, 247-251; Evans

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase, “the steel ring,” comes from an article Jane Mander wrote for *The New Republic*, dated 24 June, 1916 (164), entitled “Sheltered Daughters.” The “steel ring” is a metaphor to describe the strength and inflexibility of the circumscriptions placed on daughters by their families, and society, to conform to patriarchally assigned roles.

1990, 68-69; Jones 1991, 134-135; Moffat 1998, 90-91). Earlier critics like E. H. McCormick (1940, 148) and J. C. Reid (1946, 52) emphasize the novel's documentary value about life in the timber-milling settlements of Northland as its principal quality. I contend that trauma has been an underexplored area in critical evaluations of the novel, and in examinations of Alice's subjectivity and her positionality in a Victorian patriarchal family in England, and later in a settler colonial family in New Zealand. While I acknowledge that the text is an indictment of puritanism, and, in particular, of its effects on the lives of women, and that there are intersections between Alice's puritanism and traumatization, I argue that there is more going on than a representation of how puritanism can blight a life. I examine the text for manifestations of Alice's traumatization, and for the ways in which the narrative reveals the aetiology of her trauma and points to a stronger basis for interpreting the text as the story of a traumatized subjectivity.

Alice experiences a number of events in England, compounded by further experiences and events following her emigration to Australia, and then on to New Zealand, which, I argue, function as the precipitating cause of her traumatization. As Cathy Caruth observes, the initiating events may not be traumatizing for everyone; the pathology of trauma consists in the condition resulting from the psychic harm or damage done and its ongoing possession (1995, 4) of the person who experiences the event(s). Alice's traumatization is the result of what Kai Erikson describes as a "constellation of [her] life's experiences" (1991, 457), which, to paraphrase Erikson, invade and occupy her to the extent that they become "a dominating feature of [her] interior landscape" (458). Like Caruth, Erikson emphasizes that it is the "resulting state" (456) which gives an event or events the quality of trauma: "The most violent wrenchings in the world have no clinical standing unless they damage the workings of a mind or body, so it is the *harm* that defines and gives shape to the initial event, the *harm* that gives it its name" (ibid.). I read Alice's story as an instantiation of Caruth's observation that "the story of trauma [...], as the narrative of a belated experience, [...] attests to its endless impact on a life" (1996, 7). Alice's traumatization exemplifies Caruth's interpretation of the central Freudian insight into trauma, its *Nachträglichkeit* (the belatedness of its temporal structure), whereby "the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time" (1995, 8). The nature of the events in England that precipitate Alice's emigration is withheld from the reader until Chapter 27 of the text. When Alice finally

breaks her silence about the events in her past, and reveals that she was unmarried when she gave birth to her daughter Asia in Sydney and that she was not the widow she pretended to be when she married Tom Roland in New Zealand, the reader begins the retrospective process of decoding what is narratively encoded in the “referential field” (D’Cruz and Ross 2011, 25) of her traumatization. The “referential field” includes textual signs, such as the disruption of linear time by the past, and the manifestation of the symptoms and behaviours that bear witness to her psychic wound.

The unnamed river in the title of the text functions symbolically as a liminal or bridging space between the past, present and the future. It is the central *leitmotif* of the text, functioning to reflect Alice’s increasing self-reflexivity and recognition of how unresolved events from the past have impacted on and damaged her life. Alice is repeatedly drawn to light and liminal spaces like windows and the verandah, and outdoors, to contemplate the river, which, in its fluidity and flux, “articulates a possible area of transformation and movement across the demarcations of identity from what one previously was, and into what one can be” (Ho 2013, 163). Alice interrogates her past as a sheltered daughter in Victorian England and her present life as a settler subject woman. As a settler woman, Alice embodies a liminal subject-position, caught between domination and oppression in her heteropatriarchal marriage and a larger oppressive patriarchal culture, and her feelings of disjuncture and of being ‘un-homed’ in a location that is not properly ‘home.’ It is in her liminal subject-position, described by Hannah Ho<sup>2</sup> as a “space for dissolving delimited borders of identity” (163), that Alice articulates a subjective awareness of her identity as a woman, separate from her identities as a settler colonial wife and mother, and a deepening recognition of how the events of the past have wounded her.

At this point, in view of their harmful impact on her life, it is perhaps useful to provide an outline of the key circumstances and events in Alice’s story before the narrative opening. At the beginning of the novel, twenty-eight years of age, she is on a journey up the Otamatea River in Northland with her eight-year-old illegitimate daughter Asia, and two children, three and one years of age, with her husband Tom Roland, a colonial New Zealander. She is making the journey to rejoin Roland in a

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<sup>2</sup> Ho’s comments are in relation to Homi Bhabha’s use of the terms ‘interstitial perspective’ and ‘liminal space’ in *The Location of Culture* (1994, 3, 4), and his discussion about the possibility of moving away from or beyond the fixity of identities/subject positions. Bhabha comments: “The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities” (4). The tidal river of Mander’s novel with its constant ebb and flow signifies the transformative qualities that Bhabha ascribes to the metaphor of the stairwell.

remote location where, in the years to come, he establishes a successful tree-felling and saw-milling enterprise. Alice is born into an upper-middle-class family in England in the 1860s. References to two English monarchs give an indication of the chronological time-frame of the novel. Asia is eighteen years of age when Queen Victoria's failing health is mentioned (1920; 2007, 271); when Alice travels back down the river at forty-three years of age to move to Auckland, the steamer flies the New Zealand flag, "displayed only for such events as the King's birthday" (471). Her father is a Presbyterian minister; her mother died when she was a child. She is brought up as a sheltered daughter in a household where women are expected to be dutiful, submissive, and chaste. Her father, an authoritarian and intransigent patriarch, and siblings are not named or individualized in any way. At eighteen years of age she becomes infatuated with a thirty-year-old man, who dupes her into a sexual relationship with the promise of marriage, and abandons her after two weeks. After her father finds out that she is pregnant, he never sees her again, and with the help of one brother she emigrates to Australia. Her severance from her family is final; she never hears from them again, and even her brother's assistance with her passage is open to the interpretation that it was a way of removing her permanently from the family in a manner which typifies the Victorian social silencing of illegitimate pregnancy. To those closest to her through blood ties, she is a "fallen woman [who] brings to the surface an ungovernable sexuality that puts at risk patriarchy's own survival as a system of governance" (D'Cruz and Ross 2011, 262). Acting on the advice of a woman who helps her in Sydney, who buys her a wedding ring, makes her widow's clothes, advises her to go to New Zealand and, "for the sake of the child" (2007, 373), to marry if she can, Alice arrives in Christchurch. She meets Roland in a shop; he notices her distressed state over her lost purse containing nearly all her money, offers her financial assistance, and the promise of introductions to potential piano pupils in Auckland. With the piano she has brought with her from England and her baby daughter, Alice moves to Auckland. She is a fine pianist, but her social class and upbringing render her unable to cope with forging an independent life and earning her own living.

Alice accepts Roland's proposal of marriage, but "very soon after the marriage the incompatibilities began to assume those undreamt of proportions that are the despair of those who would do their duty. Before a year was over Alice felt that a good deal of her had died" (73). Roland's reasons for marrying her are "a curious mixture of impulsive need of affection, and business acumen. [...] He would never have admitted his class

inferiority, but in his secret heart he knew he valued her largely because she belonged to the class that ruled the world” (ibid.). Within a year, Roland also sees that “something he had hoped for had gone out of their union, if, indeed, it had ever been in it. The thing that annoyed him most was that he could not make her love him. He felt that something tumultuous lay beneath her calm” (74). Driven by his “unsatisfied heart” (73), he has liaisons with other women “for the stimulus and affection that she could not or would not give, and back to her he came for the logical conclusion that she never refused, because she had contracted to give it” (73-74). David Bruce, Roland’s business partner, who rows Alice up the river at the beginning of the novel to rejoin her husband after a month’s parting, observes the desperation and despair in her eyes when she sees the isolated cottage that is to be her future home. He also notices the lack of warmth in the greeting exchanged between the couple, and Roland’s failure to help his wife by carrying a child or any of her bags.

Mander underscores the silencing force of trauma, and of shame, through the belated revelation of precipitating events. The events in England and Australia, and those in New Zealand leading up to Alice’s marriage to Roland and their first years together, do not form part of the action of the plot. Alice fears that the shame of an illegitimate pregnancy will alter Bruce’s opinion of her; despite their deepening friendship and declaration of love, Alice is unable to tell Bruce about her past. In Victorian England, and in settler colonial New Zealand, the shame of an illegitimate pregnancy, the wrongdoing, was attributed to and borne by the woman, resulting in the woman’s exposure to social and familial censure as well as the need for concealment (Ahmed 2004; 104). Sara Ahmed comments on the transfer of the ‘badness’ of an action, its “*affective cost*” (107), to oneself: “The domesticity of shame is telling. Family love may be conditional upon how one lives one’s life in relation to social ideals. [...] Shame secures the form of the family by assigning to those who have failed its form the origin of bad feeling [...]” (107). Alice’s sense of shame from her failure to live up to the social and patriarchal ideal of a woman’s premarital chastity is so deeply imprinted in her psyche that it affects her self-identification, and feelings of self-worth, leading her to take on “the imagined view of the other [...] in relation to [herself]” (105), and to conceal the shame of her illegitimate pregnancy from Bruce.

The most powerful depiction of trauma’s disruption of linear time occurs twenty-five years after the birth of Asia. It is only when she fears that Asia is going to become pregnant to a married man that Alice finally reveals to Bruce the secret she has hidden

from him: ““When I was eighteen I did as she is going to do, and she is the child”” (2007, 370). In her account of the events in England, she mentions suicide as if in passing and in an almost disassociated or detached state of consciousness, omitting any reference to her state of mind: ““I couldn’t commit suicide – I was religious. I felt I had to think of the child – that saved me”” (373). As Alice, ““curiously calm”” (370) and ““with cool detachment [in] her voice”” (375), continues her account, the anger, grief, and torment become focalized in Bruce. He groans, grips her shoulder, swears, ““Hell and damnation! God in heaven, damn you”” (375); shouts, ““That ghastly waste! That stupid sacrifice! God! It makes me sick to think of it – sick – sick – ”” (376); staggers to his bed and lies face downwards, sobbing terribly. Alice has never seen Bruce lose control in that way; it is only when she moves to his bunk to comfort him that her detachment from speaking of events she has always tried to forget and suppress from her consciousness breaks, and they sob uncontrollably together. Exhausted, Alice watches the moths beating against the lamp: ““Mechanically she followed the agitated circles of one much larger than the rest till it dashed itself against the globe and fell blistered and maimed against the table, where it plunged up and down in tortured throes”” (377). Bruce crushes it under his ash tray, not able to bear the sight of its ““frantic agony”” (378). The moth’s agony functions as an objective correlative for the emotions evoked in Bruce by Alice’s account of her past, and for the struggles and torment she does not articulate; unable to bear the sight of the moth’s suffering, he puts it out of its misery.

Just as the temporal delay heightens the force of past events, the location of key events in Alice’s story in Victorian England and settler colonial Australia emphasizes Caruth’s argument that the impact of events experienced elsewhere becomes ““fully evident only in connection with another place”” (1995, 8). The psychic damage of those events becomes evident in settler colonial New Zealand under the stress of her marriage to Roland, an alien and oppressive settler culture, and the isolation of their future home in a remote bush camp. According to Caruth, ““trauma is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available”” (1996, 4). Despite Alice’s resolve to do her duty by Roland, the financial security that marriage to him provides, and the opportunities that a fresh beginning in New Zealand offers, the past continues to reverberate in Alice’s life and its impact on her becomes discernible in manifestations of traumatic symptomology.

There is more involved than just puritanism in Alice’s reaction to the fact that Bruce, without a woman or a midwife in attendance, had delivered her stillborn child. The

child is her third to Roland, and it is born within the first year of her arrival in the cottage by the river. Mrs. Brayton, an upper-class Englishwoman who lives with her son on a farm created out of felled bushland, and who becomes a mother-figure to Alice, puts Alice's reaction down to her upbringing in England: "Father a Presbyterian minister of the old school, wouldn't even allow Scott's novels in the house. Mother died when she was a child. One brother a missionary. A daily round of prayer meetings. No wonder she ran off and got married. And, then, I'm sure there was something funny about the marriage too'" (116). Dorrie Harding, the wife of the local schoolmaster, observes that many women, herself included, have had a "Puritan upbringing" (ibid.), and do not display the effects of it to the extent that Alice does. Her observation reflects the constraints and restrictions that were placed on unmarried daughters to protect their virginity and to prepare them to be dutiful Christian wives and mothers. It is Dorrie who senses that there is something more than modesty and prudishness underlying Alice's reaction. Dorothea Turner discounts the significance of Alice's "neurosis" (1976, 10), attributing it to her upbringing:

The fact that Alice was not married to Asia's father is more relevant to the girl's strategic placing in the story and to what she may symbolize than to the plot. As an explanation of Alice's repressions and fears it is scarcely necessary; thousands of women of unblemished conduct spent their lives in those days in just such a state of neurosis. Indeed Alice is so archetypal in her attitudes that her upbringing alone could have been left to account for them. Nor does it add anything to her reasons for marrying Tom Roland; had she been in truth a widow she might well have felt forlorn enough to decide similarly. (10-11)

While Turner praises the psychological strength of Mander's portrayal of Alice's "predicament," and states that Mander is "the first New Zealand novelist to try an honest reckoning with the human constitution" (112-113), her comment about Alice's "neurosis" begs the question as to why so many settler colonial women lived in a "state of neurosis." Critics like Turner largely praise the novel for its psychological realism and 'truth,' none of them, however, mentions the truth or reality of settler colonial trauma, or examines the patriarchal family as a site of trauma from the perspective of women and as a vehicle for interrogating the masculinist culture of settler colonialism, its hegemonic structures, norms, and institutions.

In *The Story of a New Zealand River* Mander takes the New Zealand novel into the private sphere of the family home and examines not only marital and familial relations, but also extra-marital relationships and pre-marital sex.<sup>3</sup> She opens up a discourse of what a ‘family’ may mean and represent, from a predominantly female perspective, and without a “pink china dove stuck on top” (1938, 21) to quote Robin Hyde’s phrase to describe Mander’s “classic realism” (ibid.). In these areas particularly, Mander explores new ground in New Zealand literature, and is the forerunner of women writers who begin to deal with sexuality with greater frankness and honesty. *The Story of a New Zealand River* represents a watershed between the earlier settler women’s non-fictional narratives, journals and diaries about life in colonial New Zealand, and the emergence of fiction as the site of a more critical focus on women’s subjectivity and their experiences of life and family in the settler colony.

The novel represents a movement away from the dominant masculinist narrative which valorizes the settler colonial family as an institution to ‘settle,’ colonize, and populate the ‘empty’ land, and in which the husband ‘tames’ the land and his wife is the homemaker and carer of his children. It presents a counter-narrative that explores what was going on in the silences and elisions of the narratives of the settler woman’s stoicism, endurance and toil as her husband’s “colonial helpmeet” (Dalziel 1977; 2001, 185). Raewyn Dalziel observes that, “Much as a middle-class wife was necessary in England as ornament, status symbol and angel in the house, she was infinitely more necessary in the colony because she was useful” (188). She writes that for many women, “[t]he colonial environment opened new doors. It gave, within the context of an accepted role, a sense of purpose, a feeling of usefulness and a greater degree of independence than the women migrants had experienced before” (187). Mander, however, depicts Alice as psychologically and emotionally unable to take advantage of the fresh beginnings that geographical distance from Victorian England, the “colonial environment,” and marriage to Roland present.

Through the frame of family, Mander interrogates the causal links between Alice’s personal trauma and the wider social context of settler colonial New Zealand, and critiques the ways in which the social and cultural structures and norms of settler colonialism create and/or compound familial trauma. The narrative strategy of locating

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<sup>3</sup> For discussion of Mander’s treatment of sex in her fiction and the reception in New Zealand of *The Story of a New Zealand River*, see Alan Mulgan 1962, 84; Patrick Evans 1990, 68; Lawrence Jones 1991, 124; Kim Worthington 1998, 334; Rae McGregor 1998, 73-78; and Mary Paul 1999, 86-88. See also Mander’s response to critics who called her “sex-obsessed” in “The Author’s Reply to Critics,” *Auckland Star*, 9 February, 1924.

the action of the plot, and the manifestation of Alice's traumatization, in New Zealand functions to place emphasis on settler colonialism, and on the impact of its effects on women in familial situations. Mander's depiction of the settler colonial family as a site of trauma in *The Story of a New Zealand River*, her delineation of Alice as a traumatized woman through the events and circumstances which cause psychic harm, represent a new direction in New Zealand literature. The point-of-view in the novel is predominantly that of Alice, which is often narratively opposed to that of her daughter Asia and all she represents about independence and equality for women. Through her subjectivity as a traumatized woman and her increasing self-reflexivity, Alice gains an understanding of the present in relation to the past and insight into the ways the past has damaged her.

Mander's treatment of the patriarchal family subverts the model of blood and contract that nineteenth-century settler colonists brought with them from Great Britain by exposing the traumatic effect that familial relations of power have on Alice. She interrogates the conventional notions of 'family,' predicated on blood and contract, and 'identity,' constituted by its relationships within the family. As expressed by Gillian Whitlock, "the domestic subject is articulated through the couple and the family, through an interdependent rather than an individualist understanding of identity and subjectivity" (2000, 42). In the settler colonial family Mander found the central metaphor for what she wanted to express about sexuality, independence, and liberation from imbalanced power relations, from a female gendered perspective, and a vehicle for opening up a discourse which challenges conventional articulations of the term 'family' to include the possibility of its reconceptualization and re-negotiation.

Just what her new home in the bush signifies to Alice is evident in her fearful reaction to "its appalling isolation" (2007, 16). As the punt draws closer to the cottage, the landscape<sup>4</sup> changes from one of riotously colourful vegetation to the desolation of "denuded kauri trees [...], standing alone like giant spectres, [holding] up their bleached heads imploringly to the sky" (ibid.). "Spectres" is suggestive of something from the past haunting the present. The river and the hills are now described as "one of the gateways to the land of the lost" (16); there is a "terribly lonely silence" (15) and winds that sigh "over dead men's bones" (15). The changed landscape functions as a representational medium to convey Alice's emotions of spatial, cultural and psychic

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<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the role of landscape in Mander's novel, see Lydia Wevers, "A Story of Land: Narrating Landscape in Some Early New Zealand Writers or: Not The Story of a New Zealand River," 1994, 1-11.

unsettlement and dislocation: “Every mile of it meant a mile farther from even such limited civilization as she had just left behind. [...] For the last fortnight she had been alternately shirking it and facing it. Each day had further intensified her fear. [...] Bruce saw the expression on her face. [...] [H]e realized she was horribly afraid” (16). He notices too Alice’s fearful glance at the Māori settlements along the river, and assures her that the Māori are “quite harmless” (18). His emasculating dismissal reflects the European colonist’s dominant position of colonial occupancy towards a supposedly vanquished race.

Mander’s depiction of Māori in the text reflects the symptomatic gap, the silence and the absence of consciousness about Māori in the novels by early New Zealand women writers that is noted by Aorewa McLeod. Other than a stereotypical reference to a group of Māori on the steamer who laugh and chatter “with their native philosophic indifference to the turns of fortune that is the despair of the envious white man” (288), subtextually implying that the expropriation of their land was to them a matter of insouciant indifference, references to the Māori relate to archaeological evidence of an earlier Māori presence through bones, shells and greenstone found in a cave (128), a Māori pit and remains of an old fortification (148), and a cave discovered in the bush (440). The name of the river, Otamatea, also indicates prior Māori presence and naming. Through such references Mander acknowledges centuries of Māori history and occupation, but fails to write about the indigenous other, even though she grew up and lived in areas of Northland where the Māori population was high (Turner 1972, 57). McLeod observes, “Reading Grossmann, Mander and Escott from the post-colonial perspective of the 1990s, the Maori, the indigenous ‘other,’ is everywhere absent,” and notes that the absence “confirms Gayatri Spivak’s suggestion that the articulation of the female subject within the emerging norm of feminist individualism during the age of imperialism necessarily excluded the native female”<sup>5</sup> (1998, 73). Alice’s position in the text reflects the conflicted position of the European woman in the colonies, occupying the dominant position of race and the subordinate one of gender.<sup>6</sup> McLeod suggests that it was complicity in the dominant position of race that led to the gaps in novels by colonial women novelists unable to confront what they could not write about (74). The proximity of the Māori settlements to her isolated future home evokes fear in Alice, but

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<sup>5</sup> Gayatri Spivak, “Three women’s texts and a critique of Imperialism,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1985), 243-246.

<sup>6</sup> See Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire* (1993), Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 12.

no wish to engage with the lot of Māori women and their children (some of whom presumably attend the local school that she considers not good enough for Asia). The dominant position of race, overriding the subordinate one of gender, is suggested in Alice's lack of contact with or reference to Māori.

The fearful isolation that Alice experiences in her encounter with the landscape functions as a signifier of her subjectivity and her dread of isolation with Roland, the resumption of marital relations, and more children. As the punt draws closer to her future home and reunion with Roland, her sense of isolation and apprehensive knowledge of what the future holds increase when she sees the "hills and gullies, hills and gullies without end" (2007, 22). Doreen D'Cruz and John Ross describe social exile signified by isolation as "a sense of a disturbing rupture with the immediate environment. Place thus becomes identified with an uncanny otherness, which may be the figurative projection of a self whose frames of reference are undergoing collapse" (2011, 3-4). The landscape evokes the British settler's experience of non-belonging in an alien environment and of a disorienting rupture from 'home.' As a settler subject, Alice's subjective isolation in the landscape accords with that of the social exile, and the experience of 'not-at-home-ness' in an uncanny landscape. Her response to her future home signifies her social, cultural, emotional and psychological dislocation: "It all looked just about as hopeless and as near the end of everything as it could" (2007, 24).

Her mounting sense of dread which the ghost-like kauri trees signal is intensified by the glimpse of two crosses marking unknown graves. The signs of a solitary dwelling give her some relief from her fear of the resumption of marital relations with Roland: "Alice thought of babies to come, the worst nightmare of this future life, and thanked God from the depths of her orthodox soul for that clump of pines and that suggestion of home and neighbour" (22). D'Cruz and Ross describe such an encounter with an alien, inhospitable landscape as the "encounter between a more or less isolated subject and a daunting landscape bereft of cultural meaning or the imprinted recognition afforded by historical memory" (2011, 1). For Alice, an Englishwoman, with inherited inscriptions about nature and landscape, the New Zealand bush has no social or symbolic meaning. Her sense of isolation operates on more than one level; isolation in a remote physical location with its implications of hardship and risks for a woman with young children, fearful of the prospect of future pregnancies; isolation as a subjective experience of loneliness in the external world, and in her loveless marriage with Roland; and isolation

in an alien environment heightening her feelings of cultural dislocation and displacement, of non-belonging in a colonial setting.

Mander's location of an isolated setting is deliberate. As Joan Stevens observes, "it is vital to the inner experience which she attempts to express" (1966, 37). It is under the psychic duress of isolation in its multiple significations that the symptoms of Alice's traumatization become manifest. The isolation that Alice experiences brings to the surface the delayed and unresolved effects of events in the past that have up until now lain dormant. Their latency,<sup>7</sup> and Alice's apperception of their harm, become apparent in her isolated subject position. D'Cruz and Ross in their discussion of the topos of isolation in New Zealand literary fiction extend its signification to include its function as a "critical location" (2011, 259), observing that "[i]solation has [...] a productive dimension, and not simply an exilic one" (xviii). In a landscape that offers her no cultural or historic referents, and in which she experiences the repetitive returns of past events and traumatic memories, Alice begins the recuperative process of interrogating the past. As part of that process of self-examination, Alice is drawn to threshold spaces to contemplate the river and its surrounding landscape. Her gaze is essentially an introspective one of self-examination. In their reading of Katherine Mansfield's "The Woman at the Store" (1912), D'Cruz and Ross see in the woman "the birth of an embryonic subjectivity that belies her otherwise objectified status" (2011, 29), and "female isolation as coterminous with the articulation of a nascent female subjectivity" (ibid.). The "appalling isolation" that Alice enters with such trepidation can be read also as the productive ground of her emergent subjectivity as she confronts the irruptive surfacing of the past in the present.

Isolation in the bush accentuates Alice's rupture from 'home' (England), and "the world that lay so far away, the familiar ways of living, the things she knew and wanted, the kinds of people who mattered to her" (2007, 29). The trope of the genteel European woman's degradation in the colonies is evident in Alice's inscription of the woman living in the dwelling she sighted as "some impossible, rough, farmhouse drudge" (22), and, after one week in the cottage, in her fears for herself: "Thinking herself the only white woman of her type who could ever have met so awful a fate, she had inwardly raged [...], anticipating her own degeneration" (41). For an Englishwoman of Alice's

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<sup>7</sup> In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Caruth discusses Freud's use of the term 'latency' in connection with the train accident from which a person walks away, "apparently unharmed" (17). Freud uses the term to describe the "incubation period" (ibid.), the lapse of time between the accident and the first appearance of symptoms (16).

social class and education, the sight of the interior of the makeshift cottage with only two finished rooms, and a kitchen at the back and a bedroom for Asia, is a “tragic moment” (24), while Roland’s unrefined table manners at their first meal in the cottage, in marked contrast to those of Bruce, increase her discomfort over her realization that Bruce, an Englishman, is of the same social class as herself.

The notion of class in settler colonial New Zealand, which was premised on offering settlers the possibility of a better life and opportunities to get on and improve themselves, was complicated by the diverse backgrounds of the settlers themselves, who brought with them attitudes towards class as divergent as their own backgrounds and who were as attuned to class markers in the colony as they were in the ‘home country.’ Among the men in Roland’s bush camp and timber-mill there are “English university men bunked next to the colonial-born sons of pioneer traders” (84). Bruce is an English university man. He trained as a surgeon, and emigrated to New Zealand after a love affair with an older, married woman ended badly. Under the influence of alcohol, he failed to administer medical attention to her husband, with fatal consequences, and the woman subsequently broke off their liaison. He chose not to become registered as a doctor in New Zealand, and spent some time digging gum before meeting Roland when he piloted him to the kauri forest at Pukekaroro. An alcoholic, he is recovering from one of his lapses when he meets Alice for the first time to row her up the river. In his disheveled, unshaven state, Alice resents being formally introduced to him by the Hardings as if he were an equal; she looks on him, mistakenly, as Roland’s servant. When she sees him later, shaven and wearing a suit “that still bore the stamp of a tailored past” (26), and with the physical effects of a hangover erased by a day in the fresh air, she sees at once that he is not the “pariah” (11) she had judged him to be.

The dwelling Alice saw on her journey up the river contains another surprise for her; its owner is the elderly upper-class English gentlewoman, Mrs. Brayton, who emigrated with her only son as he wanted to farm in New Zealand. During the visit she pays to greet Alice, Mrs. Brayton tells her that Bruce is a gentleman who plays the violin and reads Voltaire, and to remember that she has an Englishwoman and an Englishman (Bruce) to “see [her] through” (43). It is a remark that reflects Mrs. Brayton’s intuitive awareness of the difficulties ahead for Alice in her new surroundings, and her knowledge of Roland’s “skirmishes with other women” (44). Bruce and Mrs. Brayton become mediating figures for Alice, able to intercede between her and Asia, helping and advising each of them, encouraging Alice to see Roland’s good qualities, and

supporting her as her health deteriorates from miscarriages, stillbirths, and the birth of two more children.

Alice's sexual submissiveness to her husband whose demands for sex she never refuses is imbricated with her guilt over her deception, and the lie she told him about being a widow, her fear of being found out, and her enculturation in the belief that the marriage contract makes the wife the sexual property of her husband. Her revulsion at sexual intimacy with Roland is apparent the first night she spends in her new home when he calls out to her, "Come to bed" (30):

She clenched her hands. She had been away from him for a month. She knew he had been thinking all afternoon of this hour. She knew that he would not consider the fact that she was tired to death. She knew he would simply feel injured because her vitality was not equal to his own. And she knew that if, later on, the children woke up and cried she would have to get up and look after them, and that he would blame her for the disturbance. In his eyes she would not be equal to her job. She gave one hopeless look, like that of a trapped creature, round the mountains, the bush and the river. Then she went in. (ibid.)

Roland expects the wife he married for the social class and gentility she represents to adapt seamlessly to life in an unfinished cottage in remote bush. As patriarch of the family, he exhibits the expectation, even in such altered material circumstances from the Victorian upper-middle-class domestic order in England, that his wife will take charge of the domestic sphere, and conform to and cope with the mandates of the capable settler colonial wife and mother. His lack of consideration for Alice's feelings displays a patriarchal sense of entitlement that his wife will submit to his sexual demands. As a settler woman, Alice is constituted in her identities as a wife and mother. She sees her life circumscribed by "living with Tom Roland and having his children" (197), and her future as one of "self-suppression save in so far as she could grow again in her children" (74).

Man's physicality as symbolic of social domination of woman is figured in the scene where Alice watches the felling of a magnificent kauri tree. The scene draws a parallel between the brutality of man's desecration and possession of the land and, through the implied gendering of the tree, his domination and oppression of woman. The tree imagery operates to convey Alice's helplessness, and the pain of her physical and

psychic deracination. The anthropomorphosis of the tree, conveyed by the verbs ‘shiver,’ ‘hesitate,’ ‘realize,’ ‘plunge forward,’ and the emotional timbre of ‘crack,’ ‘tear’ and ‘rip’ (65) instantiate Alice’s “sense of her own helplessness” (ibid.) in her marriage and her awareness of her powerlessness to escape her settler woman subjecthood: “She looked round the clearing at the various evidences of that brute strength, and felt herself trapped into submission by it” (66). Alice is a *déracinée*, uprooted like the felled kauri with its “torn roots obtruding” (ibid.), facing the prospect of a future that offers her no hope of putting down roots in the colonies.

In the context of an alien and isolated environment in remote bush which offers her no known cultural “frames of reference,” the impact of the past events in Alice’s life become manifest in symptoms that fit the characteristics of trauma described by Caruth and other trauma scholars.<sup>8</sup> The isolation intensifies her feelings of entrapment in her marriage to Roland from which she can see no escape. When Alice finally breaks her silence about her past to Bruce, she tells him that ““it was just as bad as it could be when we came here. I did not see how I could live shut up with him”” (375). Her sense of being a “trapped creature” is heightened by the cramped interior of the cottage whose “walls seemed to be closing in upon her” (24).

Alice’s silence, and the ‘freezing’ that accompanies it whenever questions about her past, her first ‘husband,’ and Asia’s father are brought up, alert the reader to something in her past that is silenced, and to unhealed wounds and intrusive memories that haunt her. Her evasion of questions about the past becomes apparent in her conversations with Mrs. Brayton, who observes that “Alice froze at the approach of personal questions” (52). She notices too Alice’s “forbidding” (ibid.) tone to Asia when she mentions that she was born in Australia: “[Asia] knew by the look in her mother’s eye that she had broken one of the commandments” (ibid.). Mrs. Brayton describes Alice as an “iceberg” (37), which is a prescient observation given that so much of Alice is submerged, or suppressed. ‘Freezing’ functions as a symptomatic indication of linear time being disrupted; subjective time ‘frozen,’ as it were, because of associative thought processes which carry the mind back to unpleasurable past events or experiences.

Alice describes her feelings of helplessness and powerlessness to alter her situation as a “net drawn round her from which she could never escape” (75). In the words of Erikson, traumatized people live “against a numbed gray background of depression,

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<sup>8</sup> See Bessel Van der Kolk and Onno Van der Hart 1991, 431-432, 441-451; Judith Herman 1992; 2001, 33-50; Laurie Vickroy 2002, 11-13, 24; and Anne Whitehead 2004.1, 12-29.

feelings of helplessness, and a general closing off of the spirit, as the mind tries to insulate itself from further harm” (1995, 184). Alice submits to the marital sexual contract in her relationship with Roland, using the word “vitality” (2007, 126) euphemistically to describe Roland as sexually demanding. Her sexual submission, and her failure to resist Roland’s domination of her, reflect more than a socialized capitulation to the patriarchal construct of the wife’s subordination to her husband. It reveals her devalued sense of self, heightened by her feelings of helplessness in a remote location in the bush, and her guilt over her deception of Roland: ““I felt I had to be his [Roland’s] slave because I had deceived him – and I did want peace. But there was no peace. I got so little sleep, he was irritable, he hated crying children – and he was so awfully alive. He always dominated me. I grew so afraid of him”” (375). Her submission is inflected with self-punishment for her deceit, and with the shame of her illegitimate pregnancy whose “traumatic memory is treated as a solitary burden that needs to be expunged by acts of denial and resistance” (Erikson 1991, 458). Her acts of denial and resistance take the form of punishing her body, and trying to suppress the growing love and sexual attraction she feels for Bruce. She submits to the sexual inscription of her body by Roland, and also inscribes it herself through self-inflicted acts of denial.

Alice carries frugality to excess during a financial downturn in Roland’s timber-milling business when household economies have to be exercised, drawing the attention of the local storekeeper and Bruce who finds out from Asia that she and her mother have had only two meals a day for six weeks. Her punitive self-inscription of her body is exemplified also in her lifting of a heavy iron camp-oven<sup>9</sup> in the later stages of her third pregnancy to Roland. When Bruce discovers that she has been lifting it, he tells her that she could have asked for help from him or one of Roland’s employees (Roland is away on business at the time). She does not reveal to Bruce that she has been lifting it even when Roland is at home. Roland’s response when Bruce tells him that Alice should not have been lifting such a heavy object is to say that Alice should have asked him to lift it for her. The incident also functions to emphasize the continuation in the settler colony of the Victorian ideology of the separate spheres. Roland plays no part in helping his wife in the domestic sphere.

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<sup>9</sup> Dalziel singles out the camp oven for mention in her description of the household work of colonial women: “The ubiquitous camp oven was a heavy iron box placed over an open fire” (2001,188).

The haunting power of traumatic memory and the disjunction of temporality by the “irruption of one time into another” (Whitehead 2004.1, 6) are instantiated in Alice’s “one frenzied shriek” (2007, 94) and her immediate collapse at the sight of a man in the kitchen yard of the cottage. In the man’s shadow, she sees a spectral Other from the past looming out towards her. In the words of Anne Whitehead, the spectral or ghostly “represents the haunting of the individual by an image or event and testifies to the profoundly unresolved nature of the past” (2004.2, 131). Alice’s habituated self-punishment is evident in her refusal of Bruce’s offer to look after a large sum of money Roland has ill-advisedly left in the house, in her care, while he is away for several days on business. Bruce, out of concern for Alice in her advanced state of pregnancy and fearing that the house may be burgled, has been keeping watch each night, unbeknown to Alice. In a wrought-up state and sensing there is someone about, Alice pulls up the blind to look outside, and sees the crouched figure of a man in the dark. In the man’s shadow, she sees a spectral Other from the past looming out towards her. Hearing her shriek, Bruce rushes into the house and carries her “contorted body” (2007, 94) into her room, where he delivers her stillborn child.

The impact of Alice’s discovery that it was Bruce who delivered her baby, unattended by a midwife or female friend or neighbour, reveals more than a puritanical reaction or “paralysing prudishness” (Wevers 1980, 249). Her “misery” (117) over the discovery is not solely because a man “had done for her such supremely intimate things” (2007, 119); it is because it was a particular man to whom she is sexually and emotionally attracted, conflicting with the thought that he had delivered the baby. For a week after giving birth, Alice “hover[s] between life and death” (99). After she is sufficiently recovered, Bruce withdraws, leaving her care to Dorrie Harding and Mrs. Brayton: “Alice was appalled to find out how much she wanted to see him” (107). It is only when Bruce, Dorrie Harding and Mrs. Brayton judge that she is sufficiently recovered to withstand such “a large dose of life” (101) that Mrs. Brayton tells her that it was Bruce who delivered her baby: “She [Alice] wondered if she would ever be able to think again. [...] She felt as if the sap had been bled out of her, leaving only a physical shell that ached because of the void inside” (117). Fear, and the knowledge that she had longed to see Bruce, play a large part in her conflicted emotions: “She knew that if he ever grew to care for her and told her so she would be helpless against any advances he might make” (122). The past had taught her the result of her “impulses” (121).

The conflicted nature of Alice's subjectivity is evident in her psychological and emotional struggle with the values and proscriptions of puritanism that oppressed her as a child and young woman, and in which she was socialized, and her innate capacity for passion, which finds its expression in music: "When she had finished Alice sat looking helplessly at the keys [of the piano]. She knew she had revealed capacity for feeling, and she wondered why she hated having people know how she felt" (55). She remembers how, at Asia's age, "she herself had been a clod to be moulded as her elders pleased. She had never doubted the things she had been told. She had never heard any other point of view; she had been too carefully sheltered" (150). Her early inculcation in puritanism, freighted with guilt and shame over her sexual transgression, conflicts with her struggles to suppress her inherently passionate nature. When Mrs. Brayton asks her if she is a Puritan, the tone of Alice's voice and her reply express her doubtfulness: "I'm afraid I am, rather" (42). The puritanism of her upbringing inflects her belief that she has sinned and her conviction that the pain she is suffering is a deserved punishment for that sin. She distrusts her impulses, which in her case amounts to fear, as she has been their victim: "She could not understand why anyone who hated them as much as she did should have them so violently. She had been taught and she still believed that impulses were monstrous inventions of evil to be fought and suppressed. Her own experiences had taught her their terrible results" (75). Her puritanical sense of guilt and shame over her sexual transgression becomes powerfully imbricated with the trauma of the consequences of that transgression.

Alice inflicts and reenacts on the body of Asia, "in disguised form" (Herman 1992; 2001, 40), the unassimilated trauma of her own past sexual transgression. A flashback or break in "the mind's experience of time" (Caruth 1996, 61) occurs when Asia is late home from an afternoon spent with a local boy, the son of the Kaiwaka storeman. The flashback's disruption of linear temporality represents a traumatized subjectivity's psychological possession by an intrusive memory from the past. Alice fears that Asia's friendship with a boy will lead to early sexual experimentation and the spectre of illegitimate pregnancy, and she enacts her pent-up fury, and fear, on Asia's body when she returns, "eyes aflame" (2007, 128), from her afternoon exploring a cave where they find "Maori shells and bones, and [a] beautiful bit of greenstone" (ibid.), the words tumbling out of her in her excitement. Alice is horrified that Asia has been in the bush with "Reggie Broad [...] a coarse, rough boy [...]. Alice realized his type" (ibid). Alice beats Asia with a strap, emotionally "thoroughly unstrung" (ibid.), and crying out:

“‘You wicked girl [...]. How could you go away like that with that boy? You must never speak to him again. Do you hear me – you are never to talk to boys or go anywhere with them. I must make you remember it’” (129).

It is only much later in the novel that the emotional and physical excessiveness of Alice’s response to Asia’s afternoon of innocent outdoor adventures with a boy is contextualized. Alice tells Bruce that her father would not let her see men; that when she met Asia’s father, he forbade him to call, and she then had assignations with her lover “‘on the sly’” (373). Some of the harsh and wounding words Alice uses possibly echo what her father said to her when he forbade her from seeing men and when he learned she was pregnant. The physical wound Alice inflicts on Asia reflects her own psychic and emotional wound, and, through the irruption of one time into another, the beating instantiates “the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits” (Caruth 1995, 5). At that moment, Asia is the embodiment of her own sexual transgression, and Alice reenacts the psychic wound in the physical action of beating.

Alice and Asia’s mother/daughter dyad involves the transference/exchange of pain and wounding between them. When Asia tells her mother a lie that she is going away for a few days to help in a household where there is sickness, Alice already knows from Bruce that Asia plans to begin an affair with a visiting Australian; Alice is, however, unsure of whether the affair has begun until Asia tells her she did some cooking for her that morning in preparation of her absence: “‘Then Alice saw. She ran the needle into her finger, and leaned down while she put it in her mouth. Prepared though she thought she would be to meet the trial when it came, she felt a rush of pain through her body’” (2007, 400). Pain running through her body signifies more than a painful prick to the finger by a needle. The physical wound instantiates the psychic wound that Asia inflicts on her mother, and operates in parallel to the physical wound that Alice inflicts on Asia when she beats her.

Alice’s body is subject to multiple inscriptions throughout the novel, “pointing to unhealed wounds that linger in and on the body” (Vickroy 2002, 167). As Laurie Vickroy expresses it, “an anguished sense of the past [...] lived in the body and [the body’s] indirect telling of it can be the most faithful rendition of traumatic history” (170). The effects of trauma are reified in the bodily violations and wounds that Alice experiences. Her body is an object of surveillance through her father’s strict patriarchal control while she is growing up in England. When she transgresses the moral and sexual boundaries proscribed for a young, unmarried girl of her class, she is banished by her

family, exemplifying that “[t]he control of women’s assertiveness and independence through a regulation of her sexuality is an acknowledged method of the exercise of patriarchal power” (Thapan 2009, 124). Her body is sexually exploited by a man who deserts her. She goes through her first childbirth at eighteen years of age in Sydney without familial support, and suffers the humiliating social inscription of assuming the outward manifestations of widowhood in order to live a lie, exchanging her body to give Asia a legal surname, and for material security. To Roland, she is a ‘trophy wife,’ the embodiment of her class, culture and nation. He sees all three inscribed on her body, and marries her for the prestige they will confer indirectly on him. She suffers the sexual inscriptions of continual pregnancies to Roland which include four live births, miscarriages, and stillbirths, and which contribute to the physical inscription of ill-health on her body from his sexual demands:

She became more and more nauseated by the terrible vitality of her husband. It was being stimulated this very day, she knew, by the sportive widow who had recently bought the Hakaru pub. [...] She had married knowing she would have children, that it was her duty to have them, that God approved of large families, that she ought to love and welcome all her children, and that she ought to feel a renewed exaltation in the knowledge that another was to come. But now she did not feel any of these things. She felt only a dumb rage, a sick helplessness, a fierce rebellion. (126)

Following the birth of two more children, Alice increasingly leaves the management of the household to Asia, allows herself to be waited upon by her, and rests during the day. Unbeknown to Alice, after she gives birth to another dead baby, Bruce speaks to Roland, in his capacity as her doctor and medical adviser, and advises him to cease marital relations because of the risk to Alice’s health from any further pregnancies. Liberated from the marital sexual contract, and buoyed by Asia’s return from two years in Sydney to care for her while she convalesces from a hysterectomy, Alice starts to regain her physical health.

Mander critiques the trope of the sheltered Victorian middle-class daughter by depicting Alice’s upbringing as so sheltered that it leads to disastrous results, and by portraying Asia, who resists Alice’s attempts to shelter her, as an independent, liberated young woman. Asia escapes “the steel ring” that Alice tries to place around her in the misguided belief that it will protect her daughter from the mistakes that she herself

made. After leaving home, Asia supports herself initially as pianist for a touring concert company, returning home only for short visits. During this particular visit she falls in love with Allen Ross, who is taking an extended break in a cottage near the Rolands with a fellow Australian. Ross is thirty years of age, a politician and a law student, and married to a woman who will not give him a divorce. Asia recognizes Ross from a political rally she attended in Sydney, at which Ross spoke, and knows he is married.

The relationship between Alice and Asia raises the possibility of the transmission of trauma from mother to daughter. In the words of Vickroy, “mother/daughter relations [are] an important locus of identity formation and perpetuation of traumatic legacies” (2002, 10). Alice repeats the mistakes of the past and tries to possess, control, and shelter Asia in the same way that her family in England dominated and sheltered her. She tells Asia not to ask other people questions and that she must come to her if she wants to know anything, saying that “it is the duty of children to believe what their parents tell them” (2007, 150). Her attempts to control Asia’s thoughts and relationships with other people reflect what Judith Herman calls the “dialectic of trauma” (1992; 2001, 47), whereby the traumatized person exhibits the characteristics of opposing psychological states or responses, “caught between [...] floods of intense, overwhelming feeling and arid states of no feeling at all, between irritable, impulsive action and complete inhibition of action” (ibid.). Alice frightens Asia with the vehemence of her questions about exactly what happened the night her first stillborn baby was born (Mrs. Brayton has not yet told Alice that Bruce delivered the baby). Asia’s nervous answers convince Alice that Bruce has instructed her not to reveal anything that might indicate his presence: “Alice realized that Asia was afraid of her, but she was not in a mood to think of her. She was fast getting to the borderland where accumulated anger becomes blind passion” (2007, 110). In a “frenzy of rage” (ibid.), she forbids Asia to speak to Bruce again. Asia’s defiance of that order shocks Alice and her belief in “her right and [...] power to dominate her own child” (ibid.).

The transmission of a traumatic legacy from mother to daughter is evident again in Alice’s reaction to hearing that people have been gossiping about her possible pregnancy in the local store. Asia overhears the chat that her mother is going to have another baby, and when she asks her mother if it is true, Alice reacts with a fury that frightens Asia: “You are going to make me ill. You are going to kill me if you go on like this. You must stop talking to anybody – anybody but Mr. Bruce. [...] I will not allow you to go anywhere” (151). Alice’s tears of shame and humiliation, the raised

pitch of her voice, and her clenched hands to stop herself from screaming in response to Asia's seemingly straightforward question are manifestations of the classical trauma symptoms of intrusion, hyperarousal, and explosive rage, which are at the other end of the symptomatic spectrum from numbing and constriction. Other people discussing her pregnancy in a public place functions as the "trigger" or associative condition that causes a return to past traumatic events (Vickroy 2002, 12). Alice knows that her sudden and unaccompanied departure from England, as an upper-middle-class daughter of the manse, elicited gossip about the reason among her family's social circle and the parish. She instructs Asia in future not to talk or listen to anyone in the store, silencing her protests: "You must do as I tell you" (2007, 152).

In an uncanny repetition of her own upbringing, Alice fails to educate her daughter about sex, exposing her to the same risk of ignorance that she herself experienced, and deprives her of the opportunities and skills that would equip her for an independent life, subconsciously perhaps in an attempt to tie Asia to home, and herself, as a docile and dutiful daughter. She shelters Asia by her unwillingness to send her to the local school, not wanting her to mix with the local children whom she considers not "good enough for her child to associate with" (167). When Bruce learns that Asia is only being taught spasmodically by Alice, and the subjects are limited to reading and piano tuition, he protests, tells her that such an education is not sufficient to prepare Asia for life and work in New Zealand, and offers to teach Asia a wider range of subjects. It is Mrs. Brayton who gives Asia books on sex and biology, not her mother. At eighteen years of age, when Asia tells her mother that she is leaving home, she insists, "I want to earn my own living. I want to see the world [...] I must go. I can't be a parasite – I just can't" (248-249). At the word "parasite," Alice blushes with "a flood of shame" suffusing her face. It is a word she herself uses when she tells Bruce that Asia was born illegitimately: "I had belonged to a family that made parasites of its women. No woman in it had ever earned her own living" (374). Alice is, in a sense, repeating the sins of the past in making a parasite of her own daughter by depriving her of the opportunity to go to school, and limiting the breadth of her education. Before she leaves home to begin an independent life, Asia acknowledges her debt to Mrs. Brayton, and Bruce, for all they, not her mother, have taught her: "You have made me – you and Uncle David" (262).

Mander addresses the issue of parents who control the lives of their daughters in her article "Sheltered Daughters," and who 'educate' them for "dependence, not for self-

reliance; for weakness, not for strength” (1916, 194), and to be either dutiful and virtuous wives or self-sacrificial spinsters who never leave the family home. Mander critiques the “woman-as-property idea” (ibid.), which she links with marriage: “The various grades of “Society” in city and village still regard marriage to money and position as the be-all and end-all of life for their women, and to that end daughters must be bred in the manner desired by the men of their set” (ibid.). She includes herself among those who live outside the “steel ring” that surround the *débutante*, and observes that while “[t]hose of us who live outside this steel ring are inclined to question her powerlessness, to scorn her for her parasitism” (ibid.), she is more to be pitied because of her upbringing to do what her parents and society expect, and “her inability to have real choice” (ibid.). Just how much this article is written out of Mander’s personal experience<sup>10</sup> and conviction is revealed in the wound she describes as being inflicted on the people one loves, and on oneself, in establishing “the right to be self-reliant, to get out and challenge the world.” She writes: “It is a terrible thing to have to wound the people one loves. Those of us who have gone through it in the fight for personal freedom never quite get over it” (195). Asia knows that, in leaving home and forging a separate identity, she wounds her mother and also herself through the wound of separate/d identity, of failure or loss of ‘relation.’ Both are damaged by the severing/severance of a possessive, controlling mother/daughter relationship.

Asia’s clearheadedness about not wanting to be a parasite is born in the “grim crucible” (2007, 437) of her mother’s experience. From a young age Asia is aware of the dysfunctionality of Alice’s marriage, and her suffering in her sexual relations with Roland: “[Alice] never knew how many nights the child sat up in bed, wretched beyond description at the sounds of Roland’s sleeplessness. She had no idea how much she saw and heard” (196). Asia’s experiences in the Roland family home and of her mother’s suffering lead to her conflicted feelings of protectiveness towards her mother and a dread of ‘reliving’ her mother’s experiences in a similar marriage, or of being emotionally trapped into staying at home to care for her mother and manage Roland and the household for her. She knows she has to escape the family home, and the roles prescribed for her, in order to claim an authoritative, independent identity.

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<sup>10</sup> Mander left New Zealand in 1912 to study at the School of Journalism at Columbia University, New York, and spent the next twenty years living abroad before returning in 1932 to see her terminally ill mother, who died before she reached New Zealand. Mander, who never married, remained in New Zealand to care for her widowed father (see Turner’s *Jane Mander*, 1972). Her last novel was published in 1928.

The arguments Alice uses to try and dissuade Asia from leaving home reveal the rawness of the wound she herself received at eighteen years of age, and her fears that Asia will become the victim of a predatory male: ““You don’t know anything about life and men. You don’t know what girls have to put up with, especially when they – they look like you. You don’t know yourself, or how clever men can fool you, and lie to you. [...] You’ve lived a sheltered life here. You’ve had no chance to learn what men can be, or how you yourself can feel”” (250). Asia smiles to herself about her mother’s use of the word “sheltered,” thinking of the male caresses she has already rebuffed, and of which her mother knows nothing.

The “dialectic of trauma” and oppositional psychological symptoms to rage and hyperarousal are manifest in Alice’s numbness and constriction as she says goodbye to Asia. She is unable to meet Asia’s eye, and ignores her held-out hand. Alice’s “frozen limbs refused to move” (266) as she watches Asia board the sailing boat. Her frozen immobility reflects the altered or detached state of consciousness characteristic of the symptom of constriction or psychic numbing, and attests to the intrusive reliving of past events as though they are occurring in the present; the loss of her daughter and her departure by boat trigger memories of her own departure from England by ship into an unknown future, her loss of family, and the circumstances that led to her emigration. Caruth describes how “the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing” (1996, 63), governing a person’s life through the destructive repetition of trauma and the repeated suffering of ordinary events. Alice later tells Mrs. Brayton of her inability to raise her arm to wave goodbye to Asia: ““Feeling makes me blind. It does something to me – I don’t know what. I have been cruel to her and it is all my fault”” (274). Alice wounds herself again through inflicting on Asia the wound she experienced in the cold-blooded heartlessness of her own family’s severance from her.

Mander interrogates the constructs of the heteropatriarchal family based on blood and contract, in which relationships are constituted by their consanguinity, and their legality. Common to both constructs is a woman’s subordinate status in her natal family, and in her marital one, in Victorian England and settler colonial New Zealand. The warmth, strength, and the enduring quality of the affiliative bonds between the central characters undercuts the concepts of blood and contract. Alice looks upon Mrs. Brayton as a mother. To Asia and her siblings, Mrs. Brayton is ‘Granny.’ Asia asks Bruce if he would be her uncle, and thereafter he is ‘Uncle David.’ Within days of meeting Mrs. Brayton, Alice “loved the old lady with a passion born of years of longing

for some kindred spirit” (60). Her love is bound up with the early death of her mother and the lack of mother/child attachment bonding in her young life, just as Mrs. Brayton’s love for Alice is imbricated with the loss of her own daughter whom she sheltered and protected, but who defied her to run away from home to be with a man Mrs. Brayton considered not “rich enough or good enough” (273). Mrs. Brayton severed all links with her daughter during the “year of happiness” (ibid.) she and the man spent together, only seeing her again as she lay dying after giving birth to a baby: “I have seen her as she lay there every hour of my life since – ” (ibid.). The tragedy in Mrs. Brayton’s past, and her mistaken sheltering, and later shunning of her daughter, retrospectively decode the significance of the advice she gives to Alice on only their second meeting: “Don’t try to dominate that child [Asia]. Reactions from domination are inevitable. And they are very painful things” (54).

Bruce’s frequent location in the Roland family home subverts the role of the patriarch in the settler colonial family. Bruce wonders if Roland realizes “how much of an outsider he was in his own home” (212). During Alice’s convalescence after her first stillbirth, Roland is “only a cipher in the crisis” (102), relegated to live in the men’s kitchen and not permitted to see Alice until the third week. ‘Uncle David’ may be the way Asia refers to Bruce, but, increasingly, he begins to fulfill the role of a father figure within the family. The fatherly figure he presents is caring, patient and loving. Asia says to him, “Will you come and tuck me in?” (97). Exhausted as he is after delivering Alice’s stillborn baby, Bruce does just that, and waits to see her soundly asleep. Unlike Roland, he plays with the children, has time for them, listens and talks to them, and fixes and repairs things around the house. After Daisy, the house cow, drowns, Bruce and Alice are upset by Asia’s grief: “To help her they went out and began to clean up the yard and the garden, and there they all worked, keeping the children quiet and busy till it was time to have another picnic meal outside” (204). It is an image of family togetherness which is never evident, when Roland, the legal husband and head of the family, is present. Mander is not negating the importance of family; rather, she is affirming that affective intimacies between its constituent members supersede blood and contract as its more critical defining characteristics.

When Roland is in the family home, tension is in the air. He is impatient with the children, scolding them for crying, and demanding that his needs be attended to immediately. During the winter of storms when the booms on the river threaten to give way, releasing the logs destined for export, “he had used to the full what he supposed

was his right to work off steam on his family” (187-188). To Alice, he represents only a physical presence that she fears:

[O]thers had not had to feed him or sleep with him; while, for almost the whole of their married life, she had known him only as an irritable and irregular eater, a restless sleeper, and a man who had made their intimate relations merely a continuous performance of abruptly passionate acts. They had never read a book together. He did not like music. [...] His presence had always meant irritation, tenseness, uncertainty; his absence a blessed relief. (228-229)

In depicting the family home as more harmonious without Roland, Mander is not just undercutting filiative relationships by juxtaposing them with affiliative relationships, she is subverting contractual marital relationships as well by portraying Bruce as the better ‘husband’ to Alice.

Bruce provides the love, friendship, companionship, emotional and spiritual closeness that is lacking in Alice’s relationship with Roland. There are no affective intimacies between Alice and Roland other than the sexual act behind a closed bedroom door. There is never a gesture of intimacy like the one Bruce expresses, when he leans forward, taking Alice’s hands, and straightens a piece of lace on her throat that had been crumpled under her cloak (364). After the cessation of their marital relations, the marriage between Alice and Roland becomes one of mere rituals, “certain courtesies. She accompanied him to the gate when he left for more than a day or two, and came to the door to meet him on his return” (395-396). The relationship between Alice and Bruce represents a ‘marriage’ in all respects, other than sexual and legal.

Referencing the ideological sway of the patriarchal belief that a woman, on her marriage, becomes the property of her husband, Bruce looks upon Alice as the wife of another man. When Bruce and Alice acknowledge their love for each other, he tells her that he will not deceive her husband: “I cannot go on making love to you in any form here in Tom Roland’s house while I take Tom Roland’s money” (219). On the second of the two occasions when Alice visits Bruce’s shanty in the evening, Roland calls in to see Bruce on a matter of business, and finds them together: “It was the first time in all their experience that Roland had come upon them in anything like a compromising situation” (413). Bruce’s angry denial to Roland of sexual relations with Alice also focuses the salient relationship as that between men, positioning women as objects of

property and exchange between men. His assurance to Roland is as honest as it is revealing. He tells Roland that they have not been unfaithful to him “in the conventional sense” (413). Roland expresses his amazement, saying that he had believed them to be lovers ever since Bruce had spoken to him about Alice’s health and that he has deliberately given them opportunities to be together by staying away from home for long periods and always advising of his return. Roland’s incredulity sparks Bruce into expostulation: “Good God, man! [...]. I’ve been in a position of trust. What the devil do you mean by thinking I would abuse your confidence in that way?” (414). I explore the patriarchal concept of the wife as the property of her husband in greater detail in the next chapter on *The Butcher Shop* in which it forms a critical component in the central character’s identity construction and its subsequent fragmentation.

In Alice’s refusal of Roland’s offer of a divorce, Bruce recognizes that while psychic wounds may partially heal, they leave an indelible scar, which, like a physical scar, may break open again under certain conditions. He fears that if they live together, while she is still married to Roland, it may trigger trauma’s “referential return” (Caruth 1996, 7)<sup>11</sup> to originating events. Alice’s decision about the divorce is coloured by her deceit of Roland, her retributive and penitential submission to his wishes, and a puritanical recoil from scandal. When Roland offers them the possibility of living together, Alice puts the decision on to Bruce. Knowing the events of her past from the earlier scene in his shanty, Bruce tells her that he understands her decision: “I want you to understand now that I will not have you at any time as a sacrifice, as a compromise, as anything that is not spontaneous and happy. If you ever come to me you will come to me as Asia went to Ross, and in no other way” (423). He adds that she has time to think it over, and that he will go on loving her whatever she decides, but says he knows the outcome already: “You can’t do it” (424).

Alice herself is aware that the wounds of the past will never fully go away. Her deepening insight into herself, her recognition of the psychic harm wrought by the events and circumstances of the past and their damaging impact on her life do not equate to a full recovery from trauma, or the ‘disappearance’ of traumatic memories. In the words of Herman, “[r]esolution of the trauma is never final; recovery is never complete” (2001, 211). Herman’s observation is illustrated in Alice’s reaction to the

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<sup>11</sup> Caruth relates Paul de Man’s critical theory of reference, and the story of the falling body, to the theory of trauma and the locus of referentiality, writing that “the story of trauma is inescapably bound to a referential return” (1996, 7). Caruth sees the attestation of trauma’s “endless impact on a life” (ibid.) in the victim’s inability to escape from the referential force of an event or events through its/their belated return.

“blow” (2007, 377) of her discovery of Asia’s plans to follow Ross when he returns to Sydney:

She knew as well as [Bruce] did that her life had been a sacrifice and a waste, but she had known it for so long that the thought of it had ceased to rouse in her more than a dull despair. Lately she had sought to forget it, to shut it out of her consciousness, and she had succeeded even better than she had hoped until the present blow had revived it all for her. (376-377)

Alice examines herself as she reflects on Asia’s decision to begin her affair with Ross by going to live with him in the rented cottage; she recognizes her damaged self in her use of the word “maimed,” which occurs earlier in the text in the description of the “maimed” moth (377):

She saw that every one had lied to her and she saw why. She saw that every one had conspired to shield her and she saw why. She saw that because she had shut herself off from life, life had closed its gates to her. And she saw that she did not have to flee from life because life had maimed her, that she should have done as David Bruce had done, that she should have reached out to it, taken it with both hands and used it. (385-386)

At their first meeting after the evening in Bruce’s shanty, Bruce observes that Alice is torn by indecision over whether to live with him. He decides to help her settle it: “I told you then and I tell you again that I will never let you do anything with a doubt in your mind. I believe you will always have a doubt in your mind about living with me. That is the end of it for me. It must be the end of it for you, for uncertainty would put a strain on us at once” (431). Alice feels “overwhelmed by a passionate desire that he would carry her off and force her to do the thing she could have done in no other way” (ibid.), but realizes that “[i]t was a plunge she could not face” (ibid.): “Her heart cried out against the long lean years of hunger and suppression. It beat against the bars of training and tradition. But even while it raged it realized that it would succumb in the end to the something that chained it” (ibid.). Fettered and maimed by the past’s psychological and emotional hold on her in the present, Alice looks resignedly upon a “drab and colourless” (433) future, and the continuation of a platonic relationship with Bruce.

Her resignation is not tested; within days, in a *deus ex machina*, Roland is crushed to death by logs in a trucking accident. The brakes of the truck he is driving down the line fail, and he unloads the logs in order to save two children who, in their fright to get away, have fallen between the tramlines. Waiting in the house to hear the outcome of the accident, “a fierce excitement burned [Alice]” (442), while Asia’s reaction to her stepfather’s death is one of relief. She immediately thinks of the possibilities it will open up for her mother, the difference it will make to her home, and that her mother will be both rich and free. Four or five months after Roland’s death, Alice and Bruce travel down the river to Auckland where they will marry, and where Asia will embark on her journey to rejoin Ross in Sydney.

Asia embodies new possibilities for women with regard to the management of their own sexuality and to alternative constructs of family and home which are not predicated on the imbalanced power relations of the archetypal Victorian patriarchal family transplanted to settler colonial New Zealand. She is the ‘New Woman,’ not a settler colonial woman; she is mobile, sexually liberated, ‘at home’ in the metropolitan centre and remote bush settlements. She enlarges “the social and psychic meanings of spatial boundaries in relation to the family” (Davidoff et al. 1999, 83) through claiming an independent identity that contests the conventions and norms of settler colonial society. Asia accepts that the compromises of her relationship with a married man may not include children, and that she and Ross will not live together openly. Bruce alludes to shifting social attitudes: “As time goes on their friendship will be known and its possibilities suspected, but they will win the world to believe in their friendship, and to shut its eyes to what may happen between them in private” (2007, 365). Auckland, as Bruce points out, has couples who live as Asia and Ross plan to do.

Lydia Wevers contends that “Asia’s answer, to emigrate to Sydney with her unconventional solution, is not really satisfying. The pioneer woman who leaves is a tacit defeat, and while Asia feels it necessary to leave, it is the conventionality of the Alices, their puritanism and their society, that triumphs – not Asia’s freedom. Her society has rejected its own” (1980, 251; see also Atchison 2014, 239, 241-242). Read contrapuntally, however, Asia’s decision to follow Ross to Sydney represents an enlargement of sexual space and, by inference, of the constructs of family and home. Lee Wallace, writing in the context of New Zealand Cultural Studies, comments on the concept of space in relation to the discursive dominance of heterosexual marriage and the heteropatriarchal domestic sphere:

Cutting across a number of reinforcing discourses such as religion, romance and law, marriage is one of the most obvious ways in which heterosexual culture asserts its moral (and spatial) superiority over other sexual subcultures. [...] [S]exual legitimacy is frequently played out in spatial terms. The family home is considered the logical shelter for personal intimacy appropriately veiled against all public speculation. (2004, 76-77)

While acknowledging that Wallace's comments about the expansion of sexual space relate more specifically to homosexual space, I consider that the concept of expanding sexual space is also applicable to new reiterations of heterosexual space in the settler colonies, and to an interpretation of Asia's move to Sydney. Rather than a rejection, Asia's supposed 'flight,' or "exile" (Atchison 2014, 242) to Sydney can be read as an assertion of a woman's right to expand the boundaries of her cultural and sexual space beyond the private sphere, a statement of her right to a sexuality that is not solely confined to procreation within marriage, and an affirmation that 'family' is an historical and ideological construct subject to change and renegotiation.

Asia's character resists an interpretation of defeatism. From girlhood, she represents independence and agency. At one point, she is described as a "colossus" (2007, 291), referencing the Colossus of Rhodes, the giant statue of Helios, the Titan god of the sun. Built as a celebration of victory and freedom from an invading force, it straddled the harbour of Rhodes. The analogy conveys Asia's ability to move with ease between cultures and worlds without a sense of dislocation. Her name<sup>12</sup> denotes her special status in the novel; Alice's four other children do not have such exotic names. To Ross, the bearer of this symbolic name "looked like the Greek spirit incarnate" (297). Asia embodies hope for a future that allows for the possibility of "fresh beginnings" (478), new ways of thinking about family, and identities that are not constituted solely by their familial relationships.

Alice's decision to establish a maternity home for unmarried mothers in Auckland and a scheme to enable them to go to Australia where they can make a fresh start

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<sup>12</sup> In Greek mythology, the Oceanids are beautiful sea-nymphs. According to the Greek poet Hesiod, Asia is one of the Oceanids, along with Europa/Europe. Etymologically, 'Asia' is connected with the east, the rising sun, and 'Europa' with the west, the setting sun, just as the Latin origins of 'Orient' and 'Occidental' reflect 'rising' and 'setting' respectively. Mander may also have had in mind Shelley's play *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), in which Prometheus, after a long captivity, is reunited with his wife Asia. The play champions free will, hope, and idealism, and heralds the liberation of humankind.

reflects not only her own past experience and a wish to help other women in a similar situation, but an expansion of her agential space beyond the private domestic sphere. It also makes a spatial claim by bringing the issue of pregnant single women into the public domain, drawing attention to what has been silenced and hidden as a matter of private shame for the women and to the need to acknowledge and address the hypocrisies of the sexual double standard. Herman describes such social action by a victim of trauma as a “survivor mission” (2001, 207), whereby the victim becomes involved in transforming her traumatic experience into meaningful social action, which, at the same time, functions as a redemptive and recuperative process. Asia’s work in politics in Australia and Alice’s in social welfare represent a transnational engagement that exceeds the private domestic sphere, rather than a capitulation to the conventions.

The journey to Alice’s new life in Auckland begins with a river-journey, just as the novel did fifteen years ago. The name of the river is only mentioned in Chapter 20, which describes the arrival of Ross and Lynne, signifying that theirs is a different type of journey, not the metaphoric one of self-discovery and change that it is for Alice. Elsewhere in the text it is referred to as “the river,” which enhances its symbolic force. The most powerful metaphor in the novel is fluid and tidal, symbolic of the ebb and flow of Alice’s emotions as the novel progresses. Its tides signify flux, and the possibility of change, as Rae McGregor observes: “Jane Mander interweaves the ebb and flow of the river with the ebb and flow of Alice’s realization of herself” (1998, 124). Being tidal it connects with wider and more distant currents than the merely local. It signifies flux, the possibility of change, and is symbolic of entry and exit. Alice contemplates the river as she struggles with the puritan principles she was taught, and her attraction to Bruce: “The biggest cause of her uneasiness was that she had begun to question the verities. If you live beside a river sooner or later you have to. You can’t help sitting beside it, and listening to it, and watching the water go by. [...] And your thoughts run with it and change with it” (2007, 125). Its flowing water references the restorative powers of healing, and the possibility of renewal. Mander’s understanding of culture (and its multiple sites such as family, home and sexuality) as mutable and shifting is reflected in the novel’s central metaphor, the river.

The journey up the river takes her into a world she perceives as isolated, alien and hostile, and where her symptoms of traumatization become manifest in her settler woman subjecthood. She tells Bruce that everything hurts her (170), and that she does not know what is the matter with her (175). At the end of the novel, just before

Roland's death when Asia is preparing to leave for Auckland, Alice surprises Asia by her calm acceptance of her departure to be with Ross. Alice says simply, "I just see things differently" (437). One of the things she realizes, "with the force of a revelation" (229), is that she had wronged Roland more through marrying him than he had wronged her; he had hopes for their marriage, while she had doubted its success before it began. She encourages her two younger daughters to give up their jobs at the local school and to study at Auckland University. The processes of her reflection and critical engagement with the past, puritanism, and her upbringing in England are recuperative, unlike her earlier denial and suppression. They help her to understand the past, to integrate it into the "story" of her life, and to turn to the future.

By the end of the novel, when she travels down the river, Alice has gained in insight and understanding, and as she leaves, she looks with Bruce and Asia up the river: "They had forgotten the people, and were thinking of the place. [...] But they knew, even when the gap had cut it all out of sight, that they had not left the river and the hills behind them" (476, 478). The river and its surrounding hills function by way of prosopopoeia as teachers. Alice puts the thought into words: "I am bringing away all it has taught me" (477). The act of taking leave from the river does not free Alice from the trauma of her past. Through a recuperative process of self-reflexivity she is, however, able to attain self-awareness and insight into the ways her past has harmed her. It is in her liminal subject-position as an oppressed settler wife in a culture oppressive to women, looking out from the domestic sphere of the house in order to look in, that Alice gains the greatest insights into her damaged self and her subjectivity as a woman, and learns from those insights to incorporate all that the past has taught her into the continuing story of her life.

In the next chapter, I discuss Jean Devanny's *The Butcher Shop*. Both *The Story of a New Zealand River* and *The Butcher Shop* depict marriage as a property relation to women. Mander critiques the damaging sociocultural conditioning of "sheltered daughters" to marry and conform to parental and societal expectations of a dutiful and submissive wife. Devanny treats property-marriage more politically, viewing it through a socialist lens. She regards marriage as a Western capitalist institution designed to keep woman in bondage to the man. Both novels depict the man demonstrating deference to the husband and his property rights to his wife, positioning the woman first and foremost as an item of property.

Unlike Jane Mander who uses the physical isolation of a timber-felling enterprise as a productive site to explore the traumatized subjectivity of her central character and to articulate her increasing awareness of how the past has damaged her, Devanny locates trauma in relation to a large sheep-farming property and against a background of bloody violence. Devanny depicts the violence associated with the European invasion and settlement of New Zealand and the corruptive and brutalizing processes of the meat production industry as pervasive and destructive forces in the present that infiltrate and haunt the family home of the Messengers, impacting on the coherent functioning of Margaret's identity construction and contributing to the novel's dystopic conclusion. Mander's novel portrays the possibility of revisioning the construct of family, and of extending women's agential space beyond the domestic sphere, whereas *The Butcher Shop* depicts the destruction of the Messenger family through Margaret's psychic collapse, Barry Messenger's suicide and Margaret's murder of her lover.

## Chapter Two

### *The Butcher Shop* by Jean Devanny

#### **Bloody Violence down on the Farm – the Property-Wife and the Collapse of a Constructed Identity**

She saw him through a red haze. Yes, there he was, sticking up for the man, clinging to his own sex against the woman. Well, she would fix him. “Refused me, did he? She taunted. “Why, he came into my bed. He has been in my bed and I in his!” And now, utterly deranged, she flung her head back and laughed shrilly. She did not notice the man slink away from her with the hand of death writ large upon him.

JEAN DEVANNY  
*The Butcher Shop* (1926)

A man’s home is his castle; rarely is it understood that the same home may be a prison for women and children. In domestic captivity, physical barriers to escape are rare. In most homes, even the most oppressive, there are no bars on the windows, no barbed wire fences. Women and children are not ordinarily chained [...]. The barriers to escape are generally invisible. Children are rendered captive by their condition of dependency. Women are rendered captive by economic, social, psychological, and legal subordination, as well as by physical force.

JUDITH LEWIS HERMAN  
*Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1992; 2001)

Jean Devanny’s *The Butcher Shop* (1926) presents the traumatization of the central character, Margaret Messenger, which is occasioned by her self-realization that marriage is constitutive of male ownership of the female and that she is the property of her husband. The psychic fragmentation of her identification and self-image as the “Lady” of Maunganui Station is the result of her realization of her lack of an autonomous identity and agency as a property-wife. Margaret’s carefully constructed identity with its emphasis on her beauty, purity and cleanliness, her social position, and her awareness of being on a “pinnacle” (1926; 1981, 198) or “pedestal” (209), “renowned throughout the country for her mental and moral pulchritude” (199), is shattered in the final section of the novel. *The Butcher Shop* depicts the trajectory of Margaret’s socialization from girlhood towards marriage, the formation of her identity as a beautiful and revered “Lady” and adored wife of a wealthy man to the tragic conclusions of her realization that she is the object of patriarchal constructs, the property of her husband and that her identity is defined by her bondage within the

marital relationship. Devanny inflects the bloody violence resulting from the shattering of Margaret's identity construction with the violence of settler colonial history and the novel's agricultural setting, demonstrating that the "use of place as a site [...] shapes the protagonist's experience and perception of the world" (Balaev 2012, xi).

Setting is crucial to how trauma is manifested in the novel and to the way Devanny articulates Margaret's traumatization. Devanny situates the bloody violence resulting from the shattering of Margaret's identity construction and traumatization on a station haunted by the violence of settler colonial history and associated with the brutalizing nature of meat production. The predominant valence in Devanny's depiction of Maunganui Station is violence, both in its history and the bloody realities of animal slaughter. Erin Mercer describes the scenes of animal violence legitimized by colonial capitalism as "working to express a nightmarish version of a settler nation based on notions of the pastoral that is actually revealed to be defined by violence, death and decay" (2017, 51). Devanny not only subverts the myth of New Zealand as a pastoral paradise, she portrays the violence of the station's history as a pervasive, corrosive influence that surrounds, and then seeps into the heart of the family home, contributing to the novel's violent conclusion. Patrick Evans makes a connection between the brutalities of animal slaughter and its brutalizing impact on human behaviour in his discussion of the slaughter house trope in New Zealand literature, commenting that *The Butcher Shop* "draw[s] attention to the brutalizing effects of life on a farm" (1980, 78).

I contend that Devanny draws a connection between Margaret's traumatization and the violent setting in which it occurs. She depicts the settler colonial violence of the station's history and the brutalizing nature of its agricultural processes as feeding into, inflecting, and contributing to Margaret's traumatization, and uses the figurative potential of violence towards animals to signify trauma. The coarsening and brutalizing effects of Margaret's experiences of animal debasement and commodification on the station inflect her sense of victimhood as a property-wife and her debased self-image and self-identification with an animal, the property of its owner, impacting traumatogenically on her and leading her to commit an act of extreme violence herself.

Devanny's criticism of *The Butcher Shop* in *Point of Departure: The Autobiography of Jean Devanny* (1986; edited by Carole Ferrier) provides a point of entry to the comments of literary critics on the novel. Devanny describes it as "a terribly confused and foolish book; its meagre merit sincerity, frankness and a certain power of phrasing" (94). Critics position feminism and socialism, and a critique of puritanism, capitalism,

and property-marriage, as the novel's central themes (Stevens 1961; 1966, 39; Roberts 1981, 8, 13; Evans 1990, 126-127; Jones 1991, 137; Moffat 2000, 18; Mercer 2017, 54). Lawrence Jones also draws attention to "the discrepancy between aim and accomplishment" (1991, 138) in his criticism of excesses in Devanny's use of rhetorical and descriptive language (see also Stevens 1966, *ibid*; Evans 1990, 119). Mercer analyses the novel's heightened effects in relation to the use of the Gothic mode,<sup>1</sup> describing the novel as "essentially a Gothic fantasy about violence that is meted out on human as well as animal form" (2017, 57). None of the critics mentions settler colonial violence and its intersections with trauma, positions Margaret as a traumatized character or takes account of aspects of the novel which situate it as a trauma narrative and which add complexity to its strengths and weaknesses.

There are contradictions in the text which create ambivalences about where Devanny is positioning the argument about socialism and a woman's right to choose her sexual partners, irrespective of her marital status. A reading of Margaret as a likeable victim of social conditioning and patriarchy's rigidly scripted roles for women or as a blameless proto-feminist who exacts revenge for "the Margarets of the world" (1981, 224) through her murder of Angus Glengarry, her lover, declaring "Never again shall man claim property rights in me" (*ibid.*), is undercut by aspects of her portrayal which reveal her as a flawed character. She does not engage with improving the life of the workers on the station, or with the economic and social reality of what an independent life as a separated or divorced woman may mean. Her first encounters with the brutal facts of agricultural slaughter horrify her, but she continues to enjoy the comfort, wealth and status they provide, and opportunities for material display. Her awareness of her own beauty, and its impact on others, reveals a streak of vanity or narcissism in her character, encouraging her to regard herself as superior, while her marriage to Barry Messenger betrays a self-serving interest in the status that his wealth and property will confer upon her. It is Margaret's voice that speaks through the narratorial comment, urging her husband to appoint a station manager with no reflection evident on the entrenched wealth and class divide it expresses: "Of what use their wealth, if he were going to toil all his day like the veriest proletarian?" (91).

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<sup>1</sup> See Mercer's essay, "'Shot at and slashed and whacked: The Gothic Slaughterhouse in New Zealand Fiction'" (2017). She includes *The Butcher Shop* in her discussion about the Gothic mode in New Zealand fiction, referring to its "heightened" (53), "excessive qualities" (54) as pointing to "the heightened realm of the Gothic, which it uses [...] to convey the horrors of agricultural slaughter and the effects it has on those involved with it" (*ibid.*).

Devanny also depicts Margaret as being shaped towards a particular path in life. Her upbringing, and the prevailing ideology of a woman's function in life, socialize her towards marriage and the familial roles of wife and mother. In the popular romantic fiction of the era that Margaret reads, a woman's physical beauty is a 'passport' for her to marry a wealthy man above her social class and to perform an identity commensurate with both the patriarchally mandated, essentially domestic roles of wife and mother and the social identities of accomplished hostess and lady. Margaret's socialization, and her own idea of herself as being worthy of something 'better' in life, put her on a path that ends in tragedy. The fragility or performative nature of her socially constructed identity, and the role that patriarchal constructs play in its formation, is revealed in its collapse or disintegration like a house of cards.

Devanny portrays the interconnections in the prevailing patriarchal ideology that a woman is both subordinate to her husband and an 'Angel in the House,' revered for her chastity and moral virtue. The roles of wife and mother are patriarchally imposed identity constructs to define, and confine, women within heteropatriarchal marriage. The appellations of 'lady' and 'Angel in the House' are congruent or overlapping concepts. The 'Angel in the House' construct gave the wife an elevated position of moral authority and influence within the domestic sphere, venerated by her husband and family for her moral and spiritual purity. In fact, like wife and mother, it was a patriarchally imposed identity, predicated on the expectation of the wife's sexual chastity and exemplary behaviour. In raising a woman 'up' to the status of 'Angel,' in quasi compensation for her subordination to her husband in the asymmetrical power relations of a heteropatriarchal marriage, patriarchy sought to circumscribe her further by divesting her of sexual desires, just as the roles of wife and mother circumscribed her autonomy and agency. 'Lady' is another iteration of 'Angel in the House,' whereby a woman is placed on a pedestal, revered for her beauty and grace, but still expected to conform to patriarchal expectations of virtuous behaviour.

Socialized to become a wife and mother after marriage, Margaret is interpellated by all that is invoked in the concept of becoming the "Lady" of Maunganui Station. She is revered in all three identities, specifically by her husband, and everyone on the station. Her awareness of herself as exceptional, her wish-fulfilment of being a 'lady,' and her subsequent identity construction as the "Lady," following her marriage to a wealthy man, are enhanced by the pre-eminence of her position on a pedestal and invoke no apprehension of being the property of her husband. What that socialization means in

reality is forcibly brought home to her only when she falls in love with Glengarry, the station manager, and is awakened to sexual passion. She argues for her right to assert an independent identity against the dominant social expectations of wife, mother, and ‘lady,’ and to be a woman with sexual desires, free to express her love for a man not her husband. Her realization that Glengarry regards her as the property of her husband and is ashamed of their liaison, despite her efforts to persuade him otherwise, begins the destabilization of her identity by sensitizing her to the awareness that, in the eyes of patriarchal society, not just her lover and husband, she is first and foremost a wife, the property of her husband, and not the woman she claims to be with the right to an autonomous identity and the freedom to choose her sexual partners. Judith Herman’s observation about the alterations in identity in a traumatized subject are relevant to Margaret’s traumatization: “All the psychological structures of the self – the image of the body, the internalized images of others, and the values and ideals that lend a person a sense of coherence and purpose – have been invaded and systematically broken down” (1992; 2001, 93). Margaret’s own attachment to and particular investment in the idea of being the “Lady” of Maunganui Station establish the preconditions for the later shattering of her identity.

The arrival on the station of Messenger’s cousin, Miette Longstair, Margaret’s jealous suspicion that Glengarry is having an affair with Miette, and fear that he is no longer in love with herself, further undermine the cohesive functioning of her identity construction as wife, mother and the virtuous and widely revered “Lady,” which gives her the “sense of coherence and purpose” to which Herman refers. Margaret realizes that she is a woman, susceptible to sexual jealousy, and capable of deviousness in deliberately setting out to re-awaken the love that she believes Glengarry no longer feels for her. Her patriarchally and culturally imposed identities of wife and mother, and her own self-identification with the construct of the “Lady,” by which she was so early interpellated as a young girl and later as the adored and beautiful mistress of Maunganui Station, finally shatter when Glengarry tells her, after the last time they have sexual intercourse, that he will never lift his head up again and that he would sooner have died than have lost his self-control and violated her against her will:

And then and there there dropped from Margaret the desire to regain her pinnacle. [...] She looked around her room: so pretty and dainty a room she had, with its toilet accessories that kept her beautiful for her lord and master. She almost shrieked

aloud. She beat her breast. “My place is down in the stable or in the kennels with the dogs.” She laughed aloud, and her laughter was not good to hear.

(1981, 201-202)

Margaret realizes that she no longer wants to play the “Lady” of Maunganui Station. Her self-recognition as a woman includes her recognition that the patriarchal construct of ‘lady,’ like wife and mother, is a form of control designed to delimit her agency. Her passage from functioning effectively and in a coherent way as a wife and mother, and as the “Lady” of Maunganui Station, to a state of dysphoria where she is “alone with the fiends of hell” (222) reflects Herman’s observation on trauma as a tearing apart of “a complex system of self-protection that normally functions in an integrated fashion” (2001, 34).

To analyse Margaret’s traumatization, I examine Devanny’s use of the settler colonial setting of the station and its violent and traumatic history to contextualize and figure Margaret’s psychic collapse. The Messenger family’s possession of the station relies on a prior dispossession of its rightful Māori owners. *The Butcher Shop* portrays the settler colonial history of the station as revenant, which Anne Whitehead describes as a history “in which the present is overshadowed and haunted by the unresolved effects of the past” (2004.1, 15-16). Devanny depicts the transmissibility of trauma through the station’s history, the dispersed effects of events in the past, and the exacerbating dimension of the settler’s not-at-homeness on stolen land as subtending the tragedy that befalls the Messenger family. The station, haunted by the spirits of chiefs, becomes the site of further haunting through the traumatic events that take place at the end of the novel.

Devanny subverts the tropes of romantic narrative to portray how cultural, social, historical, and sexual forces, as well as psychological, are imbricated in trauma. The novel’s title is a multivalent signifier that adumbrates the violence that permeates the text, and operates as an objective correlative for the emotions evoked by the text’s unfolding narrative. The animals on the station function as signifiers of commodification, victimhood, and inferior (non-human) status, with the station becoming a metaphor for a male-dominated world in which women are positioned as the property of men. Through the violence evident in the motifs of cruelty and killing, the suffering and victimhood of animals, and in particular, in the links between their commodification and that of women (see Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 1990),

Devanny critiques repressive sociopolitical ideologies and cultural norms which have female disempowerment and subordination as their objective. Through her characterization of Messenger as an honourable man, and a devoted and loving husband, Devanny places the emphasis on the sociocultural norms and “the shackles of man-made laws” (1981, 65) that oppress women.

Joan Stevens draws attention to the cover design of the 1926 edition, commenting that the image of “a naked woman [...] bound to the earth by cords” (1966, 39) symbolizes the novel’s theme of “emotional feminism” (ibid.). The depiction of a woman in bondage<sup>2</sup> alludes to the links between the concept of patriarchal ownership of women and capitalism, and Devanny’s view of marriage and family as capitalist institutions which hold the woman in bondage to the man. The nakedness of the woman highlights her vulnerability to the external forces in society that butcher her, like a lamb for export.

A butcher shop on a station is the place where stock is killed for consumption by the owner’s family and employees, and to feed the working dogs. It was man’s work to kill stock in a station’s butcher shop, and butcher shops in towns and cities in the 1920s were predominantly male domains. Butcher/butchering signifies violence, killing, blood, death: a victim and a perpetrator; meat; commodification and consumption; the body; flesh; and fragmentation. In the discourse of sexuality, flesh is a powerful signifier for the erotic objectification of women, while meat is used to signify sexual abasement. Fragmentation is a term used in psychoanalytic discourse to denote the physical and/or psychic disorganization, the fragmentation of self, associated with traumatic experience. All of these valences apply to the novel with its title also serving as a metonymic marker of the forces in settler colonial society that “butcher”<sup>3</sup> the woman.

The pervasiveness of violence operates multivalently in the text. It encompasses disturbing, gratuitous acts of violence towards animals, as well as those sanctioned by farming practice. A key valence in Devanny’s use of animals to prefigure or instantiate impending trauma is the signification of women as consumable commodities through their shared status with animals as items of property. Carol Adams writes: “With the

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<sup>2</sup> The trope of a human figure held in bondage by ropes or chains is suggestive of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s dictum and challenge to the traditional order of society in *The Social Contract* (1762), “Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains.”

<sup>3</sup> In an interview of 4 June, 1926 that Devanny gave to the *New Zealand Times*, she said that she chose the title of *The Butcher Shop*, “[b]ecause the woman is butchered in life. [...] I have endeavoured to show the subjugation of women from ancient times” (quoted in Bill Pearson’s “The Banning of *The Butcher Shop*,” 1981, 228).

lens of feminist interpretation we can see that the animal's position in the story of meat is that of the woman's in patriarchal narrative: she is the object to be possessed" (1990, 94). The work of the station depicts violence legitimized in the name of profit with animals as victims powerless to resist their exploitation.

Violence is also shown to engender violence; Messenger responds with uncharacteristic physical violence to a shepherd, for his horrific torture of a sheep-dog. Instead of just dismissing him instantly, he first beats the man "to a pulp" (1981, 78) with his riding-whip. He stays away from docking on the station while his hands castrate the lambs with their teeth and fry the testicles to eat, but does not stop the practice. The callousness of the dockers as they "shout and call and laugh and swear while they wrestle with the terrified lambs" (184) calls to mind Evans's observation about George Chamier's depiction of life on a sheep station: "The violence of frontier life and the existence of a class of people created by and attuned to that violence, are insisted upon by Chamier as an unavoidable background to both his novels" (1980, 73). Margaret is repelled by a woman on a neighbouring farm who tells her that she used to breed cats to shoot for their skins, but at the behest of her husband, she stopped breeding them and now shoots wild cats, for days at a time, and skins them herself. The thought of a woman skinning cats and collecting their skins as a hobby sickens Margaret, as does her encounter with the tortured farm-dog. The narrator describes the episodes where Margaret experiences sanctioned and gratuitous violence towards animals as "leav[ing] a mark" (1981, 78) on her. "Mark" is open to the interpretation of an indelible psychic wound, signifying that Margaret's violent reactions and subsequent act of murder are fostered by the pervasive violence that surrounds her.

The positioning of animals as victims can be read as a metonymy for the subjection of women in marriage as the property of the male, as instantiations of the 'unhomely,' and as encoded, disturbing prefigurations with "traumatogenic significances" (Forster 2007, 279) of future violence. Greg Forster uses the term "retrodetermination" in connection with the persistent planting of details whose full significance is gained by the "retrodetermined revelation of a given scene's meaning" (ibid.). He describes such strategies as seeking to "induce a kind of signification trauma in the reader. [...] They work [...] to transmit a form of psychic disequilibrium 'directly' to the reader, rather than offering a merely cognitive knowledge of the traumas the book explores" (ibid). The scenes and imagery relating to animals cumulatively assume the form of a (belated)

revelation that retrogressively rewrites or “retrodetermines” their significance as traumatic markers.

Implements that can wound, cut, fragment, or kill form part of the violence that pervades the text. They include a jack knife, a shot gun, clippers, traps, shearing blades, a riding-whip, axes, a razor blade, and the teeth of rabbits and humans, while the frequent references to knitting and knitting needles call to mind the *tricoteuses* seated near the guillotine waiting for the heads to roll. Adams comments on the use of implements in fragmentation: “The essence of butchery is to fragment the animals into pieces small enough for consumption” (1990, 50). The butchering of animals on the station prefigures, metaphorically, the psychic fragmentation of Margaret’s constructed identity, while their physical wounding prefigures the wound to Margaret’s mind through the traumatic shattering of her identity. It also references the butchered body of the girl on the gallows in the dream/nightmare that Margaret has on her second night on the station (1981, 52).

An act of killing occurs on the first page of the novel which begins in 1924 on Maunganui Station in the King Country of New Zealand during the lambing season. It establishes that the station is associated with an atmosphere of death and killing. Messenger, the second-generation owner of the station, is on the lambing beat. He delivers a live lamb, places it on the dead body of its mother, slits its throat, and then skins the mother for its fleece. Ten years later, the novel ends with Messenger’s suicide, and Margaret cutting the throat of her lover in the homestead of the station. Put differently, the novel opens with a birth, a death, and a killing, and ends with a suicide, and a murder. Devanny uses the 20,000 acre Maunganui Station, the violence depicted in its current operation as an economically very successful stock farm, and its ‘acquisition’ from the Māori by Messenger’s English father, as the physical and historic frames to contextualize her delineation of trauma. The concept of property, which is so critical to Margaret’s self-realization as the property of her husband, is linked with the European settlers’ appropriation of Māori land, and a conflicted relationship with ‘home’ – not only in relation to England as ‘home’ or the ‘Motherland,’ but also in the sense of being ‘not at home’ on dispossessed land. Contextually and metaphorically, the station and the land on which the Messenger home stands represent a conflicted and destabilized site with a violent, unresolved history which continues to haunt the present.

Devanny’s choice of the King Country for the location of Maunganui reflects Whitehead’s observation on the connection between trauma and place: “[S]omething of

the trauma remains or inheres at the site of its occurrence” (2004.1, 28-29). The King Country was a site of carnage and violence in the New Zealand Wars of 1845-1872. Heather Roberts comments that “the locating of the novel in the King Country is incongruous because it is very unlikely that such revolutionary ideas [about socialism and feminism] would have found much favour in this area. In the early 1930s the King Country was inhabited by sympathizers with the New Zealand Legion, a right-wing political organization which sprang up during the Depression (and quickly disappeared after that)” (1981, 21). The ‘effect’ and resonance of this choice, from the reader’s perspective, are with the King Country’s association with the New Zealand Wars, and with Māori resistance to the British troops ordered in by Governor Sir George Grey to put down what he saw as a threat to British authority by the Kingitanga (Māori King movement), and to drive Waikato Māori from their territory in readiness for occupation and settlement by Europeans. Early in the 1880s, the colonial government made confiscated land in the King Country accessible to Europeans.

It is against this background of bloodshed in battle and forcible land confiscation that Messenger’s father acquired Maunganui: “Old Tutaki had been living on Maunganui when it had been staked out” (31). The use of “staked” conveys both the material reality of Europeans marking out the land into saleable blocks, and a wound inflicted on the land and its rightful owners. Devanny writes: “His [Barry’s] father, some thirty years before this time [early 1890s] had brought from English country life to New Zealand a little fortune and an indomitable will, and had builded<sup>4</sup> Maunganui acre by acre, so to say” (28). The emphasis placed on the European settler’s “will,” the “build[ing]”/creation of Maunganui Station, and the effort implied in putting it together “acre by acre” suggest that the European settler was responsible for creating coherence out of an inchoate land, and underscore the settler’s sense of ‘rightful’ ownership of an ‘unproductive’ land he has built into a profitable enterprise.

The text draws attention to the presence of earlier inhabitants on the land, and to the station as an ‘unhomely’ site of haunting, to voices and a history that have been silenced, but which continue to have a phantom-like presence. The status of the

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<sup>4</sup> An echo of William Blake’s “Jerusalem” with New Zealand as the “new Jerusalem” which European settlers hoped to shape into a better society than the one they had left behind. Evans refers to Blake’s “Jerusalem” in his essay “Paradise or Slaughterhouse: Some Aspects of New Zealand Proletarian Fiction” (1980), writing of New Zealand’s failed attempt to be “[t]he ‘Better Britain of the South Pacific’” (72) through “its specific avoidance of the dark satanic mill” (ibid.). Evans sees the slaughterhouse as “New Zealand’s own satanic mill” (76), a symbol of “the loss of the antipodean paradise” (ibid.), and includes Devanny among the writers who portray the pastoral myth’s dark underside in the brutality of colonial reality where animals are reared to be slaughtered for the frozen meat trade.

Messengers' home, the house that Margaret Errol comes to as a housemaid and that later becomes her home following her marriage to Messenger, is undercut by its location on land dispossessed from its rightful owners who now occupy a position of marginality and subservience on their ancestral home. Messenger is described as having "a profound respect [...] for the grand race his own had dispossessed" (30), the statement encapsulating his conflicted feelings about the property his father had acquired. While it would seem that respect for a race and dispossession of its land do not sit easily together, there is a common trope within colonial discourse that combines precisely these things.

The topography of the station contains a traumatic and violent history that is figured as haunting the land, and destroying the Messenger home and family. The Messenger home takes on a double metaphoric dimension since it is 'not at home' on stolen land, and is ultimately consumed by fires from within. Glengarry's eyes are "like coals of fire" (104) and his kiss "like a scorching flame upon [Margaret's] mouth" (*ibid.*), signifying the all-consuming nature of the passion that will destroy them both. The fire that burns in the family dining-room, and around which the family gathers each night, assumes symbolic significance as "explosive elements were being gathered to a core within the heart of [Messenger's] home" (171), and Margaret becomes increasingly consumed with sexual jealousy and suspicions about Glengarry and Miette: "The log fires blazed within" (*ibid.*). The "red rage" (164) and the "red haze" (222), which signify the torment and disturbance in Margaret's mind, reference the blazing log fires in the homestead.

The Devil's Hole is one site of such a history on the station. It is associated with both death and protection from "molestation by [...] enemies," and it possibly still contains the bones of Māori. On the top of a hill, it is located near a ruined Māori stockade:

Devil's Hole was a deep pit, so deep that if a stone had been cast in it, it could only be faintly heard striking the bottom. It lay just outside the ruins of the old stockade. Its origin was a mystery, as the Maoris had possessed no facilities for digging it, and it had certainly been there when the white man arrived. Tradition had it that the Maoris used to throw down the dead bodies of their chiefs to save them from molestation by their enemies. (59)

When Margaret suggests that she and Messenger picnic there the day before their wedding, Messenger, mindful of its history, hesitates before he replies: “We’ll go to Devil’s Corner if you like. We’ll go to hell if you say so.” Margaret’s response is one of puzzlement: “Why, what a funny thing to say. I don’t want to go to hell.” Messenger agrees to go to Devil’s Corner, saying: “If you don’t behave yourself I’ll throw you down the Devil’s Hole” (58). His threat indicates an undercurrent of violence, here perhaps a kind of sublimated violence through jest, that characterizes settler culture, as well as gender/sexual relations in that culture. The threat could be read as indicative of Messenger’s patriarchal expectations that his future wife will conform to prevailing social and cultural norms, and submit to his authority. It is also allusive of his awareness that, as ‘master’ of Maunganui Station, in proposing marriage to Margaret, a housemaid employed in the station homestead, he is marrying beneath his social class; he is cautioning Margaret that she must conduct herself in a manner commensurate with her social elevation to the future mistress of Maunganui Station. The textual references to “hell” in connection with Devil’s Corner, its association with death, and its location for what Margaret later calls her real wedding-day, because it is where she initiates sexual intercourse with Messenger, foreshadow the novel’s tragic end. The references to “hell,” and to Devil’s Hole as a “pit,” are signifiers of the descent of their marriage to its tragic conclusion. Messenger’s words at Devil’s Corner are prophetic. He and Margaret do go to hell, metaphorically, towards the end of their marriage.

In the first pages of the novel, Devanny introduces the narrative device of foreshadowing to signal impending tragedy with the past’s anachronic intrusion into the present symptomatic of the haunting power of traumatic memory. The opening scene with Messenger, the killing of the lamb and the death of its mother (not once referred to as a ewe) develop greater resonance as the reader decodes the textual markers of impending trauma. The description of Messenger dealing with the lamb and its mother, and his thoughts on the “heart-breaking” (29) and “soul-scarring” (*ibid.*) nature of work on the lambing beat establish, like the Devil’s Hole, an atmosphere of brooding menace and death, and belie Roberts’s comment that “[t]he sheep to Barry Messenger are no more than property, to be dispensed with when they are of no economic use” (1981, 15; see also Mercer 2017, 56 for a similar interpretation of Messenger’s attitude towards his stock). The Messenger children lose their mother, as Messenger lost his mother. The buried trauma of the death of his mother while giving birth to him is a form of haunting:

“Sometimes the crying of the young lambs temporarily separated from their mothers would wake a strange emotion in his breast. He would catch his breath sharply, and the hand holding the clippers would shake. Then he would wonder why this would be so” (29).

The dream/nightmare that Margaret has on her second night on Maunganui Station foreshadows the tragedy that envelops her marriage to Messenger, and her psychic fragmentation. In that dream, the numinous, Edenic landscape in which she and Messenger are walking becomes one of foreboding:

The drenched sweet grasses at their feet became rank and noisome with sliding serpents<sup>5</sup> [...]. Thick, sticky cobwebs barred their path, enmeshing them in their clammy strands, and monstrous spiders, hairy, horny, with bulging eyes and gaping jaws, hung in mid air and glared malignantly.

[...]. She put out a hand to fondle a spider, and the dainty fingers turned to talons ere they reached it.

All this the spirit separate from the body saw. (52)

In the nightmare, the man assumes a huge stature, giving him “a majesty of demeanour befitting a king of worlds” (ibid.), while the girl becomes an animal, prefiguring Margaret’s equation of herself with one of her husband’s cattle. The man’s former love and reverence for the girl are replaced by loathing, which foreshadows Messenger’s disgust when Margaret rejects his suggestion that they go away for a year together, telling him that it would leave Glengarry alone with Miette. At this point, Messenger is unaware that Margaret and Glengarry have been lovers. He [the man in the nightmare] points at a “gallows from which swung the body of a woman” (ibid.): “[T]he dehumanized Thing standing in the rank, noisome grasses, the spirit apart and the man, all knew that the butchered upon the gallows was the girl”<sup>6</sup> (ibid.). The dream that becomes a nightmare uses the motifs of animals and butchering that form a thread through the novel. The serpents signify the sexual passion to which Margaret succumbs in committing adultery with Glengarry, while spiders are negative symbols in dreams;

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<sup>5</sup> Serpents, symbol of temptation in the Garden of Eden, are an intertextual reference to the Book of Genesis, and the representation of Adam and Eve as innocent before their fall. From the classic Freudian perspective, they are a psychosexual symbol of the phallus. A Freudian interpretation of a snake dream emphasizes unconscious sexual desire or repressed sexual conflict.

<sup>6</sup> An intertextual reference to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) by Thomas Hardy. Tess murders Alec, her former seducer and her downfall, and is hanged for her crime.

they live off their victims, and are associated with entrapment and deception. Miette spreads a web of deceit and lies to ensnare Margaret into thinking that Glengarry has fallen prey to Miette's sexual enticement, and that he is no longer in love with her.

Foreboding is also present in the site of the love-making between Margaret and Messenger at Devil's Corner, the day before their wedding. Margaret realizes that it had meant very different things for each of them: "No transcendental uplift of thought in regard to their changed relations had resulted from the act of consummation such as had happened with the heroines of the popular novels she had read. She felt no different from last evening" (63). She senses that "the dominating factor in him then was, and all day had been, a vast solemnity born of their union" (*ibid.*). She is right, but neither of them realizes its other more prophetic and ominous significance: "Man, in that union, had come into his own. Woman still but lay prepared, waiting for the awakening. He had taken from her utterly, but in taking he had not given. He had but prepared" (*ibid.*). The preparation refers to Margaret's sexual awakening with Glengarry.

Devanny portrays the sense of something fragile, unstable, and haunting, as well as violent, over which the whole edifice of the station and the Messenger family's homestead are built, leaking into and haunting the lives of the characters. Tutaki, one of the sons of Chief Tutaki, functions as a witness to the unfolding tragedy, occupying what Otto Heim calls "the internal onlooker perspective" (1998, 111). He is ambivalently positioned as both a privileged insider, and yet an outsider in the text; an insider because of his long friendship and shared school-days with Messenger, and accepted because of his acculturation in the customs, literature and values of the dominant culture, and an outsider because of his racial 'otherness.' The following narratorial comment about relations between European New Zealanders and Māori is an example of the conflicted positionality of the Māori in the text: "Poor silly Miette had a lot to learn about New Zealanders and Maoris. She had to learn that the Maori, grand in the traditions of his race, stood equal with the average white man, and that in New Zealand racial distinction between Hawaiki's sons and the whites was non-existent" (1981, 141). Evans offers a possible explanation to the contestatory nature of this statement. He refers to the emergence in the 1920s of Māoritanga and the work of its assimilationist proponents "[which] amounted to a progressive neutralization of the Maori Other on behalf of colonialism" (2004, 73), the beginning of the process of the white-settler ideology of biculturalism, and the "fetishization" (*ibid.*) of the Treaty of Waitangi "as part of the dominant culture's ideology of partnership and progress"

(ibid.). The narrator's comment is an iteration of the white-settler's emergent ideology of the "partnership and progress" that Evans describes.

Other narratorial references to Māori are intermittent, and are refracted through the lenses of the settler colonist and the white European migrant. Their intermittence, and their stereotypical, often derogatory nature, reflect the settler colonial strategies to erase, marginalize, silence, assimilate, acculturate, and/or 'other' the Māori. Tutaki, for example, is depicted as assimilated, acculturated, but also racially 'othered' in references to him as a "nigger," and "the brown man." Rona, Tutaki's young stepmother, is 'othered' by the white male eye of Glengarry who appraisingly contrasts her appearance with the 'superior' beauty of the white woman: "Rona's dusky skin, her ungraceful, incongruously clothed big body and bare primitive feet set off Margaret's daintiness, her exquisite toilette, the glorious beauty of her dark fairness. Glengarry [...] appreciated the distinction of the picture they made: the dressed-up primitive against the finished product of civilization" (1981, 111). The morning after her arrival at the station as the new housemaid, Margaret, who was brought up in Wellington, tells the other housemaid, Maire, who is Māori, that she is the first Māori girl she has met. Her comment reflects the 'invisibility' of the Māori in the cities. James Belich observes that "[i]n 1936 Maori were 83 percent rural and 17 percent urban" (2001, 471) and refers to the "complete inversion of urban-rural proportions" (472) that took place within a period of fifty years, citing 83 percent of the Māori population as urban by 1986. In the 1920s and 30s the Māori were still predominantly based in their tribal homelands, largely in disenfranchised situations not dissimilar to those on Maunganui Station.

The narrator's tendentious statement about the absence of racial distinction in New Zealand (1981, 141) sits uncomfortably alongside other passages which reveal the white settler's racial prejudice and convey the sense of tensions broiling beneath the surface with the capacity to erupt. The colonial fear of miscegenation is evident in the action of Messenger's father when he "whisked the lass ["a brown maiden"] out of harm's way" (30), having noticed the girl was 'pursuing' his son. The power of the "English country gentleman" (29) to remove the Māori girl is also evident, even though it is described by a verb which downplays it as an action of quasi legerdemain. Messenger attributes the preservation of his virginity, which he loses at the Devil's Hole with Margaret, to his father's warning in relation to the "many brown girls" (30) on the station and to what the narrator describes as his "own clean racial sentiment" (ibid.). Ironically, it is a white

woman, Miette, who pursues Tutaki sexually, which highlights the contestability of the earlier stereotypical and racialized statement that the “brown maiden,” in being the pursuer of the man (Barry Messenger), was acting “as the traditions of her race gave her the right to be” (ibid.). The trope of the European settler’s fear of the threat to the dominant culture by the indigenous woman’s assumed unbridled sexuality is evident in the narratorial comment and the swift action of Messenger’s father.

Tutaki’s thoughts as he sits on the Wellington wharf, waiting to meet Miette and her husband from England, reveal his ambivalent positionality between two cultures on his ancestral tribal homelands. The hopeful emotions ascribed to the emigrants from the “old land” (138) arriving in Wellington<sup>7</sup> are belied by Tutaki’s reflections on *his* parent land and the fate of the Māori. His thoughts are stirred by the sight of ships with “mutton for the overseas maw” (143) being loaded into them, and his reflections on “Progress” are indicative of his conflicted awareness of the fate of the Māori, their traditionally rural and tribal culture, and their rootedness in ancestral lands: “It was the march of Progress, Jimmy knew. Progress, which was carried in the hands of the ‘pakeha.’ Progress made sport of racial extinction. The fittest to survive! Jimmy, true son of his race, [...] knew that the law of club and fang was the law of Progress, and yet that Progress was good” (ibid.). The “law of club and fang” is emblematic of the harsh reality enacted on New Zealand’s stations and farms where animals are reared as commodities to produce exports for overseas markets as well as to feed New Zealand’s growing European population:

He knew the history of the white migration and settlement; in his breast, as in every true Maori’s, there burned the never-dying lands, upon which greedy whites, descendants of the thieves, now lived in splendid opulence, ordering chieftains and chieftains’ sons to do their bidding. [...] And his heart turned to water, and his eyes spilled over their tears with anguish for the death of his race which was slowly sinking, sinking, with thinned blood and loosened muscle and sagging belly back into the earth which was the dust from which it had sprung. (ibid.)

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<sup>7</sup> Michael King refers to the “increasing vulnerability [of Māori] to European-introduced diseases such as influenza and measles. As each new boatload of immigrants arrived, there was the possibility they carried with them pathogens from the most recent strains of diseases prevalent in Britain or Europe” (2003; 2004, 180). The insufficient immunity of Māori to introduced pathogens contributed to the decline in the Māori population of New Zealand and the physical as well as spiritual enfeeblement that Tutaki mourns.

The passage taps into the myth of the ‘dying Māori race.’ Belich comments:

As the twentieth century opened, most Pakeha and some Maori believed that the Maori people were destined for extinction. [...] Though the ‘fatal impact’ of Europe on Maori during the nineteenth century has been exaggerated, the stresses of contact did halve the Maori numbers during the century — to 45,000 in 1901, including ‘half-castes’ living as Maori. (2001, 191)

Tutaki grieves for the emasculation and enfeeblement of his once-proud people; as the son of a chieftain himself, he does the bidding of his European ‘master.’

Tutaki’s presence in the text, and his grief for the historical loss/trauma suffered by Māori over the appropriation of their land by the British Crown, work oppositionally to the ‘normalization’ of colonial capitalism and its aim of “yield[ing] the illusion of a ‘natural’ connection to the land” (Evans 2004, 75) through the performance of agriculture and its ‘legitimation’ of the white settler’s occupancy of indigenous land. His psychological possession by the ghosts of his ancestors is also significant in relation to trauma and its transmissibility from one generation to the next. As Whitehead explains, “In its disturbed and disrupted temporality, trauma is inextricable for Freud from the ghostly or spectral, and it testifies to the profoundly unresolved nature of the past” (2004.1, 13). The fate of his ancestors and the wrongs done to his people haunt Tutaki; the dominant culture’s sense of security in the ‘taming’ of the indigenous Other, as well as his land, is as false as its belief that the violent past is over and done with.

The “racial emotions” and melancholic memories not fully sealed within Tutaki call to mind Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok’s use of the concept of a crypt in connection with melancholia: “Grief that cannot be expressed builds a secret vault within the subject. In this crypt reposes [...] the objective counterpart of the loss, as a complete person with his own topography” (1994, 8). Just as places like the Devil’s Hole, a ‘crypt’ holding the bodies of dead chiefs who were not accorded a *tangihanga* or full Māori burial ceremony, leak phantoms, and affect, so do the memories sealed within Tutaki, as within a crypt, break their seal, representing a form of transgenerational haunting. Roger Luckhurst describes traumatic memory as “persist[ing] in a half-life, rather like a ghost, a haunting absent presence of another time in our time” (2008, 81). Tutaki’s solitary positioning on the wharf as he remembers his people’s past, and their fate in the colonized present, are symbolic of what Mercer describes as “significant

silences and erasures” (2017, 66) in the depiction of New Zealand as a pastoral paradise: “New Zealand as a pastoral paradise has no place for wars or massacres, the marginalization of Māori culture, or for contemporary issues relating to minorities and social inequality” (ibid.). Tutaki holds the memories of his ancestors within himself, and grieves silently, and alone, for their subjugation.

The Messengers, settler colonists, are aligned with greed and theft, wealth gained from the dispossession of Māori land, the labour of Māori chiefs and their descendants, and the exploitative agenda of settler colonialism. Messenger senior had come to New Zealand with “a little fortune” (quite different from a small fortune), and had become a wealthy man through 20,000 acres that was rightfully the property of Māori. The station is comparable to a contact-zone, a term used by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* to describe “the social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (1992, 10). Pratt’s definition of “contact-zones” is relevant to the racial microcosm evident on Maunganui Station with its imbalanced power relations and the unequal inter-cultural contact between European settlers and the Māori, who are employed as housemaids, labourers and station-hands. Devanny does not, however, explore the lived reality of the Māori on the station or on a neighbouring Māori farm, or who form inter-racial marriages; reference is only made to their existence (1981, 160), and from the perspective of the white European. Glengarry refers to the European women who marry Māori as ““low-class”” (165) and the men as ““niggers”” (ibid.), while Miette, the pursuer of Tutaki, to ward off suspicion from her husband, slyly professes incredulity to him about a ““white girl”” (160) marrying a Māori, calling it ““dreadful”” (ibid.).

The dynamics of settler colonialism are revealed in the greater permeability of the imported English class system, and reflect processes of social and cultural change in New Zealand. In England, it is unlikely that the owner of a landed estate would marry one of his housemaids. Messenger refers to Margaret as “occupying the position of a menial in his house” (37), but attributes the fact that he had spoken very little with her since her arrival on the station, not “to any “class” foolishness” (ibid.), but rather to having been seldom in her company. Nor would Messenger, as owner of the estate, dine regularly with his employees in staff quarters. Similarly, in England at the time, it is questionable whether an employee and racial ‘Other’ like Tutaki would be the only outside worker invited to dine with the family on Sundays. Mrs. Curdy, the English

housekeeper, expresses her disapproval to Messenger, and surprise at “the cultured table manners and undeniable mental superiority of the Maori” (33), exclaiming, ““Why [...] he is a gentleman, like yourself!”” (ibid.). Messenger’s reply of ““Sure. Why not?”” (ibid.) reflects an understanding that social class and race are not necessarily the hallmarks of a gentleman, and that, in the settler colony, English class boundaries are fluid and shifting. The fact that two other employees sit with the family in the evening, the English house-keeper and the Māori housemaid, Maire, points to an erosion of class hierarchies in the settler colony. While the station resembles an English estate in a number of respects with a hierarchy of workers, facilities and housing on the estate for the outside staff, and in the deference paid to its owner and his family in the “big house,” there are important differences. Notwithstanding these differences, the Messengers’ house party for the Governor-General reflects the emergence of “a stratified society in which the subtle social divisions of Britain were being duplicated” (Evans 1980, 74). Devanny’s novel highlights the existence in New Zealand of a “capitalist [landed] aristocracy”<sup>8</sup> that made huge profits from the wool trade and the frozen meat market, and enjoyed privileged life-styles on their stations.

The title of “Lady” accorded to Margaret invokes the English class system and the very English values of social status associated with the aristocracy transposed to a rural station in a far-flung settler colony, which was largely settled by working class and lower-middle-class migrants in the nineteenth century. The class consciousness brought out from England still lingers, and can be seen, for example, in Mrs. Curdy’s judgement in a letter to Mrs. Errol that Margaret is “exceedingly fortunate” (1981, 55) to marry the owner of Maunganui Station, and in Margaret’s summing up of Miette, on first meeting her, from the vantage point of her own social elevation, “She’s coarse and common [...]. She is not in Barry’s class” (145).

Messenger’s father marries a French governess employed on a neighbouring station after his emigration from England. Her social position as a governess would be regarded as inferior to that of a “country gentleman,” while Margaret’s social position as a maid is even lower, giving further credence to the greater social mobility in the colonies. Messenger is brought up, in a racially hierarchized environment, by a succession of “white housekeepers and Maori maids” (28). A first-generation New Zealander, he does

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<sup>8</sup> Evans uses the term “capitalist aristocracy” (1980, 77) to describe the social class “which owns the meatworks and profits by exploitation of humans and animals” (ibid.). He comments that it is only in Katherine Mansfield, among our early writers, that “we glimpse this aristocracy, in the figure of Stanley Burnell” (ibid.). The Messenger family, and Maunganui Station, provide a further glimpse into the creation of a “capitalist [landed] aristocracy.”

not maintain English customs and class distinctions as rigidly as his English father, reflecting a generational weakening or lessening of imported English customs. Mrs. Curdy, Messenger's housekeeper, "not long out from the Old Country" (45), calls Messenger "Master," and Margaret, as is English custom with housemaids, by her surname. Messenger himself refers to England as 'home' when he asks Mrs. Curdy to desist from calling Margaret by her surname: "'And don't call her 'Errol' any more, please. That sort of thing might be all right at home, but it doesn't suit me.'" (Mrs. Curdy smiled again. He had made no objection to her calling Errol's predecessor by her surname.)" (42). Mrs. Curdy's smile indicates that Messenger's request does not relate solely or strictly to a loosening of class customs in the colonies.

Margaret Errol arrives on the station at seventeen years of age to take up her first paid position. She had been brought up in a lower-middle-class family of six children, where money is described as "scant" (43), with the family experiencing want: "Her father, an underpaid Government official, was of pioneer breed, and her mother was gentle both by nature and blood, being come of ancient Irish lineage, though impoverished" (*ibid.*). Despite the shortage of money, Margaret's childhood and upbringing are depicted as both happy and emotionally secure, and the familial bonds as loving. There is no indication of trauma in Margaret's life experiences before she arrives on the station, or in her familial circumstances.

One particular incident in her young life stands out as a formative experience in relation to her subsequent identity formation and aspiration to be admired for her beauty and dress. She stares, in stunned admiration, at a beautiful woman in a restaurant: "Margaret fairly gulped at her beauty" (44). Her staring is so prolonged, that the woman's male companion asks her to explain herself, to which Margaret replies: "'She was so lovely I could not help it'" (45). The woman, who transpires to be the famous prima donna in the opera Mrs. Errol takes her daughter to see that same evening, spontaneously gives Margaret her bracelet which remains Margaret's "choicest possession" (*ibid.*). This incident with the beautiful woman, and Margaret's treasuring of the bracelet, reveal her aspirational identity formation to be a 'lady,' revered not only for her beauty, but also for her social status and material possessions.

Margaret's narcissistic pleasure in her own beauty adds a complication to her characterization, and forms a critical component of her identity construction as the "Lady" of Maunganui Station. The brief outline of her life up to seventeen years of age emphasizes her beauty: "Her physical beauty was a source of great pleasure to her. She

often used to think and say how she would hate to be ugly. She admired pretty women intensely, and could never forbear staring when encountering one on the street” (44). She is also aware of the impact of her beauty on others. She notices Messenger’s reaction when he sees her for the first time: “Of course he [Messenger] had been surprised to see her last night, surprised at her prettiness [...]” (49). Messenger stops what he was about to say and stares at her, falling in love with her instantly.

Feminist historian Catherine Hall has observed the clear distinction between the education of the daughters of the poor and those of the middle and upper classes: “The daughters of the poor should be trained as servants or as good wives; the emphasis in their schooling should be on industry, frugality, diligence and good management” (1992, 89). After Margaret leaves school at fourteen years of age, her mother trains her in housewifery as the realistic dictates of money mean that Margaret must find employment “in woman’s ‘natural sphere’ alone” (1981, 43), namely domestic service. Her family cannot afford to pay for tuition in the refined pursuits of a lady, such as piano, drawing, or dancing lessons. She is taught to dance by Messenger and Tutaki, who had ballroom dancing lessons at their boarding-school,<sup>9</sup> reflecting the differences between their education and her own. Margaret is described as rebelling hotly against the use of her “labour-power” (ibid.) in “the semi-slavery of domestic service” (ibid.), which are textual clues to her vanity and feeling of superiority that she is deserving of something better, and her future efforts to repudiate her objectification as an item of male property.

There are other early indications of the strength of Margaret’s ego and the assertiveness she later displays in arguing so strongly for her right to an autonomous identity. On her first day at the station, aware of the impression her beauty made on Messenger, “[Margaret’s] mind got to work on the matter” (48), and she imagines marriage between herself and Messenger. She reasons, “there is no reason why we should not fall in love and get married. I’m as good as he is” (48). She misinterprets Messenger’s shy silence at the fireside in the following evenings, before his blurted-out proposal, as loss of interest in herself. Her reaction is one of affront and pique: “Probably he is only a common ‘toff’ after all, and has remembered to-day that I am his housemaid. Well, Mr. Messenger, there is plenty more fish in the sea” (50). It is

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<sup>9</sup> Messenger and Tutaki attended the same “college” (30). The text does not state it, but a possible inference is that Messenger’s father funded Tutaki’s secondary education as both boys were childhood friends on the station, and he wanted his son to have a good friend with him when he started at boarding-school; Messenger may have even requested it of his father.

unlikely that a housemaid would speak as defiantly as Margaret does to Mrs. Curdy, the housekeeper, when she cautions her that gentlemen do not take a serious interest in their housemaids. Margaret cries: “In New Zealand they do! [...] Gentleman! He’s only a common farmer working on his land – like his men. And he doesn’t want to be any different from his men, either. I’ve seen how he hates your English ideas” (41). Her defiance indicates her confidence to express her opinions quite forcibly. Within days of getting to know Margaret, Maire remarks to her, with a grin, “I think you like showing off” (50). The remark is made about Margaret’s talkativeness, but it reflects an astute insight into her self-confidence in expressing her views. Her “mentality far above the average” (44), “studious [...] disposition” (ibid.), and questioning nature, “ever searching for the why and the wherefore of things” (ibid.), are characteristics evident in her subsequent challenge to the lack of autonomy and agency available to married women in patriarchal marriages in which they are legally and economically positioned as the property of their husbands.

Devanny subverts the traditional romance plot by ‘writing beyond the ending,’ placing Margaret and Messenger’s marriage at the conclusion of only six chapters and not as the culmination of the novel. She further subverts the traditional romance plot by using the concept of property, which is so seductive for Margaret and instrumental in her marriage to Messenger, to convey Margaret’s later awareness of herself as an embodied and commodified object. It is with the romantic notion of an adventure that Margaret applies for the position of housemaid on Maunganui, having never been in the country beyond the Hutt Valley. Six weeks later she is the wife of her former “Master,” who proposes marriage within a week. While Margaret believes herself to be in love with Messenger, she is also in love with the idea of becoming mistress of Messenger’s property: “If she married him she would be mistress of that big house in which she was now housemaid. [...] Then she could do so much for her home folk as Messenger’s wife. How she would love to shower gifts upon them all, especially upon her Mum” (53-54). In Margaret’s letter to her mother about her engagement, the first thing she mentions about the “wonderful son-in-law” (56) she has found for her mother is money, “Did you dream of money to burn? You’ll have it, Mummy” (ibid.). The beautiful heroine secures a handsome and wealthy husband, and an elevated social position, but there is no happy-ever-after for the couple.

Devanny uses Margaret’s social elevation from housemaid to mistress of the household to underscore how she has exchanged one position of servitude for another.

Leonore Davidoff et al. comment: “Femininity was partially defined as being a server, foremost as wife, then as mother” (1999, 159). On her marriage, Messenger remains her master as head of the heteropatriarchal family. In his letter to his future parents-in-law, Messenger outlines his wealth and property: “I am the sole owner of Maunganui Station. My land carries fifty thousand sheep and, just now, about fifteen hundred steers. The wool clip this year brought an unprecedented price. I have to pick up some fairly heavy losses on the slump years, but even so, I should clear about twenty thousand pounds” (1981, 55-56). The letter is an indication of the importance of money and property placed by a patriarchal society on the establishment of a man’s credentials, and his ability to support a wife and children.

The station is to Margaret, initially, “a bubbling fountain of sheer delights” (57), shearing “engrossing,” (ibid.), and the “Industry” (65) of the station “wonderful” (ibid.). She is described as “settling into her rightful place in the big house, still rather playing at keeping house, of course, and still a little in awe of her position as Mrs. Curdy’s mistress, but settling down nevertheless” (64). In the first weeks of her marriage, Margaret is located in the public, working areas of the station: “The girl ran about disseminating the sunshine of her happiness to all and sundry, thrusting it under everybody’s nose like a child with a new toy, but in this very fact was the shallowness of her love revealed. The man’s emotions were too deep, were to him too sacred, to be held up for public apprehension” (ibid.). Margaret’s emotional investment in her marriage is depicted as less than her investment in its material advantages to her and her family, and her role as “Lady.”

The cultural and social context within which identity is formed is critical to identity formation (Aguilar 2013, 32). Margaret’s marital status as the wife of a wealthy and propertied man, and as the mistress of Maunganui Station, become powerful components in her identity construction, which already contains her self-awareness of her beauty, her belief in her superiority, and her impressibility by beauty and its display. Messenger’s reverence for his wife, and the adulation that Margaret receives as the beautiful mistress of Maunganui Station place her on a “pedestal,” and provide her with an “enabling myth of coherent identity” (Henke 1998, xvi). The role she is accorded, the “Lady” of Maunganui Station, operates coherently with the patriarchally imposed elements of her identity, namely wife and mother, and those which relate to her awareness of her own beauty, her robust self-worth, and her aversion to being a “common creature” (1981, 108).

The term “Lady” is a critical component in Margaret’s functioning as an integrated subject, reflecting the elevated social position that she enjoys as mistress of Maunganui Station and forming part of the preconditioning of its later fragmentation. Messenger is relieved to discover in the fly-leaf of the book she is reading that her name is Margaret, not “Gladys! or Pearl! for instance” (39). He had hoped that she would have a “grand” name “consistent with the qualities her facial characteristics indicated” (38-39). “Lady” is also redolent with the “victim-imagery of the Christian Church, which extols passive motherhood in the person of the Virgin Mary” (Rich 1979, 269), and with courtly romance where the beautiful, aristocratic lady is an idealized, aesthetic construct presumed to have no sexual longings. After her marriage, Margaret finds that it comes easily to her “to *play* [my italics] the lady” (1981, 71):

At Christmas time she had had her whole family to stay with her for a fortnight. How proud she had been! Of her husband; of his possessions, which were now also her own; of her own great good fortune. Oh, yes, Margaret soon began to think less of such things as wages and workers. Now, in her allusions to the station employees, like Barry himself, she spoke of our “hands.” (ibid.)

She is described as possessed of “transcendental qualities” (105). On meeting her, Glengarry “would not have been surprised had jewels dropped from her mouth” (98), and Tutaki, who always addresses her as “Lady,” says: “I worship the ground she walks on” (118). She is the revered “Lady” of Maunganui: “So gracious was her demeanour to all around her that her small world was at her feet” (116).

Margaret’s enjoyment of bodily finery, and social occasions where her beautifully robed body is the object of the male gaze and a source of male pleasure, is reflected in Sidonie Smith’s observation that “social life becomes synonymous with female bodily display” (1993, 93). Her embodiment as a beautiful and gracious wife, mother and hostess reaches its apogee in the visit of the Governor-General and his entourage to the station for ten days, with daily excursions and visitors every evening: “Margaret enjoyed it right enough. She liked the gaiety, the din and bustle. And oh! Did she not wear some beautiful frocks! [...] Barry’s adoration of her at this time was complete, and as for Glengarry – he was not far behind” (1981, 193). She plays the part of hostess with ease, and relishes the opportunities it affords to dress in a way that signifies her status as the wife of a wealthy man: “The dress becomes a costume of the body, a

costume of the mind, enclosing the young woman literally and figuratively within a particular representation of female identity” (Smith 1993, 92-93).

Dress, a powerful signifier of not just status, wealth, and social class, but also of allurements, functions in Margaret’s construction of herself as “Lady.” It has a close alignment with the body, and self-representation. Margaret is described as having one extravagance, clothes. The morning after her first sexual union with Glengarry, she “dressed her hair elaborately, an unusual thing, and put on an exquisitely simple morning frock” (1981, 108): “It gave her immense satisfaction to see herself in her great mirrors, a truly resplendent figure. And this satisfaction was not the simple thing it used to be, but a sensual gratification in her sex-potency. It allayed her irritated woman vanity” (ibid.). The vanity is a reference to the insult she felt was in Glengarry’s remorse over their sexual union the previous night. The mirror is aligned, in this instance, with her awakened sexuality and enjoyment of her reflection as a sensual being, but the text hints at her vanity and habit of admiring herself in the mirror in the dresses that adorn and accentuate the “resplendent figure” of the “Lady.” Margaret is interpellated by the freighted and iconographic concept of “Lady.” As Ann Kaplan puts it: “One grabs the discourse, as it were, because it helps or benefits one” (2005, 36). “Lady” not only gives her an enabling identity that fits the social context in which she finds herself positioned on her marriage, it also fits her early self-identification with her own beauty, her vanity, the narcissism that is evident in her enjoyment of looking at herself in her mirrors, her abhorrence of “soilure,” and her distaste for a future in domestic service.

The word “clean” circulates throughout the novel, and operates oppositionally to the concept of “soilure.” It is associated with both Margaret and Messenger who are virgins when they meet. Messenger rejoices that he has kept himself “clean” for what he describes as his “mating time:” “[He] flung out his clenched hands in exultation at the realization of his manhood – of his *clean* manhood. He pounded his hands upon his chest. This – this was why he had instinctively preserved himself. [...] He had preserved himself in order that he might breed a fine, clean race [...]” (1981, 37). Margaret is described as coming from “good, clean stock” (44), and “totally inexperienced in love affairs” (47). “Clean” evokes the body, and operates in the text as a signifier for sexual purity, and oppositionally to sexual lust. It has connotations of cleanliness of mind or spirit which is mentioned in connection with Margaret, and “[her] purity of mind to which the soilure of everyday life simply could not cling” (44).

It is linked with Messenger's worship of Margaret, and his request of the two old rabbiters who work on the station to save all the rare white rabbit-skins for him so that he can have them made into a rug for Margaret (61).

Margaret's reaction to the murder of one of the rabbiters foreshadows the justification she sees for her murder of Glengarry. It occurs just before Glengarry's arrival on the station. Both men are heavy drinkers at weekends. Old George, in delirium tremens, feels the bodies of skinned and maimed rabbits, each dragging a trap attached to some part of its body, descend on him and begin to nip him: "[E]ach rabbit had a soul: a misty wraith accompanying it which gazed on George with eyes filled with the accumulated agony of all the rabbits he had slaughtered" (88). Bill says George asked him to chop off his head: "'George, 'e 'ad the dingbats. [...] I never meant ter do ol' George any harm. He arst me to do it'" (84-85). Margaret is profoundly affected by the legal decision of the verdict of murder, and ten years with hard labour: "Murder had been done, and yet no sin had been committed. [...] It affected her so deeply and strongly as to colour her whole attitude toward human actions and institutions; the humbug and injustice of legality, the fallibility of common judgments, the illogicality of taking things at their face value" (91). The rabbits' revenge on Old George prefigures the revenge that Margaret enacts for all the suffering property-wives of the world, while her belief that Bill committed no sin foreshadows her dissociation from her murder of Glengarry, as if it were an act of reversal she is 'called upon' to do.

The novel's structure of four key sections reflects the accretive nature of trauma which builds to the explosive ending. Each section builds on the former, while adding new insights, and operating cumulatively to signify impending trauma. The sections are: Chapters I to VI (27-64); Chapters VII to X (64-91); Chapters XI to XV (91-136); Chapters XVI to XXV (137-224). In the first two sections, Devanny establishes the settler colonial setting, Margaret's identity construction as the "Lady" of Maunganui Station, introduces the trope of haunting and the foreboding of tragedy, and the key motifs of violence and the commodification of animals. The characters of Glengarry, station manager, and Miette and Ian Longstair, who function as catalysts in Margaret's destabilization and her psychic fragmentation, enter in the third and fourth sections respectively.

Devanny's depiction of the cumulative forces and influences that bear on Margaret's traumatization is reflected in the structure of the novel, and its movement from the exterior to the interior, both spatially and psychologically. The family home becomes

the focalizing enclosure for the site of the familial and relational ruptures that begin to dominate and disrupt the text. The narrative strategies to convey the impact of the unfolding trauma include the station's isolation as a focalizing lens to intensify relationships and events. Margaret and Messenger make trips away from the station, but these are only reported on, as are the visits paid to them by friends, neighbours, and the Governor-General and his party. Devanny intensifies the focalization as the novel progresses. The movement shifts from a focus on the outdoor life of the station, Margaret's interactions with the hands, and the scenes involving animals, to the interior of the homestead and its inhabitants. Other than Glengarry's taming of the bay foal which occurs in the third section of the novel and is symbolic of his 'possession' or 'overpowering' of Margaret, and the docking scene in the fourth section, which Margaret does not witness, no further key scenes with animals occur. The ear tagging of the lambs signifies their ownership and status as property, while their docking and the castration operate as signifiers of Margaret's increasing powerlessness vis-à-vis the forces destabilizing her image of herself as a functioning "integrated subject." The love affair between Margaret and Glengarry takes place within the family home, which becomes the site of sexual jealousy, secrets, deceit, and revenge – all of which contribute to Margaret's fall from her "pinnacle of impeccability" (198).

Devanny emphasizes the comfortable domesticity of the Messenger marriage to underscore the destructive impact of the events that follow the arrival of Glengarry and the Longstairs. Husband and wife are described as settled down after ten years of marriage with Messenger as much in love with his wife as ever. He thinks Margaret's motherhood "divine" (95). Margaret is devoted to the care of her four children: "Acutely sensitive to the responsibilities of parenthood, she would not resign any part of the care of the children to hired help. Harry, for one, now eight years old, needed her constantly" (91-92). Margaret's motherhood carries more import than Roberts suggests in her comments and observation that Margaret never needs to face her children's physical demands physical demands, other than breast-feeding (1981, 19). Devanny's emphasis on Margaret as a loving and engaged mother underscores its later destabilization in her psychic collapse. A domestic scene early in the Messengers' marriage encapsulates the patriarchal assignment of embodiment to woman as wife and mother when Messenger gazes at his baby son on Margaret's knee: "Fat little legs pawed the air continually; little hands wavered uncertainly about, and Messenger's eyes never left the child except to rest on its mother. He smoked his pipe, replete with

content. There at any rate was domesticity personified” (80). The focus is on Messenger’s gaze and its embodiment of Margaret as wife and mother, situated in the domestic sphere.

Margaret is depicted as a loving mother, devoted to the care of her four children, who “unconsciously [...] assumed the proper attitude towards parenthood; saw it in its right relation to all other things” (79), but not totally subsumed by it: “[H]er thoughts played freely upon other phenomena in the world around her” (80). She realizes that if she had not come to Maunganui she “might still be a working girl or married to a working-man living in penury” (136), and knows that she enjoys a privileged existence in what she describes as “safe domesticity” (ibid). There has been no reason for her to assert an independent identity, to consider herself as her husband’s property, and nothing to disturb her coherent functioning in her identities as a wife, mother, and “Lady:” “[Her] splendid mentality had early grasped the actual, though often concealed, inequality of the sexes. She had been born rebellious, but her early marriage into affluent circumstances had disallowed the development of the tendency. Now the conditions were there to urge on that development” (ibid.). The conditions relate to the arrival of Glengarry on the station.

Devanny deals explicitly with the power of sex<sup>10</sup> and its capacity to disrupt and destroy in her depiction of the affair between Margaret and Glengarry. She inflects the sexual passion between them with the undercurrent of violence that runs like a *leitmotif* through the text, ultimately destroying them both. Their sexual attraction ignites instantaneously at their first meeting, and takes place in the dining-room, the heart of the family home. Margaret sinks to the floor when Glengarry follows her out of the dining-room: “He bent over her and lifted her in his arms. Lifted her and crushed her to him [...] He was carrying her away. Where? She did not know – She did not care. She was responding to his madness. She ceased to think” (104). Glengarry is ashamed of his actions the following morning, apologizes to Margaret, and tells her of his resolve to leave the station. Margaret surprises him by saying she is proud of what happened, that he must not leave, and that her husband will be away for a month: ““Let us be happy””

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<sup>10</sup> *The Butcher Shop*, published in England by Duckworth, was banned in New Zealand, Australia, Boston, and later, allegedly, in Germany, where it had been published under the translated title, *Die Herrin (The Lady)*. Evans comments that the novel’s “sexual frankness” (1980, 80) may have been a factor in its banning, in addition to its depiction of the brutality of the agricultural industry, which was considered to be detrimental to immigration policies of the time. For a full account of the banning of *The Butcher Shop*, see Pearson’s “The Banning of *The Butcher Shop* (1981, 225-234). H. Gustav Klaus (“Devanny in Germany,” 1988) casts doubt on the supposed banning of *Die Herrin* in Germany.

(107). Devanny portrays Margaret as unawakened sexually by her husband: “Her sex life with Barry [...] loomed little in her scheme of things. Its biggest aspect was its relation to the begetting of children” (96). On the second occasion they have sex, “[she] struggled, but vainly” (107). “Vainly” is ambivalent; it leaves open whether Margaret struggles in vain to resist her own impulses, Glengarry’s superior physical strength, or both. Her sexual arousal by Glengarry’s “grossness” (108) and “savagery” (ibid.) cause her to shiver “in fearful delight” (ibid.) at their recollection. Margaret’s experience of sexual pleasure makes her realize the “love and ecstasy she enjoyed with Glengarry was the same emotion she had wondered at in Barry himself in his union with her” (115), and that but for Glengarry “she would have gone through life unknowing the ecstasies of love’s communion” (ibid.). Margaret persuades Glengarry to stay and to continue their liaison during Messenger’s absence, arguing strongly for the purity of her love for him and her right to experience its enjoyment: “I have a right to my happiness if I can get it without harming others. Every woman must have the right to consummate the greatest love of her life” (121).

In a reversal of the traditional positioning of guilt in novels about adultery, and heightening the import of Margaret’s arguments about her right to sexual enjoyment, it is Glengarry who experiences a deepening sense of guilt over their affair as his relationship with Messenger becomes one of friendship. His guilt relates to the patriarchal belief that a wife is the property of her husband. Like Bruce in *The Story of a New Zealand River*, his male ‘loyalty’ positions women as objects of property and exchange between men. He feels that he is committing an “outrage” (105) in having sexual relations with another man’s wife, and that he is transgressing his own code of honour; for him, the “bedrock issue” (118) is his conventional morality, and his knowledge that Margaret would never go away with him and leave the children. On two subsequent occasions he tells Margaret that he will leave the station (120, 122); each time, Margaret tells him she will die if he does. The arguments that Margaret advances to urge Glengarry to stay reveal her angry resistance to being regarded as the possession of her husband, a “subject doll<sup>11</sup> of any man” (133), and nothing more than another man’s wife and the mother of his children: “What am I in your eyes, eh? A machine, just the female of the species to be caged up, a breeding animal denied even the right to choose my own mate! [...] You outrage my womanhood!” (120). She accuses

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<sup>11</sup> An intertextual reference to Nora, the doll-wife, in *The Doll’s House* (1879) by Henrik Ibsen.

Glengarry of partisanship in the “sex-war” (122), and declares to him that he and all men are her enemies.

While the experience of sexual fulfilment awakens Margaret to her womanhood, Glengarry’s feelings of guilt also awaken her to something she has not internalized, and articulated, before. For the first time in the text, she uses the term ‘property’ in relation to being a wife and mother, and asserts that Glengarry, in regarding her as the wife of another man, is insulting her by looking upon her as an item of property:

‘You are considering my position as a wife. Wife with you is synonymous with slave. You think you are stealing the property of another man. I am not, to you and society, a human being with all the inalienable rights of a human being, living with Barry because of affection and because of circumstances which must compel me to remain living with him. I am a wife, a slave, the property of Barry, like his cattle, bound to him by law.’ (134)

Margaret is aware that the Law privileges the male, and, if she left her husband, that the Court would decide in favour of Messenger for the guardianship of their children. The wife’s economic dependence on her husband, the Law’s privileging of the husband’s right to guardianship of the children, and society’s condemnation of a woman who abandoned her children were factors that forced women to stay in loveless or oppressive relationships.

The Longstairs are socialists, and their views on property and the enslavement of women in property-marriage contribute to Margaret’s psychic destabilization despite the flaws in their characters and marriage which weaken the integrity of the socialist<sup>12</sup> views they, particularly Longstair, expound and which contribute to the confused elements in Devanny’s positioning of socialism in the narrative. When Miette tells Margaret that they are both the slaves of their husbands because they are economically dependent on them, Margaret is taken aback to hear “the conclusions her own experience had caused her to arrive at [...] being promulgated by this tawdry soul as scientific truths” (147). Through Glengarry’s repeated avowals that he is acting dishonourably in conducting an affair with another man’s wife, Margaret is aware that,

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<sup>12</sup> Devanny was a Communist, and communist and socialist doctrines form a significant part of her novels, resulting in what Jones describes as “abstract and preachy set pieces” (1991, 138). For a commentary on the Marxist and socialist ideas in *The Butcher Shop*, see Roberts’s discussion in her “Introduction” (1981, 8-9, 13-14, 19-20).

as a wife and mother, she is regarded by society and the Law, not just Glengarry, as the property of her husband *before* the Longstairs arrive on the station. Messenger and Tutaki listen with interest as Longstair talks about world politics, revolutions and socialist movements in Europe, but there is no record of discussion between them in which they contest and exchange opinions. It is Margaret who pays special attention to Longstair's socialist beliefs and spends hours with him in discussion about his views on the history of the family in Western society and the subjection of women in a male-dominated, capitalist society. His beliefs serve to heighten and further destabilize Margaret's awareness of herself as an item of property and to colour her view of herself as a property-wife to Messenger.

Longstair's function in the text is to expound Devanny's views on socialism, and, in so doing, to sow the seeds of Margaret's exalted idea of carrying out a self-sacrificial act to avenge other victims of property-marriage. Only one of the conversations between Margaret and Longstair is reported in any detail; it occurs after Glengarry violates her, when she seeks Longstair out to ask him about man's property rights in women. He explains the history of group marriage, the rise of private property, and man's wish to have legal surety over his legal heirs. Margaret is arrested by his comment that "woman shall cease to be a chattel and become a human being only after private property has ceased to exist" (205), and his exhortation to her and other women: "If you women could realize, Margaret, that your emancipation from your mental and bodily slavery can only be achieved side by side with and through the emancipation of the workers from class slavery, then surely you would be up and doing" (206). Her psychological vulnerability renders her mind fertile to a rallying challenge that 'speaks' to her emotional distress: "[I]n the midst of it the fantastic notion came to her that it was the essence of the souls of the women that had gone before; the women who had borne the load as she was bearing it; the women who [...] had bridged with their bodies the gulf that yawned from the beginning until now" (ibid.). With this thought "playing around her spirit" (ibid.) and "grabbed" by the socialist/feminist cry to action, Margaret ceases to pay attention to Longstair's explanation of the class system and its bearing on the economic system. She identifies only with the aspects of socialist ideology that address her belief in her objecthood as a property-wife within a Western capitalist construction of family, not socialism *per se*. Her comments to Tutaki after her murder of Glengarry reflect her self-justificatory exaltation, and delusion, in executing an act which she sees as contributing to "[a] race

of emancipated women, free in body and mind, economically independent, choosing their own mates” (ibid.).

Prior to Miette’s arrival with her husband, the situation between Margaret and Glengarry is described as “fairly comfortable” (137); Margaret resolves that she and Glengarry will just be friends, but “there were times, when, despite themselves, love conquered both resolve and conscience and drove the lovers into each other’s arms” (ibid.). The “Lady” of Maunganui Station is still strongly embedded in Margaret’s identity construction. She regards Glengarry’s shame as an insult, rousing her to indignation, “[a]s though she were a common creature that a man would dare insult!” (108). She laughs contemptuously when Glengarry reminds her of “what the world thinks of married women who conduct illicit love affairs” (133), and tells him that he is “soiling [her] mind with society’s filth” (ibid.). She considers herself to be above sexual jealousy, and accuses Glengarry, and men in general of jealousy, when he tells her how he would feel if he saw another man fondling her. She asserts proudly that, if Glengarry had a wife, she would be the “friend” (135) of his wife and that she would also be willing to share her husband if he had a lover, only later to be consumed with jealousy herself when she thinks Glengarry and Miette are in a sexual relationship. Margaret’s adultery with Glengarry takes place in the family home, but she describes Miette and Tutaki as “desecrating” (168) her house through their sexual encounter which represents for her “[a] living shame in her house; vice stalking in her children’s midst” (167). Her sense of her own moral superiority leads her to differentiate between her and Miette’s deceit of their husbands, while her pushing back against being designated as property is undercut later when she first suspects that Miette is trying to seduce Glengarry. She dismisses the thought proprietorially with “[w]as not Glen hers?” (194).

The fracturing of the cohesive and efficient functioning of Margaret’s belief in herself as a ‘lady’, and her realization that she is a woman are depicted through a series of juxtapositions and parallels between Miette and herself. Miette’s primary function in the text is to arouse sexual jealousy in Margaret, to destabilize her belief in herself as the “Lady,” and to hold up a mirror to Margaret for her to see her reflection in it as a woman. Miette is positioned as the whore to Margaret’s Angel in the Angel/whore binary, as a “common creature” (108), “pure animal” (194), dirty, lustful, and vulgar to Margaret’s persona as “Lady,” clean and pure, and “whose love flew so high” (157). Both commit adultery in the family home, overpowered by sexual passion. Tutaki,

succumbing eventually to Miette's signals of sexual availability, follows her out of the dining-room (as Glengarry followed Margaret): "They went out into the dark, and the beast screamed" (155). The violent animality of the analogy for the sex act echoes the comparison of Margaret and Glengarry to "the habitant[s] of the lair" (104) when they have intercourse for the first time. Both women deceive their husbands about their adultery with lies and secrets, and 'use' them sexually as "substitutes." Rebuffed by Tutaki on their first meeting, Miette "went upstairs and used her tired husband as a substitute for Jimmy" (142). Margaret tells Glengarry that their "love episodes" (173) are over because he comes to her against his will and conscience. She regards such an attitude as an insult to her: "'You shall sin with me no more. I have never sinned with you'" (173). During the period that follows her cessation of their sexual relations, in "her tumultuous longing for the other to be in his place" (174), Margaret uses her husband sexually as a substitute for Glengarry.

Margaret and Miette arouse jealousy in each other. Miette believes that Margaret warned Tutaki to stay away from her in order to keep him for herself and is convinced that she also has Glengarry as her lover. She sets out to take revenge on Margaret over Tutaki by flirting with Glengarry. Margaret overhears the maids gossiping about an intrigue between Miette and Glengarry. She cannot bear the thought of Glengarry succumbing to Miette's wiles and having sex with her. With "the woman in her [...] awake now" (194), she seeks to pre-empt that possibility by turning the full force of her charm on him, hoping to revive his love for her: "[T]he woman in her had told her to tighten up the shackles" (196). The reference to "shackles" indicates her sense of 'ownership' over Glengarry, and *her* unwillingness to share him, which is at variance with her expectations of Glengarry and her husband. Glengarry, however, "with his mighty passions awakened" (*ibid.*), repulses her, wanting to avoid a return to "the old days of hopeless longing" (*ibid.*). His avoidance of her, and manner, convince her that he has succumbed to Miette, "Then it was that jealousy thrust its forked darts into the fabric of her and dragged her down from her pinnacle. [...] She [...] scarcely dared to believe that that good woman had been herself. [...] And through all her torment there ran a fierce flame of resentment at having been pulled from her pinnacle. Margaret felt *bad*" (199). She realizes she is as susceptible to emotions like wounded vanity, pride and jealousy as any other woman: "She, Margaret Messenger, renowned throughout the country for her mental and moral pulchritude, had descended to the level of a drab" (199). Her robust physical health begins to suffer (200), and her thoughts and emotions

are in “turmoil” (198). It is at this point when she tells Glengarry that she thought his love for her was dying and had sought to revive it, that their last sexual encounter occurs (200-02).

The final breach<sup>13</sup> in Margaret’s emotional and psychological investment in the roles of wife, mother and mistress of Maunganui Station, and her cathexis to being the “Lady” on a “pinnacle” or “pedestal,” which provide her with a protective and “enabling myth of coherent identity,” takes place after Glengarry overpowers her to make love. Despite the violence involved in the overpowering, she is filled with a “flood of roselight” (201) joy that he does still love her. Glengarry refuses to lift his head to look at her, whispering: “I shall never lift it up again” (ibid.). When he tells her that “ [he] would sooner have died a thousand deaths, [...] there was no love in the eyes he bent on her” (ibid.):

[A]s he [Glengarry] turned away to leave her a link seemed to snap in the chain of her womanhood; the man’s mental attitude, his debased idea of womanhood, struck into the quintessence of her and planted the first seeds of a real corruption. He was life to her; she had honoured him above all else on earth, and he spurned that honour as a thing unclean; he stripped from her the rights of a human being and placed her with the cattle on her husband’s estate. (ibid.)

It is the moment of psychic breach that crystallizes for Margaret the erroneousness of all her previous disavowals of being the property of her husband, and she internalizes the equation of herself with the cattle owned by her husband. The traumatic impact of the realization is indelibly imprinted on her psyche, “[sinking] into the essential soil of her” (ibid.).

The indelible imprint of the moment of recognition or realization has similarities with the moment described by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, Black Masks*, when he is fixed by the gaze of the Other, a white child in a train, who sees him and cries out: “Look, a Negro! *Maman*, a Negro!” (1952; 2008, 93). Fanon writes: “The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am *fixed*. [...] I sense, I see in this white

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<sup>13</sup> Kaplan and Luckhurst comment on Freud’s work on the ways in which the mind uses systems or strategies of self-protection, and the effect of a breach to those enabling systems or strategies: “[Freud] theorizes that trauma arises from a breach in a protective shield that the mental apparatus sets up to ward against overviolent stimuli” (Kaplan 2005, 31); “[In Freud’s] model of trauma [...] protective filters are overwhelmed by a traumatic impact which unleashes unbound excitations into the psychic system” (Luckhurst 2008, 83).

gaze that it's the arrival not of a new man, but of a new type of man, a new species. A Negro, in fact!" (95). Fanon's moment of realization that he is a negro, is a moment of "suffocating reification" (89), when he recognizes that he is an "object among other objects" (ibid.). It is a moment that maps well on to the look that Glengarry gives her ("she shrank as though struck by a whip with that look, at that face with its load of remorse and self-accusation," 1981, 201), her realization of her reification or 'objecthood' as a wife, and the shattering of her cathexis to the position of "Lady" which gave meaning and coherence to her life, and to her beliefs about herself.

The mirror reflects a changed Margaret after she has lost "the desire to regain her pinnacle." In it she sees the reflected shadow of a patriarchally constructed femininity: "All that beauty, all that charm the possession of which she could not but be cognizant of, all that love which had in some miraculous way become the pivot on which her life turned, was wasted. And why? Because in the early years of her life, she had become a wife" (202). Margaret stares into her mirror again after she tells Messenger that because she is his wife, she cannot have the man she loves: "'You see this face of mine, Barry. You can see that the life is draining out of me. He can see it too. And he would see it drain away drop by drop, and yet be loyal to your sense of property rights in woman'" (215). These specular moments before her mirror reveal a woman estranged from the performance of her constructed identity and who "recognizes too clearly the ways in which the fabricated body and the female subject in that body are constituted out of the "invisible presences" of patriarchal ideology" (Smith 1993, 91). She reflects on how her "calf-love" (1981, 202) for her husband had not lasted, and blames "society" (ibid.) for the gendered ideology that the wife is the property of her husband, no different from the "wife of the Middle Ages" (203).

The breach in Margaret's systems of self-defense which enable her to function in an organized or coherent way is followed by her psychic collapse, or dysphoria, its psychoanalytic term. Herman characterizes dysphoria as "a state of confusion, agitation, emptiness and utter aloneness" (2001, 108). She comments: "The normal regulation of emotional states is [...] disrupted by traumatic experiences that repeatedly evoke terror, rage, and grief. These emotions ultimately coalesce in a dreadful feeling that psychiatrists call "dysphoria" [...] (ibid.). Of particular relevance to the analysis of Margaret's traumatization is Herman's work on the ways in which the human system of self-defense becomes overwhelmed and disorganized, and on the changes that traumatic events may produce in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory. She

notes that “traumatic events may sever these normally integrated functions from one another” (34), and states that they “shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others” and “cast the victim into a state of existential crisis” (51).

Margaret’s passage from functioning coherently to a state of dysphoria is characterized by the somatic and psychic symptomology of hyperarousal, intrusion and constriction. She becomes hyper-alert to signs that Miette and Glengarry are having sex. Through a ploy on Miette’s part, she notices Glengarry’s handkerchief<sup>14</sup> on the dressing-table in Miette’s bedroom, and challenges Glengarry about his relationship with Miette, saying it is ““killing”” (1981, 211) her. He vows again to leave the station, but Margaret clings to him, sobbing and incoherently imploring him to stay, implying that she will even put up with his having sex with Miette: ““It is the thought that you would go to her when I, your love, am waiting for you. You have made me a bad woman, Glen. But don’t go away. If you can’t stay here without – without – Oh, you know, Glen; then stay with it. I’ll put up with it. I will, I will! If you leave me I shall die”” (212).

The numbing of affect which characterizes constriction is seen in Margaret’s ruptured attachment and indifference to her children. Margaret finds out through Glengarry’s mother that Glengarry has told Messenger that he has decided to leave, and begs her husband to ask Glengarry to stay. Her sense of disconnection is evident when she says to Messenger, after he tells her that Glengarry has refused his request to stay: ““Do you know, Barry, I just don’t know, now, where those children came from”” (220). He brings their youngest child to her, a toddler, but she responds to the child with impatience. She uses Harry, who is sitting outside her door, to ask Glengarry to come to her. Her look at Harry is described as “cunning” and her tone “calculating” (221). When he returns with Glengarry’s refusal, she slams the door in his face.

Margaret’s thinking throughout this period becomes increasingly disordered: “[T]hings moved in a circle” (210). Her effective functioning is eroded through “the ferment in her mind [which] raged night and day” (210), and “a real fear that she was going mad” (220). The somatic symptomology of trauma is evident in her loss of appetite and weight (210 and 213), sleep disturbance (210), changes in her appearance (200, 207, 210, and 213), loss of energy (212, 214 and 218), fainting (218), hysteria

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<sup>14</sup> An intertextual reference to the role the handkerchief plays as a symbol of fidelity in Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

(219), and the change in her voice's register (220). She swings between "feeling her brain was on fire" (203), to "flat mood" (213), and to "a strange accretion of energy" (220), darting about her bedroom, when Messenger tells her that Glengarry is resolved to leave the station.

In her disturbed mental state, Margaret utters damaging and fatally wounding words to her husband, whom she respects and worships (214). The rupture of the attachment bonds to her children and husband reflects the damage to relational life that Herman describes as one of the primary effects of trauma (2001, 51). Despite saying to her husband that she will never forgive herself for the trouble she has brought upon him, Margaret declares: "Because I am your wife, I cannot have the man I love" (1981, 215). When Messenger asks if she would take Glengarry as her lover while living with himself, she shows no pity in replying that she would "glory" (ibid.) in doing so: "To him [Glengarry] I am your property. To him I can prostitute myself to you and still be cleanly; but to give my body to my love would be the crime of crimes" (215). Messenger remains unaware that Margaret and Glengarry have been lovers until, out of concern for her health and mental well-being and to try and save their marriage, he offers to take her away on an extended holiday. Her refusal, because it would leave Glengarry with Miette, disgusts him: "My God, Margaret! Isn't it enough that the man has refused you when you offered yourself like any common strumpet to him?" (222). Margaret taunts him: "She saw him through a red haze. Yes, there he was, sticking up for the man, clinging to his own sex against the woman. Well, she would fix him. 'Refused me, did he?' [...] 'Why, he came into my bed. He has been in my bed and I in his!'" (ibid.). Unnoticed by Margaret, who is "now, utterly deranged" (ibid.), Messenger leaves, and she sits in a state of detachment all night.

Tutaki enters Margaret's bedroom after dawn to tell her Messenger was found drowned in the dam. In her "very calm and collected" manner (223), Tutaki, referred to as "the Maori," sees "at last that there was something dreadfully amiss here, too" (ibid.), and backs away from her in fear, seeing from her eyes that she is dead also. As Margaret walks to Glengarry's room with Messenger's razor-blade concealed in her hand, Tutaki senses a terror worse than Messenger's death: "The superstitious kernel of the man came through the pakeha's training and stayed his steps at the top of the stairs. 'Run away! Run away!' it told him. 'A fearsome monster walks with the woman'" (ibid.). The "fearsome monster" that walks with the woman is an intratextual link with Margaret's nightmare, and the fragmentation that occurs in it, when Margaret splits into

the hybrid monster, the “dehumanized Thing” (52), and the butchered body of the girl on the gallows, with the spirit apart/separate from the body watching.

In the referencing of Tutaki as Māori and the supersession of “the pakeha’s training,” there is an indication of a ‘contested’ space of race, a double inscription of signification, through the privileging of the Māori’s superstitious, extrasensory perception, and his association with the spirits of his ancestors who continue to haunt the stolen/colonized land of Maunganui Station. It attests to the larger disturbance in the novel of the transmission of trauma through the violent and traumatic history of the station invading and haunting the family home. Past and present come together in Devanny’s figuration and articulation of trauma through the violence of pre-European conflict, invasion and colonization by Great Britain, settler colonial appropriation of the station’s land from the Māori, and brutalizing agricultural processes. She portrays the effects of these layers of violence as feeding into and fostering Margaret’s violent reaction to the destabilization and collapse of her identity construction and her act of murder.

If one looks beyond the ending, when Tutaki sees that Margaret has slit Glengarry’s throat, to likely consequences, one sees imprisonment, or, more predictably, long-term incarceration in a mental asylum for reasons of insanity for Margaret, the traumatization of her four children by the circumstances of their father’s suicide and their mother’s murder of her lover in the family home, and the destruction of a family. Who breaks the news of her son’s murder to his mother? Who cares for her, and what of the future of the many employees on the station? The upbringing of the four Messenger children may fall to the questionable care of Miette, Messenger’s cousin, and, in a cyclical repetition of their father’s childhood, to a “succession of white housekeepers and Maori maids” (28), or to Margaret’s parents either in Wellington or on the station, or separated, to be cared for by Margaret’s brothers and sisters. Their future is uncertain, and the Court will be involved in the decision, but what is sure, Maunganui will be forever haunted by Tutaki’s blood-curdling screech reverberating down through the years, and the actions of their father and mother. The intergenerational transmissibility of trauma is starkly before the reader. The patrilineage of the Messenger family line, and the passing of the station from father to son will end, as Harry, afflicted with an acute valvular heart condition, is not predicted to have a long life. The haunted ancestral home of the Māori becomes also the haunted home of the Messenger family. It, and the dam, become haunted sites, like Devil’s Corner.

Unlike Jane Mander's novel, *The Story of a New Zealand River*, where the possibility of recuperation from trauma is depicted through Alice's subjective engagement with the past's impact on the present, Devanny's novel ends in tragedy. It circles back to its violent beginning where Messenger slits the throat of a new-born lamb and lays it on its dead mother, in a movement that is mimetic of trauma's haunting return. Devanny uses the trope of haunting to underscore that the resolution of trauma is never final, and to convey the transgenerational transmissibility of trauma. The conjunction of the violence of New Zealand's settler colonial past in the appropriation of land from its Māori owners and the violence that overwhelms the Messenger family evokes the concept of history as revenant. Deborah Horvitz comments on the link between violence in personal histories and violence in the historical past: "[U]nless the brutal past is understood and accepted, it will be destructively repeated" (2000, 90). The aporetic ending of *The Butcher Shop* attests to the intersections between the fatal impact of Margaret's realization as the property of her husband, her psychic fragmentation and collapse, its tragic consequences for the Messenger family and Maunganui Station, and a traumatic and violent history that continues to haunt the present.

Devanny's analysis of the family, and a woman's position within it, is more politically motivated and inflected than Mander's. While both women critique the social norms and conventions that subordinate women in society, and within the family, as a socialist and member of the Australian Communist Party for many years, Devanny held more radical views, for the time, on the family as a Western capitalist construct which constitutes women as an item of property to be possessed by men. Devanny believed in the right of women to sexual liberation, and to freedom of choice in their sexual partners, irrespective of their marital status.

Whereas in *The Butcher Shop* Devanny portrays the violent disintegration of her central character's identity construction and its devastating effects on a family, Hyde's *Wednesday's Children*, discussed in the next chapter, deals with early relational trauma. The early relational trauma that Wednesday Gilfillan experiences is cumulative in nature and is caused by deficits in her care and nurture that go back to her early childhood in the household of her half-brother and his wife, and to an absent mother. The failure in nurture is compounded by the accretive nature of the emotional neglect Wednesday suffers in the Gilfillan family throughout her girlhood and young womanhood. Hyde depicts Wednesday's life in external reality, and in her dissociative

identities as a fortune-teller in an impoverished working-class suburb of Auckland and as an unmarried mother of five children to four different fathers on an island off the Auckland coast. The five children and their fathers do not exist in external reality. In her dissociative identity as a mother, Wednesday enacts the warm and loving family life that she did not experience in her own home. As a fortune-teller, her identity is also matrifocal. She dispenses kindly, common-sense advice and the comfort of hope to people on the margins of society. Hyde critiques the conflictual and dysfunctional familial relationships which, together with early relational trauma, lead to Wednesday's dissociative identity disorder, and ultimately to her suicide.

## Chapter Three

### *Wednesday's Children* by Robin Hyde

#### Relational Trauma in a Fantasy World of Family

"I was always in bad trouble, Mr Bellister, with the truth. Not so much knowing **what** it is, as knowing **which** it is. My truths were amoebae, they had second selves, split personalities, double faces. If I write to you now the really true truth, you'll say, 'Poor, daft Wednesday,' and your faith in me will vanish like mist. If I write you the other, the seeming truth, it's so inadequate. Oh, well."

ROBIN HYDE

*Wednesday's Children* (1937)

BEING ALONE leads to splitting. The presence of someone with whom one can share and communicate joy and sorrow (love and understanding) can HEAL the trauma. Personality is reassembled "healed" (like glue).

SÁNDOR FERENCZI

*The Clinical Diary of Sándor Ferenczi* (1988)

In this chapter I extend and develop the theme of trauma by examining a trauma that is not event-based. The trauma in *Wednesday's Children* does not refer to a quantifiable event, an 'objective' or single incident trauma like a road accident, a terrorist attack, or a violent mugging. *Wednesday's Children* is about trauma that presents in a more disguised form and over an extended period of time. Kai Erikson's comments about traumatization that is cumulative in nature and results from "a constellation of life's experiences" (1991, 457) are relevant to the trauma Wednesday experiences. He writes that traumatization can result from prolonged exposure to "a continuing pattern of abuse as well as from a single assault, from a period of attenuation and wearing away as well as from a moment of shock" (ibid.). *Wednesday's Children* is a text that resists allowing the reader to have a full knowledge of the originary trauma because of the very nature of the trauma itself, and the silences and gaps with which it is enshrouded.

Mary Edmond-Paul (2008, 15-28) refers to the feminist reappraisal of Hyde's work<sup>1</sup> in the 1980s and 1990s which examined *Wednesday's Children* from new perspectives,

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<sup>1</sup> See Stuart Murray, *Never a Soul at Home: New Zealand Literary Nationalism and the 1930s* (1998, 165-198) for an overview of the reception of Hyde's work. E. H. McCormick's dismissal of *Wednesday's Children* as "fantasy

foregrounding and valuing different aspects and content. Renata Casertano singles out the carnivalesque qualities of the novel, and argues that Hyde consciously worked within the tradition of the carnival, *Commedia dell'Arte*, and Menippean satire (41-52). Michelle Elleray sees in the novel's focus on the marginalized a "politics of inversion" that questions New Zealand's subordinate position in imperial hierarchies which privilege England and English culture (31, 39). Susan Ash describes Wednesday as a creative artist, and the novel as an "allegory of the female artist in a hostile, male-dominated world" (1989; 1993, 7). Chris Price (1995, 57-67) reads the novel as a critique of colonialism and prescribed social relationships, and interprets Wednesday's island as her creation of an alternative utopian empire inhabited only by women, children and indigenous people closely aligned with nature. I contend that there are textual signs, scenes and moments which cannot adequately be read in such terms, and which call for an interpretation in terms of relational trauma. I examine the text for manifestations of trauma, and for the ways in which the narrative and characterization reveal relational causes of traumatization, and argue that the characterization of Wednesday and the depiction of her family situation (both her real settler colonial one and her imaginary one) point to relational trauma as a stronger basis for interpreting Wednesday's families (real and imagined), her dissociative identities, and inventions.

I argue that Wednesday suffers from dissociative identity disorder (the term used in psychoanalytic literature for multiple identities) caused by early relational trauma and cumulative relational trauma, exacerbated by "continuous impingements" from her familial environment. M. Masud R. Khan uses the term to describe the negative impact that the familial environment can have on the growing child. He writes that "the processes of infancy in such an interaction between mother and infant [the infant-mother relationship] do not come to an end when the infant grows to be a child because the family environment perpetuates and reverberates them throughout childhood" (1972; 1974, 293), and states that "the aetiology of the dislocation of self [...] starts always from maladaptive environmental care" (295). Marcus West comments on the nature of relational trauma as opposed to single incident trauma: "The distinction might also be taken to imply that, just because the events were far away in time, or were of a relational nature, they were less "traumatic" [...]; on the contrary, early relational trauma is frequently a lot more pernicious as it can affect and dominate the individual's

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without ballast" (1940, 176) affords one example of the era's dominant masculinist emphases and attitudes, and devaluation of women's writing (see Edmond-Paul 2008, 16).

whole personality and life experience” (2016, 27). He describes “early relational traumas, and the responses and defences thrown up in response to them, [as] foundational elements in the psyche which can be seen to underpin and determine both the development and form of the individual’s personality” (28). Wednesday’s psychic splitting into the mother of five imaginary children from four different imaginary fathers, and her identity constructions as a mother with a constructed family and as a fortune-teller, have their origins in relational trauma arising from deficits in her maternal care, in what D. W. Winnicott terms the “holding environment” (1965, 43-44, 48-50) of the “good-enough” (145-146) mother, and in her cumulative experiences of alienation, ‘invisibility,’ and traumatic aloneness in an inhospitable familial home and environment as she grows up to young womanhood.

The novel, set in Auckland in the 1930s, situates Wednesday Gilfillan and the Gilfillan family in the wider context of settler colonialism through its depiction of the patriarchal, puritanical, anglophile, and class-conscious attitudes, relations, and practices evident in the central characters and the lives they lead. The immediate Gilfillan family comprises Wednesday, her step-brother Ronald, his wife Brenda, their only daughter Pamela, and Elihu, the great-uncle of Wednesday and Ronald. The five of them live together in the family home until Wednesday walks out, at twenty-seven years of age, following her win of £25,000 in an Australian lottery. The Reverend Crispin Westmacott, brother of Brenda Gilfillan, and two English visitors, Hugo Bellister and his ward and cousin Derwent Charles Winscombe, who is engaged to Pamela Gilfillan, complete the central characters in external reality.

Robin Hyde’s choice of an urban setting reflects the changing nature of New Zealand colonial society, its increasing materialism and urbanization, and the widening gulf between social classes. Great-Uncle Elihu is described as “lousy with money” (1937; 1993, 25) by Ronald: “This alone entitled him to considerable thought” (ibid). The world inhabited by Brenda and Ronald Gilfillan is untouched by, and shielded from, the Depression of the 1930s. They live in the leafy Auckland suburb of Remuera in a house with a butler (and another for Great-Uncle Elihu), and uniformed maids. Their way of life reflects the hegemonic cultural, social, and puritanical values and attitudes, and gendered codes, of settler colonialism. Brenda, “a genuine snob” (22), makes the Gilfillan family home into a “fortress” (167) that reflects, and protects, the materialist values of a white, privileged class in a settler colony that still looks deferentially to England, the ‘mother country,’ as the lodestar of social and cultural

norms. The English-style decoration of the dining-room, and the English flowers in the garden-bed outside, are Brenda's creation: "She [Brenda] had made it. She had also made Pamela, who kept her head bent down and had honey-coloured hair lightly powdered with gold-dust, and Ronald, who, if he did pull faces, also pulled down three thousand a year at his legal practice, and was repeatedly urged to stand for Parliament" (24).

The *cachet* accorded to having two upper-class English gentlemen as guests, and the privileging of things English over the local or indigenous, are indicative of a settler colony unsure of itself, and still tied to England socially and culturally, as well as politically and economically. The social world inhabited by the Gilfillan family reflects the patriarchally-dominated social and cultural norms and institutions of the settler colony. The engagement of Pamela to Derwent, who was brought up and educated to marry advantageously and to live within the confines of heteropatriarchal marriage and its separate spheres of agency ("Convent school, charity bazaar, picture of young lady watering the garden, or what have you," 22), represents an aspirational alignment of the colonial with the imperial, with the added inference of the implicitly unequal and hierarchical power relationship between the two spheres. Mr Bellister reflects: "The children [Pamela and Derwent] aren't even likely to live in New Zealand" (33). The patriarchal structure of the family is evident in the meeting of the respective heads of the two families in Ronald's office, where he is described as "the lord of the swivel chair" (72), to discuss Pamela's marriage settlement. Behind the froth of nuptial celebrations lies a pre-agreed financial arrangement about the money that will be transferred from the bride's family to that of the bridegroom. Hyde uses the Gilfillan family, and its forthcoming alliance with that of Derwent and Mr Bellister, to depict what Stuart Murray describes as "the continued settling of the colonial civil society" (1998, 192) in "a land where everyone perpetually intones, 'We are more English than the English'" (1993, 119). Murray compares Hyde's use of the family to that of Katherine Mansfield: "If, in Mansfield's fiction, the family works to signify the capitalistic, patriarchal settler nation, then Hyde's work expresses something similar [...]" (1998, 191). He comments that Hyde, "a successor to Mansfield's analysis of an emerging settler society" (192), moves the context to "the more developed urban contexts of Auckland and Wellington and the more fretful nature of a national settler modernity" (ibid.).

Hyde uses the domestic locus of the Gilfillan family, its settler colonial contextualization, and its conflicted relationality to encapsulate the “fretful” aspects of New Zealand’s “emerging settler society,” from the perspective of a traumatized and alienated female subjectivity. Wednesday’s displacement within her family, characterized by her feelings of alienation, traumatic aloneness, and insignificance, works to signify also the displacement of a cohesive and triadic symbiosis of “family/society/nation” (Wevers 1995, 46). Behind the façade of conformity to the ideal of family life, the Gilfillan family’s relationships are conflictual and dysfunctional. Wednesday grows up in an environment where relational and emotional skills deficits are evident, with relationality figured as glimpsing people on stairways, looking at them through the cracks of doorways, slamming doors in faces, avoiding the front stairs, escaping the house to the stable-loft, and rolling down flights of stairs in a wheel-chair to taunt and provoke. Mr Bellister perceptively sums up the Gilfillans: “Generally speaking, reflected Mr Bellister, the Gilfillans and their circle could be called an unhappy family [...]” (1993, 72-73). Great-Uncle Elihu is banished to the attic of the family home (or has chosen to retreat there from Brenda’s social pretentiousness). To Brenda, and the affluent, conservative middle-class respectability of her “fortress” home, Great-Uncle Elihu is an intruder: “He did not understand nor sympathise with her will to make her home a fortress, a safe place in which Brenda’s interests and Brenda’s people could live for ever secure, protected against the thug, the gipsy and the intruder. He had been an intruder himself, Great-Uncle Elihu” (167). His uncouthness and belligerent, straight-talking ways make him a social intruder in the aspirational gentility of Brenda’s “fortress” that excludes the poor, and the colonized.

In the context of a settler colony like New Zealand, however, “intruder” may be read as the white European colonist who expropriated the land of the indigenous peoples. Displaced to the attic, whether by choice or not, at ninety years of age, Great-Uncle Elihu is an uncomfortable reminder of New Zealand’s early years of colonial settlement, its pioneering ‘rough-and-readiness,’ of settler colonists as intrusive “landgrabbers”<sup>2</sup> from the Māori, and the often exploitative means by which some of Auckland’s ‘first’ families made their fortunes: “Trustingly, guilelessly, Maoridom still expected the white man’s world to work along the same lines, and was astounded when it got stung” (94).

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<sup>2</sup> Hyde used the term “landgrabbers” in the article “The Singers of Loneliness,” published in *T’ien Hsia Monthly*, August 1938; 1991, 351: “He [Governor Sir George Grey] wrote of a famous landgrabbing family: ‘The A’s were a soft rata vine, strangling the growth of New Zealand;’ but he could not avert, and did not always handle wisely, the clash between landgrabbers and the original owners.”

There is a textual reference to the questionable acquisition of Great-Uncle Elihu's wealth in the young colony: "Reading of the deaths of his contemporaries, like frozen robins being knocked off the orchard twigs, did not amuse him much, although he had robbed most of them in his time, and fought duels with several" (34-35).

The displacement of Great-Uncle Elihu to an attic mirrors Hyde's depiction of the Māori and their displacement to the margins of society. Just as Great-Uncle Elihu's 'home' is in what is regarded as the servants' quarters in a large, storeyed house (or a place where detritus from the past is stored), so the location of the text's imaginary Māori (Maritana, the nanny to Wednesday's imaginary children, Joe, and Maritana's boyfriends) on an island is peripheral, and analogous to the dispossession and marginalization of the Māori by British settler colonists in the nineteenth century. The world represented by the Gilfillan family is 'white,' racist, and exclusionary, and Māori are absent in middle-class social circles and affluent suburbs like Remuera. Hyde's critique of the displacement of the Māori by a rapacious British Empire and its land-grabbing white settler colonists is discernible in the musings, ironically of an English visitor, as he walks back to his hotel through the streets of Remuera:

There it [a great native tree] was, stranded in civilization, without kith, kin, or company. [...] But far more than this soft movement [of leaves] was noticeable its background of fixity. It looked as if it had been there for ever. As if, a hundred years ago, somebody had looked on it so long, with such intent eyes, that it had no power to change the swinging of a single leaf, but hung there out of time, sealed upon the consciousness of eyes long dead, intimate with footsteps that had gone by a century ago. [...] At one moment he thought he saw something like a human foot resting on a low branch...a naked, high-arched, bronze and lissome foot. But when he looked again, the little bronze foot was only a shadow, or else the climber had pulled up his bare legs into the screen of leaves. (54)

Great-Uncle Elihu tells Mr. Bellister that the name of the suburb Remuera, which appears so "seemly and discreet" (55), in a further twist of irony, means "'My Buttocks'"<sup>3</sup> in Māori: "The place, the superior residential district, the chosen locale of judges, Archbishops, retired naval officers, and that sad little band whom Elihu

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<sup>3</sup> Remuera comes from the Māori *remu-wera*, meaning 'burnt buttocks,' and is an allusion to a Māori cannibalistic ritual. *Wera* is Māori for hot; *remu* means buttocks.

described as the Wet Knights of New Zealand, really was called My Buttocks, *tout court*" (ibid.).

Lydia Wevers comments on the absence of Māori in Katherine Mansfield's short stories, "At the Bay" and "Prelude:" "The invisible Maori lie beyond the boundaries which construct the Burnells' landscape, are still unexplored territory and in that sense, they are historically unsaid, unfronted: history has not yet invaded the modernist present" (1995, 45). Hyde, writing around fifteen years later than Mansfield, through her metaphoric location of Maritana, "sort-of-nephew" (1993, 92) Joe, and her boyfriends on the island (they, and Wednesday's children are imaginary; the island is not) explores ways of writing about the Māori, their displacement, and the relationship between Māori and Pākehā in an idealized, imaginary family, which includes Wednesday's imaginary European lovers. The frequent references to Wednesday's "brownness," while also connoting camouflage for submissive self-protection within the family home, her plainness, and her comparison with animals like voles and squirrels, may also be read as denoting her wish for indigeneity (Elleray 2008, 37). This wish, however, does not extend to having a child by a Māori lover; she considers the possibility of having another child, named 'Amber,' with a lover from India or Ceylon (1993, 47). The depiction of Maritana, Joe, and her boyfriends is emblematic of the ways, not always successful, in which early New Zealand writers were seeking to figure the Māori in an affiliative relationality to Pākehā. Maritana is in a position of subservience as nanny to Wednesday's children of European descent, and, despite her boyfriends, has no children of her own, textually encoding 'the dying Māori race,' and the settler colonist's aspirations for indigeneity through erasure of the Māori. Her fondness for a red dress, and Joe's *taihoa* ('hold your horses'), and liking for *wai piro* (alcohol), are among a number of stereotypical weaknesses.

Mr Bellister's observations on New Zealand, particularly those made during his visit to Rotorua, reflect the picture-postcard image presented for tourists' enjoyment. He looks at mud pools, attends a Māori concert, and throws coins to Māori boys in a river, who call out to the tourists, "'Penny, *pakeha*, penny, *pakeha*'" (120). Just as Hyde's description of the imaginary Māori on Wednesday's island lack authenticity, so the Māori in Rotorua are seen as "picturesque" entertainment. Price comments on the contradictions and generalizations in Hyde's fictional and journalistic depictions of the Māori: "Nonetheless, she was unusual for her time in perceiving the Maori as the victims of Empire, and in her disgust at the colonial culture's treatment of them as

‘picturesque’ while ignoring the very real (and unpicturesque) conditions in which those such as the Ngati Whatua of Orakei found themselves” (1995, 57).

Hyde makes reference in “The Singers of Loneliness” to Māoridom’s “immense wealth of native myth and poetry, which had never been written down. Though most of this was grossly wasted, a little has been saved and used, or is still available for writers of the future” (1938; 1991, 347). While she was keenly aware that the settler colonists came to an already inhabited land in which “rivers, mountains, forests, lakes were alive with diversified chanted or whispered legend or song, known to every child” (349), and aligns the “padding barefoot runners of the New Zealand bush” (1993, 66) with the “Romans of Britain” (65-66), the canoes with the coracles, in making “land-roads and sea-roads” (65), her predominant use of myth and legend in *Wednesday’s Children* is Greek or Roman. The imaginary children glimpse a *waka* (Māori canoe) off the island (“Wednesday’s children often played that the red canoes were prowling around the headlands, and swathed one another in paraha<sup>4</sup> as if in cocoons,” 58), but such references to the “immense wealth” of Māoridom’s traditions and cultural *taonga*<sup>5</sup> are fleeting, like the *waka* itself, and hint allusively to what Hyde terms the “minds divided” (1938; 1991, 352) of colonists uncertain or “fretful” about both their allegiance and relationship to the ‘Mother Country,’ and to a New Zealand whose shifting nature is portrayed in the bleak scenes around Madame Mystera’s cottage.

These scenes reflect what Hyde calls “the dead hand of mid-Victorian morality” (353), and its pernicious hold over the patriarchal social and cultural norms of far-flung settler colonies like New Zealand. Great-Uncle Elihu reflects on his experiences of settler society in New Zealand from its earliest years and concludes that little has changed for women:

He had looked back, with wise and faded eyes, upon features of social existence which had always depressed him...limitations and onesidedness in matrimonial arrangements, the fetish of illegitimacy, the dual standard of morality, the cheerful acceptance of prostitution and its near-respectable little sisters. It was all very well for his contemporaries to talk of Woman as a delicate flower, fit only for protection. Elihu knew his cloakrooms, a generation before and a generation after most people,

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<sup>4</sup> *Paraha* is Māori for convolvulus with which, it is believed, captives were tied up before being placed in Māori ovens (57).

<sup>5</sup> In Māori culture, a *taonga* is an object or natural resource which is highly prized and treasured.

and he knew that a normal thing, woman is neither protected inside marriage nor beyond it. (1993, 164)

In the settler society of Great-Uncle Elihu's youth and in the emerging, urban settler society with its widening class divisions depicted by Hyde, the Law and the Church are portrayed as masculinist and judgemental, as powerful and conservative structures which uphold traditional gender codes and protect white, male hegemonic norms, and devalue women as subjects. The police matron at the police court observes resignedly: "She knew her world, her cloakroom people. Men were its masters, and gentlemen its occasional visitants, sparkling like the angels from the Christmas trees. Men beat or deserted or murdered their wives, men were physically unprepossessing, and mentally less than dust" (135).

Crispin embodies Hyde's indictment of puritanism in New Zealand's colonial society. His virulent condemnation of Wednesday as a "harlot" (28), her conduct as "degraded" (29), her unconventional way of life on an island and as a fortune-teller in Auckland, her gifting of the lottery win to a children's home and not giving any of it to her already affluent family signifies the narrow, mean-spirited, judgemental nature of antipodean puritanism, and its lack of compassion for and engagement with the marginalized and downtrodden. He insists on "the necessity of keeping the Church out of politics" (22). There is no clergy evident in the impoverished, working-class suburbs that Wednesday walks through to reach Madame Mystera's cottage, only a doctor, "a good, tired young man, who did not really mind when his patients failed to pay him [...]" (83). It is he, not a member of the clergy, who mutters "terse words like 'hovel' and 'hounds' to the elusive Powers that Were Not, and had seen fit to leave the old lady with nothing in her cupboard but half a cup of very cold and dirty tea" (83), on his arrival to attend to the dying Madame Mystera. When Wednesday leaves the family home and writes to Brenda to let her know that she is living happily with Mr. Agrapoulus, Crispin pronounces that "she was as one dead to us. I insisted upon it" (31). He represents in his "blackness" (his "black hat," "streamlined and black" car, and "dark clothes," 72) a puritanical faith whose "God sees [and] uncovers the shame of the evildoer" (34), but does not love or forgive, or risk social and political engagement. Ronald, caught between his affection for his step-sister and loyalty to his wife and her brother, wonders: "Resentment... He [Crispin] hasn't any love, not for anything. He hates Wednesday because of that [...]" (33).

Crispin's condemnation and hatred of Wednesday are based on his and her family's erroneous belief in what she has told them about herself in the letter she wrote to Brenda after leaving the family home and apparently running away with Mr Agrapoulus, who sold her the lottery ticket, and what they subsequently read about her in the newspaper. Wednesday places newspaper notices to announce the birth of her five children; they state her name (and her family's surname), but do not refer to their respective Greek, English, Italian, and Irish fathers. Brenda is particularly sensitive to the scandal: "Of course, Brenda's friends all knew the scandal. Wednesday was so patently abnormal that the least they could do was to make no mention of her, as though she were in a mental hospital or a gaol" (25). Crispin states that if Wednesday is mad that "she should be certified and put away" (34). The references to abnormality, certification or prosecution leading to incarceration in a mental hospital or gaol, reflect the prevailing patriarchal view that a woman's transgression of traditional codes of sexual morality rendered her either 'mad' or 'bad,' or both, and dangerous to the heteropatriarchal construct of family and the power of the Father.

Wednesday resembles the unmarried sheltered daughter that Jane Mander describes in "Sheltered Daughters" (1916) in her 'usefulness' to the Gilfillan family who expect her to stay at home and show her gratitude through her dutifulness (194). Prior to her departure to live with Mr Agrapoulus, Wednesday plays the role culturally assigned to her through her family's and society's attributions. Adrienne Rich writes: "Through motherhood, every woman has been defined from outside herself: mother, matriarch, matron, spinster, barren, old maid – listen to the emotional timbre that hangs about each of these words" (1979, 261). At twenty-seven years of age in the 1930s, Wednesday is both a spinster and an old maid. She is seen as a dutiful, subservient, and dependent household appendage, whose life is circumscribed by the culturally defined scripts of spinster and old maid, tolerated by the family for her domestic usefulness: "I was an unwanted woman for twelve years – all the way between my seventeenth birthday and my twenty-eighth one. That was reality" (1993, 189). Crispin regards her as "extremely plain" (30) and a nonentity in the Gilfillan household, a spinster step-sister who is financially dependent on the *largesse* of her step-brother and his wife for her food and keep. To Brenda, Wednesday is "a little brown creature," "always underfoot," "running about with her raffia workbasket," "hiding behind the lilacs" (25), and "small and easily dealt with" (72): "Brenda had for years dealt firmly, if kindly, with a Wednesday whom she had no reason to think other than a worm. The fact that Wednesday put up no show

of opposition for her to master made little difference. She mastered her meekness, just as thoroughly as she would have mastered the offensiveness of a fish-wife” (ibid.). Wednesday is not one of the six bridesmaids Brenda initially chooses to have at her wedding, despite the fact that she is the bridegroom’s only sibling. Given Brenda’s anxious compliance with social conventions, her omission reflects the insignificance she already represents in the world Brenda intends to make in her married home, and perhaps also her lack of conventional prettiness. To her niece Pamela, Wednesday is “like a little brown animal ... homely, but not domesticated” (39), remembered “for being very nice to me once in my childhood” (ibid.). Great-Uncle Elihu sees his great-niece as “plain, brown, fugitive Wednesday” (35):

While she remained a good girl, he had liked her, in a way. Soft hands. Soft step. Quiet little way of moving about. He had thought, now and again, of doing something for her, and giving his nearer kin a surprise. Thought, and chuckled, and tucked the thought away again. Good girls don’t require to have things done for them. They are brown shadows, you meet them on landings, or they come into your boredom and listen to you yarning in the sad twilight, and don’t interrupt or aggravate you with fool questions. (ibid.)

Ronald remembers his step-sister as “a pretty good scout” (28), and her kindness to him “in her funny, worried way” (28). He remembers “her brown paws” (29) flying up to catch the bridal bouquet, only for it to be caught by another bridesmaid, and that “his heart felt warm and sad for Wednesday” (ibid).

After Wednesday’s departure and her apparent transgressions of social and sexual codes in external reality, she is ‘othered’ differently by her family. To Brenda, she is “suddenly a boa-constrictor, slipping from [her] reach, and coiling herself gaily in the most conspicuous positions” (25); to Crispin, she is a “woman [to] be dealt with, restrained” (33); to Ronald, she is “a bad lot” (28) and “an International Thingumabob” (29); to Great-Uncle Elihu, she is “Elihu’s Thing, to be protected and revered” (67), because she “hadn’t stayed good. She’d flung her cap over a whole row of windmills, hopped it with a Greek bookmaker” (35); to Pamela, she is a “nymphomaniac” (38) and “terribly unconventional” (40).

The ways in which Wednesday is ‘othered’ by her family, both before and after her lottery win, signify her displacement within the family, her lack of a relational ‘home’

to which she feels a sense of belonging, and the puritanical and judgemental social codes to which her family conforms in not reaching out to her. She refers to her departure from the family home as being “kicked out:” ““You [Ronald] and Brenda and Crispin and all your friends did kick me out, didn’t you, as soon as you heard about the children? I mean, out of your own lives?”” (171).

The “period of attenuation and wearing away,” to which Erikson refers as a characteristic of traumatization that is not event-based, is applicable to the years Wednesday spends in the Gilfillan family home which she describes as “aeons of blinding, speechless misery” (64):

It is not very easy to love people, when the core of their own attitude is a fundamental contempt of everything you are, or would hope to make yourself. The long sands you have walked together become painfully strewn with flints and shards, sharp fragments of criticism, pebbly sneers, granite boulders of straight-out suspicion and disbelief. Your feet shrink from such a road. (65)

The negative ideation of Wednesday’s self-image, and her feelings of being an outsider, marginalized, and traumatically alone in a household where empathy is profoundly absent (with the exception of her relationship to her great-uncle) are attributable to the cumulative nature of the “continuous impingements” she experiences: ““And then when it all went so badly – living where I wasn’t wanted and looking such an insignificant plain kitchen pot, and dropping stitches in knitted bedsocks no sane person would have worn, anyway, I began to wonder, ‘Which self? Which self? True to which self?’ You see, Mr. Bellister, most surface selves are such lies.”” (197). The analogy of herself to a “pot” occurs also earlier in the text when, on her last night in the Gilfillan home, she reflects: “*I’m* so plain that I don’t look like a person at all. I look more like a pot, a brown pot” (84). When Derwent entreats her to visit her dying great-uncle and to put aside “all the little feuds and differences” (170), Wednesday’s reply reflects her feelings of being rejected and cast out by her family: ““I never made any feuds or differences,” whispered Wednesday. ‘I never tried to prevent them from doing whatever they liked. I only asked to be myself, and I didn’t even ask that until I found out that if I went on living their way, I’d have become either a maniac or a mummy’” (ibid.).

The analogical use of small, vulnerable creatures and the colour “brown” to denote the ways in which her family ‘others’ Wednesday (“little brown creature,” “worm,”

“little brown animal,” and “brown shadow”), the description of her hands as “brown paws,” her comparison with a rabbit “anxious to get back to its burrow,” or with a creature that hides in the shrubbery, signify her inconsequence within the family, and her marginal status. The creatures with which she is compared live close to, or under, the ground. The repetition of the colour “brown” reflects not only her not-belonging in the exclusively “white” world of the Gilfillans, her ‘outsider’ positionality comparable to that of the Māori, and her nondescriptness in the family’s eyes, but also her emotional and psychic response to devaluation. Just as comparing herself to a “pot” reflects her negative self-image, so “brown” signifies her self-effacement, and the way in which she seeks to make herself as submissive and inoffensive as possible in the Gilfillan household: “I let myself be edged off the earth – by shyness, by clumsiness, by mooning in corners. [...] One becomes unreal. [...] I couldn’t be bothered even pretending with people, at the last. There was a mist between us” (198).

“Brown” further signifies a desire for inconspicuousness and concealment as a defensive means of self-protection in an inhospitable environment. Wednesday makes herself ‘invisible,’ and adopts submissive behaviours as a form of coping adaptation to the aggravating impingements of her familial/sociocultural environment. Her responsive behaviours take the form of the dissociative defensive mechanisms of freeze, submit and collapse, and reflect the flattening of affect, the numbness and passivity characteristic of the hypoarousal defined by West: “Hypoarousal is the experiencing of “too little” activation – a numbing sense of deadness or emptiness, passivity, and possibly paralysis, being too distanced from the experience to process it effectively” (2016, 43-44). He comments that hypoarousal can also enable loss of memory as part of “survival-related immobilization responses” (44). Wednesday’s dissociative identity disorder is a harmful result of cumulative early relational trauma, but it is also a method of coping with it.

Textually, there is no sustained narrative of Wednesday’s childhood and young womanhood; the novel is predominantly about Wednesday *after* she has left the Gilfillan family home, her imaginary life as a mother on an island, her work as Madame Mystera the Second, her interactions with her family, Mr Bellister and Derwent, and their responses to her apparent transgressions, and her death by suicide. The absence of a coherent autobiographical narrative reflects the “wordless and static” nature of traumatic memory commented upon by Judith Herman (2001, 175), as opposed to “the

action of telling a story” (Pierre Janet<sup>6</sup>; *ibid.*), which Janet describes as characteristic of normal or narrative memory. The two textual examples of Wednesday’s recollection or recounting of a ‘story’ from her childhood have the static effect of a “still snapshot[s] or a silent movie” which “does not progress or develop in time” (*ibid.*). The most significant insight from the two memories comes from a flashback, when she enters the attic, at thirty-seven years of age, to visit her great-uncle. As Briggs, Great-Uncle Elihu’s butler, opens the door to the attic, she recalls what she is going to see there, and ‘sees’ herself as a distressed child in the attic:

But she did not mention the other inhabitant of the suite, the child in a white pinafore, whose long brown curls were not natural, like those of other damsels, but had to be brushed round a cross nurse’s finger, and then generally came out before a day was half-ended. ‘Oh, Miss Wednesday, do look at them bird’s nests of yours,’ was the usual reference to her unlucky hair, if she did anything in the least exciting. The little girl in the attic had a smudgy face, due to slate-pencil, tears and chocolate, the last having been administered by Great-Uncle Elihu, who declaimed in his cockatoo voice, high and formidable: ‘Never mind if yer sums won’t do, Wednesday, me girl. A nice world this ‘ud be with females sitting around doing their sums right. A bloody fine sort of world that ‘ud be.’ (1993, 68)

When Briggs opens the door wider, and announces Wednesday, “the little girl, who had been sitting cross-legged beside Great-Uncle Elihu’s chair, gave the visitor just one rainy smile, and then vanished” (*ibid.*).

The second example exemplifies both a visual image, and what Onno van der Hart, Ellert Nijenhuis, and Kathy Steele term “sensations” (2006, 41), writing that “traumatic memories are sensorimotor and affective experiences rather than ‘stories’” (*ibid.*). It occurs when Wednesday consents to visit her great-uncle, as he lies dying. She says to Ronald: “‘Wasn’t he [Elihu] wise and funny and mysterious? [...] I can remember I was in trouble one day, and being scared and sidling along the wall, hoping nobody would see me. And Great-Uncle Elihu was there in a turkey-red dressing-gown, and suddenly it was all right’” (1993, 171). Great-Uncle Elihu is the only significant other who offers

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Janet, *Psychological Healing* [1919], Vol. 1, trans. E. Paul and C. Paul (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 661-663. Janet (1859-1947) was a pioneering French psychologist, philosopher, and psychotherapist in the field of dissociation and traumatic memory.

her a sense of safety and relatedness, and the attic provides a refuge for her. Crispin dismisses her escaping to the attic as “for ever running to his [Elihu’s] side” (29) as a child, and the kindly jolly provided by her great-uncle as “pamper[ing]” (ibid.).

The gaps represented by the absence of a sustained narrative or ‘story’ about Wednesday’s childhood are mirrored by the significant silence in the text about her mother, and maternal influences as she grows up. Wednesday never refers to her mother. She is mentioned only once by Ronald, who says: ““Same father, mother an Agnew”” (28). The brevity of this sole reference to her could be read as an oblique reference to a family of social standing in Auckland society and/or to a family of some notoriety, known for its transgressive social conduct, a scandal, or mental instability. The only reference to the father of Wednesday and Ronald is in relation to his will, which, to quote Crispin, left Wednesday “practically penniless” (29). Wednesday’s mother is ‘silenced’ or erased in the text, and in the gapped ‘story’ of Wednesday’s twenty-seven years in the Gilfillan family home. Laurie Vickroy describes such an absence as a “presence [...] connected to repression, isolation, loss” (2002, 187), and silence as representing “a traumatic gap, a withholding of words [...]; it characterizes traumatic memory as wordless, visual and reenactive rather than cognitive/verbal [...]” (ibid.). Wednesday’s mother represents an absence that is present in relation to the imagined identity that Wednesday assumes as the mother of imaginary children, and in the silence that communicates itself in the infant care experienced by Wednesday. There is no evidence of mothering, or nurturant, empathic care (“a cross nurse” represents the only reference to a care-giver).

Wednesday’s absent or unavailable mother, and the silence about her nurture as an infant and child point to failures in her maternal care. One of Winnicott’s key concepts is the “good-enough” mother, with which he drew attention to the importance of the mother’s caretaking function and its critical significance for the infant’s emergence into self-status. Winnicott describes “good-enough” maternal care as the mother holding the infant, figuratively, as well as physically, in conditions which are favourable and reliable: “It is reliable in a way that implies the mother’s empathy” (1965, 48). He adds that it enables her to meet and adapt actively to the infant’s needs: “The basis for instinctual satisfaction and for object relationships is the handling and the general management and the care of the infant [...]” (49). Successful maternal care results in there being “built up in the infant a continuity of being which is the basis of ego-strength; whereas the result of each failure in maternal care is that the continuity of

being is interrupted by reactions to the consequences of that failure, with resultant ego-weakening” (52). Wednesday’s description of herself as an object, a “brown pot” (1993, 84), not a person, reveals her negative self-image.

Compounding the distinct affect of absence and loss in the silence about her mother, Wednesday also suffers from the aversive impingements from her inhospitable and conflicted familial environment, and from the negative impact of the ways in which they ‘other’ her and treat her as a nonentity or an appendage to be tolerated, giving rise to her feelings of alienation and aloneness within the family. Winnicott’s conceptualization of nurturant and empathic “holding” extends beyond the “good-enough” mother’s “holding” of the infant to include the environment in which the infant is reared. He comments that “[t]he environment, when good enough, facilitates the maturational process” (1965, 223), and observes, “[o]ften, the environmental factor is not a single trauma but a pattern of distorting influences; the opposite, in fact, of the facilitating environment which allows of individual maturation” (139). The combination of the “good enough” mother and a “facilitating environment,” that is “good enough,” facilitates the infant’s developmental stages, and becoming an individual in his or her own right. In the words of Winnicott:

Behind a child’s maladjustment is always a failure of the environment to adjust to the child’s absolute needs at a time of relative dependence. (Such failure is initially a failure of nurture.) Then there can be added a failure of the family to heal the effects of such failures; and then there may be added the failure of society as it takes the family’s place. (207-208)

Wednesday’s absent or unavailable “good enough” mother and her lack of compensatory empathic care and nurture are exacerbated by her experience of a negative “facilitating environment,” and “relationships, which gall us and goad us” (1993, 200). The failure of nurture is compounded by the failure of the family to provide her with an environment in which to form secure object-relations and to develop a coherent sense of self. Together they signify the cumulative trauma she experiences over a significant number of years in the Gilfillan household. Both Winnicott and Khan emphasize that relational and cumulative trauma do not arise from a single event, and describe such traumas more as “a pattern of distorting influences” (Winnicott 1965, 138), and “strains and stresses” (Khan 1963; 1974, 46) that build up

over a period of time. Khan stresses that single events may not be traumatic at the time, or in the context in which they occur; rather that “they achieve the value of trauma only cumulatively and in retrospect” (47).

Deprived early in life of the guiding influences necessary to identity and the formation of secure attachments (object relations), Wednesday displays a weak ego-strength (linked to a failure of ego-support from her family), which is evident in her negative self-view and her dislocated, fragmented sense of self. She reflects on Polonius’s well-known saying from *Hamlet*: “It was Shakespeare who in after years kept saying to me, “To thine own self be true.” [...] I began to wonder, ‘Which self? Which self? True to which self? You see, Mr Bellister, most surface selves are such lies. [...] My truths were amoebae, they had second selves, split personalities, double faces”” (1993, 197-198). Her gradual psychic erosion is manifest in her fragmented sense of identity, and in her suicidal ideation and thoughts of death, *before* she rejects Mr Bellister’s marriage proposal and commits suicide:

Naturally, upon receipt of this news [the predictions of Madame Mystera about “Luck, money and love,” 82], Wednesday postponed her own idea of dying. She did not want to die, she just didn’t want to live as she had been living, as it had seemed inevitable that she must live. She had not quite decided on her manner of dying, and had wished for the sake of all concerned, that she could simply dissolve into foam, like Hans Andersen’s mermaid. (ibid.)

Wednesday recalls how she felt the night she walked out of the Gilfillan home, and wanders, without conscious direction, through the darkened streets of Auckland: “There comes a stage of walking alone into the rain, into the rain. Its soft little thudding drums, its drone of elfin bag-pipes, its hidden voices and hands, would help you if they could, but it’s too late” (81-82). The lines convey the sense of a person whose defensive organization and functioning are at breaking point, until the seven candles in Madame Mystera’s lighted window draw her in, and she enters the cottage for the first time: “If it hadn’t been for Madame Mystera the First, would Wednesday have been alive at all, let alone in possession of her island and her children? Not Wednesday, and very well she knew it” (81).

Wednesday describes the identity predicted for her by Madame Mystera to Mr Bellister as “[t]he first really lovely frock of my life. I put it on, and it suited me, I felt

happy in it. You'd call it a cloak of invisibility'" (199). Madame Mystera tells Wednesday that she will win a fortune and have "an abundant family of splendid children" (82), adding that she sees little evidence of a marriage in her crystal. Her win in a lottery triggers the defence mechanism of hyperarousal, which, like hypoarousal is survival-related, but is characterized by fight and flight responses, and an "accelerated pace of emotions, sensations, and sensory stimuli" (West 2016, 44). Wednesday leaves the family home, rents an island off the coast of Auckland for £10 a year, where she, in her psychical reality, brings up her five children. In external reality, from twenty-seven years of age to thirty-seven, she lives alone in a shack on the island, which has no other inhabitants, or in Madame Mystera's two-room cottage, also alone, predicting fortunes. She re-enters her former home on only three occasions during that time to see her great-uncle, each time using the back stairs to avoid meeting any other members of the family and re-experiencing traumatizing memories of the past.

Wednesday's dissociative identities as an imaginary mother and as Madame Mystera the Second derive from the specific nature of the early relational trauma she experienced *vis-à-vis* her primary object, her absent or unavailable mother, and from the cumulative trauma she experiences in her familial environment. Dissociative identity disorder is a classic defence mechanism against trauma which involves "an undue division of the personality" (Van der Hart, Nijenhuis, and Steele 2006, 15) into "two [...] or more [...] self-conscious psychobiological systems" (31). They note that "dissociative parts are components of a single personality" (30), and comment that "even though dissociative parts have a sense of self [...], they are not separate entities, but rather are different, more or less divided psychobiological systems that are not sufficiently cohesive or coordinated within an individual's personality" (ibid.). Wednesday's dissociative identities are a mother living with her children on an island in psychical reality, and a fortune-teller in external reality. Her letter to Brenda announcing that she was living with Mr Agrapoulus, and the birth notices in the newspaper are facts in external reality. Unlike her 'openness' to her family and the readership of the Auckland papers about her 'illegitimate births,' she hides her identity as Madame Mystera the Second in external reality from her family. In her identity as a mother, she, and her island family are aware of her work on the mainland as a fortune-teller; as the fortune-teller, she makes no reference to her other identity as a mother, or to her life on the island. Prior to her suicide, Mr Bellister is the only person from external reality who visits the island; members of Wednesday's extended, imaginary

family and her three oldest children have imagined visits and adventures on the mainland. Madame Myстера the Second, the identity that Wednesday assumes in external reality, does not pay a visit to the island, and the imaginary children, four lovers and other members of Wednesday's imaginary family have no contact with her other than in Wednesday's psychical reality.

The identity that Wednesday assumes as Madame Myстера the Second is comparable to the putting on of the "frock," except that it involves a black veil and wraps, but like the "frock," it gives her "a cloak of invisibility" (to all but Mr Bellister). She looked like "a ghostly little black bundle with a veil hiding the whole of her face" (1993, 124). The assumption of the identity of Madame Myстера enables Wednesday to fulfill a sense of gratitude to her: "Shortly after the funeral [Madame Myстера's], Wednesday's red lottery ticket announced its magical success. The cottage with candles, bleak and blind, looked forlorn when she walked past it, and she felt that she owed it a debt which could now never be repaid" (83). She regards it as a "duty" (78) to continue to provide the services of a fortune-teller in the poverty-stricken back streets of Auckland; although the financial return is small (as she sometimes foregoes payment), "it did good [...], and it kept evergreen the memory of Madame Myстера the First. Those were the main things" (86).

Wednesday's work as Madame Myстера, in an environment that is socially, racially, culturally and economically different from her former familial and social one, reflects her wish to do good, on the margins of society, among those in whom she recognizes the marginalization, alienation and aloneness that she experienced growing up, and her desire to align herself with them. Her negative comparison of herself to a "pot" because of her feelings of plainness and ordinariness becomes a comparison to its usefulness. She sees herself as a psychic "container" for the confidences of the downtrodden: "Just there to *contain* things, a receptacle for simmering personalities" (84). With her advice about homespun remedies for complaints like warts and the more dependable of two suitors for a young girl, she continues providing the services that she sees Madame Myстера's cottage as offering, namely those of "both a clinic and a chapel" (*ibid.*).

The jumble-sale scenes provide a telling contrast between the world Wednesday now inhabits and her former one. Most of the women and the girls in the neighbourhood resort to buying their clothes at jumble-sales, which are the cast-offs of "the wives and daughters of the well-to-do [who] came down in cars and sold off their nearly good garments at fantastic prices, sixpence for a hat, quite good frocks for a shilling" (79).

There is callousness, and rapacity, in the way socially and economically advantaged young girls join in what is described as “fun:” “Occasionally, bright-eyed and laughing, the flowery girls would join in the fun, and fight for their own cast-offs with frantic women who clawed at the silks and tried jejune silk blouses against their slumped but massive bosoms” (ibid). Pamela visits Madame Myстера the Second to have her fortune read, fails to recognize her aunt, and her only observation on the area is to say to Mr Bellister that the cottage, described by the young doctor as a “hovel,” looks ““a little like the gingerbread house in the fairy tale”” (121). Unlike her niece, Wednesday sees the poverty and deprivation on the streets of her new surroundings, the impact on families and relationships of socio-economic inequalities, the widening gaps between social classes in settler society, and the gathering sense of alienation in a society that looks to be increasingly uncaring towards those in need and in which “the hoped-for better” (Evans 2007, 160) has failed to materialize.

Hyde uses a female subjectivity to observe and implicitly critique the impact of poverty and gendered codes on society, on relationships, and in particular on women, with an emphasis on the ways in which the woman’s body expresses gender differences in relation to physical abuse, sexual double standards, trauma, and the greater burden women bear in coping with poverty. In a series of bleak vignettes describing the slum around Madame Myстера’s cottage, Hyde depicts the gendered ways in which “individualized relational situations reflect the impact of more generalized social situations” (Vickroy 2002, 5). Women are exhausted, and prematurely aged, by childbearing, and the struggle to feed and clothe large families in unsanitary conditions. Trapped by poverty, they are unable to escape physically abusive husbands, or predatory males. Pregnancy for an unmarried girl means a risky backstreet abortion, or suicide, “[...] the girl’s figure, in its bedraggled finery that failed to conceal decisive alterations in her silhouette, grew rigid as she stared down at the oily water lapping against the piles of the wharf” (1993, 84). Hyde portrays women whose lives are governed by the same patriarchally-determined cultural and social codes as the women who reside in suburbs like Remuera, but with far fewer compensatory options.

In the grey-painted women’s cloakroom at the police court, in which hangs a poster warning about contagious and infectious diseases, Wednesday finds “the note of colour” (134) she wants, “the queer struggling colour of people flung together in a mass, trying to grow flowers out of themselves” (ibid), in two women sitting beside each other. The half-caste Māori girl suckling her son is described as looking like “Madonna and Child”

(*ibid.*), while the sobbing older woman is “white and wilted; one who had been so outrageously battered about by life that even her little birthright of self-possession was gone” (*ibid.*). The juxtaposition of a racially transgressive iconic maternal tableau beside a downtrodden and spent European woman, who will drop her claim against her unfaithful husband, encodes the threat to indigenous people from European colonization, and vulnerability to settler society’s entrenched gendered codes.

The world that Hyde describes in such scenes is the world that Brenda endeavours to exclude from her “fortress” home. She is depicted only in her domestic “fortress” where her obsessive ‘making’ of her material environment to fit her anglophile social pretensions reflects her attempts to ‘make’ people (like objects) suit the backdrop she has created. A fortress is not impregnable, and it also imprisons those within. While Brenda enjoys the material wealth, and social position that the women in the slum do not have, she, like them, is a captive to the same patriarchal and gendered codes. Despite her attempts to seal herself within social conventions, she is troubled by their aridity:

Drearily her mind ran over the long, aimless accounts of love and matrimony and life, accounts that wouldn’t add up right. But perhaps one shouldn’t keep accounts. Perhaps one shouldn’t try to treat all this as a business. Perhaps one should only love and be beloved... Treason, treason, cried the practical woman inside her, running like a spider from side to side of the threatened fortress. (168)

Brenda lives her life within the framework of the dominant culture, and compensates for the vicissitudes of relating to and in the world through material show and treating others as ‘objects.’ Her “fortress”/prison is well-buttressed materially compared to the circumstances that imprison the women in the slums, but she, like them, is subject to the gendered codes of the dominant culture.

There is a lot of the maternal in Wednesday’s identity as Madame Mystera the Second, and in the solace she gives her clients to make their threadbare lives more bearable. Ash comments that Wednesday, as Madame Mystera, “functions as artist in the external world, working not with objective facts, but with the ‘unreal’ truths of dreams, creating female stories and shaping female experience” (1993, 212). Textually, it is difficult to find evidence of an “artist” at work, “creating female stories and shaping female experience”. Encoded, however, in the kindly, but far from liberating or

imaginative advice that Wednesday dispenses is Hyde's critique of the powerful social and cultural structures that work to continue women's subjugation to patriarchally-constituted gender stereotypes and norms: "Naturally none of her clients gave a hoot for these things [character-reading, applied psychology, phrenology and allied sciences], being anxious rather to learn (*a*) how to get husbands, (*b*) how to get rid of husbands, (*c*) how to induce their husbands to come home again" (1993, 85). Her advice with its promises of a little money and its spinning of false hopes would not be out of place in the 'Agony Aunt' section of a woman's magazine: "Not much was expected of her that could not be furnished by common sense, perspicacity, a medical dictionary, general knowledge, and, above all, sympathy" (84). In her identity as Madame Myстера the Second she provides people with a momentary escape from a bleak present and something to hope for, such as a little windfall, a child growing out of stammering, an ocean journey, or love and matrimony.

The identity of fortune-teller with her veils and wraps in a slum area functions as a double layer of concealment in hiding Wednesday from the Gilfillan family in external reality. They understand her to be living on one of Auckland's many offshore islands, her precise location unknown. When the two under-cover policewomen charge her with making illegal proceeds from fortune-telling and refer the case to the police court, Wednesday immediately thinks of the repercussions if the Gilfillan family learns that she has been working as a fortune-teller. In her dissociative identity as imaginary mother, in which she had placed the birth notices, Wednesday had felt no concern about the Gilfillan name when announcing her children's illegitimate births in the newspaper, or repercussions for the children; in external reality, she fears that exposure in her identity as a fortune-teller will shame her family, and may have consequences for her children.

In both the dissociative identities that Wednesday assumes there is an implicit critique of settler colonialism and its impact on women. As Madame Myстера, she positions herself in the external reality of a slum to engage with and help the victims of poverty and social inequalities. Her alignment extends to living in impoverished circumstances herself. The little back bedroom of the cottage with its gas-ring, washing-up bowl, bed with a patchwork quilt, and table, "halt and maimed of three out of four legs" (81), is strikingly similar in its ascetism to the little shack that is revealed at the end of the novel as her 'physical home' on the island. They both highlight the 'reality' of the traumatic aloneness in which she lives for ten years, despite her veiled contact

with clients and her imaginary life with her island family. The identity of Madame Mystera foregrounds a form of social engagement, in external reality, on the margins of society, and the harmful effects on women of “a malignant social code”<sup>7</sup> (quoted by Edmond-Paul 2008, 21), while the nature of Wednesday’s maternal identity, and the island family she imagines, is an expression of her longing for “community, which laughs and is free” (1993, 200), instead of relationships which “gall us and goad us” (ibid.).

The island on which Wednesday lives represents the frame that marks off the different kind of reality that is within it from that which is without it. Wednesday herself describes the island’s imaginary status, saying to Mr Bellister that it ““lies off the map”” (130). She also regards it as a ““sanctuary”” (ibid.) from the external world in which she tells Mr Bellister she has ““no place”” (131). The account of her life on the island is not that of a life lived in external reality; it is a metaphorized version of herself as she would like to be, and of familial life as she wishes it were. In her dissociative identity as a mother, she enacts a loving, nurturant, and empathic relationship with her children, and the island’s other inhabitants. Metaphors of ‘home’, belonging, and family are signifiers of her matrifocal life on the island, in contrast to the metaphors of not being ‘at home’ and not-belonging that signify her life in the Gilfillan household. She has no relational ‘home’ in the external world. Her experiences of a profound absence of relationality in the Gilfillan family, and the cumulative impingements from her familial and patriarchal, sociocultural environment, lead to a level of unbearability, which results in the defence mechanism of dissociation or splitting into multiple identities. Wednesday tells Mr Bellister that people only come to her island when ““things outside refuse to fit in a bearable sequence”” (192). Her experiences on the mainland in the Gilfillan household and on the island are signified metaphorically by mainland/island, patrifocal/matrifocal, filiative/affiliative, anglophile/international, materialistic/natural, exclusive/ inclusive, restrictive/free dichotomies.

The island is the metaphoric sanctuary from external reality where she can enact and enjoy the affective intimacies and relationality that were absent in her own childhood. Her dissociated self creates a large home whose white-washed walls she describes as being “coated with the warmth of their living together” (18). She imagines “a long table of white pine” (ibid.): “Seating herself, in imagination, at the head of her table,

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<sup>7</sup> Patrick Sandbrook, “Robin Hyde: A Writer at Work,” Ph.D. thesis, Massey University Press, 1985, 51-52.

Wednesday looked down the row of fire-flushed faces, and felt that her heart could almost break for pleasure in them” (ibid.). In reality, it is “a little white pine table” (202). The emphasis on relational warmth around the imaginary table is in contrast to the display of wealth and status embodied in the chill splendour of the Gilfillans’ much larger dining-room table:

Each day, its glossy mahogany skin was eased and renewed with the finest wax. It was groomed like a sleek horse. There were various rites in connection with the table. Sometimes a gardener came tramping to the backdoor, burdened sadly with his choicest begonias, and said, grumbling: ‘The Missus’ orders. Them flowers for the dying-room table.’ Sometimes the housekeeper would say awfully to a new maid: ‘Mary, lay the table,’ as if the table were a ghost [...]. (203-04)

The homeliness of Wednesday’s table with its paint stains and pocket-knife engravings and on which babies are laid to have their napkins changed is in contrast to the “shining nakedness” (204) of the Gilfillans’ “round, thick-jointed god of domestic sacrifice,” around which Mr Bellister sees “anxious faces, discontented faces, lonely faces” (ibid.).

Wednesday’s dissociative identity as a mother is reflected in the foregrounding of motherhood, mothering, children, sibling interactions, and family. Her lovers are tangential, and pass quickly out of her life, with only Beppo returning to the island, broken from fighting in Abyssinia. The care that Wednesday gives him is maternal, reflecting her subjective experience of her body as procreative and maternal, rather than sexual: “[S]he always managed to retain the friendship of her lovers, which was the main thing. There was always another lover where the first one came from, but how in the world could she replace a friend? [...] Love blossomed and shone and passed. Friendship remained, and there were always the children” (17). The form that Wednesday’s dissociative identity takes in its privileging of the mother/child relationship indicates that she is enacting a primary (maternal) object relationship in which she is both the mother and her children, who are extensions or components of her child self. The strength of the hypercathexis between mother and children is apparent in her subsequent rejection of Mr Bellister’s marriage proposal, and life in external reality.

The warmth of touch, absent in her own childhood and young adulthood, is expressed, not in sexuality, but in her loving relationships with her children; they are hugged, consoled in comforting embraces, and tucked up in bed at night. She treats each

of them as an individual, and listens to their stories and adventures, both ordinary and extraordinary. She imagines a fantastical adventure for each of the three older children that suits their respective passions for sculpture, exploration, and animals. All of the people on the island, and the events they are involved in, exist only in Wednesday's imagination.

Mr Bellister presents for Wednesday the possibility of relationality in the external world. Critical discussion of Mr Bellister in relation to Wednesday often foregrounds his comparison to "a shaft of Aberdeen granite" (23), and his passion for islands: "Great blobs of continents, coloured a hearty pink to represent the outpoured blood of the British Empire, left him cold, but an island, especially an obscure island like Wednesday's, could still stir his imagination" (76). Price contends that "Mr Bellister wants to possess the world of the imagination and ideal community that Wednesday represents; he is determined to colonize her island empire" (1995, 61), while Ash argues that he wants to "possess Wednesday and appropriate her island for his own dream" (1993, 213), stating that "marriage to Mr Bellister would reduce Wednesday from independent myth-maker and hero to passive heroine" (214). Together, the analogy to a granite tombstone and the reference to colonization contribute to an interpretation of Mr Bellister as wanting to subordinate her in a heteropatriarchal marriage, and colonize or appropriate her, thus stifling her creativity and subjective independence.

The nuances of the descriptions of Mr Bellister as a piece of Aberdeen granite relate to their contextualization, and his confident self-possession. His eyes, which are "grey," "calm," "watchful," and "a trifle amused" (1993, 23), are frightening to Brenda, as she presides over her splendid dining-table, aware that her butler and Mr Bellister know of her inner *angst*. In his elegant greyness with his "silvery-grey hair" and "exquisite grey suit," he reminds her "of the more elegant sort of tombstone" (*ibid.*). She recognizes in him both "completeness," and "integrity," "a complete man [who] would make his own decisions, he would *be* his own decisions" (*ibid.*). Later, that same evening, when he hears about Wednesday's scandalous behaviour, he is overcome with mirth, which he tries to suppress: "The slim granite pillar of his self-possession slid into place again, wobbled, stood firm" (30). To calm Wednesday, when she senses something is wrong with the unexpected arrival of Ronald, Pamela, and Derwent while they are drinking tea, he puts his arm around her shoulders and says "'Steady, steady,'" while "his eyes went like grey pebbles and his tombstone effect slid smoothly into position" (169-70). On the night that Mr Bellister is determined to visit the island,

Wednesday knew that his tombstone effect was once again in position. She knew now what thing that look portended [...] the smooth determination to have his own way. Wednesday felt a little shiver run up and down her spine. Impossible that she should feel any shrinking from Mr Bellister – he was her friend, infinitely more than her friend – but for the moment, it did not seem that a man stood there at her side among the breast-high lupins. A granite shaft, a dead, grey, magical thing, potent with too great a power of drawing to itself and striking out at enemies, waited there in silence. (188)

Mr Bellister says, “I am coming to your island tonight, and immediately” (ibid.). Wednesday gives in and acknowledges that she is “beaten” (189). She takes him to the wrong side of the island (away from her shack): “We can sit there and talk. I believe I’d like that. I never before sat on my shores and talked with anyone grown-up” (ibid.). Her description of “grown-up” is not dissimilar to Brenda’s perception of Mr Bellister: “Self-possession [...] I think that is the word. [...] The ownership of oneself. Never giving oneself away, in love, in shame, in quarrels, in defeat. I don’t mean that you are ungenerous. In fact, that sort of self-possession is a little like the miracle of the loaves and fishes. You can feed the multitudes and remain intact” (189).

The solidity of the metaphor conveys the protection Mr Bellister would offer Wednesday, and his ability to defend her, while his “completeness,” “self-possession,” self-controlled equipoise, indicate a coherent, functioning sense of self. The last reference to Mr Bellister’s resemblance to a pillar is when he rises up to tower over, and castigate, Crispin when he berates Wednesday for her humiliation of the family and for advertising “pretended children” (204). His “tombstone effect” on the night he is determined to visit the island is more a reflection of Wednesday’s subjectivity, and her fearful apperception that it represents the inhospitable social world of external reality to which, she senses, he will propose that she return.

Mr Bellister’s own experience of trauma is overlooked in interpretations of his relationship with Wednesday. It is a single incident trauma which involved the death of a girl with whom he was very much in love. He tells Wednesday about it on the island:

‘She was hardly grown up, very slender and proud, when she bought a car, and was quick in learning to use it. The car overturned soon afterwards, and she was pinned

beneath it and burned to death. I don't think I have ever seen much since, except sometimes her white dress and the apples in her lap, and sometimes what they took out from under the car. Make me forget that, Wednesday.' (193)

He tells her: "'You're the first woman I have loved since then'" (ibid.). The gapped memory of trauma is evident in his repeated "'I can't remember, I can't remember'" (192), when Wednesday asks him to tell her more about the girl. His memory of her is fixed in one static, visual image, "'a girl in a white frock, with sun on her smooth hair and apples in her lap'" (ibid.). In its fixity, it has the qualities of "timelessness and immutability" that Van der Hart et al. describe as subjectively characteristic of traumatic memories (2006, 41).

Another textual clue lies in Mr Bellister's sensitivity to "the small, the lonesome, the pathetic" (1993, 76). Although this relates to his passion for islands, his intuitive attunement to psychological and emotional states of attenuation, alienation, and helplessness is apparent in his relationship with Wednesday, and in his ability to see beyond the surface 'truth.' He first sees her through a crack in the library door as "a small brown creature, uncertain whether to advance or run" (75). Pamela does not recognize her aunt in Madame Mystera, but Mr Bellister does. He is unsurprised at her "prim" (128) refusal of help from a stranger following the charges of the two undercover policewomen; he notes the clouding of Wednesday's eyes at the mention of a fine, and wonders why that is after a lottery win; he senses that the children Wednesday brings to satisfy the wish of her dying great-uncle, who are not as he expected her children to be, are "dream-children" (173); and when he kisses her for the first time on the island, he is "momentarily surprised at a don't-hit-me look in those dark eyes: not the look he would have expected from a mother of five" (193).

A *pohutukawa* tree provides a fifth, and critically overlooked, signifying table in the text. It is the only table in the text at which Wednesday experiences true relationality in external reality. Mr Bellister suggests a picnic after the incident with the two policewomen. Armed with a bottle of claret and sandwiches, they use the roots as a "comfortable dining-table" (130):

He [Mr Bellister] picked up the shilling wine glass they had bought with the claret, and poured the light ruby into its heart. 'There are people who get no happiness from wine at all,' he said, sombrely, 'nor from such things as the littleness of sand grains

and the peace of doing nothing. Now let us drink a toast and break these horrible glasses. To our better acquaintance.’ (131)

At which point, Wednesday says she has no acquaintances, and “no place in the world” (ibid.); Mr Bellister’s response is to propose another toast, “To the dream within the dream” (ibid.), and shatters his glass against the tree. Wednesday hesitates, then drinks the wine, raises her hand and shatters her glass as well. The scene provides an insight into the nature of Mr Bellister’s romantic love of islands; he imagines them as places free of the expectations and constraints of society where one can enjoy “the littleness of sand grains and the peace of doing nothing.” The romantic gesture of a picnic on the roots of a tree signifies a warmth of relationality, or intimacy, that Wednesday has not experienced before around a table in external reality.

Ash interprets Mr Bellister’s imagining of Wednesday as a “fawn” (137), a delicate, vulnerable creature that startles easily, as an appropriative gesture that expresses his wish to “possess and deposit” (1993, 214) Wednesday at ‘Fawns,’ his estate in England. While it is correct that Mr Bellister wants to take Wednesday, as his wife, to ‘Fawns,’ such an interpretation omits his intuitive understanding of her, while still unaware that the children do not exist in external reality: “Don’t be so frightened of everything,’ he said gently, ‘you’ve only fallen out of touch with the world, and you can regain that so easily. Not here. Right away on the other side of the world” (192). Given that Mr Bellister recognizes very quickly that her familial environment is unhappy, and discovers her working as a fortune-teller in a slum neighbourhood, his wish to take her, and her children, to his home in England is perhaps not surprising. He intuits that there is something wounded in her that needs to heal, and offers her the possibility of healing and recovery in the loving relationship, described by Ferenczi. Similarly, the “things of reason” (190) he says to her, are not ‘unreasonable.’ Reflecting again his ignorance about the ‘non-existent’ children, he tells Wednesday that the £100,000 left to her children by Great-Uncle Elihu will give them security and independence, and that she cannot keep her children on the island for life.

The warmth of physical intimacy is figured in the reciprocity of their embrace on the island. It represents the first textual reference to Wednesday’s experience of physical intimacy with a man:

He kissed Wednesday on the mouth, finding her lips soft, cool, and not too greatly afraid. The second kiss she returned. 'I do love you,' he heard her say, as though it were a matter of still surprise to discover it, 'I do love you, I do love you.' [...] 'please kiss me as much as you possibly can. I've wanted this.' 'You're not the only one,' said Mr. Bellister, 'lovely... on the oldest island, before the beginning of the world, not only the oldest music when the oars dripped, but the oldest warmth. Like this, together in the sands.' (193-94)

The intimacy that Mr Bellister offers Wednesday in the external world, and his marriage proposal, present a threat that she is unable to cope with. Her negative self-ideation and lack of self-worth are evident in her response to his declaration of love; she responds that he only loves her because of her island and children, saying that "without them I'd only be rather f-funny" (193). Mr Bellister replies, in a relationally warm way, by telling her that he likes her to be "rather f-funny," draws her close, and tells her that he is going to kiss her. There is both intimacy and warmth in the way Mr Bellister describes life together at 'Fawns.' He says they may have more children, and shows an understanding of children's love of unfettered play in telling Wednesday about the open spaces her children will have to explore.

Wednesday is unable to accept the intimacy, and relational 'home' in the external world, that Mr Bellister offers. What he proposes would require adaptive and integrative actions on her part to re-cathect with external reality. The risk of intimacy in a 'real' relationship, in an inhospitable external world, is too great for her, as she fears that the future might be a repeat of the traumatic past. When Mr Bellister tells her that "reality isn't going to be so alarming from now on" (188), Wednesday's answer is: "Don't forget that I have tried it" (189). Mr Bellister is not the threat, nor does Wednesday perceive him as such. She loves him and tells him: "The worst of it is, if I had known you years ago, I might never have had my children. That makes me feel unfaithful to them" (194). The threat comes from the external world (of which he is a part), in which she experienced early relational trauma and cumulative relational trauma from her familial environment, and in which trauma might re-occur. The hypercathexis to her children of her maternal dissociative identity is too strong, the risk of re-traumatization from the external world too great, and her defence system of flight too entrenched, and she commits suicide by drowning that night, after Mr Bellister has left the island.

Wednesday's death is prefigured in her comparison to Eurydice<sup>8</sup> when she enters the attic to visit her dying great-uncle, taking with her five children from the Anstruther Children's Home to which she had given her lottery win. Beagle, Great-Uncle Elihu's butler, sees her look once over her shoulder, "a small and plain Eurydice. Then darkness swallowed her up" (173). Mr Bellister rows Wednesday to the island in darkness: "'Charon, Charon,' whispered Wednesday, as the oars sheathed in the black plumage of the water, 'where is the obolus for my eyelids?' As she leaned forward, the moon placed two cold little silver pennies on her closed eyes, and Mr Bellister was startled by her deathly look" (190). It is a journey which Casertano describes as having "all the characteristics of a journey to the nether world" (2008, 49). The prefigurations of her death in the referencing of Eurydice and Charon, the ferryman who carries the souls of the deceased to the Underworld, echo Attica's prophetic sighting of a mermaid: "It was far out. [...] It could have been arms, beautiful arms and breasts, shining tail, flashing in the sheath of waves" (1993, 62), and Wednesday's wish to be like the mermaid in one of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, and dissolve in sea-foam (82).

Hyde also uses the classical myth of Demeter, the goddess of grain and agriculture, and her search for her lost daughter Persephone, her younger self, to convey the symbiotic mother/daughter relationship between Wednesday and Attica. The description of Wednesday as "a presence [who] could carry wheatsheaves and poppies" (16), and Attica "with dark little wild poppies and cornflowers in her hair" (102) resonates with the cornucopias of grain and wild flowers associated with both Demeter and Persephone. The symbolic mother/daughter quest for (re)union is also implicit in the oceanic and lunar imagery associated with Wednesday's suicide. Given the importance of the sea's function in the text as liminal space between the mainland (external reality) and the island (psychical reality), Wednesday's death by drowning signifies a return to the maternal womb (*matrix, mater*; 'womb,' 'mother'), and to a (re)generative, symbolic power of oceanic communion with the (lost) mother, the original primary object. The sea, "a maternal symbol even more primary than the earth [...] implies also transformation and rebirth" (Tresidder 2005, 429); it is bathed in the silver light of the moon, "image of the earthly cycles of [...] death and rebirth [and] a symbol of the passage from life to death as well as from death to life" (322-23). Ellen Handler Spitz

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<sup>8</sup> The myth of Eurydice is about a doomed love. Orpheus enters the Underworld to find his dead wife Eurydice, and persuades Hades and Persephone to let him leave with Eurydice (they impose the condition that he must not look back at her). He does look back at her following him, and she vanishes into the Underworld again, lost forever.

extends the maternal signification of the moon by referencing its “roundness (suggestive of the breast) [and] its cycles: like the mother, the moon disappears gradually and predictably reappears – changing shape but always recognizable” (1993, 270). The final lines of the poem which ends the novel, *And I in a white boat rocking, // Rocking and dreaming, in an island place* (1993, 208), evoke the rocking of a cradle, and the desired oceanic communion between mother and child.

Wednesday, imaginary mother, returns metamorphically as her imagined daughter, Attica, in Mr Bellister’s vision:

With his eyes he saw nothing, but into his mind came the clear picture of a young girl running. [...] ‘Attica,’ he whispered, ‘Attica.’ No footprint set its beautiful shapely seal on the edge where the pale foam was sucked down into the sand. But foam and sand sprayed up together, as though the runner’s foot had touched and adored them. (207)

The forlorn and empty look of Wednesday’s little shack on the island has the symbolic aspect of the ‘empty tomb’ following Christ’s resurrection, with Wednesday’s metamorphosis into the daughter of the mother/daughter dyad embodying the haunting presence of the dead among the living. The lyrical density and beauty of Hyde’s prose, rich in metaphor and allusion, conveys what Wednesday says in her letter to Mr. Bellister she “can’t convey with words” (201), and reminds us that the human psyche, like life, is fragile, and can be damaged irreparably. Wednesday is testament to this truth.

The lyricism of the novel’s ending belies the tragedy at its heart. Wednesday is unable to accept the possibility of healing offered to her in a loving relationship in external reality, and commits suicide rather than risk re-experiencing trauma. Her inability, and fear of what external reality has meant for her, are attributable to the early relational trauma and cumulative trauma she experiences in her familial environment, and which lead to her dissociative identity disorder. The trauma she experiences is not event-based, rather it is accretive in nature, and is traceable to an absent or silent mother and deficits in empathic, nurturant care.

Hyde’s most productive years of writing were in the mid-1930s, which is the period from which Khan dates “the whole new emphasis on infant-mother relationship [that] changed our very frame of reference for the discussion of the nature and role of trauma”

(1963; 1974, 44). In her depiction of Wednesday, and her familial environment, Hyde gives literary expression to the impact of early relational, family-based, cumulative trauma that European psychoanalysts were working to understand. Hyde demonstrates how early relational trauma is exacerbated by continuous impingements from an inhospitable familial environment, which, in turn, reflects the corrosive influences of settler colonial society and its patriarchal, puritanical, anglophile sociocultural norms and institutions. Vickroy comments on the way in which mother/child relationships are “a locus for considering many sociocultural aspects of trauma” (2002, 4). Hyde’s indictment of settler colonialism’s “malignant social code,” and its impact on women, is integral to her depiction of the cumulative psychic damage and erosion Wednesday experiences through deficits in her infant care and from the impingements of her familial environment, and which lead to her dissociative identity disorder. The two dissociative identities she assumes (a loving maternal figure in her psychological reality, and a maternal fortune-teller on the margins of society in external reality) reflect the intersections between early relational trauma and cumulative trauma from her familial, sociocultural environment. Wednesday’s suicide represents her final flight, and dissociation, from external reality.

Set in Auckland in the 1930s, *Wednesday’s Children* reflects the increasingly urbanized nature of New Zealand society, and the impact of the Great Depression (1929-1935) on people already living on the margins of society. The novel depicts the effects of urban poverty, on women’s lives in particular, the widening gaps between affluent suburbs like Remuera and those where poverty and unemployment are becoming endemic, and the increasing gulf between social classes. Hyde critiques pretentious anglophilic attitudes as symptomatic of a settler colony still tied to the ‘mother country’ and unsure of its identity.

In the following chapter, I move the discussion to the transmissibility of trauma from one generation to the next within one family. I examine Kidman’s use of the trope of diaspora, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma from Isabella McIssac to her daughter Annie McClure, Annie to her daughter Maria, who is born in New Zealand, to underscore the transmission to New Zealand of the patriarchal sociocultural norms and structures the settlers brought with them to the new colony, and their persistence into the postcolonial period. Writing in the 1980s, Kidman explores the colonial past through three generations of women from one family in a sociohistorical context. *The*

*Book of Secrets* opens in New Zealand in 1953, and reaches back to 1812 in Scotland and the diasporas which took waves of settlers to the colonies. Fictionalizing the character of Norman McLeod, a Scottish lay preacher, who emigrated with a group of followers to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Kidman depicts the stories of women whose voices and experiences of diaspora to far-flung countries and settlement in alien environments have often been ‘silenced’ or neglected in official histories.

## Chapter Four

### *The Book of Secrets* by Fiona Kidman

#### The Matrilineal Transmission of Trauma

The spring came and she ruptured the ice, brought out eels from the river. Such delicacies, such riches, she thought as she stewed them in her largest pot. And remembered, not for the first time, how they could strip a creature to the bone. Standing alone at the bench, she pressed her hands over her ears as if to shut out an old voice or voices. The trembling fractured ice she had broken that day, and the dark water above which she had perched herself, had opened something up again, something that would never go away.

FIONA KIDMAN  
*The Book of Secrets* (1987)

The intersection that I want to focus on is how a person carries within his or her own mind and inscribed on his or her body numerous histories of experiences within the family's legacy of traumas and losses, along with the family's culture and external world.

JILL SALBERG  
"The Texture of Traumatic  
Attachment: Presence and Ghostly  
Absence in Transgenerational  
Transmission" (2017)

*The Book of Secrets* by Fiona Kidman, published in 1987, is a fictional historiography which references Norman McLeod (1778/1779? – 1866), a Presbyterian lay preacher, who left his home country, Scotland, in 1817 with a group of followers to found a religious settlement in Nova Scotia, Canada. McLeod later migrated, with his wife, family members and religious adherents, to Australia and then on to New Zealand where he established a religious community in Waipu. He is not, however, the focus of the text. The nineteenth-century Scottish diasporas, the deeply-held religious convictions of McLeod and his followers, the founding of religious settlements in settler colonies like Canada and New Zealand, and the transmigration of British settlers across the globe from settler colony to settler colony, function as a textual frame for the depiction of the transgenerational transmission of trauma through a matrilineal genealogy. Kidman depicts settler colonialism and its cultural and social structures as persistent and intrusive across time (1812 – 1953), and space (from Great Britain to Canada, Australia and finally to New Zealand), and relational, attachment, and event-based trauma shaping the familial and diasporic experiences of three generations of

women in one family associated with McLeod's transmigrating sect. Silke Stroh comments on the concept of transmigration, citing "'multiple migration' where individuals and communities physically relocate to different countries not only once, but repeatedly, involving at least a third location" (2013, 301), as its most precise sense. On a material level, multiple migrations function to unsettle further the concept of 'home' as a place of fixity and stability, to exacerbate dislocation, and to increase the demands on women to establish the semblances of a settled household. In her reference to the etymology of the prefix *trans-*/'across,' Stroh notes that the essence of transmigration is mobility (306). Trauma is similarly inherently mobile in its ability to reappear in another time, and/or location; its transmigratory nature is implicit in the concept of *Nachträglichkeit*. Anne Whitehead writes:

[Cathy] Caruth's emphasis on trauma's disruption of time or history draws on Freud's concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, which has been translated as 'deferred action' or 'afterwardsness.' *Nachträglichkeit* describes a complex and ambiguous temporal trajectory and has proved to be a useful model for those (like Caruth) who seek to rethink the relation between trauma and memory and to construct models of historical temporality which depart from the strictly linear. [...] Caruth's understanding of trauma reworks 'deferred action' as belatedness and models itself on Freud's conception of the non-linear temporal relation to the past. (2004.1, 5-6)

The prefix *trans-* in both 'transgenerational' and 'transmission,' used in relation to trauma, signifies the 'carrying across,' or migratory penetration, from one generation to the next, from one period to another time, and from one location to a different context.

The principal point of difference between *The Book of Secrets* and the previous three novels discussed is its status as a text which engages with the settler colonial *and* the postcolonial as historical periods, and which depicts the persistence of the settler colonial paradigm into the present. Jane Mander, Jean Devanny, and Robin Hyde were contemporaneous with the period they wrote about in *The Story of a New Zealand River*, *The Butcher Shop*, and *Wednesday's Children*. From her 1980s perspective, Kidman looks back to the colonial past. *The Book of Secrets* opens in 1953 in New Zealand, and reaches back to 1812 in Scotland. She uses the trope of a matrilineal genealogy to delineate the transmissibility of trauma from one generation to the next, and to show how settler colonialism is a particular kind of colonialism that generates

particular social formations which persist into the postcolonial period. Her focus on the traumas of settler colonists, the persistence of settler colonial structures and norms, and her exploration of what the past tells us about the present, and what the present tells us about the past, situate the text across the settler colonial and postcolonial paradigms.

The text depicts the transgenerational transmission of traumatic experience and memory through the intrusion of the past into the present, embodying the continuous cycle of suffering and loss in the context of family, and through the lens of a matrilineal genealogy. Thematically, the transmission of traumatic experience and memory is portrayed across three generations of women (Isabella McIssac, her daughter Annie, and her granddaughter Maria), whose stories intersect throughout the text. The constantly shifting chronology, and non-linear modes of telling, underscore the text's central theme of the transgenerational transmission of trauma, and its phantomatic haunting of the present.

*The Book of Secrets* foregrounds trauma, both diegetically and textually, through the use of different and alternating female narrative voices, its fragmented narrative organization of changing time-frames, locations, and familial contexts, and its incorporation of modes of testimony and witnessing in the form of extracts from journals and letters. While the authority of the church is evoked in the title of *The Book of Secrets* with the reference to *Book* claiming biblical authority for the secrets disclosed, *Secrets* signifies a counter-discursiveness to the dominant patriarchal discourse and an appropriation of the discursive terrain for the narration of a subjugated female history. As Elizabeth Rosner comments, "Fiona Kidman's novel permits the reader access to a text whose existence is not even imagined by the discourse against which it was written [...]" (1991, 86). A similar observation is evident in Doreen D'Cruz's comment on Kidman's "refiguration of an androcentric national imaginary to include female ancestries and subjectivities" (2017, 98): "In *The Book of Secrets* (1987), arguably her most accomplished work, she [Kidman] uses fictional female testimonies to recuperate female genealogies and histories and thus moderates the patriarchal bias of official colonial history" (ibid.). Maria's discovery of the journals in a "forbidden place," Isabella's trunk, alludes to the hidden nature of counter-discursive writing, and the difficulty of gaining access to buried memories, while also symbolizing resistance "by means of the "underground" survival of a female text – a text which insists upon empowering the "secret" knowledge that exists outside the boundaries of the dominant discourse" (Rosner 1991, 83). Kidman subverts patriarchal controls over discourse, and

uses the textual device of journals and letters, archetypal female, and essentially private, modes of writing in the colonial era, as a means of access for Maria to learn about the past and the secrets it contains about the lives of her mother and grandmother.

Kidman's use of three generations of women from one family reflects an expanded concept of family from the one-generation model, described by Jill Salberg as "the nuclear orbit of the primal oedipal family" (2017, 79), with its mother-daughter dyads and mother-father-child triads, to a conceptualization of family which permits a "broader view that incorporates the influences of disrupted attachment across multiple generations" (ibid.). *The Book of Secrets* illustrates Salberg's observation that "transmissions are always multigenerational and richly influenced by context, both historical and personal, and are carried in the mind and in the body" (79-80). Kidman portrays what Salberg and Sue Grand describe as a "much larger object-world" (2017, 3), which extends psychic influence and "disrupted attachment" beyond the nuclear family model. Through her depiction of the political, economic, and social conditions which led to the Scottish diaspora, the transmigration of families from settler colony to settler colony, the repressive and harsh nature of McLeod's religious sectarianism, the patriarchal subjection of women across chronological time and geographical space, and the hardships of exile, dislocation, and repeated efforts at re-settlement, Kidman portrays, from a woman's perspective, the historical and sociocultural markers of trauma across three generations of women, transmitted in contexts that are familial and communal, and which impact traumatogenically on women in their familial roles, as individuals, and as a collectivity.

I contend that Kidman portrays a multi-faceted and interpenetrating matrilineal legacy of trauma with its constitutive facets being the disruption and dysregulation of familial and intimate relations by patriarchal patterns of domination and subordination, and event-based trauma. Isabella is gang raped five times by three men while pregnant, and later miscarries; Maria is forcibly imprisoned in her room, and later in the house, by her mother and uncle when they discover she is pregnant. "The Man's" [McLeod's] arrogant and narrow religiosity, his patriarchally-constituted forms of control and surveillance, and will to power over his followers are further co-constitutive facets of trauma through their divisive and corrosive influence on three generations of family members and their personal relationships. I argue that the text manifests trauma and that there is something more going on than the depiction of a subversive female subjectivity that "triumphs over patriarchal plots and subsumes them" (D'Cruz 2017, 99), "the

disruption of the exclusive alliance between language (or sign) and official time, through women's access to subversive signification" (D'Cruz 2007, 64), and the interpretation of the cave in Pictou and the house in Waipu as womb-like places where women can claim their maternal and female identities and exercise subjective autonomy (73, 74, 76).

My critical perspective decodes a narrative of psychic wounding that runs through the text; I explore what the transgenerational transmission of trauma suggests about the violence of settler colonial family formations and argue for settler colonialism to be recognized as a persistent social and cultural formation into the present. Whitehead writes: "Theories of trans-generational trauma suggest that affect can leak across generations; that a traumatic event which is experienced by one individual can be passed on so that its effects are replayed on another individual one or more generations later" (2004.1, 14). Salberg also comments on how affect "leaks" through processes of psychic and emotional extrusion and absorption, observing that "a central feature in the concept of the transmission of traumatic experience from the first to the second or third generation [has been] that parents extrude the traumatic contents of their minds into their children" (2017, 78). I contend that the traumatic events experienced by Isabella leave a legacy of trauma which is passed on to her daughter and granddaughter with the primary form of transmission being processes of extrusion and absorption of affect, and that the matrilineal legacy of trauma connotes settler colonialism's damaging legacies in the postcolonial present.

In view of the importance of matrilineal genealogy to my argument, it is useful at this point to provide an overview of the line of descent. The story of Isabella McIssac (née Ramsey), the writer of the journals, begins in 1812 in the north-west of the Scottish Highlands. She is the only daughter of an Englishwoman who married a Scot, "a gentleman, at least in a minor way [...]. The belief that he was any kind of gentleman had been a great comfort to her in their northward migration" (1987; 2012, 50). Despite Mrs. Ramsey's wish to settle in London, Mr. Ramsey insists on returning to Scotland, where he takes up the position of supervisor of the British Fishing Company. In the small fishing village of Ullapool, the Ramsey family enjoys a prominent position, and lives in one of the finest houses. Mrs. Ramsey knows that Isabella "had been admired during her season in London" (48), but fears that Isabella, at twenty-six, is destined for spinsterhood: "The cause of her daughter's problem, her single state, was all too clear to her. The girl thought she had the head of a man" (51). Against her parents' wishes,

Isabella marries an impoverished crofter, Duncan MacQuarrie, who comes under the influence of McLeod, an unordained Presbyterian minister, who has taken up a position in Ullapool as the local schoolmaster, while continuing to preach to large crowds in the open air. For a time, before her marriage, Isabella assists McLeod's wife, Mary, with the running of her household and the care of her children. Isabella and Duncan emigrate to Nova Scotia with McLeod, and his followers.

The only living child of Isabella and Duncan, Duncan Cave MacQuarrie, is born with a deformed foot after Duncan's death by drowning in Nova Scotia. His father Duncan MacQuarrie had acquired a limp, "caused through an accident when the laird was out shooting and accidentally discharged a gun in his direction" (64). Isabella's second marriage is to Fraser McIssac, with whom she has two children, Hector and Annie. Annie marries Francis McClure, and in 1851, Annie, Francis, and Hector join McLeod, his wife and family, and his followers, in their migration to Australia, and on to New Zealand. After the death of Fraser McIssac, Isabella emigrates from Canada to New Zealand with Duncan Cave and settles in Waipu where her daughter and son-in-law farm. Annie has only one child, Maria McClure, who is born after three miscarriages, and after Francis McClure's death. Isabella moves into Annie's house to help her daughter, and the three generations of women live together in the house where Maria was born in 1878, and where Isabella dies at nearly one hundred years of age. Maria has an illegitimate child by a Dalmatian gundigger/roadmender, a girl, who dies shortly after her birth. Maria<sup>1</sup> continues to live alone in the house until her death in 1953: "I think it is about fifty-five years that I have been on my own. I live away from the society of people in the world" (20).

The novel opens in 1953 in Maria's house. It is a windy night: "The old timber creaked, the iron on the roof was almost rusted through; another winter or so and it would be through all over. Already she kept a large china bowl under the leak in the corner of her room" (11). The walls of her bedroom are lined with newspapers to cover over the cracks. They are "yellow and brittle with age, the year 1897, the year the world had stopped. Or she had stopped being in the world" (13). There is "a persistent singing

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<sup>1</sup> Maria McClure is a fictionalization of a real person, Kitty Slick, who lived alone in Waipu. Kidman writes: "[I]n 1955, there had been a witch figure at the edge of the village, who died alone in her house after allegedly keeping herself to herself for 57 years (in the book that I wrote later, it is 55 years). I had particular cause to remember; I had entered her house in my teens, not long after her death, and its barrenness and sorrow had entered me like an arrow. I still have pieces of the newspapers that covered her walls, dated 1898. [...] The character of Maria, who was never intended to exactly represent Kitty, contains all the elements of what I knew of Kitty at the time of writing, plus a 'secret life'" (1991, 10; 13).

across the sea” (11). It is a singing from Scotland in 1817 that travels across the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Tasman Sea:

The music unfurled like a dirge across the lake, nearly drowned out at times by the weeping of those left on the shore. [...] As the ship pulled away, McLeod, standing on the deck, broke into the old lament of McCrimmon, and in a moment the voices of everyone on board had joined with him and were soaring back across the water to the watchers on the shore – *cha tille cha tille cha tille me tuilleach*, return return return we never, in peace nor war return we never, with silver or gold return we never. (92-93)

The voices of family and friends who are gathered on the hillside above the bay at St. Ann’s, Cape Breton Island in 1851 to farewell members of their community sailing to Australia merge with the voices from Scotland to form the “persistent singing across the sea” (11). The Scottish lament evokes the exilic departure of settler migrants from their mother country, cast adrift into an unknown world with no hope of a way back.

The *leitmotif* of lament and its evocation of loss, implicit in the sense of a lost connection with the mother country and broken attachments through exile, recurs, forebodingly, throughout the text. It appears again as McLeod and his followers sail from Canada to Australia, leaving loved ones behind, and in Maria’s lapse into exhausted sleep moments after her daughter is born, still alive, but with the umbilical cord around her neck: “By the candle-light she looked down on the blanket and saw the baby lying between her legs. There, it was done. Joy, like a fresh wave, engulfed her. It will be all right, she said to the baby. I have you now. She slept again, and heard in her sleep the songs of the Gaels, and the echoes of a lament” (291). When Maria awakes, “[S]he was stiff and cold, and between her legs there was a cold solid mass. She could not remember for a moment what it was that had so tormented her in the night. The candle had burned down and gone out. She put her hand on the baby, knowing without looking that it was dead” (ibid.). She blames herself for the baby’s death: “Around her neck the tell-tale cord, if only she had known, could have held onto consciousness a minute, or five. A killing of sorts. A failure of will at the critical hour” (292). The *leitmotif* of the “ancient litany of sorrow” which functions as a signifier of lost connections and broken attachments through colonial migration and settlement, and personal tragedy, returns to Maria in the hours before her death in 1953: “The edges of

the past blurred and fused with the present” (12). The persistence of the sorrowful singing, and the blending of the voices, symbolize the haunting presence of the past, and what has been lost, in the present.

The merging of the past with the present is evoked in the text’s wider engagement with settler colonialism, and its ongoing legacies of trauma. Robert Eaglestone comments on the sociocultural and historical specificity of trauma, and the importance of “looking closely and more carefully not simply at the trauma, but at the structure of experience within which trauma is made manifest” (2014, 18). Through her depiction of the impact of diasporic dislocation, the androcentric hegemony of McLeod and his sect, and a matrilineal genealogy, from a female-centred perspective, Kidman makes manifest the connections between repressive and patriarchal social, economic, and religious structures, and disrupted familial attachment and affect. Laurie Vickroy comments on the “structures, workings, and effects of domination” (2002, 36) in specific contexts:

Situations of subjection and colonization have fostered many of the conditions for feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that create trauma. Investigating trauma in these specific contexts can be a valuable focus of inquiry, indicative of the sociocultural contexts or causes of trauma and of the interconnections between the social environment and intimate relationships. [...] Although cultural and economic contexts may differ, situations of subjugation manifest similarities in the structures, workings, and effects of domination as well as in the psychological effects on the individuals involved. (ibid.)

While Vickroy is commenting on a particular kind of colonialism which involves the colonization, oppression, and exploitation of indigenous peoples, and African slaves in America, she makes important points about the postcolonial broadening of its definition:

Another important conceptual expansion of colonialism involves situations where relations of domination and subordination still prevail, which is often the case in situations of trauma [...]. To what extent are domination and subordination absorbed into the dynamics of personal relationships? Is there reproduction of a social dominant in the family, one that seeks to impinge, define, silence? [...] Further, as

the psychological consequences of oppression are passed on to children, legacies of trauma become occasions for repetitions of domination in postcolonial contexts. A powerful context for examining the traumatic consequences of living in colonized situations is domestic space and the relations between mothers and children therein. [...] One indicator of a mother's power is her relationship to home and what this place signifies about her relationships to herself, to her children, and to the social realm, as well as the traumatic consequences of her inability to provide or maintain a safe home. (36-37)

Different as the postcolonial sociocultural contexts may be, Vickroy's observation about the absorption of domination and repression into the domestic space and familial relationships is relevant to settler colonialism as a persistent social and cultural formation into the present. Kidman places the matrilineal genealogy of Isabella, Annie, and Maria in the wider context of diasporic experience, the British Empire, and three of its settler colonies, and brings settler colonialism into contention through the legacies of trauma engendered for three generations of women in the domestic locus of the family home. She depicts the damaging social and cultural contexts which impact on the domestic space and on women's ability to provide a safe home for their children; the home becomes the place where the trauma of the oppressed mother is transmitted to, and perpetuated, in the next generation.

The nineteenth century was the period of the great Scottish diasporas when families, driven out of the Scottish Highlands by the lairds' clearances and the ensuing starvation and privation, migrated to the British Empire's settler colonies in search of a better way of life. Duncan MacQuarrie's brother-in-law, also a crofter, tells Isabella: "People perish every day collecting kelp. They fish when they can and starve the rest of the time. Sometimes they're allowed to till a strip of the poorest soil, and sometimes not. That's at the pleasure of the owners. [...] The children are dying and the women are wasting away" (2012, 61). Kidman portrays the diasporic experience as a conflicted site for women and families: "Parents who were about to leave [Scotland] were wrestling with their own parents as they tried to drag children from their arms, believing that whole families were about to perish and some must be saved" (92).<sup>2</sup> The onward

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<sup>2</sup> Kidman recalls her "state of rapture" when she first heard Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur* as a thirteen-year old at Northland College, and cites the line, *A cry that shivered to the tingling stars*, which rises from the assembled crowd at the sight of the dying king and the barge bearing him to the underworld. She writes: "The wailing and lamenting as

migration from Canada to Australia continues “tearing families apart” (221): “At the bitter hour of their leaving, those who were to stay behind stood on the hillsides and wept” (219). The finality of family ties severed by long-distance and perilous sea-voyages is reflected in Martha’s grief at leaving her mother, whom she had cared for devotedly after her breakdown: “Kate and Eoghann’s daughter, Martha, and Alexander McWhirtle her husband, Martha walking away from her mother as one in a dream, or a nightmare. [...] Kate MacKenzie, who had not spoken for nearly a year, suddenly cried out, ‘*Oh Dhia nan gras mailer rin*, merciful God be with us!’ and fell to the grass” (223-224). Earlier in the novel, as a middle-aged woman, Kate reflects on how little agency she had as a wife in her husband’s resolve to leave Pictou with McLeod: “Even when he had asked her to consider coming to St Ann’s, it had been a kindness extended to a young wife. Really, there had never been any choice” (197).<sup>3</sup>

The long, and perilous, sea-voyages to the settler colonies were fraught with added anxieties for women, as Barbara Brookes describes: “Amid overcrowded and often dirty conditions below deck, ravaged by seasickness and any number of infectious diseases, and at risk of fire and shipwreck, women migrants tended to their children” (2016, 50). Kidman depicts the conditions on board during the voyage to Canada: “By morning [the first day out from land] there was already filth accumulating underfoot. The deck tilted this way and that, and sometimes it was to the advantage of the passengers as human excrement slid overboard. At other times, those caught on the wrong side of the boat found their ankles awash” (2012, 93). In a storm in which the *Frances Ann* nearly breaks up, “Little children were being tossed around, bouncing from side to side of the boat. She [Isabella] began to gather those who were unattended. [...] With Kate MacKenzie who, like her, was still unaffected by the violent motion of the ship, she lashed the children into their bunks with bedclothes” (95).

The sense of a secure connection to ‘home’ is lost through the diasporic sundering of families from the ‘mother-country.’ Isolation for women in alien and inhospitable environments, without their networks of support from older women relatives, enhances

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ships depart from one country for another, leaving behind loved ones who, for one reason or another cannot follow, are stories played out repeatedly in family legends of that district and form part of my own history too. When my Scots great-great-grandmother left Scotland to join the Wakefield migration in 1839, she tried to stay behind but her husband came down the gang plank and lifted the baby she held from her arms and took it aboard the ship. Her only option was to follow, as the laments rose in the sky, or, in other words ‘*a cry that lifted to the tingling stars*’” (2014, 20).

<sup>3</sup> Kidman writes: “[A]n image occurred to me (in the cemetery [at Stoer Point in the north-west Highlands of Scotland], as it happens) of the women who had been associated with the migrations, who had left their homes, never to return, and landed up in distant Waipu, some of them to live their lives out, like Kitty Slick, isolated from the world, for reasons which were arbitrary and cruel” (1991, 11).

their feelings of displacement and of not being ‘at home.’ When Isabella, in Nova Scotia, realizes she is pregnant for the first time, she becomes aware of her ignorance about pregnancy: “I think I am with child. I feel that I ought to know more about this subject. I always presented myself as a woman of the world. Yet out here, alone in the woods, it seems as if I know nothing” (100). Her isolation bears powerfully in upon her: “I am afraid to walk far around here, for there are abysses of water, small lakes quite unmarked and unknown to the stranger, which are still covered by ice, but it is thin and would not bear my weight if I were to stand unexpectedly upon it. I think the end would come very fast as the cold water closed over” (101). She asks herself “Home? No, I *tell* [my italics] myself. This is home” (ibid). The question, and the need to “tell” herself that the woods of Canada are now her home, highlight Isabella’s effort to be rational about her dislocation. At an emotional level, however, the ‘unhomeliness’ of her location is reinforced by her journal entry then moving on to the description of a cemetery: “There are three fresh graves in the cemetery. An old man died of fever the week before last. It took six men more than a day to chip a hole for his coffin in the earth. [...] Last week, Samuel, a timber worker, was killed...” (101-102). Some weeks later, Isabella refers again in her journal to the cemetery:

I mentioned before a third grave in the cemetery but I try to pretend that it is not there for if anything makes me afraid it is this. But the fact is, a woman in the village has died in childbirth. How often one hears that phrase! It is none the less terrifying for its familiarity. Especially for women who are a long way from home, in rough cabins cut out of the woods. (108)

Isabella’s repeated reference to the cemetery with its recent graves, and her disquiet, signal proleptically Duncan MacQuarrie’s death, and his burial alongside his fellow timber worker Samuel.

The settler’s conflicted and uncertain sense of ‘home’ is evident in Isabella after her husband drowns in a logjam. McLeod brings Isabella a collection of money from the people who had migrated to Canada with them: “When he had gone I took the money inside and counted it, two pounds and three shillings. It is not a fortune, but it will buy some meal for the winter. I think I will be able to shelter here until the spring but after that I do not know what will become of me” (130). Her destitution, and dislocation, are evident in her thought of writing to her parents for the fare home: “I suppose it is a

possibility, but there is no guarantee that they would want me back and therefore no compulsion for them to send the money. I am not even sure that I want to go back, or that if I did it would ever be my home again” (155). The concept of ‘home’ loses its emotional unambivalence for the settler caught between two ‘homes.’

The sense of disconnection from home is compounded by the difficulties of maintaining written communication with family members through letter-writing, heightening feelings of physical and emotional isolation. In the same journal entry in which Isabella writes about her intimations of pregnancy, she records, “I wish that I could write to someone but there is only myself now. Nobody replies any more. To send my letters would be like sending them in a hollow log. Only the mice and the birds will find them...I’m alone” (100). In less than a year after leaving Scotland, Isabella feels erased by her family. Years later, Duncan Cave, now grown-up and a talented artist, reminds his mother that she does not even know whether her brother Marcus is alive when she suggests writing to him in London to seek support and patronage for his nephew: “‘He would reply to your letters? How many have you sent that have gone unanswered in twenty years or more?’ ‘Something must have happened to him. Some accident befallen him’” (211). Whole letters written to her sister-in-law, Louise Ramsey, are included in the novel because they were returned, in a bundle, to Isabella by her niece after Louise had been killed in a hunting accident, more than forty years earlier (247). Maria discovers the letters in Isabella’s trunk, and reads them.

Poverty, privation, and the challenges of trying to maintain a household with meagre resources are not new experiences for the Scottish women who sailed for Canada in 1817. Neither are the rigours of childbirth. They are, however, compounded for women in the colonies through the effects of separation from extended family networks, and isolation in remote and unfamiliar environments. For pregnant women living in the backblocks of Canada, like Isabella, far from a settlement or village, with husbands away all day working in distant locations and no female relatives nearby, or living with them, to act as midwives and offer support and advice in the weeks following, childbirth presents an even more daunting prospect, particularly for a first-time mother, with no older children to send for help when her time comes.

Kidman uses the metaphor of seeds, their durability and portability, and their ability to be transplanted and to proliferate, to convey the concept of transference or transmissibility implicit in the etymology of diaspora [Gr *diasporā*, from *dia* through, and *speirein* to scatter]. In Scotland, “[t]he machair grass tossed in the wind and a

violence was on the land” (20). The seeds of the grass which the Scottish settlers used to fill mattresses flourish in New Zealand: “The brown-top grass that the settlers had brought in the hay in their mattresses was flowering. How that grass had taken hold. Nova Scotia had transplanted itself to the New Zealand soil so easily you wouldn’t believe it” (34). Like the seeds from Scotland and Nova Scotia which take root in New Zealand, trauma is inherently mobile in its ability to pass from one generation to the next, and to reappear in another time and/or place. Fire races through the dry grass in the paddocks that surround the house in which Isabella, pregnant, is forcibly imprisoned by her mother and uncle: “Coming towards her now across the paddocks, through the dry grasses, the brown top and rye from Nova Scotia that had come with the people in their mattresses and spread throughout Waipu, the tongues of fire snaked their way towards the house” (246). There is a storm the night Jamie McIssac arrives to take shelter in her house from the threat of enforced enlistment in the First World War. Blown and buffeted like a seed on the wind into Maria’s house, Jamie contains within him a family secret relating to his patrilineage; it is a secret from the past known only to Maria, that unsettles the present:

She [Maria] was aware of the old house and the rainy night pressing in on them. The winds might have blown from off the Highlands, through the brown machair grass that bent beside the Atlantic, or through the elegant grey branches of the birch trees stripped in winter on the coast of Nova Scotia. Across the world, the winds and the voices tramped. We are alone, trapped at the end of our destiny at the bottom of the world. (304)

The seeds, and the dried petals of wild flowers, signify also the connectedness of the three generations of women. Before sailing for Canada, Isabella writes in her journal: “I have gathered plants and seedheads, sweet cicely from the manse garden, rose root and cloudberry, and I have been given some seed of the small wild celery that grows in the Summer Isles. I wonder will they take root in Nova Scotia?” (92). The inter-connection that is implicit in the concepts of ‘across,’ and ‘scattering,’ the linking of one to the other, is evoked in the intermingling of memory traces of her grandmother in the journals, and traces of Maria’s reading:

Wild flowers and twigs and bits of ribbon and recipes for succotash and forach fell from Isabella's journal. But the place where it opened with ease each time Maria McClure picked it up in her house in Waipu was marked not by Isabella but by Maria herself. It was sticky with tea and grains of sugar and pieces of biscuit from all the times that she had opened it and read it, sitting at her kitchen table or lying in bed reading last thing at night when she had her evening snack, sometimes leaving the yellowed pages open and face down on the coverlet while she slept. (156)

The seeds are symbolic also of the nineteenth-century diasporic transmission of heteropatriarchal structures and norms which British settlers transplanted in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and which persist into the postcolonial period across geographic space and time.

Like the seeds, the heteropatriarchal family is one of the structures that is transplanted, with the trope of transmigrant diasporicity enhancing and reinforcing its expansion across the British settler colonial world. The family was the building-block of the British Empire in the settler colonies; it was the instrument with which the lands of the indigenous peoples of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were appropriated, settled, and domesticated. Ruled by the Father, and subject to his authority and law, the family was the key to British Empire-building, demographic domination, and the erasure of the indigenous peoples. The metonymic use of "harsh," "bitter," and "hard" in connection with "land/s" underscores the structure of the settler colonial experience for women, and its continuation in the present. Isabella calls Scotland "this harsh and bitter land" (66), the onlookers remember "the harsh and bitter lands they had inhabited" at the scene of a hanging in Pictou (142), while Annie describes New Zealand as a "hard land" (250). She makes this observation in middle-age, in the materially comfortable circumstances of house and land ownership, and with the leisure to enjoy afternoons of wool-carding with her friends. Such circumstances continue, however, to be dependent on women's subjection to male authority: "Money and land, and dutiful wives, offered themselves as simple solutions to the restlessness of their sons" (250). A woman's chastity before marriage, and during it, is implicit in the word "dutiful:" "They [the older women] could see that the young women would become comfortable matrons without the hardships they had suffered, and given that they avoided cards and Catholics, kept chaste, and made sure their children learned the catechism, they could make a most equitable peace with the Lord" (ibid.). The double

standard in relation to sexual morality, encapsulated in the juxtaposition of “dutiful wives” and “restless sons,” was officially mandated by no less a person than Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862)<sup>4</sup>, a key figure in the large-scale British settlement of New Zealand.

Land functions in the text as a signifier of patriarchal power and control over women, as well as being the motivation for members of McLeod’s religious community to sail to Canada, and later to Australia. The parched nature of the land around Adelaide, their first landfall in Australia in 1851, and the pestilential conditions they encounter in Melbourne, are the spur for their onward migration to New Zealand: “They must now, he [McLeod] said, proceed to New Zealand. [...] McLeod had written to Sir George Grey, the Governor of New Zealand, and had been informed that there was much good land to be had” (2012, 232). Hector uses land as a tool to strengthen his imprisonment of Maria in her mother’s house before the birth of her baby, reflecting patriarchy’s imposition, and policing, of boundaries to circumscribe female agency. He arrives to tell her that her mother Annie has died, and when she says that she will leave, he informs her that she cannot legally, as the land on which the house stands, and the surrounding farmland, belong to him: ““Before your mother’s death we discussed your future. She agreed with me that you were not fit to take possession of the land around you and to try and administer it. [...] Accordingly, she made the land the house stands on into my name, and the house into yours”” (279). Maria objects, and enquires whether a lawyer had witnessed the agreement, but Hector’s reply is dismissive: ““A lawyer? Young woman, it is neither here nor there to a lawyer. Any lawyer would recognize that we have acted in your best interests”” (280). Maria protests, and tells her uncle that she will leave tomorrow, and consult a lawyer in Auckland.<sup>5</sup> In a voice “as soft as velour” (ibid.), Hector tells her that she will be prevented from leaving: “In order to leave the house, you must cross the land which is mine. That is not allowed” (ibid.). “Watchers” monitor the house and Maria’s movements night and day: “[S]he was aware that there were always people close by. It was as though they were afraid she might break loose and inflict some terrible damage if she walked past certain parameters that had been laid

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<sup>4</sup> See Brookes 2016, 46-47; also mentioned in the Introduction, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Brookes writes that the New Zealand Married Women’s Property Act of 1884 granted “all married women in New Zealand the right to control their own wages and property,” and comments: “This legal recognition of equality, however, did little to eradicate the deeply held expectation that a woman would be economically dependent on her father or spouse – an expectation that shaped European attitudes to women’s education, work and wages” (2016, 108).

down for her” (240). As an unmarried, expectant mother at twenty years of age in 1898, Maria has little choice but to accept her imprisonment in the house she now owns, and her economic dependency on her uncle for her material needs.

The power that Hector exercises over Maria through his ownership of land and financial control is symptomatic of the heteropatriarchal family structure that was transported from Great Britain and transplanted in its settler colonies, and in which women were subject to their fathers, and, on their marriage, to their husbands. D’Cruz refers to the “transactional economy of patriarchy based on female commodification” (2017, 114). The imperial drive to populate the settler colonial world with white European settlers of British descent, and the consequent instrumentalization and commodification of the woman’s body for procreative purposes, is evident in the text’s emphasis on the relentless cycle of miscarriages, childbirth, and child mortality, and its impact on women. Diane Hoeveler links sexuality with death in her comment on “the death-dealing properties of female sexuality” (1999, 400). In addition to the risk of dying in childbirth, women experience its “death-dealing properties” in other ways. Isabella miscarries after being raped, Annie has three miscarriages, Martha McWhirtle (née MacKenzie) has a baby every year, Mary McLeod gives birth to ten live children (she also has miscarriages), and Maria’s baby dies after being born. When Isabella greets Mary as she arrives in Nova Scotia, she is struck by her appearance: “In her arms she held another child, born as she had been about to leave Scotland. She looked more pale than ever. [...] [S]he raised haggard eyes, scarcely seeming to know her old friend at first” (2012, 113). To Isabella’s enquiry about the crossing, Mary says, “‘I was ill near most of the time. So were the children. Look at this one, his name is Bunyan. Did you ever see anything sicklier?’ There was a hint of bitterness which Isabella had never detected in Mary before. ‘I tell you, I watched this child night and day, expecting him to die every minute of the way.’” (114). Annie befriends Mary’s daughter Peggy, who tells her there are not enough children in the McIssac family: “‘We are fortunate [...] that we have several children in our family. It’s always useful to have more if any should die’” (173). Peggy’s matter-of-fact, if callous, remark refers to the ten live children her mother bears, of whom one is known to have died, and the limited life-expectancy of babies. It reflects also the prevailing view that procreation was the married woman’s task, irrespective of the cost to her own physical and psychological health:

Often the minister's wife [Mary McLeod] did not rise from her bed for days at a time, and when she did sit at table with them her face was like flour and her eyes fatigued. They roamed across the tops of her children's heads, and Annie could have sworn that she saw none of them. Her hands lay between her knees, the fingers threading themselves round and round each other, a ceaseless rhythmic motion contained in the circle of her lap. (173-74)

The psychological consequences of repeated childbearing, several miscarriages, and the death of possibly more than one baby are evident in Mary's physical appearance, her unseeing gaze, and the automaticity of her gestures. She is physically, and emotionally, worn-out by her husband's demands on her body.

Sexuality "death-deals" in a symbolic, as well as a literal sense, in a heteropatriarchal marriage in which the rule of the Father (*qua* husband) is absolute. In the first stages of pregnancy, Isabella writes in her journal that "[her] breasts tingle, are painful" (101). She adds: "I do not always want him [Duncan] to touch me but he takes rejection so hard. At least he is not like McLeod who, I suspect, takes his way without kindness or respect for Mary. From what she used to say to me" (*ibid.*). Isabella experiences the repugnancy of sexual relations to be endured, rather than enjoyed, in her loveless marriage to Fraser McIssac:

In the room where she must lie down for the night, her husband lay waiting. As she sat on the edge of the bed he opened his mouth, issuing forth a belch stained with grease. Instinctively she moved down the bed an inch or so. His hand fell on her shoulder. 'Where are you going?' 'Nowhere. I am going nowhere.' Have nowhere to go, she might have added, but did not. She thought, as she had before, I have endured worse. And survived. (171-172)

The "worse" is the gang rape by three men in Isabella and Duncan's isolated cabin in the woods.

The ominous repetition of physical isolation, something unseen rustling in the undergrowth, and Isabella's sense of fear and of being watched, signal proleptically the horror and trauma of rape that is about to befall her. In her journal, she writes about "the daily terror and danger that lurk in the woods" (108). In a succession of entries she records her mounting sense of danger: "I felt afraid again, in a nameless way that I

cannot describe. [...] Behind me, in the woods, I heard a crash. And then something moving” (111); “Something watching me” (112); “I have to get out of the cabin, yet I cannot escape a feeling of menace out there. [...] I gathered wild strawberries today. In the wood nearby there was a crackling in the undergrowth” (118). On the 6 June 1818, she writes only one sentence: “Truth is, something is going to happen, and I do not know what” (ibid.). The rape takes place on the 10 June 1818, and is described by the third person narrator:

All along she had known it was a man. [...] ‘Is it you Duncan?’ She heard herself say, and then suddenly she was aware of herself whimpering in the back of her throat. [...] [T]he redhead’s hand was falling upon her. She could not take her eyes off his hands. They were stumpy and thick, white with feathers of red hair along the backs of them. His hand ripped her skirt in one sharp motion, splitting it from the bodice. She heard herself begin to wail, a thin high sound that she would go on making for an hour or more, even though her mouth was hit repeatedly to stop the noise. (123-124)

It is Duncan who discovers her, towards dusk, still lying on the floor, half-conscious, covered in dried blood, and bleeding from the miscarriage.

The rape causes a psychic rupture in Isabella, or “*schize*” (Hartman 1995, 543), which “divides time into before and after” (ibid.). Geoffrey Hartman writes: “The interpreter’s task is always to sort out the relations between split or rupture (*schize*), place of [first] encounter, repetition and subject” (ibid.). Like families, trauma has a genealogy, a line of descent or point of origin. The originary trauma of the subsequent fateful transgenerational transmission of trauma, the place of “first encounter,” is Isabella’s horrific gang rape and the loss of her child; its repetition is the trauma of Duncan’s death by drowning four months later. Cathy Caruth comments on the repetition of catastrophic events: “In some cases, Freud points out, these repetitions are particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual’s own acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events to which they are subjected, and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control” (1996, 1-2). Isabella lies to Duncan when he asks her repeatedly how many men were involved in the rape. She struggles to understand her lie about there being two men, which had begun when he first found her bleeding on the floor, and wonders

whether she lied to protect him from knowing all that she knew, and, later, whether he “would buckle before the truth” (2012, 127). His questioning, and her answer of “two,” become “like some crazy ritual, something he could not force out of his head and in a kind of madness needed to keep adding to the horror and disgrace of it all, letting it hang there between the two of them, filling his mind with more and more pictures to pass his days” (ibid.). When Duncan tells her that he will ask her for the last time, and she again answers “two,” he reveals that he had known all along that three men had raped her, because there had been three tankards on the table:

She stood at the bench for a long moment. Too long. For when she went to call him back, to ask him to help her or to let them help each other, however it could be done, he was gone, and the woods were silent again.

So that she was left alone with what felt like guilt, except that she could not decipher its cause, nor think of anything she had done which might cause her to feel this way.  
(127)

Wounded in body and mind, Isabella unconsciously, and repeatedly, inflicts a wound on Duncan by denying his need for her to tell him a truth he already knows.

In the time of “after,” the damage of the wound inflicted on Isabella is enacted in the wounds she and her husband inflict on each other, and in the gulf that opens up between them. In two consecutive journal entries of the 20 and 30 September 1818, Isabella writes: “I often think of dying now. It will be winter soon. We see no one. Duncan sits drinking rum by the fire in the evenings” (127); “Last night Duncan sat by the fire [...] and he drank until he no longer recognized me. After that he came to our bed and for the first time in a three month or more, lay with me as my husband. Only it was like a stranger in my bed. It was like that morning in June. He staggered out at first light, without a word” (ibid.). Duncan’s dead body is carried back to her in a textual echo of the way Samuel’s body was carried back to his widow, and his burial takes place in the cemetery whose sight filled Isabella with dread (108). One of the men tells Isabella that Duncan’s death was an accident, caused by a logjam, which he had tried to free up, but the logs rolled, and Duncan fell between them. Isabella does not tell the men that she knows Duncan’s drowning was deliberate: “She could see then his lame foot which he had always tried to ignore. He had worked it so hard that it was almost as strong as his

good one. He should have known though, she thought, it was never meant for jumping logs on fast-flowing rivers. Oh but he would have known. She knew that he did” (130).

The *leitmotif* of “dark waters” operates multivalently and proleptically in the text. Isabella writes of her fear in her journal: “... How preoccupied I am with dark waters. But how can I be otherwise? Duncan is not sure-footed, that is the trouble” (104). Like the woods which hold a sense of impending threat and menace, the “dark waters” become *unheimlich*, with each repetition intensifying their effect of disquiet and foreboding, and reinforcing links between the past and the present. They are “abysses” (101), in whose depths “eels, evil-faced creatures with jagged yellow mouths, [...] flick to the surface, vanish, a whiplash of black slime” (110), after stripping salmon, caught in nets, to the bone. The terror that lurks beneath the “dark waters” foreshadows the horror of Isabella’s rape. Isabella knows that Duncan fears the “depths below” (106). Waking in the night, after they had buried Samuel, Duncan is racked with sobbing, and tells Isabella of his fears: ““We are all lost. [...] Don’t ever leave me, don’t ever die without me. [...] There would be nothing. [...] Nothing without you”” (107-108). The shadows in the room take on a blood-like colour, and “[h]is tears looked like blood” (108). Blood is a further proleptic signal of the rape; Duncan finds Isabella lying on the floor, bloodied by the injuries inflicted by the men, and bleeding from a miscarriage.

The accretion of imagery and motifs intensifies the sense of impending tragedy, with the apprehension of foreboding heightened further, on the day of Duncan’s drowning, by Isabella’s sudden and involuntary sense of fear that she will be raped again by the three men:

[S]he felt dread descend on her like a hard hand. She stood upright and the first thing she feared was that the men were coming to get her again. She looked wildly around the room without seeing anything, as a blind person seeks when danger is near, sniffing the air like an animal, for she knew that she would smell them if they came near her again. [...] Now, in panic, she thought they were returning and ran from one wall to another, clawing to find an escape while all the time the door stood open. She stood still again, certain that this time she would die. [...] She sat down to wait for Duncan, but she didn’t think he would come. (129)

The bodily wound of the rape is powerfully evoked in the analogy of dread to a “hard hand,” in the hyperarousal evident in Isabella’s somatic reactions, and in her sniffing of the air to see if she can detect the smell of the men.

For Isabella, the “hand” is the haunting image of the rape; when she sees the hands of the hooded hangman at the hanging in Pictou, her body ‘remembers,’ and she re-experiences the trauma of the rape. The third person narrator describes Isabella’s reaction at the scene of the hanging in Pictou: “Then a woman’s cry, long, bitter and anguished, rang out across them all, a thin single note, and looking to where it came from, Kate saw that the woman who had made that terrible sound was Isabella” (2012, 144). The image of the “hand,” and Isabella’s tormented cry, highlight the “persistent power of traumatic residue” (Hoeveler 1999, 399) in the life of the survivor. In her journal, Isabella describes seeing the hands:

I was close to the front of the crowd, and I saw the hangman raise his hands to undo the bolt. They were short thick hands, and red hairs sprung in clusters along the backs of each finger. Now where have I seen hands like that before? I do remember, I cried out when I saw the hands of the hooded hangman ... There are no men in the woods. There are no ghosts. There are only hands. Here in a long narrow cave I can keep my back to the wall all the time. I can keep watch. No hands can reach me here. (2012, 149-150)

At the time of writing this journal entry Isabella is living in a cave, with her baby son, whom she names Duncan Cave. She refers to the cave as her “home” (153), where she and Duncan Cave may stay forever. The cave resembles a house through the presence of a door, a window, and a rough floor, made by a previous inhabitant, referencing allusively another person’s retreat from the world.

The baby, who was conceived during the only time her husband slept with her after the rape, is born with a club foot. When Isabella says, “Like Duncan” (132), gazing at her newborn son, Kate, who assisted at the birth, reminds her sharply that Duncan’s lame foot was caused by a shooting accident in Scotland. Isabella replies: “It is fitting though, don’t you think?” (ibid.). In her baby’s club foot, Isabella sees the somatization of the wound she inflicted on her husband:

Poor Duncan. To think that I killed him. Now that is a sin. Driving *him* mad and driving him away with wild and fanciful tales of men in the woods. I still remember him saying to me the strangest thing. He said, ‘There were three tankards on the table.’ Who could have put them there? I must have. I must have been expecting company. Yes, that was it. No one had visited me for a long time, and I kept hearing bears in the woods, and thinking it was friends passing by, so I put out the tankards. (2012, 148)

Isabella’s retreat from human society to live in a cave encodes her psychic breach. She describes going to live in the cave as “madness:” “Let me tell you something. It *is* madness. I have come here to hide it. No one can see my madness now except for my child” (2012, 147). The unassimilated trauma of the rape, compounded by her guilt over Duncan’s death, is reflected in her anguish: “Why am I mad? Oh haven’t I answered that yet? No, no, I am still working that out. It must be my badness, my driving Duncan to his death” (149). The gapped memories of traumatic amnesia disrupt the present, and undermine her sense of self: “What drove me mad? Do you know, *I* don’t know any more. Was it the wild men in the woods? Men? What men? I don’t think there were any men. They were figments of my crazy imagination” (147-148). Her trauma returns to haunt her phantomatically: “No, no. I never saw strange men in the woods. Ghosts perhaps” (148). The ghosts represent the return of the past in the present, haunting Isabella with unprocessed traumatic memories.

Patriarchy’s control over women is evident in McLeod’s visit to the cave to persuade Isabella to go and live in his house to help Mary with the children. He warns her of the dangers of the approaching winter, and she accedes to save her child from dying of the cold. McLeod’s visit operates on another level. In Isabella he sees a woman with a strength and intelligence equal to his own, and in her refusal to show him deference, a threat to patriarchal authority. The first night back in McLeod’s house, he introduces her to Fraser McIssac, an illiterate labourer on his farm, “a heavy sweating fellow, a bit overweight, and pompous” (155). The page in her journal where Isabella writes of her marriage to Fraser McIssac falls open with ease as Maria reads it so frequently:

The next entry, written at St. Ann’s, Cape Breton Island, was in a hand that pressed hard into the pages with angry flourishes, the hand of Isabella McIssac: ‘So that is the price of my keep. In the end, it was I who was in McLeod’s debt. When we sat at

table today, after this wretched marriage had taken place, I could have sworn there was complacency in his eyes. As if he had buttoned himself up for once and all. I have been betrayed by my own people, or those, who in the absence of all others, I have come to think of as mine.’ (156-157)

Through placing Isabella under the authority of a husband, McLeod asserts the rule of the Father. With her past trauma unassimilated, Isabella enters a loveless marriage, which becomes another form of incarceration. In 1851, with three grown-up children, she “looked across the fireplace at her husband, and wondered whether freedom existed anywhere” (220).

The dysfunctional relationship between Isabella and Fraser McIssac, and the traumatic events of Isabella’s past, impact on their familial relationships, and in particular, on Isabella’s psychologically and emotionally damaging relationship with her daughter Annie. The past obtrudes in the present in the transmission of trauma from Isabella to her daughter through processes of extrusion and absorption of affect, which impact on their attachment relationship. Salberg writes:

It is the dysregulated affective states of the parent that infuse the child’s attachment experience and can evoke fantasies of the parent’s missing stories. There are often missing pieces of the trauma: sometimes it is the narrative, sometimes the affect, and sometimes both. This is for me the nexus of where trauma meets attachment theories. The child needs to feel that he or she has access to and can live inside the mind of the parent. If part of that mind is deadened, hidden, and/or dissociated, the search for the parent becomes dire. In many ways it is a search for a missing bond, an attachment to an absence. (2017, 94-95)

The source of Annie’s attachment trauma is located in her prolonged exposure throughout her childhood and young womanhood to the disrupted attachment and dysregulated affect she experiences in her relationship with her mother, contextualized within a dysfunctional family.

Annie’s search for her mother, for an “attachment to an absence,” and her longing to connect with the absent space she sees reflected in the secrets of her mother’s life, are encapsulated in her thoughts as a young married woman:

She would have liked to be able to tell her [Isabella] things, but Isabella never seemed to have heard what she had tried to tell her. Would she listen now? On the ship to New Zealand perhaps she would write to her. She remembered how her mother had sat with a secret look on her face and composed entries in a journal which she did not show to anyone. Had she shown Duncan Cave? Who knew the secrets of her mother's life? She wondered if anyone would ever want to know about her life as much as she longed to know about Isabella's, or if it would even mean as much to anyone else. (2012, 233)

The child Annie recognizes the differences in her home from those of other families in Pictou in the "accumulation of small things" (165), such as brighter colours in the curtains, a photograph on the wall of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, a shawl thrown over the back of a chair, and a fur rug on the floor. She senses that she must not grow up like her mother, and doubles her efforts to be diligent and dutiful at school. Isabella's "outrageous utterances," such as calling McLeod's congregation an "audience" (161), fill Annie with shame: "[S]he knew that to be liked and well thought of, and to get on at school in the master's schoolroom, one must behave well in and toward the church at all times" (ibid.). At eight years of age, she vows to be a "faithful worker for the church" (163), and to read three chapters of the Bible a day, instead of two. When her father and brother hold her fast for moving a little in the pew, after more than two hours of sitting still, "[t]he edge of safety shimmered and dissolved around her" (164): "It is unfair, her heart cried out [...]. If only mother were here. But it was cruel precisely because mother was *not* there. [...] That was the hardest part of all, that her mother got away with it, with not coming to church, while Annie went and had to endure for the sake of them all, and for everything" (ibid.). Annie asks herself who would understand her "glittering and brooding" (166) mother, whom she sees as "aloof as always" (167) from her.

Isabella's relationship with her daughter represents failures in bonding and attachment. Her behaviour towards Annie is emotionally distant and detached, and extrudes to Annie the affect that she is unloved by her mother. On the occasions when Isabella comes into her bedroom to sit and talk, instead of saying a perfunctory 'good-night' from the door, "Annie would wonder why she was so afraid of her" (168): "Annie desired only to be good, to be loved, to be like the McLeods. Or even to be better than the McLeods' own children. But it was hard with a mother like hers. It was whispered amongst her friends at school that Isabella did not believe in God" (ibid.).

When Annie asks her mother if she is a “heathen” or a “witch,” Isabella’s facetious reply about being a witch who has the power to turn girls into curds which melt and sizzle in hell is far from reassuring to a timid child. On the day that Bunyan McLeod, the best friend of Duncan Cave, is buried, Isabella sends Annie to spend the day with Kate MacKenzie: “[She] knew that Annie secretly would have preferred to spend the day with her, and that she had been unkind to her. [...] She knew that she had been cruel” (177).

Annie’s efforts to please, and be good, fail to secure the love she knows her mother feels for Duncan Cave, and whose relationship with Hector and herself is mediated by the physical tie they represent to a husband she finds repugnant. Isabella’s attendance at revival meetings and a real communion service in the woods causes further alienation for Annie from her friends; they now stay away altogether from visiting her at home. There is “bleakness” (183) in Annie’s face when she asks her mother if she really goes to the meetings. Isabella tells Annie the truth and says her husband would not stop her, to which Annie replies ““couldn’t”” (ibid.), as “[h]e is afraid of you”” (ibid.), revealing her knowledge of the state of her parents’ marriage. She looks out the window at her half-brother, Duncan Cave, not seeing him, “for he was part of the landscape, but [seeing] rather the landscape itself” (203): “It occurred to her that she was not a part of it but merely an onlooker who was yet to discover some mysterious place in the scheme of things, and wondered if she might spend the rest of her life standing behind glass” (ibid.). Both Annie and Isabella are light sleepers, and sometimes startle each other by meeting on the landing:

There, in the different and stranger illuminations of night, they might look into each other’s eyes. Isabella wondered then if she ought to try explaining to her child that neither of them need be called to account for what lay between them; that it was just that love itself seemed to have stopped some time before Annie was born. It was as if she was outside of love and all its possibility. (193)

The disturbed patterns of interaction between mother and daughter, and the lack of love she sees in her mother’s relationship with her father, result in emotional harm to Annie, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and impact on her relationships with her husband and daughter Maria.

Annie's mistrust of bodily pleasure and her subsequently conflicted relationship to sexual intimacy are evident in her distrust of the physical enjoyment she experiences in skating: "It [skating] was a harmless thing to do that no one complained about, skating across the ice, yet the very pleasure it gave made her doubt its lightness" (172). She senses repressed passion in her mother, expressed in the sensual pleasure her mother takes in her cat Noah: "He stretched, reached out his paw to her. His tongue was hanging out of his sweet whiskery little mouth. She could not resist him. She leaned down and touched the tip of his tongue with her own" (218). Annie dislikes the cat, and her mother's expressions of affection for it.

In Annie's confusion of lust with love-making and guilt over the sexual pleasure she initially experienced with her husband, she 'exiles' herself from her own female body and aligns herself with the patriarchal control over female sexuality for procreative purposes and the verifiability of patrilineage. She begins to cringe and cower away from her husband, as if his wish to make love is a violation. She tells him that sex is for the procreation of children, and believes she is cursed: "It is the madness taking me. [...] It comes to us sooner or later, it is in my family, this was bound to happen" (229). On the eve of their departure for New Zealand, and after another rejection of her husband's touch (there is no textual evidence that he forces himself on her), Annie tells Francis about repenting her sins. His fears about her response to his question about what she means are well-founded. Annie tells him, "[t]here was lust between us" (232), and refers to McLeod's loss of three sons, dead from typhoid in Melbourne, as an example of the punishment that could befall lesser people like them: "Obedience, chastity, Francis. Passion is a curse. We must mortify the body. Oh Francis, I despise myself" (233). Annie shuts herself off from Francis's genuine reassurances about how clever and capable she is, and his reminders about the respect and admiration she received for the way she had cared for typhoid victims in Melbourne's Canvastown. She fails to see that her husband is "overcome with desolation" (*ibid.*), and blocks the possibility of mutuality in sexual pleasure, which may offer an insight into Francis's later sexual infidelity. That night, before falling asleep, Noah, pleasurably licking his paws, appears to Annie: "Looking back up through the awning of the tent, she could have sworn she saw a black-and-white cat, smiling and licking its paws, riding the antipodean sky" (*ibid.*). Annie's imagined sighting of Isabella's cat is suggestive of Noah as a witch's medium (Isabella jokes to Annie that she is a witch), flying on the back of a broomstick with a self-satisfied air, secure in his relationship with his mistress.

Annie never experiences security in her relationship with her mother, and the memory of that, and its hurt, accompanies her to the Antipodes. Psychically wounded in her “search for a missing bond, an attachment to an absence” (Salberg 2017, 95), she inflicts further damage on herself in her rejection of the possibility of an emotionally intimate and loving relationship with her husband, and in so doing, wounds her husband, and later her own pregnant daughter by her betrayal. Annie’s passive submission to the ‘will of the Father,’ and the influence of McLeod and his form of patriarchal and retributive religion, out of a sense of abandonment by her mother, are repeated in her reliance on her brother Hector, and his patriarchal authority, when she discovers that Maria is pregnant, and in her emotional, and physical, abandonment of her own daughter.

Kidman emphasizes the harsh and punitive elements of the heteropatriarchal family structure. Unequal power relations, oppressive circumstances, failures in mutual support, and destructive patterns of interaction predominate over expressions of warmth and intimacy. In the McLeod family, the rule of the Father is absolute. McLeod “does not permit love in his family” (2012, 189), and dominates its members (and his followers) with his bigotry, harsh sabbatarianism, and repressive and misogynistic religiosity. From the pulpit, he castigates his wife, and other women and girls, not hesitating to name them publicly, for immodesty in dress and trifles such as a ribbon adorning a bonnet. The integrity of his puritanical zealotry is, however, undercut by the ‘blind eye’ he turns to the brandy-running and double-dealing of his sons, by his treatment of his wife, and by her enjoyment of “small brief summers” (176) when he is away from home. He dismisses Mary’s views with ““Do not question me, Mary. It is unseemly of you”” (73). When Isabella remonstrates with Mary over her submissiveness to her husband, Mary’s reply is: ““You’re not married to him. [...] You do not know to what lengths he will go”” (74).

Those lengths are amply illustrated when McLeod cuts off part of Lewis MacKenzie’s ear by sword for a supposed theft of money, after a hastily convened ‘trial’ by school trustees and elders, chaired by McLeod. Eoghann MacKenzie’s failure to defend the innocence of his son, and his capitulation before McLeod by not subsequently pressing charges for wrongful injury, become the catalyst for deepening the rift that has developed between Kate and her husband, now an elder of the church. Elder that he is, exercising his patriarchal power, MacKenzie raises his hand to hit his daughter Martha’s face when she declares Lewis’s innocence of the charges ahead of

the 'trial.' Martha voices her hatred for her father to her mother over Eoghann's failure to stand up for his son, while Kate undergoes a physical and mental decline over her son's harsh treatment and subsequent departure from home. Kate wonders "if marriage was a good idea for anyone, if there might not be too much potential for disappointment" (213). At night, in bed, "there was only the emptiness they had imposed on each other years before" (ibid.).

Through the description of their marriage as "their mutual exile" (ibid.), Kidman conjoins the motif of diasporic exile with emotional distance, highlighting the depth of the desolation between wife and husband: "He [Eoghann] rarely looked directly at her, and if he did it was in an appraising, distasteful way, as if she was someone he had to put up with" (ibid.). One day Kate disappears into the woods, telling Martha, who finds her, that she was looking for "'A way out of here. To find the church'" (214). She is not seeking the church of McLeod that wrecks such damage on their lives; it is the one that Isabella told her about, of people gathering in the woods to worship and to receive the sacraments from an ordained minister. Kate suffers a complete breakdown, and does not speak for a year; her silence echoes that of Isabella after Duncan MacQuarrie's drowning.

Male entitlement to hit women (and girls) as a form of punishment is evident in McLeod's summons to Annie to come forward to be hit with the cane as she is unable to answer a question in a scripture lesson: "Isaac could see that the schoolmaster was committed to his course of action, and perhaps too, that he wished to hit Annie harder than he had ever hit anyone before" (190). When Martha MacKenzie questions McLeod about now whipping the girls, as well as the boys, he dismisses her from her position as schoolteacher. Hector's forced incarceration of Maria in a locked room also enacts patriarchal violence and power over women, while his threat of physical violence as Maria buries her daughter expresses a sense of righteous male entitlement: "'I should beat you, Maria. Only your feebleness of mind and body prevents me'" (293).

Traumatic memories continue to haunt Isabella. She tells Duncan Cave, now grown-up, that she sees "ghosts" (180) and "creatures in the woods" (ibid.): "'They come at me in dreams, I don't know who they are, Duncan. Sometimes I think they are real, and then I am frightened, but other times I'm not sure if it is just a craziness that I have. We came out of the woods, you and me, Duncan Cave'" (ibid.). She remembers a man on a horse coming to take her away from the cave, and saying she must put the past behind her. She is sure that it was McLeod: "She could not remember what he meant though,

for the past was like a dream. In that cave there was lightness, and whiteness, and whatever it was that had frightened her had disappeared. But now, at the edge of her consciousness, there was fear again” (ibid.).

In a return to the place of “first encounter,” the remote cabin, Isabella is drawn back into the woods, and becomes caught up with a large group of people gathering for a communion service: “At first she was afraid, for it reminded her of the way people had congregated around the hanging at Pictou, even though to remember that was in itself a relief. That is why I am here, she thought, confronting what has lain buried for so long” (181). Cooking eels at home for her family, when Cape Breton Island is in the grip of famine, she has an “eidetic and referential flashback” (Hartman 1995, 552): “The trembling fractured ice she had broken that day, and the dark water above which she had perched herself, had opened something up again, something that would never go away” (2012, 218). She remembers, “not for the first time” (ibid.), that eels can “strip a creature to the bone” (ibid.), and covers her ears “as if to shut out an old voice, or voices” (ibid.). She clutches the table for support, and looking wildly around the kitchen, says: “I do not want to be alone” (ibid.). Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart refer to Pierre Janet’s work on traumatic memory and how one element of a traumatic experience evokes the other elements:

Janet observed [...] that traumatic memory is evoked under particular conditions. It occurs automatically in situations which are reminiscent of the original traumatic situation. These circumstances trigger the traumatic memory. [...] Traumatic memory is produced by the mechanism which Janet called *restitutio ad integrum*.<sup>6</sup> When one element of a traumatic experience is evoked, all other elements follow automatically. (1991, 431)

The breaking of ice and the “dark water” beneath are symbolic of re-opening suppressed horrors, drowning, and submerged secrets. The salmon stripped to the bone reflects her powerlessness in the violence of the rape, while the voice could be that of Duncan MacQuarrie and a reminder of her sense of guilt over his death, the voices those of the rapists.

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<sup>6</sup> *Restitutio ad integrum* is a Latin phrase for ‘restoration to original condition/state.’

Isabella's cry, "I do not want to be alone," reflects Vickroy's observation that "one of the worst effects of trauma is the sense of alienation and isolation involved" (2002, 205). Her reaction to the memories re-evoked when she cooks the eels includes her somatic responses, indicating her fear of her past physical isolation in the cabin when the three men rape her, and her awareness of her present emotional isolation within her family (with the exception of her relationship with Duncan Cave). She does not want to be alone, but the feelings of alienation and isolation she experiences after the rape that lead her to hide in a cave do lasting damage to her ability to form a strong affective relationship even with her own daughter. When Annie, from the kitchen doorway, asks her mother if she is all right, Isabella tells her to go and entertain her suitor, Francis McClure, saying: "I am perfectly all right" (2012, 218). An opportunity for Annie to be 'let in' emotionally by her mother, and to learn about the "missing stories," "the secrets of her mother's life," is blocked, just as she blocked her first husband's repeated, if clumsy, efforts to get her to talk to him about the rape.

Isabella's journals and the secrets they contain form a structuring device in the text, linking the three generations. They function, through their disclosures, to reveal the transgenerational transmission of trauma, with the passing on of the journals by each generation to the next symbolic of the transmission of trauma. When Maria finds Isabella's journals, on the night of the fire, the first words she reads are: "*I have been betrayed by my own people*" (247). In an act of recognition, she calls out to her mother, who abandons and betrays her, "'Mother, where are you?'" (ibid.), in a biblical echo of the betrayal of Jesus by one of his own disciples, and Jesus's cry of abandonment to God on the cross. Maria's betrayal by her mother and uncle echoes Isabella's betrayal by "her own people." Pregnant at twenty years of age and incarcerated forcibly in her mother's house by her uncle and mother, Maria reads the journals, and the secrets they contain about her family, which, in old age, she says "haunt me always" (19). Maria describes the knowledge she acquires of the secrets of the past, her insight into the lives of her grandmother and mother, and her recognition of commonalities of experience, as a form of binding: "There are secrets to which I am linked through being her [Isabella's] kin, and we are bound by the common thread of my mother's life. Once I would have dismissed this as being of no importance but I can no longer ignore it, the binding together which it made" (ibid.).

The links between the generations, and Maria's internalization of her grandmother's and mother's experiences, are evoked in her mantric blending of their names, "maria

maria marisabella mariann annisabellamaria yesyes” (34), and materially through the matrilineal gifting of memory objects, the two silver candlesticks and fine white linen, which are symbolic of the links between the generations. Maria wears Isabella’s necklace of her three children’s baby teeth, which she finds in her mother’s drawers, connecting the three generations symbolically, as does their knowledge of plants, and their resourcefulness in making herbal remedies. In Melbourne, Annie makes potions and broths for the sick “as if these remedies were in her bones” (231). Kidman depicts their connection to nature’s healing powers as an expression of female resilience and strength in adversity.

Maria transgresses patriarchy’s cultural and sexual boundaries through her “sin of fornication” (22) with Branco, a Dalmatian gum-digger/road mender: “I wanted someone different from all the others, that’s the only thing I can tell you now” (36). Her uncle forces Branco to leave the area, and the sight of his ransacked shack devastates Maria. When Branco returns, “as she expected he would [...], there was an odd dead weight inside her, as if he was untidy luggage that she would like to find somewhere to put down” (262). The sexual passion she felt for Branco is gone, and she realizes that she used him to escape from the “edifices” (254) her mother had built around her, and to “drive herself to make a declaration of her independence from the community” (ibid.). Infuriated by Branco’s reappearance during a church service, and fearing that Maria may resume the liaison, Hector and Annie lock her in her bedroom and imprison her there for a month. When Maria is allowed by her mother and uncle to leave her room, her mother, with Hector beside her, says: ““There was no bleeding in that room, Maria. [...] No blood”” (269). Maria is betrayed by the absence of her period, with the motif of blood gaining an additional layer of significance. She discards the thought of suicide for fear of failure, recalling her mother’s hushed account of a botched hanging in Pictou that Isabella had witnessed, and decides to run to Branco’s shack to seek his help to keep the baby safe (Hector told her that the baby would be taken away after its birth). The shack is a pile of ashes, and Hector, his two sons, and two other men block her onward flight, and she is forced to return to the house where she is under constant surveillance by watchers to ensure she does not flee.

Patriarchy others Maria as a witch for her sexual transgression. The ‘othering’ of women as witches<sup>7</sup> for transgressive behaviour reflects a historical understanding of the operation of patriarchal power “through the naming and isolation of the Other, who at her base is female” (D’Cruz 2017, 101). The men who fight the out-of-control burn-off that threatens the house see Maria at a window and say “[that] was how they would always remember the witch, with her arms stretched out like some unholy cross and her shameless belly pointed towards the flames” (2012, 246). Maria opens the windows, and holds them wide apart, to allow the flames to reach her more easily: “So this was the hell that had been made for her! Soon the Devil would claim her; she should submit to the flames and be consumed by them, and that was how it ought to be” (ibid.). Hector calls Maria a witch for her transgression of sexual, ethnic, and religious boundaries (he ‘others’ Branco as a “Papist”), and justifies his incarceration of her to curb her deviant sexuality: ““And to be put out of reach of the beast that stalks you”” (264).

Isabella and Maria both signal their alterity, and marginalization within their communities, by calling themselves witches. The reference to a “cross” cuts two ways – to the burning of witches on a stake, and to the crucifixion of Christ. Maria calls herself “the last sacrifice” (283), referencing the punishment exacted on her, and the concept of betrayal, Christ by Judas Iscariot, and her own by her mother and uncle. Annie sacrifices, and traumatizes, Maria, through her complicity in Maria’s incarceration, her betrayal and abandonment, out of a misplaced and warped submission to the patriarchal hegemony of the church of the Man, inflicting the effects of her own attachment trauma on her own daughter. The day after the fire, Hector arrives at the house to tell her that her mother died the previous evening of a broken heart, and accuses Maria of killing her mother. Despite Maria’s entreaty to be allowed to leave, Hector, stating he is now her father (281), insists on her continuing enforced incarceration in the house.

Maria’s decision to stay in the house dates from the death of her daughter and her wish to guard her grave (307). She buries the baby under the japonica tree, “its blooms like blood spots on the shining tangled branches” (291), where she had felt the first birth pangs, and blood had gushed from her. Isabella’s belief that she had killed Duncan MacQuarrie by sending him to his death is echoed in Maria’s sense of guilt that she failed her daughter by losing consciousness after giving birth. Hector’s accusation that Maria killed her mother is repeated in his accusation that, through not hanging the white

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<sup>7</sup> See also Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977, 125).

cloth out the window to signal she had gone into labour, she also killed her daughter; he tells her she is free to leave. Maria informs him of her decision to remain in the house, and in the days that follow she papers over the cracks in the walls in the upstairs rooms with newspapers, stopping them, and their news of the outside world, in 1898: “It was far enough” (295).

Jamie McIssac’s arrival at the house in 1914 to seek shelter from enforced conscription disturbs Maria’s self-imposed seclusion from the world. Jamie believes he is Maria’s second cousin, the son of William McIssac and grandson of Hector. Through her reading of the journals, Maria knows he is her half-nephew, and that William, her half-brother, is the son of her father Francis McClure with the wife of Hector McIssac. Although knowing this, she begins a passionate affair with Jamie: “In her mind she explored the edges of her treachery” (318). Maria senses they are being watched, and insists to Jamie that he must leave; on his refusal, she gives him one of the journals to read and to learn the secret of his paternity, saying, ““Forgive me”” (320).

Kidman uses the tropes of genealogy, and sexual betrayal, to destabilize patriarchal lines of descent through her depiction of the demise of the McIssac family line and the continuation of a ‘transgressive’ genealogy in Duncan Cave’s descendants. Duncan Cave has an affair with a Māori girl, Riria, who bears a son. The son is the father of Hoana, who is the mother of Christie. Duncan Cave’s line continues into the fifth generation with Christie’s son, Ross Monroe, and includes Māori and Dalmatian antecedents in its genealogy. The lone tree beside the house is symbolic of Maria’s isolation and endurance as the last of the McIssac line: “[A]longside of [the house stood] a single stark, skeletal giant that has been stripped of its leaves by lightning. The great tree just died. It is not entirely safe, so close to the house, but no one would think to remove it” (19). ‘House’ connotes a family line, while ‘tree,’ in its genealogical sense, indicates through ‘branches’ the various ancestral lines of descent. Only the dead tree, with no sign of regeneration evident in the form of fresh leaves or shoots, stands close beside the decaying house which sits alone in a paddock (19): “The old timber creaked, the iron on the roof was almost rusted through; another winter or so and it would be through all over” (11). The tree, and its adjacency to the house, function as signifiers of the extinction of the McIssac family line with Maria, the keeper of its secrets, the last survivor, whose only gesture to ‘maintain’ the house is to glue newspaper over the cracks in the timber. The house, “full of devils and ghosts” (247), is

depicted as “crumbling” (368) at the end of the novel, its garden bereft, and the japonica bush, marking the grave of a descendant of the McIssac line, half dead.

Kidman contests genealogy’s mistrust of “‘family secrets’ as a subjective record that contaminates the preservation and transmission of accurate family history” (Watson 1996, 299), underscoring that, in reality, there are uncertainties, deceptions, and secrets over patrilineage. Through her reading of the journals, Maria learns a secret that subverts the “knowability of family history” (ibid.). Hector, the patriarch of the McIssac family in New Zealand, who is so judgmental and harsh about Maria’s liaison with Branco and her illegitimate pregnancy, is unaware of his wife’s sexual betrayal with Francis McClure, and brings William up as his son. The “family secrets” undermine the truth claims of ‘legitimate’ and ‘verifiable’ family history, and validate the personal story. D’Cruz makes the observation that “patriarchy as an organization for the control of male inheritance has its treacherous underside in the sexual desires that can derail this outcome” (2017, 117).<sup>8</sup> The “treacherous underside” of “the urgings of lust” (ibid.) between Rose McIssac and Francis McClure calls into question the fixity of patrilineal descent, and also destroys the love affair between Maria and Jamie through their close consanguinity. Jamie’s desolate, and proleptic, utterance of loss on the night before he leaves echoes that of Duncan MacQuarrie (see 2012, 107-108): “‘It will be lost. [...] [I]n time it will all be lost’” (322). The “it” refers to the loss of the personal stories he asks Maria to tell him about the “old people” (ibid.) and life in Nova Scotia, which official history does not record, the loss of his and Maria’s own story, and its challenge to the authority of the master narrative, and, less directly, to his own death by drowning at sea when the ship taking him to England sinks. William tells Maria that the earlier ship Jamie would have sailed on arrived safely at its destination, and accuses her of a third killing, saying: “‘They burned people like you at the stake once, and even that would be too good for you’” (326).

In a complex interweaving of motifs, Maria’s ritualistic cleansing of herself by the japonica tree, after she has sent Jamie away, is a performative bodily enactment of the psychic wound:

Now the dawn had broken and what she feared might happen to her was true. She could hear voices no longer, and calling to her daughter, there was no reply. Outside,

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<sup>8</sup> The observation refers to the “putative son” (2017, 117) of Barnsley in Kidman’s *Mandarin Summer*, who is the biological son of another man.

in the raw thin light, the grass smelled faintly astringent under the cool dew. The japonica flowers shone like blood. She stripped off all her clothes, shivering violently as she lay down on the wet grass, tearing up handfuls of it and washing her body, her breasts and between her legs. (323)

D’Cruz interprets Maria’s act of cleansing herself with “soil” [sic] from under the japonica tree where her daughter is buried as “indicating a [...] resistance to the dilution of her maternity by her erotic desires” (2007, 77), and comments on the significance of the ‘place’ of the cleansing: “Place thus delivers the two means whereby patriarchy’s claimed dominance over historical time can be countered - through uncharted rhythmic time that exceeds it and with whose cyclic processes maternity is allied and through a counter-history that challenges it” (ibid.). D’Cruz’s comments about Maria’s supposed reclamation of her maternity do not reference the significance of “blood” to describe the japonica flowers and to symbolize the unexpiated guilt that Maria feels over her daughter’s death, and for her deception of Jamie. Interpreting the silence from her “foremothers” (2012, 323), and from her daughter, who does not respond to her call, as a sign of their disapproval, she undertakes an act of penitence before the shrine she has made of the japonica tree, seeking forgiveness from her silent “foremothers,” and from her daughter. After the cleansing, consumed with guilt and shame, Maria lies in bed for a week:

[W]hen her foremothers spoke she did not answer them. All she heard was a new, quietly insistent voice asking her over and over again, in a proleptic signification of Jamie’s death, ‘What have you done to Jamie, your cousin? And another would respond, ‘What has she done to her cousin, who is also her brother’s child?’ She turned her face to the wall, ‘I don’t want to hear you, it doesn’t have to be true,’ she said aloud. And asked herself again, and a hundred times, why she had shown him the journal. (323)

Atonement of shame, as well as guilt, is encoded in the cleansing – shame towards her own body which betrayed her into giving in to her sexual desire for Jamie, and abnegation of her sexuality.

The Spanish Flu of 1918 brings Maria into contact with Christie, the child of Duncan Cave’s granddaughter, Hoana MacQuarrie, by her marriage to a Dalmatian. The family

is living nearby in a rundown cottage when Maria comes to their assistance, at the request of the Dalmatian man's father. Hoana's husband dies of typhoid, and Hoana, ill herself, prevails upon Maria to take Christie, and her papers, just in case, before returning north to her own family. Riria's Māori family supports and cares for her as an unmarried mother, in contrast to Maria's mother and uncle who incarcerate and abandon her for "fornication." The one and a half years that follow, loving and caring for Christie as her daughter, are a time of great happiness for Maria: "One evening [...], as Maria was tucking the covers round Christie, she found herself saying, 'Oh my darling, I love you so much.' The child looked at her gravely. 'I know,' she said. 'I love you so much too, Maria'" (346). Although able to roam freely from the house and its garden, Maria is not free from "the terror of dark waters." "It was safer close to home. They would sit on the riverbank and watch the ducks swimming, or the eels which flicked this way and that just below the surface" (346).

The *leitmotif* of singing and its signification of loss and broken attachments returns during the night before Hoana arrives to claim her daughter, foreshadowing the parting that takes place the next day. Maria hears the laughing and singing from the cottage where she found Christie: "The sound of the singing was still in her head as she went to sleep. In the middle of the night she woke, sweating and fearful" (347). When she goes upstairs to collect Christie's papers for Hoana, Maria reads the letter from Martha McWhirtle to Isabella to inform her that Riria, her nursemaid, had given birth to Duncan Cave's son and that Riria had returned to Kaipara with her baby to be looked after by her own people. Maria then opens Christie's papers for the first time: "She knew that there would be secrets it would be easier not to know. Voices were everywhere in the room now" (349). Putting her hands over her ears to block out the voices of her grandmother, mother, and "the child she had had and lost" (352), she knows that she will lose Christie too. She learns what she had known when she first saw Hoana's limp: "Blood, that's what it was. Running together, and through them" (353). She chooses not to bind Hoana and Christie to her, and to the matrilineal legacy of trauma, by not revealing their blood relationship through her half-uncle, Duncan Cave. She reassures Christie that she is going to have a great many aunts: "'That's something worth having. It's family, Christie'" (352). When Jamie asks her to tell him about Isabella, Maria says briefly, "'It was not a close family'" (318), but she describes the love between herself and her grandmother with warmth: "'I loved her in such a way

that everyone else was excluded. [...] She loved me so much, in return, as if I were a light seen after a long time of darkness. We were at each other's centre” (316).

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok<sup>9</sup> developed the concept of the ‘crypt’ as a form of psychic container for the dead or lost other(s). Through the process of incorporation, the lost other(s) is/are absorbed into the self, forming a union of the self with the lost other(s) in its intrapsychic crypt. The subject then becomes the guardian of the secrets the lost other(s) share(s) with it, and which it also entombs in the crypt. Whitehead comments on the materiality of the concept of a crypt and its symbolic embodiment of the past in the present: “In describing transgenerational trauma, Abraham and Torok notably evoke the metaphor of a building: the psyche of the next generation becomes a ‘crypt,’ a container that houses the seemingly unthinkable and unrepresentable residue of the past” (2004.1, 14). Drawing attention to the use of a ‘house,’ on a metaphoric level, as a psychic crypt, Whitehead observes:

[T]he haunted house is a common literary device in novels that explore the theme of transgenerational haunting. [...] These haunted houses both externalize or symbolize psychic processes, drawing on Abraham and Torok's metaphor of the ‘crypt,’ and suggest a connection between trauma and place, so that something of the trauma remains or inheres at the site of its occurrence. (28-29)

The cave and the house, sites of trauma for Isabella and Maria, become fused in Maria's embodiment as the crypt, the psychic container, for the secrets of the past: “She thought of herself as a cave. There were those other caves in the history of her people, the dark caves where her people had hidden, and the caves in the hills beyond Waipu, where the glow-worms shone, and she thought that now she was the shining place that would provide a haven” (2012, 314-315).

The trauma experienced by Isabella affects Maria deeply; she identifies with her grandmother and her traumatic experiences, and becomes possessed, and haunted, by the secrets she reads. She describes herself as “the keeper of certain books” (19), which she calls the book of secrets” (ibid.). From the night of the fire, when she first opens her grandmother's trunk and finds the journals, Maria reads and re-reads them

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<sup>9</sup> Nicolas Abraham (1919-1975) and Maria Torok (1925-1998) were Hungarian-born French psychoanalysts who worked collaboratively in the field of pathological mourning, transgenerational influences, and incorporation. Their best-known work is *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, translated by Nicholas Rand (1994).

compulsively, learning the secrets of the past until she knows the words by heart. They are “etched in her brain, repeating themselves” (340). When she finds another of the journals, hidden in one of her mother’s drawers, she puts it aside to read later as “[t]he past already felt as if it was cramming her head from all sides” (288).

Through processes of empathic identification and possession, Maria incorporates Isabella and her own dead baby, and the secrets/phantoms of the past, into herself in the form of a psychic crypt. Reflecting “the subject’s fantasy of the object’s survival within itself” (Yassa 2002, 88), Maria talks to her dead grandmother, mother, and baby as if they are still alive, and hears their voices speaking to her. Maria Yassa comments on the fantasy of incorporation: “Faced with the trauma of loss [...], incorporation supplies the subject with an immediate solution [...], the content of which is that the subject literally and concretely devours, swallows the object or parts of it. The subject’s wish is thereby to retrieve its own desire through magical union with the object” (87). The red jelly Maria makes from the apples of the japonica tree under which her baby is buried and which she spreads on scones (2012, 307-308) represents a reification of the fantasy of incorporation and secret identification with a lost object, while “magical union” is implicit in Maria’s mantra of the three names.

Through their insistent intrusions in the novel, the psychic phantoms of the lost others, their voices and shadows, haunt and possess Maria, and represent an “embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present” (Whitehead 2004.1, 6). Maria believes the “child still lived on” (2012, 309), and talks to her, telling her stories of the past in Scotland and Canada (308). The phantoms represent “the return of the dead or the memory of them” (Vickroy 2002, 219), haunting the present, and filling the house with their shadow-like presence. Up until Jamie’s arrival, Maria had continued to sleep in her own room; she gives him the bedroom occupied by her grandmother, then her mother, and it is in this room that they become lovers. When Jamie, as he leaves, tells Maria to sleep in her mother’s bed from now on, it is “as if he knew how the other women had occupied the shadows in the room” (2012, 323). Jamie intuits that for Maria her grandmother and mother are still the shadow-like occupants in the room, and tries to help Maria to let go of the past by claiming the room for herself.

Maria’s conception of herself as a cave is an example of how the text’s metaphors, images and symbols inhabit, and haunt, the journal extracts *and* the narrative. Esther Rashkin describes reading a text, in which another text with its own “author” is embedded, as “a constant back-and-forth motion or ‘to and fro’” (1992, 153). The use of

a “textual dual unity” (45) is a narrative strategy that also reflects the “achronology of trauma” (Whitehead 2004.1, 16) and traumatic experience’s resistance to linear forms of “chronologizing” (Vickroy 2002, 218). Kidman fragments the journals, and embeds them throughout the text at points in the narrative where the past relates to and/or thematically informs the present. Rashkin uses the term ‘transtextuality’ to describe such a textual relationship:

*Transtextuality* is the term I propose for the specific kind of intertextual relationship at work in narratives organized by phantoms. Transtextuality refers to the situation in which a narrative and its intertexts – identifiable from the textual entities, fragments or allusions the narrative contains – complement, inform, and interpret one another across a fissure or gap in the transmission of a family history. [...] Reading these intertexts means recognizing their status as *transtexts*, as encoded bits or pieces broken off from the trauma suffered and silenced by someone in the narrative’s prehistory, and whose content and effects have been transmitted transgenerationally as cryptic lexical parcels of an unutterable tale. (1992, 45-46)

The transgenerational transmission of trauma depicted in the novel cannot be understood without reading the intertexts from the journals in conjunction with the narrative. They are the means by which the secrets of the past are revealed. In Rashkin’s words, “Each text continues in the others. Each text inhabits or haunts the others” (153). The fragmented narrative, and the fragmented intertexts from the journals, function as *transtexts* which “complement, inform and interpret one another,” encoding the secrets of past traumas and the transgenerational transmission of their effects. The fragmented structure of the novel also reflects the fragmented and gapped nature of traumatic memory, its intrusive flashbacks, and the fracturing of subjective coherence as a result of trauma. Through the repetition of metaphors, images, and symbols, and particular incidents, in the narrative and intertexts, they gain what Whitehead calls a “symbolic aura” (2004.1, 86) that “suggests the insistent return of the event and the disruption of narrative chronology or progression” (ibid.).

Repetition functions to reinforce trauma’s lines of descent through the metonymic analogy of Isabella’s cave to a house, and Maria’s house to a cave, through their experiences of betrayal, dark waters and drowning, incarceration, loss of a child, ‘killing’ and guilt, being watched, and ‘othered.’ Isabella inflicts on Annie the traumatic

wound she experiences in the gang rape, her miscarriage, and her self-blame for her husband's drowning in the form of disrupted affection and dysregulated attachment. The disrupted affection and dysregulated attachment impact, in turn, on Annie's identity formation. Annie's emotional and physical betrayal and abandonment of Maria, combined with the circumstances of Maria's illegitimate pregnancy, enforced incarceration in the house, a near-death experience in an out-of-control burn-off, and the loss of her baby in childbirth, result in Maria's traumatization. Her reading and re-reading of Isabella's journals and their secrets, and her resulting possession by the past, culminate in her incorporation of the lost others, and the secrets, in a psychic crypt. On a material level, the decaying house with its gapped timbers and the yellowed newspapers from 1898 that line her bedroom walls, "[the year] she had stopped being in the world" (2012, 13), is a metonymy of the psychic crypt, which she guards until her death.

Maria tells Stella McIssac, the wife of her cousin Neil, of her decision to remain in the house, when Stella tries to persuade her to return to the community: "[W]e do feel that perhaps you have been treated unfairly. By history" (356). Maria expresses her refusal to leave the house in terms that are critical of the church of the Father, and indirectly of McLeod, and which lend themselves to a feminist interpretation of her decision: "I have never understood what it means to worship a god who dictated with absolute authority one point of view and word, who dealt rough justice without consideration of the evidence, or a god who maintained the superiority of men over women" (357). Rosner interprets Maria's refusal to leave the house as a continuation of "her grandmother's struggle to resist the urgent demands of the external male world" (1991, 85), while D'Cruz also reads Maria's continuing isolation as a refusal of "re-assimilation into patriarchal culture" (2011, 296). Maria is, however, at pains to hide her real reason for staying in the house from Stella. She suppresses "a small panicky voice in her head" (2012, 356) at the thought the house might have been sold without her knowledge. When Stella asks her if she is lonely after the little girl left, Maria's body betrays the psychic wound of losing Christie. She grips the back of the chair, feels the floor slipping away from her, her face flushes, and she thinks she is going to fall: "She must not show this woman how she felt. Or whether she felt at all. To show her would be to remind herself of more than she cared to remember. As with the walls, the cracks were sealed over" (356). Alone, after Christie leaves, Maria talks to her dead (encrypted) grandmother, and responds to Isabella's 'reply' to her question: "So now I

wait?’ ‘If that’s what you think you should do.’ ‘Until she comes back? Yes, yes, I see. That’s how it is. All right, I’ll wait’” (354). The house is the place where she “*stubbornly hold[s] out for the one who never came*” (359). The deeper reason for the resistance she expresses to leaving the house is its metaphoric embodiment as the crypt in which she has entombed her lost others, and where she also waits in hope of Christie’s return. As guardian of its entombed lost others and secrets, she is unable to leave the crypt.

The photograph Maria receives, years later, from Christie’s aunt Ripeka of her niece’s marriage to Billie Monroe, becomes “like an icon” (368) she can touch. Through Christie’s son, Ross, one of the young boys who deliberately break one of her windows, Maria learns that Christie died when he was little. She tells him nothing about her knowledge of his mother, and their relatedness. As with Christie and Hoana, she chooses not to bind him to her by passing on the legacy of trauma, and buries the secrets of the past within her. Like his mother, Ross has no limp: “No blemishes. [...] The generations were getting stronger. [...] He was his own person. A new kind of person, without allegiance to a particular group or race. He would make new choices” (374). She also saw a new hybrid race in her dead baby: “A touch of Gael and the gumdigger’s mark upon her too, a new race, my little princess, a different breed we might have brought about, if I had not failed you” (292). The unproblematic future that Maria sees for Ross, through his multicultural ethnicity and lack of a debilitating deformity, is undercut by the reference Ripeka makes to Christie: “She never did settle much with her own family, for which we were sorry, nor with her father’s” (368). While Christie’s attachment to Maria as her nurturant ‘mother figure’ is implicit in Ripeka’s comment, it also references that the future for the multi-cultural subject in the postcolonial present is not unproblematic.

Riria and Hoana are such peripheral figures in the text that their marginalization symptomizes something that the novel cannot say about settler colonialism’s displacement and absorption of indigenous peoples. Published after mounting protests and increasing activism by Māori in the 1970s over unresolved Treaty of Waitangi grievances, the novel bears signs of something it cannot confront in its erasure of indigeneity, and in its privileging of hope, and recuperation of the past, through a new hybrid ‘race’ or ‘breed’ of children descended from Duncan Cave and Riria. Chris Prentice comments on the elision of history and “the very ruptures and discontinuities from which post-colonial discourses emerge” (1998, 101) in “the Pakeha project of self-

legitimation in the post-colonial moment” (89). She writes: “[Ross’s] Maori mother, and the Maori women of previous generations, Riria and Hoana, are precisely the bodies on whom this redemptive vision of the secured future depends” (100-101). While the novel’s ending may seem to gesture towards a brighter world in which a hybridized subject is better able, through the erasure of originary differences, to move beyond cycles of conflict and aggression, the vision is contingent upon the absorption of Māori indigeneity and the over-simplistic elision of the invasion and violence that underlie New Zealand history. The erasure of the past is not a straightforward consequence of the biological fact of Ross’s multi-ethnicity, as Maria hopes. Katrina Harack refers to the “tension between rewitnessing the past and gesturing toward possible futures” (2012, 256), acknowledging that the transition from the past to the future involves tension between complex, and often competing, cultural, social, and historical forces and processes. As Whitehead observes, the ending of a novel can “rest uneasily alongside what has gone before” (2004.1, 16). She refers to “the overwhelming nature of the traumatic past, which cannot be contained by memory but always and necessarily leaks into the future” (ibid.). The fact that Maria stays in the house until her death, traumatized by and held in fetters to the past, calls into question the possibility of leaving the past behind, and opens up a discursive space to probe the legacies of settler colonialism in the postcolonial present for women in the domestic locus of the family, and to explore trauma as a mode of access to history.

The trope of diaspora in *The Book of Secrets* functions not only to convey the transmission of patriarchal sociocultural norms and structures from Great Britain to New Zealand where they take root, it also operates to signify the transmissibility of trauma from one generation to the next. The novel portrays the impact of the past’s haunting *presence* in its depiction of how a woman’s experience of rape in Canada has far-reaching and damaging effects on her daughter, and through her daughter on her grand-daughter, born in New Zealand.

In the next chapter, I discuss Elspeth Sandys’s *Enemy Territory*. Unlike Kidman, who uses the nineteenth-century Scottish diasporas and transmigration to three settler colonies as the frame for her critical focus on the inter-generational transmission of trauma, Sandys sets her novel in Auckland in the 1960s and references the protest movements, Māori land rights issues, second-wave feminism, and sexual liberation that marked the era as one of significant social and cultural change in which the forces of

dissent and an influential counter-culture rubbed up against the dominant masculist culture and the hegemony of patriarchal norms and institutions. In the 1960s, the woman's place was still widely regarded as the home, with marriage limiting her access to a continuing education and a career. Sandys examines and critiques an oppressive social culture and its impact on two families. While the differences in social class between Kay and Geoffrey's families are marked, both families are dominated by authoritarian men, whose wives experience the insidious trauma to which feminist criticism draws attention, and are troubled by disturbed affective relationships. The novel portrays the impact of the event-based and relational trauma that Kay experiences in her family, and its unresolved effects on her marriage to Geoffrey, who bears the emotional damage from his mother's physical violence towards him as a child and a home-life lacking warmth and intimacy.

## Chapter Five

### *Enemy Territory* by Elspeth Sandys

#### Acting-out, Working-through, and the Possibility of Recovery from Trauma

Kay had never talked to Duncan about her family. Not that he'd asked. And not that she'd have told him anything if he'd asked. But she was curious about his. Almost any family that wasn't hers had an aura of attraction about it. She sometimes wondered if she stayed with Duncan not for his charms, which were limited, but for the glowing picture she had of his father, handsome in the saddle, and his mother, smiling and pink-faced, presiding over a kitchen smelling of roast lamb, and filled with willow-pattern china.

ELSPETH SANDYS  
*Enemy Territory* (1997)

I would [...] distinguish in nonbinary terms between two additional interacting processes: acting-out and working-through, which are interrelated modes of responding to loss or historical trauma. [...] I have argued elsewhere that mourning might be seen as a form of working-through, and melancholia as a form of acting-out. Freud, in comparing melancholia with mourning, saw melancholia as characteristic of an arrested process in which the depressed, self-berating, and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, is possessed by the past, faces a future of impasses, and remains narcissistically identified with the lost object. Mourning brings the possibility of engaging trauma and achieving a reinvestment in, or recathexis of, life that allows one to begin again.

DOMINICK LACAPRA  
*Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001)

Elspeth Sandys frames her depiction of the family as a site of trauma against the emergent issues of the 1960s and 70s – second-wave feminism, race relations, and Māori land rights. James Belich describes New Zealand, in 1960, as “a tight society” (2001, 463), and the 1960s as the beginning of social and cultural change: “A domestic process of decolonisation – a ‘coming-out’ of difference and dissent, and a ‘coming-in’ of new influences and new migrations – created the great changes of the period 1960-2000” (465). The novel<sup>1</sup> is predominantly set in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city. Its central characters are Kay Dyer and Geoffrey Grieve, who enter their marriage with long-standing, and unresolved, repressed punctual or event-based traumas experienced in their respective families, which affects their relationships with each other and with family. Sandys shifts and enlarges the reader’s points of focalization by also invoking

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<sup>1</sup> Given the lack of substantive criticism of Sandys’s fictional writing, I hope that by offering a reading of *Enemy Territory* as a trauma narrative, it will not only fill a gap, but also open up scholarly discussion of her work.

trauma in the married lives of Esme Dyer and Winifred Grieve, the mothers of Kay and Geoffrey. Esme and Winifred ‘cover’ for their husbands, living with lies and secrets for over twenty years and seventeen years respectively, and experiencing “insidious trauma” (Root 1989,<sup>2</sup> 1992; see Introduction, 16). In relation to the concept of “insidious trauma,” Laura S. Brown questions the validity of the requirement that the stressor be “outside the range of usual human experience.”<sup>3</sup> Brown contends that “[a] feminist perspective, which draws our attention to the lives of girls and women, to the secret, private, hidden experiences of everyday pain, reminds us that traumatic events do lie within the range of normal human experience” (132). Sandys explores the damaging impact of “insidious trauma” in the marital lives of Esme and Winifred, and portrays the hegemonic power relations inscribed in social institutions, which shape the social, cultural, and familial environments of the Dyer and Grieve families. She interrogates the legacies from settler colonialism that have become part of New Zealand’s culture, and critiques the patriarchal construction of masculinity, the rigid boundaries defining gender identity and roles, and oppressive and exploitative social relations.

Sandys moves beyond expressing and representing the aetiology of trauma and its damaging effects to shifting the emphasis on to Kay’s psychic responses to her traumatization, the processes of acting out and working through, and the possibility of healing and recovery. Kay must come to the recognition that her experiences in the present have their relevance in the unresolved past, gain insight into her psychic responses to trauma, understand her repetitive behaviour, and own her own damagedness before she attains “an empowered position of psychological agency” (Henke 1998, xvi), and “recathexis of life” (LaCapra 2001, 66). I draw on Judith Herman’s work on recovery. She comments:

Recovery [...] is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation. In her renewed connections with other people, the survivor re-creates the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic capacities for trust,

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<sup>2</sup> See M. P. P. Root (May 1989), “A Model for understanding Variations in the Experience of Traumata and their Sequelae.” Paper presented at the Eighth Advanced Feminist Therapy Institute, Banff, Alberta.

<sup>3</sup> The American Psychiatric Association’s (1987) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM III-R), 250.

autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy. Just as these capabilities are originally formed in relationships with other people, they must be reformed in such relationships. (1992; 2001, 133)

Kay's working through of trauma exemplifies Herman's contention that "the first principle of recovery is the empowerment of the survivor. She must be the author and arbiter of her own recovery. Others may offer advice, support, assistance, affection, and care, but not cure" (*ibid.*). I focus on how the novel treats the harmful effects of the denial and repression of the past, the acting out of trauma, the possibility of moving beyond the past through recuperative processes of recovery, and the decolonization of the heteropatriarchal familial structure.

Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin interpret decolonization as a questioning of structures and values once taken for granted, and a form of counter-discourse which allows silenced voices to speak in order to "articulate that silence and to give that absence a speaking presence" (1993, 91). They write: "What may be called the counter-discourse of postcolonialism – or to put it another way, the dynamics of writing back – involves a dismantling, an unmantling of received or imposed authority" (81). I find helpful their use of the term "postcolonial" to signify "continuity – the persistence in the present [...] of colonialisms both old and new" (8). Sandys uses the family and familial trauma to critique the continuing impact of settler colonialism as a pervasive structure in the postcolonial present, and maps it onto wider relations of power in New Zealand society and its social institutions. Kay's acting out and working through of trauma leads to an ending which is not the aporia of melancholia, but to one which invokes the new opportunities that decolonization of imbalanced relations of power offers for "improvisatory and combinatory responses" (During 1989, 291) through the social spaces of discourse and narration.

Sandys depicts power relations defining discursive domains in her delineation of familial and relational trauma. Using Martin McQuillan's definition of deconstruction, which is "an act of reading that allows the other to speak" (2001, 6), I examine her use of deconstructive strategies to explore the social space of negotiation, and dialogic discourse and engagement as a recuperative bridge in fragmented or damaged relationships. Through the evolving mutuality of dialogue between Kay and her ex-husband Geoffrey, and the potential offered by negotiating with and acknowledging each other as equal subjects, as opposed to the binaristic hierarchization of

subject/object, Sandys offers a construct of family decolonized from imbalanced power relationships.

Sandys prefigures possible new conceptualizations of family in her reworking or decolonization of the relationships between men and women. Through her deconstruction of the heteropatriarchal settler colonial family standing as an immutable symbol of the nation as family, Sandys depicts it as depleted in its material reality and cultural significance. She reworks and revises the relationship between men and women through her interrogation of what Doreen D’Cruz and John C. Ross describe as “the fixed and objectified notion of family” (2011, 216). The novel collapses the normative construction, and fiction, of the family as a place of emotional and physical safety and security, and demythologizes romance, and romantic, idealized notions of family through the relationship of Kay and Geoffrey, the disintegration of their marriage and divorce, and the court case over the custody of their daughter Nina. Aligning the topoi of traditional romantic fiction (courtship, marriage, and parenthood) with their bleak underside (estrangement, divorce, and custody hearings), Sandys depicts the need for structural change to the heteropatriarchal settler colonial family through the traumatic destabilization of Kay’s sense of a secure and trusting connection to her family, and her home as a safe place. For Kay, as D’Cruz and Ross describe in their discussion of Maurice Gee’s novel *Meg*, “[f]amily [...] becomes emptied of the very love it purports to offer its members in the interests of a notional fidelity to a concept of itself” (214). Sandys prefigures that different configurations of affective relationality are possible, that family, like nationhood, is an evolving construct, and that mutuality in dialogic engagement in a decolonized relationship is a potential way of (re)conciling<sup>4</sup> familial relations.

Kay’s transgression of moral and social codes through drug-taking and adultery represents a threat to patriarchal authority and to the stability of social boundaries; she is condemned in a court of law as unfit to have custody of her daughter, and also by her family. Her abjection as a drug addict and adulteress in the court scene constitutes her as a “cultural grotesque” (Smith 1993, 16) who must be punished and rejected for her subversion of “man’s authority [and] the body politic” (ibid.). In the words of D’Cruz and Ross, “It [the fiction of the family as a safe haven] had been sustained

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<sup>4</sup> The brackets used in reconciliation reference the work of Penelope Edmonds and her book, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation: Frontier Violence, Affective Performances, and Imaginative Refoundings* (2016). The bracketed ‘re’ highlights the assumption of conciliation between the first settler colonists and indigenes.

through boundaries that distinguished the inside from the outside: and to keep intact the fiction of its coherence and purity, that which is alien had to be expelled” (ibid.). The Grieve family casts her out. Her father tells her that he and her mother consider the punishment to be just: ““You can’t muck about as you have, young lady, and expect to get away with it”” (1998, 24), and her mother calls her ““a wicked wicked girl”” (227).

Kay is traumatized when she sees her father, Harold Dyer, in a dress in Karangahape Road,<sup>5</sup> Auckland. As Cathy Caruth explains, “trauma is the confrontation with an event that, in its unexpectedness or horror, cannot be placed within prior schemes of knowledge” (1995, 153). Kay has no frame of reference within which to begin to understand transvestism.<sup>6</sup> The experience shatters her belief in her family as a “safe haven” (D’Cruz and Ross 2011, 214). At sixteen years of age, for the first time, she is allowed to go into the city centre to meet a friend on a Friday evening. While waiting to catch a bus home, she catches sight of her father: “She wasn’t supposed to be on the Karangahape Road. Things went on there that respectable folk weren’t meant to know about. But it wasn’t the sight of the girls in their short skirts and high heels that had catapulted her into exile, it was the glimpse she’d had of her father...” (1998, 261). The reader only learns of this traumatic moment after the custody hearing, when Kay is living on her own, and begins to read the diary of an Irish colonist, Patrick Kierin, lent to her by Makere te Tuhi, a descendant of his Māori betrothed, whom she meets in the graveyard where Patrick is buried. Patrick was hung in 1872 for the murder of seven-year old Nina Lassmann. The fact that Kay saw her father dressed as a woman is revealed later, when Kay has finished reading the diary and goes, at Makere’s urging, to talk to her mother: ““Yes, your life is a tangle [...], but you won’t sort it out by attributing blame. It’s your mother you must talk to, not your father. Maybe, when you’ve done that, you’ll see things more clearly”” (301). During her visit to her mother, Kay goes to her parents’ bedroom, and opens their wardrobe:

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<sup>5</sup> Karangahape Road in Auckland’s CBD with its strip clubs, gay bars, and adult shops was notorious in the 1960s and 1970s as a marginal area with the reputation of a red-light district. Harold Dyer’s presence there indicates that his transvestism went beyond the bounds of the domestic locus to include an area known for transient and risky sexual encounters.

<sup>6</sup> Transvestism in the *Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis*, 1968 (New York and London: The Free Press and Collier-Macmillan Limited) is defined by Ludwig Eidelberg as “a perversion in which the male and female wear clothing suitable to their opposite sex. The “role” which is assumed sometimes leads to genital discharge, which often is only possible under the condition of the disguise. Others obtain some nongenital pleasure, or at least relief from unpleasure, by wearing such clothing” (451). Contemporary psychoanalytic understandings of transvestism, and non-heteronormative sexual identities, differ from those of the 1960s. In New Zealand’s rigidly heteronormative and predominantly masculinist culture, heterosexuality was the norm; homophobia was widespread, and information about non-heteronormative sexual and gender identities was limited. Kay’s description of her father’s behaviour as “sick” (1997, 304) reflects societal attitudes of the time, and the lack of a referential framework for understanding non-heteronormative identities and practices.

Last time she looked inside – on her first visit after her marriage – she fled the house. She would not be so impulsive today. Sliding open the door, she stood back to examine the contents. The dresses were there in full view. The same ones she'd seen on the clothes line the summer she worked at Lassmann's. Three long satin frocks, one red, one gold, one emerald green. The red one she'd seen for the first time that night in Karangahape Road. She'd had to stare for several seconds before her mind would accept that the person wearing the dress was her father. (301)

Kay's experience of a "shattering break or caesura in experience which has belated effects" (LaCapra 2001, 186) is captured in the phrase, "catapulted into exile," with "catapulted" indicative of the impact of a sudden shock, while "exile" connotes her psychic breach and rupture from her family.

The iconicity of the image of the "red dress" crystallizes the nature of Kay's traumatic memory, its "frozen and wordless" quality (Herman 2001, 37). Herman describes such traumatic memories as "lack[ing] verbal narrative and context; rather, they are encoded in the form of vivid sensations and images" (38), while Dominick LaCapra's description of event-based trauma as a "shattering break or caesura in experience" (2001, 186) encapsulates the suddenness of a 'shock' that comes too soon to be assimilated.

The traumatic moment destroys Kay's sense of home as a safe place and of a secure connection with both her parents, reflecting Herman's comments on the dysregulation and disruption of familial bonds as a symptom of trauma: "Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendships, love, and community" (2001, 51). Kay's knowledge of her father's transvestism problematizes and disrupts her relationship with her mother. She lives with the feeling that her mother may be complicit in her husband's transvestism, and with the uncomfortable thoughts it raises about their marriage and sexual relationship: "She wished she could recover her unquestioning love for her mother, but ever since the night when the truth of her world was revealed to her she'd been unable to rid herself of the thought that her mother was an accomplice. An unwilling one, possibly, but an accomplice nonetheless" (1998, 123). Kay's belief that her mother is an accomplice in her husband's transvestism is reinforced the summer she returns from university in Dunedin to work in the Lassmanns' vineyard, and sees three long satin frocks hanging

on the washing-line; the washed dresses also indicate to her that her father is still wearing them.

The relationship with the mother (or first caretaker), described by psychoanalysts as the primary intimate relationship, provides the infant and growing child with “the sense of safety in the world, or basic trust” (Herman 2001, 51). Commenting on the importance of trust, Herman notes that the “profound disruption in basic trust,” together with “the need to avoid reminders of the trauma,” lead to “withdrawal from close relationships” (56). Kay loses her basic trust in her mother, and “the internal psychological structures of a self securely attached to others” (188). LaCapra also places importance on trust as a mode of subjectivity, and notes a linkage between melancholia and damage to trust:

Along with working through, trust is a category that may not hold a sufficiently prominent place in certain forms of critical theory. [...] Indeed, one might suggest that the intensity and prevalence (not the mere existence) of melancholia may be related to the abuse or impairment of trust, and melancholia is often pronounced in those who have experienced some injury to trust. (1999, 719, 43n.)

Kay’s flight to Dunedin is not only a flight from an environment which triggers memories of what she saw on Karangahape Road, it is also a flight from her parents.

Kay is unable to confide in her mother and talk through what she saw, or turn to her for comfort and reassurance, because of her belief in her supposed complicity. A flashback, when her mother enters the bedroom to find her looking at the dresses, reveals Kay’s loss of trust in her mother and belief that she will keep her safe. Kay remembers a time when her childhood felt safe: “For a second Kay was a child again, twirling in her mother’s arms, dizzy with laughter. Could the world ever be that safe again?” (1998, 302). Shocked by her mother’s scream, when she tells her that she has known that her father is a transvestite since she was sixteen years of age, Kay hugs her: “She couldn’t remember when they’d last hugged each other. A cool kiss on the cheek had long been their only sign of affection” (ibid.).

Kay’s relationship with her brother Clive is also affected. She is unsure whether he knows that their father is a transvestite, and even when they are both adults, she never raises the subject with him, despite the fact that she asks herself so many times “the question [...] tunneled out of her subconscious: DOES HE KNOW?” (121). Clive

chooses an overtly masculinist career in the army (perhaps making a statement about his own masculinity), which takes him away from home and overseas. Subconsciously, his repeated comments about not wanting to see their parents or visit them, and his wish to be as far away from them as possible, must indicate to her that he too knows. Kay's inability to talk to Clive about it is a further indication of her repression of the experience in order to avoid re-activating the memory. It signals also the embarrassment and inhibitions about sexuality as a topic of conversation in the 1960s, generally regarded as the decade of sexual liberation.

There are indications in Kay's childhood and early family life, and in her subjectification within the family, and in the psychic-emotional import they hold for her, that provide the grounds or predisposition for her to be traumatized by what she saw. When she questions Geoffrey too closely about his previous girlfriend and notices his chilly reaction, she thinks, "I've gone too far. [...] He'll do what my father used to do, and put me out on the side of the road" (57). She remembers her mother saying regretfully, the day she starts school, that she has inherited the hair of her father (75), while Clive has the hair of her side of the family (a remark that may be the origin of her obsessive fear that she will go bald, and constant touching of her hair), and her mother's accusatory look at her when Clive falls out of a tree they had been playing in, and breaks his arm (150). Psycho-emotional disturbance is evident in her sleep walking as a child (for her to know this indicates that a parent is aware of it, but there is no reference to parental concern about the emotional disturbance it signifies). Esme's privileging of her son is evident when Kay tells her that she has known about her father since she was sixteen. Esme expresses her relief that she at least protected Clive from knowing his father was a transvestite, saying it would have been worse for him because boys look to their fathers as a role model.

The conversation reveals Esme's enculturation in the prevailing sociocultural norms of binaristic gender distinctions and the differentiated treatment of girls and boys, and her failure to see that the knowledge of their father's transvestism would be as damaging for Kay as it would be for Clive. Harold's comment when she becomes engaged to Geoffrey, "'So, you're making something of yourself at last... They're a fine family'" (91) reveals the lack of credit he gives her for straight As in her second year at Otago University, and his equation of female success with marriage into a wealthy, upper-middle-class family - a family he knows only by hearsay, but whose wealth and social status signify "fine" to him. Kay's reaction when her father "pats her on the

shoulder, and compliments her on the turnout [at the party to celebrate Patrick's pardon], she is momentarily lost for words" (370) suggests an earlier undemonstrative relationship with an emotionally distant, autocratic father, who speaks "in that even tone of voice when he wasn't prepared to argue" (35). Geoffrey's observation that "[w]ords were wasted on men like Harold Dyer" (137) supports an interpretation of an authoritarian man who dominates his wife and children.

The description of the Dyer family together evokes a constant feeling of constrained and oppressive silence, and an absence of warm, affective intimacies. Kay, entertaining her parents and brother Clive to dinner after she and Geoffrey move back to Auckland, reflects on the silence between them:

With the four of them seated, conversation began to fail. This was how Kay remembered it: sitting silently at the table or round the radio, praying for the moment when she could escape to her room. What was it about her parents that froze speech? Was it because they couldn't speak to one another? Couldn't, wouldn't, didn't dare – it came to the same thing. (122)

Benjamin B. Wolman describes affectivity as "the major cement that holds the family together" (1996, 211), and "[c]ommunication in the family [as] one of the best indicators about family functioning, because without it the system cannot function properly" (ibid.). When Kay asks her mother if she had ever thought of leaving their father, "Esme gave an odd little laugh. 'Oh, I thought about it all right. When I first found out, I wanted to take you and Clive, and run away to Australia'" (1998, 302). Esme's first reaction is to flee as far away as possible. Instead, she stays in a dysfunctional relationship, unable to discuss her feelings about her husband's transvestism with anyone because of the stigma attached to non-heteronormative sexuality. The damaged relationship between wife and husband, and Esme's suppressed suffering, point to the extrusion of harmful affect and its absorption by Kay and her brother.

Kay experiences the same reactive impulse as her mother, and exhibits the acting out of trauma in her flight response to study in Dunedin. As soon as she finishes secondary school, she leaves home to study at the University of Otago: "It was as far, within New Zealand, as she could get from her parents" (35). Her flight is a defense mechanism to escape from her family, and, in particular, her parents; her repression and denial of what

she saw that night are also defense mechanisms which are forms of acting out a trauma that has not been dealt with or worked through. Acting out is a form of resistance used instead of remembering the past. It is a maladaptive control process whose repetitive acting out “inhibits dealing with the underlying structural material” (Wolman 1996, 6), and which has the melancholic quality of stasis, of being stuck in the past in a repetitive and painful reliving or reenactment of the trauma.

LaCapra describes acting out and working through, which he compares respectively to Freud’s melancholia and mourning, as analytically distinguishable, but interacting or interrelated modes of responding to trauma, commenting that “acting-out in general may be a pre-requisite of working-through, at least with respect to traumatic events” (1999, 714, 32n.). For LaCapra, echoing Freud, acting out signifies a post-traumatic process that indicates a trauma that has not been worked through: “[I]n post-traumatic acting-out, [...] one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes – scenes in which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. In acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene” (2001, 21). He states:

In acting-out, the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed. Mourning involves a different inflection of performativity: a relation to the past that involves recognizing its difference from the present – simultaneously remembering and taking leave of or actively forgetting it, thereby allowing for critical judgment and a reinvestment in life, notably social and civic life with its demands, responsibilities, and norms requiring respectful recognition and consideration for others. (70)

Acting out, for LaCapra, “is related to repetition, and even the repetition-compulsion – the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to exist in the present as if they were still fully in the past, with no distance from it” (1998, 2). José M. Yebra also comments on the “performance and showing” (2009, 199) dimension of acting out, writing that “[a]s a performative act, acting-out could be related to the body while working-through, as a linguistic process, belongs in the realm of the mind” (ibid.). Greg

Forster describes the performativity of acting out in the presentation of bodily symptoms, where the body expresses or performs the memory:

The repressed memories are reactivated [...], but the defenses against remembering remain strong enough to produce a kind of compromise formation, a symptomatic acting out in which the body “expresses” the [repressed] memories in a language that consciousness cannot decipher. (The aim of this compromise is to keep intact the unconsciousness of repressed material while giving voice to the suffering that caused its repression). (2007, 262)

Through flight, repression and denial, Kay acts out trauma and their effects become evident in her post-traumatic somatic symptoms.

She stops menstruating for over a year after seeing her father in Karangahape Road, and is unable to talk to her mother about it. She later explains to her mother, “I was afraid to tell you. I thought you might think...” (1998, 303). The word ‘pregnant’ is left unspoken. “‘You didn’t trust me,’ Esme said [...]. ‘Well, you wouldn’t, would you?’” (ibid.). Kay’s reply of “‘It wasn’t you, Mum. [...]. It was how it was then. None of my friends confided in their mothers’” (ibid.). Sex education in the 1960s for both girls and boys was often limited to one stilted ‘talk’ with the same-sex parent, euphemistically referred to as being about ‘the birds and the bees,’ short on facts, and suffused with mutual embarrassment. Her obsessive-compulsive touching of her hair, and fear that it is going to fall out, her nail-biting and chewing the side of her thumb, are somatic symptoms of an anxiety “produced by internal events – persistent thoughts or wishes that intrude into consciousness and cannot be stopped. [...] Such compulsions are attempts to counteract the anxiety-producing impulse that underlies the obsessive thought [...]” (Gleitman 1981; 1991, 776). Her substance abuse begins on her honeymoon with surreptitious drinking of sherry to numb the affects of her thoughts about Geoffrey’s previous girlfriend and whether he had told her the truth that he was a virgin when they married: “As the pattern of her thoughts grew more obsessive, Kay took to drinking on the sly” (1998, 108).

Kay’s repression of a traumatic memory, her flight response to Dunedin to study and again during the university summer break she spends at home, and her avoidance of memory- and affect-triggering stimuli enable her to enjoy what Herman describes as a period of getting on with one’s life, and seemingly putting the traumatic experience out

of mind. Kay reflects that “[i]n the two years she’d been [in Dunedin] she’d almost managed to forget” (35). She spends three successful years at Otago University, culminating in her graduation with prizes in French and History, and her marriage to Geoffrey in Dunedin. Geoffrey, also from Auckland, is a gifted law student, President of the [Student] Union, President of the Socialist Club, and leader of the anti-nuclear protests in 1963.

Sandys demythologizes ‘romantic love,’ and the illusion that being ‘in love,’ or believing oneself to be, is a guarantee of lasting domestic happiness. Kay enters marriage with Geoffrey as another form of escape: “She rubbed her eyes, and the vision [of Geoffrey] disappeared. But the conviction remained. *That’s* what I’m going to do with my life, she answered the persistent voice of her father. Marry Geoffrey” (67). She is conditioned by romantic notions of ‘falling in love’ and ‘domestic bliss,’ constructing an idealized and stereotypical view of her previous boyfriend’s family in stark contrast to her own (34-35). Belich comments on “a widely recognized but understudied phenomenon: the rise of romantic marriage” (2001, 490) that took place around the mid-twentieth-century:

This idealized the marriage process: ‘falling in love,’ white wedding and honeymoon. It also involved a notion of long-term ‘domestic bliss,’ ‘housewife’ breeding and housekeeping contentedly in her own modern home, equipped with the latest in electric servants. It romanticized not only marriage and women’s domestic lives, but also childhood, parenthood and married men’s lives, and it might be more accurate to call it a ‘cult’ of ‘romantic domesticity.’ (ibid.)

Before their marriage, both question whether they are ‘in love.’ Kay doubts her feelings: “I love Geoffrey [...]. I’m in love with him. I want to make love to him. So why do I have these doubts? Is it normal to feel this way? One minute euphoric, the next sick with panic...[...]. When the panic hit, Kay would take out the photo and stare at it. How handsome he is, she would affirm; how romantic the expression in his eyes” (1998, 87). Geoffrey makes a list of Kay’s positive and negative qualities (62-63); on the debit side, he has questions about her family, friends, and truthfulness, and adds that she is definitely a “worrier” (63). As a footnote he adds, “Once you decide to love her, you will” (ibid.).

Sandys constitutes the family as enemy territory for both Kay and Geoffrey, drawing a parallel between the Dyer and Grieve families with regard to the absence of familial warmth and intimacies that they experience, despite the glaring differences in their families' social classes. Geoffrey has no memory of "spontaneous gestures in his house, no reassuring hugs or understanding hands" (51), and describes his home as a "museum of good taste" (ibid.). While a student at Otago University, known as "a liberal" and "a radical" (72), he "included the family in his list of institutions ripe for reorganization" (ibid.). When he and Kay have their first meal as a married couple with his parents in Auckland, "[h]e wanted to convey [to Kay] that he didn't feel at home here either. He wanted to reassure her that their life would be different" (111):

There were many things Geoffrey was unsure of in life, but one thing he did know: he didn't want a marriage that resembled in any way the one his parents had. Perhaps their relationship had been good once – they must have at least liked each other – but all that was left now (it seemed to him) was their mutual determination to enjoy in perpetuity the lifestyle paid for by his father's high fees. (59)

Sandys invokes trauma in Geoffrey's response to his mother's act of violence towards him when he was five or six years of age. His mother deliberately threw a telephone<sup>7</sup> at him, which resulted in permanent damage to his hearing and, after his marriage, in a serious ear operation, leaving him deaf in one ear and needing to wear a hearing aid. He denies that it was a deliberate action to his aunt (255), and represses the memory of the incident. He passes off his poor hearing to Kay as the result of a rugby injury, which is also the 'explanation' given by his parents.

The social silencing of family violence, and the complicity of family members in its silencing, are evident in the silence that envelops the manifestations of violence in the Grieve household. A reference to his mother hitting him indicates more violence than the one incident with the telephone: "Geoffrey puffed nervously on his cigarette. It had been many years since his mother had raised a hand to him, but that didn't mean he was indifferent to her anger" (322). As an adult, "[h]e knew how to pacify his mother when she was becoming dangerous" (131), but not as a vulnerable child. In the early days of their relationship as students in Dunedin, Kay intuitively senses that Geoffrey is scared of his

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<sup>7</sup> Telephones in the 1950s were bulky, heavy objects.

mother (93), noting his expression, “‘I’m summoned’” (84) [by his mother], to describe his unavailability to see her, and his contradictory remarks about his family. He tells Kay that his father’s childhood was as “‘miserable’” (84) as his own, and that his parents fight, “‘You can hear them all over the house’” (74), but having told her previously that his parents never quarrel, he has to retract quickly: “‘I don’t mean they fight *now*. [...] They used to, is what I’m saying’” (ibid.). He lies to Kay about his family, describing them as “‘close’” (40), and does not tell her that his relationship with his father is conflicted (41).

The absence of a secure relationship with his mother, his suppression of her violence, and the impact of his parents’ fraught relationship result in Geoffrey’s deep need, stemming from his childhood, for nurturant and loving care. It is only half-jokingly that he says to Kay, “‘You could stay home and look after me,’” (148), when she complains about a busy day at Auckland University. In post-coital intimacy after his discharge from hospital, he opens up a little to Kay about his mother, telling her that she burnt all his Biggles books that he wanted to take to boarding-school in England, that she has been angry with his father for most of their marriage, and that she has been taking Valium<sup>8</sup> for the past twelve or thirteen years: “‘You can’t talk to her about it [the Valium]. She used to have a temper. [...]. She’d hurl anything within reach. Saucepans, books, records, the telephone... [...]. It still makes an occasional appearance’” (167). Geoffrey’s experience of being sent, at eleven years of age, to the boarding school in England that his paternal grandfather and father attended, and spending seven years there, is a deeply unhappy one. His discovery one holiday back home that his father has a mistress, and his uncertainty whether his mother knows, compound the misery of those years.

Kay’s wish to go to England (perhaps a subconscious wish to flee even further than Dunedin) leads to tension between the couple. The trauma of his lonely years at boarding school and “‘the misery of exile’” (147) subconsciously influence Geoffrey’s constant deferrals, and broken promises, to Kay’s repeated questions about when they are going to England, and his seeming inability at times to hear those questions. Lionel’s reminder that “‘[d]oors close’” (147), and advice, “‘Get your wife pregnant. That’ll put a stop to all this nonsense. Can’t travel with babies’” (ibid.), are followed two weeks later by the offer of the partnership in his Auckland law firm. Geoffrey’s

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<sup>8</sup> “Forty million doses of the minor tranquilliser, Valium, were prescribed by New Zealand doctors in 1969, the great proportion to women to take the edge off their unexplained misery” (Brookes 2016, 332).

immediate acceptance, without consulting Kay, provides him with a professional commitment to stay in New Zealand. His memory of his boarding school years and aversion to the thought of returning to England are also at play the night of his discharge from hospital when he hides Kay's diaphragm: "He didn't plan it. It just happened. Tomorrow he'd replace it" (166). Nina is born nine months later.

The double standard with regard to sexual behaviour is evident in Lionel Grieve's implicit sanctioning to his son of a sexual liaison with Kay (86), and his advice not to marry her. Esme's warning to Kay, when she leaves home to study at the University of Otago, is not dissimilar to the advice received by countless other young women from their mothers at the time: "[N]o one respects a girl who allows a man to take liberties" (34). Nor is Harold's paternalistic injunction to Kay atypical, when, after two years' living in a "student hostel" (36) in Dunedin, she decides to go flatting.<sup>9</sup> He says, "[n]o daughter of mine will ever go flatting" (ibid.), and threatens to cut off her funds. Functioning as an example of the male use of money as a mechanism of control over women, it reflects also the prevalent belief that flatting, even with one's own sex, facilitated opportunities for sexual freedom, or, depending on one's viewpoint, licentiousness among unmarried young people. Kay's response is to support herself with part-time waitressing and library work, and to go flatting with two other girls. After Lynne leaves to get married, a boy from the overcrowded upstairs flat takes her place (the year is 1964). The prevailing view was that 'nice girls' entered marriage as virgins.

Sandys captures the tough choices single women faced from illegitimate pregnancy; abortion<sup>10</sup>, a 'shotgun wedding,' the social stigma of unmarried motherhood<sup>11</sup>, and/or

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<sup>9</sup> James K. Baxter was the Burns Fellow at the University of Otago in 1967, the year he wrote "A Small Ode on Mixed Flatting" as a satirical response to the decision of the Otago University authorities to forbid the practice among students. James Belich writes: "A 1964 survey had indicated that only 12 per cent of male students and 4 per cent of female students favoured mixed flatting. In the mid-1960s, then, the tight society was safely internalized, even in the minds of university students, the group theoretically the most prone to radicalism. In 1971, the issue erupted again. This time close on half the students joined the protest. The general public's attitude had softened somewhat, and the university buckled" (2001, 510-11).

<sup>10</sup> Belich comments that while "[t]here was some provision for legal abortion if the health of the mother was clearly threatened, [...] it was minimal. The numbers involved were tiny until the late 1960s – 63 in 1965 – but from that time, attitudes of middle-class medics began to shift to match those of the working class. By 1969, there were 225 legal abortions. This was a very modest liberalization – illegal abortions that year amounted to 4,000-5,000, and legal abortions in 1998 amounted to 15,000 (up from 10,000 in 1988)" (2001, 498).

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Brookes writes: "The rate of ex-nuptial births per 1,000 unmarried Pākehā women rose continually from 11.67 in 1945, to 14.85 in 1951 and 17.79 in 1956, reaching 24.14 in 1961. At 5.77 per cent of live births, the New Zealand illegitimacy rate was higher than the rates of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States [...]" (2016, 326).

adoption<sup>12</sup> of the baby were the options. She portrays the disillusioning ‘reality-checks’ that Lynne experiences when she falls pregnant “after doing it for six months” (68) with a second-year medical student: “So much for french letters!” (68), she says bitterly. Lynne tells Kay that her boyfriend Brian would “run a mile” (ibid.) if he knew she was pregnant, that she would rather have an abortion than tell him, and that the doctor she saw told her she only had herself to blame, and gave her a pamphlet on adoption procedures. At Lynne’s mention of abortion, Kay thinks of another pregnant girl who, the previous year [1963], “hung herself from a tree in the Botanical Gardens. The University tried to hush it up, but the story got around. People were still trying to guess the identity of the man involved” (69). Kay takes the initiative of informing Brian, who doesn’t speak to Lynne for three days and takes a further four days before he proposes marriage. During that week Kay is afraid to leave her friend alone. Geoffrey describes the wedding as “shotgun” (72), saying to Kay, “[Y]ou reap what you sow” (ibid.). His judgmental reaction strikes Kay as not dissimilar to what her father’s would have been. Even with a wedding ring about to be placed on her finger, Lynne’s comment that she is giving up university study as she hates the thought of people “star[ing] at her belly” (75) in lectures reflects her internalization of the dominant culture and the social attitudes that prescribed, and proscribed, appropriate conduct for (pregnant) women.

Geoffrey displays the male’s sense of patriarchal entitlement to make unilateral decisions that affect both husband and wife in his acceptance of a position in an Auckland law firm. The decision contravenes their plan to stay on in Dunedin after graduation, to work in casual jobs for six months, and then travel to England for up to a year. Geoffrey is quick to assure Kay that they can still travel, but omits to mention his earlier receipt of his father’s letter, advising him to expect an offer from the firm that would also include reference to a Junior Partnership in a year or so (88). It is the first of a number of decisions, affecting them both, that Geoffrey makes without prior discussion with Kay, but often in consultation with his father.

The return to Auckland acts as the trigger which re-activates Kay’s unresolved trauma. Her apprehension about returning to Auckland is reflected in the emotional timbre of her thoughts as they drive into the city, “City of Swamps. City of Slums. City of Traps” (105). Kay’s family represents for her, not ‘home,’ but enemy territory – a

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<sup>12</sup> “There was [...] a sharp rise in illegitimate births, reflected in a massive adoption boom dating from 1944. [...] Adoptions usually resulted from very young mothers being pressured to give up babies born out of wedlock. In 1962, only 18.5 per cent of unmarried mothers kept their children” (Belich 2001, 505).

place of danger from which she lives in emotional and geographic exile until marriage and Geoffrey's position compel her return. Herman comments on the re-activation of trauma after a period of latency, citing a significant reminder of the trauma or a change in life circumstances as likely precipitants (2001, 174). The precipitants that re-activate the return of the trauma that has lain dormant, and an increase and intensification in her post-traumatic acting out, are Kay's proximity to her family and the associative traumatic stimuli she has largely avoided for three years, and the pressures placed on their marriage by the dominating influence of Geoffrey's family, and on Geoffrey especially by his coercive and domineering father.

Geoffrey's thoughts on Auckland's "ancient volcanic hills" (1998, 135) as they drive to visit Kay's parents for the first time after their return to the city, "prompted him to speculate about Auckland's fiery past, and when, rather than if, molten rock would again be hurled into the sky, and lava flow through suburban valleys" (ibid.). His speculation suggests an unsettled, dynamic landscape whose power and potential for disturbance invoke an unresolved historical trauma specific to the settler colonial context, and where the unsettled settler family is on unstable ground. Makere alludes to the historical trauma of European invasion in her conversation with Geoffrey's aunt:

'This place was our Garden of Eden,' Kay heard Makere say to Pauline. 'We had pigeons, pukeko, eels, ducks, mussels, pipis, taro, kumera. Enough to feed all our people.'

'What happened?' Pauline had asked.

'Your people came,' Makere had answered. 'They cut down the trees and drove away the birds.'

'You should never have let them,' Pauline had scolded.

'How were we to stop them? They had the muskets.' (264)

While Sandys depicts that "the western perspective is not the only, or indeed the central, source of knowledge and understanding" (Whitehead 2008, 15) in the valorization of pre-European Māori history and culture, Makere is presented as a stock stereotype, the 'wise *kuia*,' whose main role is to listen to and guide Kay. Makere describes the Māori concept of *whānau* to Kay, demonstrating that other constructs of family are possible, but Sandys does not take the concept further by engaging with the impact on *whānau* of the increasing urbanization of Māori, and the resulting dislocation from their tribal

roots. The role of Eddie Wihongi, a barrister, is to manage the legal process of obtaining a pardon for Patrick. He and Makere function principally to support and catalyse Kay and Geoffrey, who are the main focus of the text, rather than to advance Māori interests.

*Enemy Territory* is situated at a time of significant social and cultural change in New Zealand when the previously silenced voices of Māori, as well as women, began to be heard, and listened to. The text registers some recognition of Māori presence and activism with references to their increasing urbanization, and the challenges they were making to settlers' legitimacy in the 1960s through activism and legal claims over land rights. The novel's engagement with its historical and social moment is clearly evident in Sandys's inclusion of emergent Māori land rights issues, and referencing of contemporary national and international events, popular culture, and the emergence of a counter-culture,<sup>13</sup> which function as temporal *leitmotifs* throughout the text and position New Zealand relationally within global circuits, reflecting New Zealand's shifting away from the 'mother country' and its filial positioning in imperial/colonial, centre/periphery hierarchies. As a Pākehā woman, Kay's positionality in the text reflects the nexus of the discourses of social class, gender, and sexuality, as they inflect trauma theory.

The expropriated Māori land which nineteenth-century settler colonists broke in for agricultural purposes and settled is now the subject of deals in Government or corporate offices – deals with profit for Pākehā speculators, and commercial or urban development, in mind. Geoffrey resists involvement in questionable land deals, which effectively defraud Māori again, and on one occasion turns down a lucrative brief:

The company, Eden Properties, had been involved in some dodgy land deals. There was even a suspicion that they'd cheated the Maori of land on the waterfront that should have been returned to them after the war. Harry McSkimming, as Minister of Housing, had been in a position to know exactly what the status of that land was. Now, thanks to Eden Properties, who'd made over half a million from the sale, it was in private hands. It reminded Geoffrey of the Tuwharetoa<sup>14</sup> case, which he'd studied as a student. Both, in his opinion, left the government and its business advisers, smelling distinctly rotten. 'It'll backfire on you,' he warned Bunce. 'One day the

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<sup>13</sup> For discussion of the emergence of counter-cultural movements in New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s, see Chris Brickell, "Sexuality, Morality and Society" (2009, 465-486).

<sup>14</sup> The Ngāti Tūwharetoa is one of the largest Māori tribes in New Zealand. Its region extends across the Central Plateau of the North Island and includes Lake Taupo, which is the setting of Kirsty Gunn's *Rain* (1994).

Maoris'll organize themselves and start looking at these deals. There'll be hell to pay then.' (1998, 193)

The volcanic landscape, with its potential to erupt, symptomizes something that persists into the present, unresolved. On the level of analogy, settler colonialism involves its own historical trauma that impacts reverberatively in the present on individual lives, and on social and cultural formations, in ways that are still unresolved. The volcanoes are a constant reminder that “nature itself remembers, and the sufferings of the past are registered and encoded in the landscape” (Whitehead 2004.1, 57). Kay’s belief that the volcanoes are extinct, rather than dormant, maps onto her supposed ‘burial’ of the past, soon to be disrupted by her return to Auckland after her marriage, her re-entry into enemy territory, and her exposure to stimuli she has sought to avoid.

The title of the novel, *Enemy Territory*, and its epigraph, ‘We live our lives in enemy territory,’ come from the taped conversation of the poet and novelist Stevie Smith with Kay Dick.<sup>15</sup> In answer to a question about death, Smith answers: “[O]f course one longs to die, because it [absolute good] would be more in control there than here, because being alive is like being in enemy territory. I think one feels that this ultimate good, God, has abdicated his power in the world. There, you’ll feel at home – that’s what Heaven is [...]” (1971, 45). Ruth Baumert observes that the state of being dead takes many forms in Smith’s death poems, but argues that death, for her, “is, broadly speaking, leaving the world [enemy territory], escaping” (2007, 213). Sandys uses the phrase “enemy territory” allusively to refer to the oppositional and troubled affective relationships, and the imbalanced power relations that define separate gendered domains, creating enemy territory within the family itself.

Auckland, where Kay experiences the alienating and hostile environment of the Grieve family, and the boundaries that exist between social classes, also becomes enemy territory for her. Winifred and Lionel Grieve make it clear that they do not wish to associate socially with her family beyond occasions like weddings and christenings. As for Geoffrey, “he could see [Kay’s] point about not wanting to live in Auckland. Occasions involving both families could hardly fail to be embarrassing” (1998, 100). Commenting on the concept of ‘territory,’ Chris Prentice notes that “[a]nother

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<sup>15</sup> See Kay Dick (1971), *Ivy and Stevie: Ivy Compton-Burnett and Stevie Smith, Conversations and Reflections*, London: Duckworth.

constitutive or defining feature of a culture is the differentiation and exclusion of non-members” (1991, 40). Economic and political power defines the spatial territory of social class and its exclusionary practices, and protects the boundaries it creates between members and non-members.

Kay describes her lower-middle-class family to Geoffrey during their courtship while students at the University of Otago:

‘My father works for the Automobile Association. He wears a uniform and answers calls in the middle of the night from distressed motorists. My mother, who stays at home and has no known vices, does voluntary work for the Plunket Society, and makes tapestry cushion covers and fireguard panels, which she gives away at Christmas. We, or rather they, live in West Auckland.’ (1998, 39)

Their house and quarter-acre section are “meticulous[ly]” maintained: “At the front there’s a lawn, a flower border, and half a dozen symmetrically arranged rose bushes, for show. You can dig all you like but I doubt you’ll find any weeds. My father is a meticulous gardener. My mother, likewise, is a meticulous housekeeper. My brother is being sent to Borneo to kill communists, so he must be a meticulous soldier” (66). The repetition of “meticulous” in relation to Esme and Harold’s respective maintenance of house and garden alerts the reader to the possibility of a façade of cleanliness, order, and propriety they are over-anxious to project, and of something to be concealed, while Kay’s reference to digging is a signifier for something in the past that she has deeply repressed, and an adumbrative reference to the forensic dig, and the psychological work of ‘uncovering’ undertaken later in the text.

The social and cultural signifiers of social class are evident in Geoffrey’s impressions on his first visit to the Dyers’ home:

The sitting room had the appearance of an exhibit in a museum. A floral sofa with symmetrically arranged cushions: matching floral armchairs; a glass cabinet full of silver spoons and china ornaments, marshalled neatly into rows; a vile orange fireplace, whose function had been usurped by a three-bar electric heater, chosen, Geoffrey assumed, for its guarantee of cleanliness. (137)

Geoffrey's family is upper-middle-class and lives in Remuera, one of Auckland's wealthiest suburbs. Lionel Grieve is a successful lawyer from a moneyed and privileged background. He sums the Dyers up as not "our sort. Never were, never will be" (20). The Grieves' wealth, life-style, social poise, and their "mansion" (109) intimidate Kay, who is acutely conscious of their belief that Geoffrey has married beneath him. Their house is a material embodiment of wealth and social status with its "Ionic pillars, a Victorian conservatory, and a flagpole flying the Union Jack in the front garden" (ibid.).

Commenting on setting as "the representation of physical surroundings that is crucially bound up with a culture and its dominant ideologies, providing ready-made, recognizable meanings" (2005, 146), Zoë Wicomb notes that the "civility that the dining-room supposedly represents" and "as site of 'culture'" (ibid.) can be used to call that "culture" into question. Kay's first meal in the Grieve household takes place in Lionel's choice of the "seldom-used dining room, with its mahogany table and seating for twenty" (1998, 111).<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey, knowing from experience with previous girlfriends how the grandeur of his parents' house intimidated them, expostulates in vain to Winifred: "For God's sake, Mother, can't we eat in the family room?" Winifred and Lionel's conversation over dinner about the help Winifred receives in the house from pregnant, unmarried girls who live-in and leave when they give their babies up for adoption calls their "culture" into question, as it reveals more about their self-interest and self-satisfaction with the arrangement than any concern for the psychological well-being of the young women. Lionel comments off-handedly: "They've got themselves into trouble, you see. You'd be surprised at the numbers" (112).<sup>17</sup> On a later occasion, around the same table, Winifred complains about the current girl leaving to marry her boyfriend, expressing "disgust" (155), not happiness for the girl, at the inconvenience of losing her just when she had got her trained.

Belich describes New Zealand, in 1960, as a society which was "homogenous, conformist, masculist, egalitarian and monocultural, subject to heavy formal and informal regulation" (2001, 463), and comments that "[t]he 'woman's place' in 1960 was still predominantly the home" (ibid.). The belief that 'a woman's place is in the home,' and that higher education for women is not to be encouraged, or serves no useful purpose for women's future lives as wives and mothers, crosses social class, and

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<sup>16</sup> A resplendent mahogany dining-table as a metonym for the display of silver and fine china that signify wealth and good taste occurs in *Wednesday's Children* (1937; 1993, 203-204).

<sup>17</sup> Around fifty years earlier Alice Roland saw the need to establish a home for pregnant unmarried women in Auckland.

constitutes a further parallel between the two families. Harold says to Kay as she starts the final year of her BA: ““All this book reading you do, what’s it supposed to be in aid of?”” (1998, 56), while Lionel cautions his son about developing a relationship with Kay, saying, “[T]here’s a problem with clever women, you know. They expect too much” (85). Both Esme and Winifred, despite their differences in background, speak of the educational and career limitations experienced by their generation. Esme tells Kay: ““I married your father when I was eighteen. The only job I’d ever had was working in a chemist’s shop”” (302). Winifred complains to Kay that “[n]o one ever thought to ask her if she’d like to be doing something else with her life” (153), and of the sacrifices women are expected to make for their families. She dismisses Kay’s job in the University library as ““your silly work”” (155), and speaks condescendingly of her study: ““How *do* you manage? All that reading, so bad for your eyes”” (200). Her remarks reflect the conflicted positionality of a woman caught between patriarchy’s social conditioning of women as wives and mothers after marriage, and her wish to be defined outside those roles. They also offer insights into her bottled-up anger which breaks out in physical violence.

The resentfulness contained in Winifred’s comments reflects what Forter describes as a critical intersection between modern capitalism and the sex/gender system: “[T]he exchange of women serves not only gender but also class hierarchy and does so precisely by rendering women commodities whose possession is meant to secure their male owners’ status and class privilege” (2003, 156). In self-compensatory gestures, Winifred becomes the ‘trophy wife,’ or in Eva Figes’s term, “the capitalist’s wife [...] a domesticated and idle plaything” (1970, 73). With accounts at the best dress shops, gifts of diamond rings, overseas trips accompanying him to law conferences, and domestic help, Lionel keeps his wife in “elegant idleness, [...] adorned with the fine clothes and jewels that he could afford to buy her” (ibid.). As a status symbol of “commodified encasement” (Forter 2003, 147), “she [the capitalist’s wife] underline[s] her husband’s class and taste by impeccable behaviour, and display[s] the potency of his wealth or earning capacity by wearing expensive clothes and jewellery and being sufficiently unoccupied to spend her time being groomed by hairdressers and manicurists” (Figes 1970, 88). Kay notices Winifred’s habit of “looking down at her hands, spreading the fingers in a fan of diamonds” (1998, 84), as if, in the gesture of display, contemplating the ‘price’ she has paid for them.

There are no diamond rings to observe on Esme's hands when, in a gesture of love, Kay takes her mother's hands in hers and notices "spots like gravy stains all over the skin" (303). They are the hands of the housewife who uses them to cook, bake, and clean, and to make ends meet. Esme's "outsize apron, tied at the neck and waist, the protecting plastic sleeves, the scarf tied around the head" (300) are signifiers of social class, comparable to Winifred's diamond rings. There is a Pygmalion motif in Winifred's attempt to 'make-over' Kay, to 'improve' her dress sense, advise on hairstyling, and teach her about china-collecting. Kay's resistance to such acculturation is clearly evident in her initial refusal of the colonial cottage "Sunnydell," offered to them rent-free by Lionel: "She would turn imperceptibly into the kind of person her in-laws wanted her to be, dressing as Winifred dressed, cooking as she cooked, travelling only when Geoffrey's career dictated" (117).

Money is a source of power in a rapidly changing Auckland, and the source of its greatest divisions with its hierarchical atomization into wealthy and poor suburbs, reflecting Prentice's description of working-class and middle-class suburbs as "clearly demarcated geographical territories which amount to cultural boundaries" (1991, 44). Returning to Auckland by road after their honeymoon, Kay sees poverty in the suburbs of South Auckland:

It's in the faces of the people on the streets; in their paint-starved houses, and the old cars that litter their neglected front gardens. It's in the rows of run-down factories and car yards [...]. Only a few miles separate South Auckland from the gilded homes of Remuera, but it might just as well, Kay thinks, glancing at Geoffrey, be an ocean that divides them. (1998, 105-06)

At the magnificent, architecturally-designed house of Geoffrey's oldest friend, Dave de Vere, built on a promontory overlooking the Waitemata, "you could hear the clock of the future ticking. Trixie worked in television. Dave made pots of money [as a stockbroker]. Both of them took risks" (140). From the house's balconies, you could see "the rising towers of the city" (ibid.). Modern capitalism is reflected in the glass façades of those rising towers, in the offices of lawyers, accountants, and stockbrokers, where deals are cut which create "abstract wealth production divorced from utility and the social good" (D'Cruz and Ross 2011, 244), serve to increase the wealth of the already privileged, and inflate the price of property.

Sandys depicts the prevailing masculinist culture in New Zealand society, its sexist attitudes to women, and the exclusionary practices aimed at their subordination and marginalization from positions or sites of power from which male privilege and pre-eminence might be challenged and undermined. Her critique reveals what Michelle Balaev describes as “the hypocrisy in contemporary social standards that dictate gender and sexual roles for women and men wherein women are in a subjugated position” (2012, 81-82). Money functions as a form of control and power within the family with Lionel referring to the allowances husbands pay their wives as a mechanism of control through the husband’s ability to withdraw them (1998, 219). The husband’s control of money is evident in Kay’s ignorance about family finances: “Geoffrey hardly ever talked to her about money. She didn’t even know what he earned. They had a joint account on which she drew for household expenses, but there were other accounts of which she had no knowledge” (198). When Kay is forced to borrow money from her mother, as Geoffrey closes their joint account the day she moves out, Esme tells her not to tell her father about the loan. Geoffrey’s deferral to his father is evident in the modest maintenance amount he pays Kay after their separation (233).

The “pitfalls” (188) of Nappy Valley influence Kay’s decision to begin part-time study in Anthropology three months after Nina’s birth: “Nine months of full-time domesticity had begun to rot her brain. When she shared her plans with the other mothers in the ward, those with children already looked at her pityingly and advised her to wait a few years” (178).<sup>18</sup> The reaction of the other women reflects the still dominant view that a woman’s place was in the home, placing the care of her children and family ahead of tertiary education and career. Her return to University study is a source of conflict between Geoffrey and his father. Lionel objects, saying, “I warned you, didn’t I son? Clever women are never satisfied” (187-188). Knowing his mother’s reliance on Valium, “Geoffrey’s answer to that had been to remind his father of the pitfalls of being a housewife. An interest outside the home would keep Kay happy (keep her off the valium was what he’d meant)” (188). Geoffrey thinks of what his father would say to Kay’s next plan to study for an MA over two years: “‘What’s the matter with you, man? Get her pregnant! It’s time you had another baby.’ Something subtle like that” (198).

Lionel’s patriarchal attitudes to women are encapsulated in his views on feminism: “‘Don’t let yourself be persuaded by all this feminist nonsense, Geoff. Women don’t

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<sup>18</sup> “Life in the suburbs, so sought after in the postwar world for the new housing and amenities it offered, began by the 1960s to reveal its bleak side, often referred to as ‘suburban neurosis’” (Brookes 2016, 332).

like it really. Not if they're honest. [...] Women want to be mastered. That's how it works for them. Forget equality'" (146). When Kay reacts negatively to Geoffrey's wish to buy a house in St. Heliers because of its distance from the university, Geoffrey offers to buy a second car<sup>19</sup> to make both her wish to study and the purchase of a desirable residence in an upper-middle-class suburb possible, but he has ambivalent feelings about Kay's wish to undertake postgraduate study: "It distressed him to think he'd become the kind of husband who was only content when he knew his wife was safely tucked up at home" (190).

Sandys contextualizes her portrayal of the disillusionment of Kay and Geoffrey's expectations about romantic love and the disintegration of their marriage at the convergence of competing social, and cultural forces which function in a centrifugal and centripetal manner between the poles of conservatism and the status quo and left-wing dissent. At Otago University, Geoffrey was the leader of the students' anti-nuclear protests in 1963, and known for his left-wing views. His enculturation in his upper-middle-class background and the social structures that privilege his class is evident in his summation of Kay's parents, "the little he'd seen of Harold and Esme Dyer had convinced him there was little to be gained from a closer relationship" (120). When he hears that Kay and Nina move to Grey Lynn, after their separation, his reaction reflects his class prejudices: "Crumbling wooden villas badly in need of paint; neglected gardens; broken pavements heaped with uncollected rubbish; brown faces; Nina running amok in Maori backyards..." (231). The views of the liberal lawyer who supports Māori land claims are at variance with his expectations of a suitable environment for his daughter.

In Auckland, Geoffrey fulfills his father's ambition for him, "carving out a career for himself in the fastest growing city in the country" (190). He knows that Kay thinks he has abandoned his radical politics, and wishes that "[i]f she heard what he had to say she might stop thinking of him as a backslider, a betrayer of promises, and see him as the complex, hedged-about man he now understood himself to be" (192). He is unable to free himself from his father's domination, and the influence of his patriarchal and hypermasculinist attitudes, revealing perhaps an insecurity about his own 'manhood' in relation to his "bear" (19) of a father, "[a]longside [whom] he seemed to shrink in size"

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<sup>19</sup> Belich comments: "Unless a family had two cars, which was still quite rare, a housewife's use of one depended on a working husband's ability and willingness to use public transport. As in the nineteenth century, access to a horse or car made a big difference to New Zealand women. Nappy Valley could be a lonely, unsatisfying and constrictive place. As late as 1981, a quarter of women had no access to personal money" (2001, 494).

(83), through his use of a chest-expander, which he hides from Kay. Her discovery of it leads her to think about the secrets she keeps from him: “If Geoffrey had kept that secret from her, what else did he have hidden away? I don’t really know you, Kay thought. Then, remembering her own secrets, acknowledged, reluctantly, that he didn’t know her either. It’s all a game, she decided. A game we’re forced to play because the alternatives are so much worse” (163).

Kay’s hope for escape through marriage proves to be illusory in Auckland. During a visit to her parents shortly after her return, Kay goes to look at the dresses inside their wardrobe: “[T]he horror returned, and she understood that she’d married Geoffrey not because she loved him, though she did, she was certain, but to escape. To escape as finally and completely as her brother had” (118). By the end of their first year in Auckland, Kay decides to call it by one name, “City of Traps” (131), reflecting her sense of entrapment and inability to escape. She wonders: “[W]hy do I feel like tearing all my clothes off and running, screaming, down the street?” (127). The frequency and intensity of her acting out behaviours increase, reflecting her exposure to stimuli associated with her trauma, and her redoubled efforts to suppress its memory. Her self-numbing habit of drinking sherry (comparable to Winifred’s dependence on prescription Valium) increases, and she takes up smoking marijuana to the point that Geoffrey says to her, “I don’t think you should smoke pot anymore. You didn’t sleep a wink after that last party of Dave’s” (127). On one occasion, when she challenges him to set a date for their trip to England, Geoffrey evades the issue by claiming work on a difficult case:

Kay, clutching her glass of sherry, was tempted to hurl its contents at her preoccupied husband. In four days’ time it would be Christmas. Everything had been arranged. Christmas Day with the Grieves. Boxing Day with her parents. The prospect was almost too horrible to contemplate. ‘I can get you all the pot you want,’ Dave had said to her at his last party. ‘Just say the word.’ (131)

Geoffrey admits to himself that he is anxious about Kay. He notices her restlessness: “Twice, in recent weeks, he’d found her wandering through the house in the dead of night. Since she didn’t respond when he called out to her he assumed she was sleep walking. “I used to sleep walk as a child,’ she told him when he questioned her about it, ‘but never since, so far as I know” (132). Her sleepwalking continues, and only stops when she is pregnant (175). Kay tells Geoffrey that it takes just two glasses of sherry to

get the feeling of being a bird. When he asks her why she wants to be a bird, she replies, “‘Why do you think?’” (133).

Trapped in Auckland by her marriage and Geoffrey’s work, and thwarted repeatedly in her wish to travel to England, which is another manifestation of her flight response rather than of any valorization of England for its supposed superiority as the ‘mother-country,’ Kay disconnects herself from the present by altering her state of consciousness and escaping through imagining herself as a bird. On New Year’s Eve, at the party hosted by Dave and Trixie de Vere in their home, where dope is freely available, Kay finds Geoffrey in bed with Trixie: “Five more minutes in that bed and he’d have been guilty of adultery. He could blame Trixie, of course. She’d made all the running. But he was more inclined to put the blame on the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the times. Sex was in the air. It was in the streets, in the shops, in the coffee bars and cinemas” (146). Geoffrey’s misery and remorse are such that Kay forgives him that night, and tells him, “because he seemed to need it” (145), that she had felt jealous when she heard him whispering in the dark to Trixie. It was not, however, jealousy she felt. It was the feeling of being a bird: “She’d felt her wings lift, as first the room, then the house, then the city, sank into the earth beneath her. How could she tell him these things? She didn’t understand them herself. How could she expect him to?” (ibid.).

Kay’s habit of imagining of herself as a bird (141) is a dissociative symptom of her traumatization. It offers her a means of mental escape by enabling her to enter a state of detachment and disconnection, and generating a change in her sense of time (Herman 2001, 42-44, 238-240). She describes the sensation it gives her to Dave: “‘Feel the air lift your wings, up, up above the ground. See the sky filled with creatures like yourself, wheeling in harmony with one another. Watch the city dwindle into insignificance’” (1998, 141). Kay’s transient dissociative episodes of imagining herself as a bird are another manifestation of acting out her repetition compulsion to flee, and to disconnect from her feeling of entrapment, when no other escape seems possible.

LaCapra draws on Freud’s elaboration on the distinction between the healthy process of mourning and the pathological condition of melancholia in his 1917 essay, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in his theorization of acting out and its relation to abjection. According to Freud, melancholia results in ego impoverishment. In “Mourning and Melancholia,” Freud states that “the fall in self-esteem” (1917; 1959, 153) is the feature that distinguishes melancholia from mourning. He observes: “In grief the world becomes poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself. The patient

represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any effort and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and chastised. He abases himself before everyone [...]” (155). LaCapra makes a similar observation: “As in acting out in general, one possessed, however vicariously, by the past and reliving its traumatic scenes may be tragically incapable of acting responsibly or behaving in an ethical manner involving consideration for others as others” (2001, 28).

Kay’s acting out behaviours increasingly reflect melancholic abjection, and its subversive threat to the stability of social and moral boundaries. In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Julia Kristeva defines abjection: “It is [...] not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules” (1980; 1982, 4). She observes that “the abject is the violence of mourning for an “object” that has always already been lost,” and that “[t]he abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them” (15). The “object” lost by Kay is the sense of a safe connection to her family, destroyed in the traumatic moment on Karangahape Road.

Kay’s decline into melancholic abjection begins when she becomes involved in an exploitative and abusive relationship with Roy Blade. Her susceptibility to such a relationship is evident in the intensification of her acting out behaviours, her experiences of an alien and hostile sociocultural environment in the Grieve family, and an increasing sense of isolation in her relationship with Geoffrey, signified in their dialogic disconnection. Kay does not ‘hear’ what Geoffrey is telling her about his work. He accuses her of indifference, to which she says: ““How can I be interested when all your clients are rich?”” (1998, 192). Geoffrey explains that is not the case, to which Kay retorts: ““How can they afford *you* then?”” (192). Geoffrey decides not to justify himself, and does not tell her that he frequently adjusts his fees to help those on low incomes. His refusal to handle the defence for the Eden Properties case draws the comment from Kay that another lawyer will only accept such a lucrative brief, not the interested questions, or praise for his stand, that he hopes for. When Kay tells Geoffrey about her plan to start an MA, she wishes that “she could talk to him the way she used to” (197): “There was so much she wanted to tell him. Why did she hesitate? He was always so tired when he got home at night, and the weekends he wasn’t away skiing were taken up with work and Winifred’s Sunday lunches” (ibid.). Geoffrey also wants

to “start talking, really talking, to each other again” (192), but if he questions her, “she’d shift the goal posts, subtly, so that he became the one doing the justifying” (213).

Kay meets Roy Blade at a party in the flat of her friend Sandra, whom she gets to know at the University of Auckland. She hesitates about introducing Sandra to Geoffrey out of fear of what she might say: “Sandra was a ‘free soul.’ She was as opposed to the bourgeois life as she was to the Vietnam War” (154). Geoffrey urges Kay to find a more suitable friend than a “‘pot head’” (204) like Sandra, patriarchally defining Kay as “a mother now” (ibid.) with its implicit circumscription of her social circuits. After initially refusing Sandra’s invitation to a party, Kay decides to attend after Geoffrey accepts what he describes as a “summons” (ibid.) to go out sailing with his father and stay on the boat overnight. He accepts without discussing it first with Kay, who assumes he would have said ‘no’ to his father. Hurt by Geoffrey’s unilateral decision, and disappointed in her hope of celebrating together the end of her exams, Kay goes to the party:

The room smelt of pot and incense. Kay felt the old tug in her gut. Just for once she’d like to relax, really relax. She’d told Geoffrey she didn’t smoke anymore and it was true, near enough. She’d shared the occasional joint with Sandra, but she’d always been careful to stop before she got high. If Geoffrey were here she wouldn’t even be considering it, but he was on the harbour with his father. [...] When a joint was put into her hand, Kay smiled gratefully and drew the smoke deep into her lungs. (205)

Roy is a singer who performs in a coffee bar called The Devil’s Kitchen. Kay’s attraction to him is instant: “He was tall and slender, with long fairish hair tied back in a pony tail. But it was his eyes that were making Kay’s heart race. Or rather, the *look* in his eyes. I know you, they signalled. Don’t think you can escape” (206). A girl at the party warns Kay about Roy, saying “‘He’s trouble. [...] I’d give him a wide berth if I were you’” (ibid.).

Kay leaves the party early, and for the three months of the university holidays, tries to put Roy out of her mind: “Occasionally, for no particular reason, she would burst into tears” (209). Geoffrey notices changes in Kay such as her insistence that he continue with his weekends away skiing, and her refusal of his offer to accompany her to the demonstration over Robert Kennedy’s assassination.

There were other changes as well, physical ones. Sometimes he wondered if she were taking something. His mother had changed in just the same sort of way when she started swallowing valium. It wasn't anything he could put his finger on. She was thinner, anyone could see that, and her eyes seemed to be permanently enlarged; but the change he was talking about had more to do with the way she moved. She walked around the house like someone in a trance. (214)

After one and a half terms' indecision, and telling herself she loves Geoffrey despite the doubts she had at the beginning, Kay analyses her feeling as "[t]rapped, I feel trapped..." (215), and begins her affair with Roy. Driving back to his flat, "[s]he was a bird flying high above the city" (216). Her affair with Roy represents another form of escape from her feelings of entrapment in Auckland by her marriage.

Kay's behaviours reflect LaCapra's observation, in connection with abjection, about the incapability to act responsibly. She places herself, and her daughter, at risk. Geoffrey is away from home two nights a week working in Hamilton, and even though care is depicted over baby-sitting arrangements, Nina is exposed to risk with a drug-taking mother. She becomes dependent on Roy, and their partners in group sex, for the supply of drugs, and, through active self-harm, negligent of her self-care and reputation (she is apprehended twice by the police on suspicion of drug-taking).

The intervention of The Reverend Theodore Meddings reflects the patriarchal alignment of "Religion, Morality, Law" (Kristeva 1982, 16), and patriarchy's "unshakeable adherence to Prohibition and Law [as] necessary if that perverse space of abjection is to be hemmed in and thrust aside" (ibid.). Lionel, by chance, observes Kay coming out of The Devil's Kitchen one evening, and decides to ask the local vicar to broach the subject with Kay and caution her. The sexual double standard is evident in Lionel's pre-judged condemnation of Kay, his concern about hurt for his son if his wife is committing adultery, and the insensitivity it reveals to his wife's feelings over his own affair. For seventeen years, Winifred lives with knowing that her husband spends every Tuesday night with his mistress. Lionel's solipsism and sense of entitlement are evident in his speculation as to how Winifred discovered "his secret" (1998, 217): "Other men seemed to get away with it" (ibid.).

Roy exploits and instrumentalizes Kay sexually, and exercises power and control over her through the supply and administration of drugs. The affair lasts three months; it

comes to an end following Meddings's visit to threaten Kay that he will inform Geoffrey about her activities. In a state of fright, she goes to Roy's flat: "Roy smiled his miraculous smile, and ambled towards the woman he'd been fucking every Tuesday and Wednesday night for the past three months. She wasn't the only woman he was fucking, but until something better turned up she was still Number One. He just wished she wouldn't go in for these crying jags" (223). He gives her something to calm her down.

The sordid and risky nature of Kay's behaviour becomes evident when Sandra and Mike join them. When Kay sobs that she wants to go home, Roy repeats to her that he, Sandra, and Mike are her "home" (ibid.), her "real *family*" (ibid.), and reminds her that they got her out of two brushes with the police and supply her with drugs when she needs them: "We're talking about love, Lake [Roy's name for her]. Love is what it's all about. Now come on, get your clothes off. Why should we be the only ones who are naked? No one's going to hurt you. How can four people who love each other do any harm?" (ibid.). Harm, however, is done in Roy's particular construction of 'home' and 'family.'

The pill he'd given her earlier was having an effect. She was like a rag doll in his arms. But that would change with what he planned to give her next: a mixture of Methadrine and Drinamyl, known as a purple heart. He sat her on the end of the bed, and helped her pull her dress over her head. He couldn't help wishing it was Noeline sitting there. Noeline wouldn't need a pill to get her going. For a sixteen year old she was extraordinarily knowledgeable. Sixteen going on fourteen, he suspected. (224)

Kay returns home later that night to the unexpected sight of Geoffrey and Lionel waiting for her return. Lionel overrides his son to take discursive control of the situation, insisting: "Leave it to me!" (225). He pushes Kay back into her chair at one point to prevent her from leaving the room, and when Geoffrey says, "Dad, I think you'd better go," he replies, "I'm not leaving till we have the truth" (ibid.). Geoffrey resists his father's insistence that he ask Kay if she has been unfaithful; Kay challenges her father-in-law to ask the question, but the effects of a bad trip take over before she answers, and it is Roy's name that she utters and Roy whom she begs to help her – an answer in itself. The night before she leaves, Geoffrey, in tears, says to her that she still hasn't told him anything. Kay answers: "I've destroyed our marriage. [...] Why do you need to know more?" 'Then you *have* been unfaithful?' The expression on his face,

when she told him the truth, was part of her punishment now” (227). Two weeks later, Kay and Nina move into a flat in Grey Lynn,<sup>20</sup> “a suburb of Auckland seldom visited by people from St. Heliers” (226).

The processes of working through involve remembering the repressed past, mourning it, telling it to an empathetic listener, and coming to terms with the traumatic experience and its symptomology in order to move on, free from repetition compulsions. Herman describes recovery from psychological trauma as a “turbulent and complex” (2001, 155) process that unfolds in three stages, emphasizing that the sequence is not linear or uninterrupted: “The central task of the first stage is the establishment of safety. The central task of the second stage is remembrance and mourning. The central task of the third stage is reconnection with ordinary life” (155). The guiding principle of all three stages and their tasks is “to restore power and control” (159) to the traumatized person, empowering and enabling her to be the agent of her own recovery.

Herman’s remembrance and mourning stage is conceptually similar to LaCapra’s working through or mourning, with both acknowledging Pierre Janet’s pioneering work on traumatic memory and narrative memory. Like Herman, LaCapra places emphasis on the importance of telling the story of trauma, and its role in enabling the trauma victim to mourn, to recognize that the past is the past, and to recathect with the present. He comments: “Working through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma [...], one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one [...] back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future” (2001, 22). He states that “the process of narration itself should be regarded [...] as a form of mourning whereby the subject is able to specify and gain some distance from her/his traumatic loss” (120). Kay’s “tangle” with its muddled threads is not dissimilar to Van der Kolk and Van der Hart’s image of “unassimilated scraps:” “Traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language” (1991, 447). Their description of narrative memory, the work of transforming traumatic experience/memory “into a story, placed in

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<sup>20</sup> In the 1950s and 60s with the increased ownership of cars, and the mid-twentieth century ideal of the quarter-acre section, the inner suburbs of Auckland became less desirable, and areas like Grey Lynn became very rundown with houses divided into flats or operated as boarding-houses. The low rents attracted immigrants from the Pacific Islands, and by the 1960s Grey Lynn had developed a very Polynesian flavour, which Sandys’s text reflects. Its inner-city location and older Victorian and Edwardian villas contributed to the process of gentrification that began in the 1970s.

time, with a beginning, a middle and an end” (448), is also conceptually similar to Herman’s remembrance and mourning and LaCapra’s working through or mourning.

Kay begins the task of establishing safety by taking charge of the material circumstances of her life. She finds a part-time job as a proof-reader on *The Herald*, which provides her with an income to pay for food, rent, and Nina’s Pre-School, as well as flexible hours. She takes control of her self-harming behaviours, keeping no alcohol in the flat and giving up drugs. At the time of the custody hearing, she has not taken drugs for almost a year. She severs all links with Roy Blade, and chooses not to maintain her friendship with Sandra. She takes her first steps towards social reconnection through the friendships Nina quickly makes with the children of their Polynesian and Māori neighbours: “For the first time in her life Kay felt she wasn’t being judged. Her story was just one of many” (1998, 228). She begins to experience a sense of predictability, routine, and control in her life: “So a new life began for Kay. A life of work and looking after Nina that slowly, day by plodding day, began to seem normal” (227).

The process of remembrance and mourning, and dealing with the repressed material and her psychic responses to her traumatization begins following Kay’s loss of Nina’s custody, and its condition of chaperoned access to her only once a month. Fearful for his daughter’s safety should another Roy Blade enter Kay’s life, Geoffrey instigates the custody hearing when he reads in the newspaper that Roy was convicted of unlawful sex with a minor and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment. The court case over Nina’s custody is a painful and humiliating experience for Kay, stigmatizing her as an adulterer and drug addict. Kay’s lawyer knows that Geoffrey has “all the big guns” (5) on his side; Geoffrey’s lawyer thinks, “His name. A walk-over” (6), while the prominence of the Grieve family is a factor in the decision of the presiding Judge, who doesn’t approve of women barristers, to ban the press and the public from the court-room.

Sandys depicts the Law as a male fraternity designed to protect its members’ interests, and an example of the powerful social institutions that uphold hegemonic, patriarchal values and norms. She uses the analogy of a stage set to describe the court scene where the drama of the Father’s Law is enacted; Herman’s analogy of a battlefield is more forbidding:

[A]n adversarial legal system is of necessity a hostile environment; it is organized as a battlefield in which strategies of aggressive argument and psychological attack

replace those of physical force. [...] The legal system is designed to protect men from the superior power of the state but not to protect women and children from the superior power of men. (2001, 72)

Justice Barrett reflects, “a woman once fallen will almost certainly fall again” (1998, 9), and makes a mental note to congratulate Geoffrey’s lawyer on his technique, “he knows how to corner his prey [Kay]” (16). His scopophilic gaze “lingers on Kay Grieve. Someone should have told her not to wear that cheap-looking jacket” (10), appraising her as “a bit skinny for his taste, and too much of that black muck around her eyes, but attractive, no doubt about that” (15), while Geoffrey’s lawyer thinks, “[s]he didn’t exactly look ‘cheap,’ but she didn’t look much like a mother either” (7). The Judge decides in favour of Geoffrey, stating: ““At a time when we are witnessing a serious decline in traditional standards of morality it’s important the public should know precisely where the courts stand”” (22).

Freud’s metaphor of the archaeological dig<sup>21</sup> to uncover the past, and repressed memories, is applicable to the process that begins in the graveyard situated near Kay’s childhood home, enabling her to begin working through or remembering and mourning what she has repressed. On her first Saturday without Nina, Kay

spent the afternoon wandering the streets of Astley, circling Kauri Avenue [her parents’ street] as if it were infected by the plague. Finally, as the sun was sinking low in the sky, she’d come here, to the graveyard she’d played in as a child. [...] The grip this ruined garden had had on her imagination was one of the reasons she’d ended up here today. (246-47)

With its psychological and emotional valences, as a place of burial and of mourning, the graveyard metaphorizes the process of working through as ‘digging up’ and uncovering, bringing, in psychoanalytical terms, repressed material to the surface.

The tears that Kay sheds at the grave of a baby girl are over her failure to keep her daughter safe. Esme’s failure to keep her safe is repeated in Kay’s guilt over not keeping Nina safe. She cradles the broken headstone in her arms, and speaks words of

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<sup>21</sup> For insights into Freud’s metaphor of the archaeological dig, see Caruth’s article, “After the End: Psychoanalysis in the Ashes of History” (17-34) in *Trauma in Contemporary Literature: Narrative and Representation*, edited by Marita Nadal and Mónica Calvo, 2014. New York and London: Routledge.

comfort aloud to the dead child: “But this wasn’t Nina’s grave, this was a stranger’s. Would she be crying like this, choking on her sobs, if Nina had died? Was the loss she was enduring now harder to bear than death?” (248). She imagines the words on her own gravestone: **“Mother of NINA, aged three. A beautiful angel whom she couldn’t keep safe”** (249; bold in original). As she leaves the graveyard, Kay notices a new headstone with a jam jar of fresh flowers at its base; the dates 1845-1872, and the inscription, “Of your charity pray for the repose of the soul of Patrick Brendan Kierin. Unjustly cut down in the bloom of his youth” (250), compel her attention (360). None of the other headstones is dated later than 1914.

The image of a fresh tombstone suggests a still open and festering wound over the traumatic experience, symbolizing something that is not worked through, and that she has tried to cover over and repress. It also references analogously her sense of wrongful accusation as unfit to have custody of her child. The fresh gravestone propels her to prove Patrick’s innocence, and marks the beginning of not running away from her past. She thinks of the epithets denoting abjection that people must be attaching to her: “Slut? Drug addict? Unfit mother? If I could get back to the beginning [...], I might be able to unravel the tangle. I don’t feel like a bad or even a weak person, but I must be to have let this happen” (261).

Kay’s interrogation of the past and the unraveling of her “tangle” follow her meeting with Makere te Tuhi on her second visit to the graveyard, and her interpellation by the story of Patrick’s arrest for the murder of Nina Lassmann, the seven-year old daughter of a neighbouring family. Patrick is sentenced and hanged on the basis of circumstantial evidence and a search that is later revealed to be less than thorough. Kay has the answer to her question of Makere. When Patrick wrote in his diary, “I have been arrested for the murder of Nina Lassmann. May God and all the saints defend me” (297), she knows “he would have looked like Geoffrey, the night she told him about Roy. Patrick was innocent. That was the reason Makere had wanted her to read the book. But what was she supposed to do with the knowledge?” (ibid.). Kay finds what Herman terms a “survivor mission” (2001, 207), and a source of empowerment and self-validation, in her pursuit of justice to prove Patrick’s innocence: “Although giving to others is the essence of the survivor mission, those who practi[s]e it recognize that they do so for their own healing” (209). Her mission to gain justice for Patrick operates alongside her resolve to “prove herself worthy to be Nina’s mother again” (1998, 260).

Kay embarks on the process of remembering and mourning what she has repressed, and begins to understand and narrativise her story, through giving it a beginning. As expressed by Herman, “[t]he reconstruction of the trauma requires immersion in a past experience of frozen time; the descent into mourning feels like a surrender to tears that are endless” (2001, 195). She tells the story of the trauma, what she saw and felt, to Makere, who fulfills the role of a trusted listener in the months that follow, reflecting LaCapra’s observation that mourning is a “social process involving actual others – possibly empathic, trustworthy others” (1999, 721). As she turns the pages of the diary, she remembers feeling “[not] part of the human race anymore” (1998, 261), when she glimpsed her father on Karangahape Road, and thinks: “It was more than possible [...] that the tangle began there. The decision to tell no one what she’d seen could have been the first step on the road that led to Justice Barrett’s courtroom” (ibid.).

Kay’s visit to see her mother is an important first step in the process of untangling, and ordering the muddled threads of her story. She walks, “unaware of any conscious purpose” (301), into her parents’ bedroom. Her mother speaks from the doorway: “I see you know. [...] I somehow thought you did” (302). When Kay tells her mother that she has known since she was sixteen, Esme throws back her head and screams, revealing her own unhealed wound, and her guilt over failing to protect her daughter: “I should at least, since I couldn’t protect you, have tried to talk to you. I mean, I could see...well, it was obvious, wasn’t it? That Christmas when you dashed off to Dunedin...” (ibid.). Esme explains why she didn’t leave Harold when she discovered he was a transvestite: “My generation, we’re not like you, Kay. We were never taught, most of us anyway, to survive in the world” (302). She adds that she also could not have divorced her husband, for the “real reasons” (303): “You and Clive would have had to live with that knowledge for the rest of your lives” (ibid.). What is unsaid, is that Esme would also have had to live with the shame and stigma of transvestism being in the public domain, and that the options she chose, silence and covering it up, and the façade of a seemingly functional nuclear family, result in greater damage to her children. Her choice to stay with a husband she describes as a “good provider” (304) reflects how deeply she has psychically absorbed dominant sociocultural norms, mistrusting her ability to earn an income and bring up children on her own.

Kay’s overriding feeling when she speaks to her father is sorrow, not anger. Harold reveals his own trauma at living with something he is unable to control: “If I could stop what I do, don’t you think I would have by now?” her father had cried out. The words,

and his tears – the first Kay had ever seen him shed – had drowned her anger, leaving in its wake only an exhausted sorrow” (333). His desire to wear dresses, and his torment over that desire, tap into something that cannot be avowed within the heteropatriarchal and heteronormative construction of masculinity that draws such rigid binaristic gender and sexual distinctions.

Herman’s comment about the non-linearity of the recovery processes is borne out in Kay’s reconnection with others, and rebuilding her own life while dealing with remembering, mourning, telling, and integrating the story of her trauma into her life narrative. She takes on full-time work on *The Herald*, and enjoys the opportunities to write articles, book and film reviews: “When that happened several hours might go by before she remembered to count the days [until she sees Nina]” (259-60). When Geoffrey calls to invite her to dinner (they have not seen each other for six months), she tells him she has made “a new life” (273). She forms safe connections and new friendships in her “neighbourhood *whanau*” (351). Her increased confidence in herself, and in the new life she is making, is evident in her belief that she will get Nina back when the custody decision is reviewed (303). Her mission to establish Patrick’s innocence involves her in satisfying teamwork with Makere and Eddie Wihongi, whom Geoffrey recommends to her for the legal aspects of the case, saying: ““He’s had a run of successes lately in cases involving Maori land disputes. I’d say he’s starting to ruffle a few highly placed feathers”” (310). The search to find Nina’s body is successful, the police evidence confirms that she died of a broken neck from falling into a gully near Patrick’s cottage, the Governor-General accepts the recommendation of the Attorney General, and pardons Patrick “in exercise of the prerogative of mercy” (314). Kay’s article about Patrick is syndicated nationally, she is referred to as “a rising star on the Auckland newspaper scene,” “one of the new breed of women journalists” (363), and the editor of *The Herald* offers her a job as a senior reporter.

Herman includes reconciling with oneself, forgiving oneself, and concern to protect the next generation as among the tasks of the third stage of reconnection. No longer trapped in repetitive acting out, Kay is able to walk along Karangahape Road “untroubled by ghosts” (330), and she abandons her fantasy of flying (333). After the neighbourhood party Kay hosts on Boxing Day, she is drawn back to the graveyard late at night. She reflects on her conversation earlier that evening with Eddie and his question as to why she got involved with Patrick: ““I think I felt, if I could put that wrong to rights, I could begin to deal with my own past. [...] I’m not innocent like

[Patrick], but I'm not guilty the way the court decided I was guilty either'" (360). She adds that through reading Patrick's story, she knew "there had to be a way of rewriting the past – not the events, those are fixed, but our understanding of those events" (362). Kay runs her fingers over Patrick's name in the headstone: "Now she was here, with Patrick, interrogating not the past but the future" (ibid.). She whispers to Patrick that he will get his pardon, and knows too that she has forgiven herself.

Sandys invokes the transmissibility of trauma in Kay's relationship with her mother and daughter with particular emphasis on trauma's ability to undermine trust and disrupt secure and trusting relationships. Kay's wish to protect her daughter from emotional and psychological damage is linked with her fear that the mistakes of the past will be repeated. She wonders if, like her, "Nina [would] one day have to face terrible truths about her parents?" (333). As Herman explains, "[c]oncern for the next generation is always linked to the question of prevention. The survivor's overriding fear is a repetition of the trauma; her goal is to prevent a repetition at all costs" (2001, 206). After the custody hearing and separation from her mother, Nina begins to exhibit signs of traumatic disturbance in sleep walking, and in an uncanny repetition of her mother's subconscious wish, she says to her father, "I wish *I* was a bird" (1998, 253). Pauline's warning to Kay at Nina's christening about being in "shark-infested waters" (201), and her admonition to Geoffrey, "Nina is not entirely safe in the bosom of your family" (255) prove to be true.

One of Geoffrey's sisters tells him that Winifred has begun hitting Nina with a wooden spoon. He decides immediately to move out of his parents' house with Nina and into a flat: "Two things had happened to bring him to this pass. One was that Nina had started sleep walking; the other was that Winifred had begun to lose control" (274). Nina's sleep walking continues after Geoffrey moves into a flat, indicating a concerning pattern of behaviour. Subconsciously, Winifred's earlier refusal to babysit may be related to her anger, and inability to control it, and fear that she may hurt Nina, as she hurt her son. When Geoffrey moves back home after gaining full custody of Nina, Winifred is forced into caring for her granddaughter.

Through her fear that Nina may be damaged by her failure to keep her safe, and may lose trust in her as a mother, in a repetition of her own past, Kay recognizes the imperative for her to engage in preventing it: "More than anything in the world [...], Kay wanted to free her daughter from that doomed inheritance. Perhaps, with Geoffrey's help, she might manage it" (333). Kay signals that she acknowledges her

responsibility to act, together with Geoffrey, to protect her daughter from further harm in the future, and to safeguard her sense of a secure and trusting connection with her parents.

Kay's focus on the future and her forgiveness of herself reflect her growing sense of power and control over her life. When Geoffrey asks Pauline whether Kay still loves him, his aunt describes the new person Kay has become:

'You'd have to work hard to win her back. She knows what she wants now. She wants to be a mother to Nina, but on *her* terms, not yours, and certainly not Lionel's. Beyond that, she wants to be free to explore whatever life throws at her. She knows better than to make Nina, or you for that matter, the meaning of her life. She'll never make that mistake again. Are you ready for such a woman, Geoffrey? I'll be disappointed in you if you're not.' (342)

Kay is now able to reflect with gratitude on her life: "I have so much to be thankful for [...] a beautiful daughter; friends like Makere and Pauline and Eddie; Geoffrey, whom I can think of again with love" (345). She is "ready for greater intimacy" (Herman 2001, 205). Kay and Geoffrey deepen their relationship, and intimacy, by telling each other their repressed traumas, and what they have learnt from their encounters with their parents; encounters in which they experience "the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound" (Caruth 1996, 8). Caruth's literary interpretation of Freud's psychoanalytic theory of the story of Tancred and Clorinda in Tasso's epic, *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1-9), draws attention to "the address of the voice" (8) from "the crying wound" (ibid.). Caruth observes that the address of another "demands a listening and a response" (9) to the other's trauma.

LaCapra's work on empathy provides a fruitful link with Caruth's interpretation of Freud's "crying wound" and the imperative of listening to its address. He describes the response to the traumatic experience of others as an affective response, and "affectivity as a crucial aspect of understanding" (2001, 40). Kay and Geoffrey listen to the stories of each other's wounds. They discover that their trauma is "tied up" with the trauma of another in such a way that it leads to a deeper understanding of their own trauma, and to their affective response of empathy for the trauma of another. Kay sees the wound she

inflicts on Geoffrey, through the expression on his face, when she finally tells him the truth of her affair with Roy, and recognizes Geoffrey in her vision of Patrick's face when he is arrested. Esme's scream 'wakes' Kay to the trauma of her mother; Harold's sobbing attests to his suffering from having to live with his transvestism; and Geoffrey sees his mother's wound when her "mask" (1998, 323)<sup>22</sup> drops.

Without her "mask," Winifred tells Geoffrey that she took the blame for killing a man in a motor vehicle accident to protect Lionel, who was the driver. At Geoffrey's prompting, Winifred tells him that they had been at the Northern Club that night for dinner with "legal bigwigs" (323), that Lionel had drunk a lot of whisky, and had got rather carried away with himself, telling her as they drove off: "'Chief Justice Grieve, Winnie. [...] What d'you reckon to that?'" (ibid.). Winifred pauses, and Geoffrey notices how "uncharacteristically vulnerable" (ibid.) she looks: "[He] had hardly ever seen his mother without make-up. She was the kind of woman who got up before everyone else to apply her mask" (ibid.). Winifred admits to relief in being able to talk about something she has "bottled up" (324) for seventeen years, and also breaks her silence about Lionel's mistress: "'Your father is out with his fancy woman'" (324). In a gesture that Geoffrey is familiar with, Winifred fans out her fingers and stares at her rings: "'Have you ever been in an accident, Geoff? [...] The shock of the impact is something you never forget. I didn't see the motorbike. It was on the driver's side. All I remember is the noise, a sort of wrenching scream, then the car stopped, and there was this awful silence'" (324). Before the police arrive, Lionel asks her to say she was the driver, explaining that there would be consequences if he was found to be the driver. In a gesture similar to Kay's, as she was listening to her mother, Geoffrey reaches out to take his mother's hand. To his question why she covered up for her husband, Winifred says: "'Because I loved him. [...] There was a point to my life, a purpose. I wasn't just a housewife. [...] My husband would go on to be a Judge, and the victory would be mine as much as his. [...] When it was over, the trial, I mean, he changed. I think he felt ashamed'" (325-26).

Winifred's anger, and present situation, stem not just from the event of the accident; the lie she tells for her husband to protect his reputation and career relates to a larger patriarchal assumption of the higher (economic and social) value of men's work and reputation. The bitterness of her earlier remarks to Kay about her job and study (155,

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<sup>22</sup> A 'mask' is mentioned earlier in the text in connection with Winifred. At the custody hearing, her face is described as "a mask of make-up" (24).

200), and her outbreaks of physical violence reveal her suppressed anger about the sacrifice she made in vain (Lionel never makes a judge), and her awareness of the hollowness of her material compensations. Geoffrey raises something his father had once told him: “‘He [...] well, implied, that you didn’t want...after the twins were born...you more or less lost interest, he said.’ Winifred gave an angry twist to her wedding ring. ‘More of his lies,’ she muttered” (326), and says she does not care about protecting her husband any more. Her decision to divorce Lionel is the beginning of reclaiming control over her life.

The conversation that takes place that night between Kay and Geoffrey performs a pivotal function in their subsequent reconciliation; it displays a “commitment to truth, in a dialogic context and with an authentic listener” (Laub 1995, 73). Geoffrey sums his father up as a murderer: “‘A man who could stand by and allow his wife...’ He broke off. Disgust was making a dam of his throat. He didn’t love his father, he hated him. What he had done *was* as bad as murder” (1998, 332). Kay tells Geoffrey he must see his father and hear his side: “‘You’ll never get past this if you don’t, Geoff. I’m not saying you have to approve or even forgive. Just open the door a little’” (333). When Geoffrey wonders why women cover up for men like his father, Kay tells him that her mother has also been covering up for her husband, and knows that she must finally speak to him about her father.

Bridget Orr describes a dialogic encounter such as the one between Kay and Geoffrey as “allow[ing] the self to open up to the other without assimilating the other” (1994, 154). Thinking about it all later, Geoffrey forgets his disgust that his father-in-law, Nina’s grandfather, is a transvestite: “It didn’t bear thinking about. But the worst thought was what Kay must have suffered, bearing that knowledge in silence for so many years. When he tried to imagine *that* he forgot his disgust, and felt only sorrow. Sorrow and *love*, he acknowledged [...]” (1998, 341). Through the bridge of such discourse, in which there is not the hegemony of a dominant, controlling voice, Kay and Geoffrey begin the renegotiation of their relationship and their reconciliation.

Sandys conveys, in the final words of the novel, spoken by Geoffrey to Kay, that they are co-authors of a relationship that will evolve with no pre-written script: “‘But *I’m* not writing this story. [...] We’re writing it together’” (374). Such a conclusion does not offer full closure; its open-endedness gestures towards the possibility of refiguring the concept of family as an affective relationship of equal subjects decolonized from imbalanced relations of power. Kay and Geoffrey reconcile, but the

promise of their decolonized relationship does not signify a changed sociocultural and political environment. Decolonization of the heteropatriarchal family is intimately intertwined with the need to decolonize other hegemonic institutions. Imbalanced relations of power are inscribed in social and political institutions, impacting on familial and social relations, and forming the circumstances out of which trauma is created. Kay's psychological trauma is not the result of an individual pathology; she is traumatized by a specific experience which Sandys situates at the convergence of damaging familial and sociocultural contexts.

Herman comments about the inability to finally resolve trauma or to determine that recovery is complete with reference to the conflicts and challenges of life that may reawaken the trauma (2001, 211). Her statement that "[t]he goal of recounting the trauma story is integration, not exorcism" (195) contains a nuance that LaCapra reflects in his observation that working through does not signify transcendence of the past (1998, 5), and in his comments about traumatic wounds. He writes: "[C]ertain wounds, both personal and historical, cannot simply heal without leaving scars or residues in the present; there may even be a sense in which they have to remain as open wounds even if one strives to counteract their tendency to swallow all of existence and incapacitate one as an agent in the future" (2001, 144). LaCapra's comments tap into the ongoing challenges of living in a settler colonial country whose wounded and unstable topography evokes an unsettled traumatic history and emblemizes the ongoing task of coming to terms in the present with "the wounds and scars of the past" (42). The volcanic landscape is a constant reminder that living with historical trauma and persistent unsettlement is part of the settler colonial condition. Living here, like recovery from trauma, requires constant work, continuing vigilance, self-questioning, and openness and address to the other "in a manner that strives to be cognitively and ethically responsible" (ibid.) in order to meet the challenges of addressing the unresolved issues from the past that continue to haunt the present.

Like Mander in *The Story of a New Zealand River*, Sandys addresses the possibility of recovery from traumatization. Mander uses a site of physical and emotional isolation to portray Alice's increasing self-reflexivity and insight into the past as recuperative processes. Sandys depicts the disintegration of Kay and Geoffrey's marriage through Kay's post-traumatic symptoms which take the form of acting out in self-harming behaviours, leading to her abjection through drug-taking and an abusive adulterous

relationship. Her recovery also begins in a site of subjective isolation, after her divorce and without her daughter, and involves working through the past by processes of remembrance and mourning. Kay and Geoffrey's reconciliation conveys hope for the possibility of moving beyond trauma, and for decolonized affective relationships.

Whereas in *Enemy Territory* Sandys depicts the acting out and working through of trauma, Gunn portrays the damaging effects of trauma on the life of a twelve-year-old girl and the profound and unresolved nature of the psychic effraction she experiences. The blurring of temporal boundaries in *Rain* reflects the timeless dimension in which the central character lives. For Janey Phelon, haunted by the past, there is no distinction between the past and the present. *Rain* is set in the region of Lake Taupo in the central North Island. I interpret the flooded caldera of the Taupo Volcano and its surrounding volcanic landscape as a traumascapes, referencing Maria Tumarkin's coinage and definition of the concept and her work on traumascapes (2019, 2005, and 2004). The principal differences between *Rain* and the previous texts relate to the age of her central character, who is twelve when she experiences the drowning of her younger brother in the lake, and Gunn's use of topographical and natural imagery and non-linear modes of telling to convey the effects of the experience on both emotional and formal levels. The emotionally damaging relationship between Janey and her mother, her parents' dysfunctional relationship, their emotional neglect of Janey and her brother, and their constant partying, which exposes the children to the risk of harm, make the family home an unsafe place. Through the "perpetual troping" (Hartman 1995, 537) of the traumatic event through imagery relating to rain, flooding, rivers and the lake, and the fragmentation of narrative by analepses and prolepses, Gunn conveys the nature of the traumatic experience and how it is encoded in Janey's memory, suggesting an unhealed wound in the present.

## Chapter Six

### *Rain* by Kirsty Gunn

#### The Unsettled Landscape of Traumatic Memory

All children are powerless against the adults who surround them. We turn from them, set our mouths, but still our soft milk bones yield. They are bejewelled, our parents, they've earrings screwed into their lobes, buckles at their waists. They move amongst each other, the fabrics of their clothing touching, hem to seam, skin joined, lips parting. We have to share their lives, their homes and all their tricks. It's what we're born to. We grow and lengthen, spawn fills our own sacs, and still they want to keep us as their young. We're their living, heaving seed. Proof that they ever loved.

KIRSTY GUNN  
*Rain* (1994)

[P]laces of loss and trauma are never empty or blank. Even when they are covered in ruins, even when they look like they could be on the moon, even when they have shopping centres built on top of them, these sites are filled with meaning and history. All places in our lives are palimpsests, containing many different layers of the past on top of each other. In its original meaning, 'palimpsest,' of Greek derivation, refers to a re-used manuscript with its original text, usually on parchment, overwritten by other kinds of inscriptions (*palim*: 'again,' *psēstos*: 'rubbed smooth'). A place is similarly layered and overwritten. Original structures are destroyed and others are built on their foundations; new meanings are superimposed on the old; some memories and histories rest on others, submerged or largely forgotten. Yet just like in the manuscript, marks and traces of the past over-written by the present are still there, lying underneath each place, an integral and indestructible part of that place, even if 'rubbed smooth.'

MARIA TUMARKIN  
*Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of  
Places transformed by Tragedy* (2005)

*Rain*, Kirsty Gunn's 1994 novella of traumatic memory, is set in the volcanic landscape of Lake Taupo in the North Island of New Zealand. Lake Taupo is the flooded caldera of the Taupo Volcano. The caldera was created by a supervolcanic eruption which occurred approximately 26,000 years ago. It was the world's largest known eruption over the past 70,000 years, ejecting 1,170 cubic kilometres of material and causing several hundred square kilometres of surrounding land to collapse and form the caldera, which later filled with water, eventually overflowing to cause a large outreach flood. The most recent major eruption of the Taupo Volcano, dated about 180 CE from Greenland ice-core records, devastated much of the North Island and further expanded the lake. The Taupo Volcano, which is very large and has many vents, most of which are under Lake Taupo, is considered dormant rather than extinct because of fumarole

activity and hot springs along the shore of the lake. The devastating effects of the two cataclysmic eruptions are still evident in the landscape around Lake Taupo, and in its pumice-strewn beaches.<sup>1</sup>

The novella<sup>2</sup> depicts the conjuncture of the effects of violent geological events, and the trauma experienced by Janey Phelon, at twelve years of age, over her younger brother's drowning in Lake Taupo, its impact on her life, her damaged childhood, and the fault-lines in her dysfunctional family. Gunn writes family trauma through the power of place, choosing the landscape of Lake Taupo as "a generative site of meaning" (Balaev 2012, xv), to underscore the indelible imprint of trauma on a life and, by analogy, the pervasive, lingering presence of the past in the present. The physical wounds<sup>3</sup> to the landscape mirror Janey's psychic wounding, or, as Geoffrey Hartman puts it with reference to Coleridge's use of figurative language in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, represent the "externalization of an internal state" (1995, 541). Janey discovers five-year-old Jimmy's body in the lake. A strong swimmer, she brings him ashore, but her efforts to resuscitate him fail. Janey's grief over her brother's death is compounded by the guilt she feels over leaving him alone to play on one of the lake's more remote beaches while she meets Bill Cady, a friend of her mother's, for a sexual assignation. The depiction of Janey's traumatic memory of the drowning takes the form of "a perpetual troping of [the event]" (537) through the repetition of figurative language relating to the volcanic landscape of Lake Taupo and its watery expanses, with the repetitions "suggest[ive of] an unresolved shock" (543). Janey's experience of her brother's drowning, to quote Hartman, "'falls' into the psyche" (537), causing an "inner catastrophe" (ibid.), which assumes "an exceptional presence [...] inscribed with a force proportional to the mediations punctured or evaded" (ibid.).

Gunn's use of Lake Taupo as the setting and her depiction of Janey's traumatization work in the text as "parallel force fields" (Salván 2011, 145), with the magnitude and force of the volcanic eruptions connoting the damage done to Janey's psyche by her brother's tragic loss and her sense of guilt over the circumstances surrounding his death.

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<sup>1</sup> Information accessed 12.09.2019 from <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>

<sup>2</sup> An online search for critical literature on *Rain* reveals a number of book reviews (see, for example, Wendy Grossman's "Raining in my heart," *The Guardian*, November 1 1994, 10), but a lack of in-depth critical analysis. Reviews of the book's 2001 film adaptation (directed by Christine Jeffs) are also available online.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek *trauma*, or 'wound,' originally referred to an injury inflicted on the body. Cathy Caruth comments that "in its later usage, particularly in the medical and psychoanalytic literature, and most centrally in Freud's text [*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1920], the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (1996, 3). The term *traumascap*e conjoins the two meanings, or uses, of the word – physical in the sense of scars, inflicted upon the land, and psychic, referring to a wound to the mind.

The parallels between the “force fields” of volcanic activity and the pervasive impact of trauma on Janey’s life as an adult form the structure of the text, achieving what Jocelyn Dupont describes as an “omnipresence of trauma in the composition of the text” (2011, 177). Through her use of the concept of “parallel force fields,” and narrative strategies such as repetition and the disruption of linear temporality that replicate the symptomology of trauma, Gunn creates a text that is “woven around trauma” (*ibid.*), with the pervasiveness of thanatognomonic imagery contributing to its narrative structure. The images in the opening paragraphs serve both to disturb and unsettle the reader, and to prefigure Jimmy’s drowning:

All the trees were drowning. They reached their long skinny branches into the lake, leaning so far that their gnarled roots could barely hold the clay. You knew it was only time before whole bodies would be dislodged, allowed to drift, then sink. The water would seal over them again and that’s how it would end: you would never know there had been trees there at all. [...] Every year the water-levels rose. Water crept up higher and higher on the sand, another lump of earth was crumbled away. Even on the road you could see signs of its advance: pumice crumbled in the gutters, green weed stains on the tarmac from where the lake had flooded in spring. It came from building on a land spit, people said. You couldn’t claim it gave you real foundations. (1994, 1-2)

The trees are personified with bodies that have branches like arms reaching out as they drown, while ‘seal’ is a signifier of the closing of the eyes in death, and of the tomb or coffin. The instability of the land defeats the trees’ efforts to gain purchase in the clay, condemning them to slow decay in the waters of the lake. The land itself is unstable. Gunn “heightens knowledge by symbolic means” (Hartman 1995, 544) through the use of words and images that generate unsettling effects, and in her description of the submerged thanatoscape<sup>4</sup> of the lake, its flooding, and in the “dark tonality” (Ganteau 2011, 31), palpable melancholy, and spectrality of her figurative language.

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<sup>4</sup> I acknowledge a debt to Tumarik’s coinage of the word ‘traumascape’ (“physical places marked by one or a series of tragedies,” 2004, 22), and her reference to “thanotourism” (2005, 42) to describe the popularity of tours to sites of death such as the battlefields of World War I and the concentration camps of World War II in my coinage of ‘thanatoscape’ from the Greek *thanatos* (death) and –scape to describe the death-dealing powers of the lake’s waters and its spectral, submerged world.

The epigraph from Maria Tumarkin's book on traumascapes with its reference to palimpsests and the layers of "meaning and history" attached to place, "overwritten by the present [but] still there" (2005, 225) provides a point of entry to the spectrality and the shifting spatio-temporality evident in *Rain*. Tumarkin defines her use of the term *traumascapes*:

Because trauma is contained not in an event as such but in the way this event is experienced, traumascapes become much more than physical settings of tragedies: they emerge as spaces, where events are experienced and re-experienced across time. Full of visual and sensory triggers, capable of eliciting a whole palette of emotions, traumascapes catalyse and shape remembering and reliving of traumatic events. It is through these places that the past, whether buried or laid bare for all to see, continues to inhabit and refashion the present. (12)

Lake Taupo and its surrounding landscape offer a palimpsest of meanings from the violence of the lake's volcanic origins before the human settlement of New Zealand, its settlement by Ngāti Tūwharetoa (the region's dominant *iwi* or tribe) in the fourteenth century, to successive forms of colonization by European settlers from the 1830s on, which involve "overwriting" signs of indigenous presence, and indeed of colonizing processes themselves.

Tumarkin refers to Jay Arthur's observation that Australia, a 'settler-invader colony' like New Zealand, "comes into being by repeated acts of colonization."<sup>5</sup> She writes:

To this day these *repeated acts of colonization* sustain the neo-colonial project of securing "the land emotionally and spiritually for the settler society."<sup>6</sup> Many forms of colonial violence, both overt and barely discernible, are repeated and re-enacted [...] most potently in our relationship with the land. (2004, 22)

The "repeated acts of colonization" are evident in the appropriation of Lake Taupo and its environs by entrepreneurs, developers, and Tourism New Zealand, and its transformation into a tourist destination for people able to afford holiday homes, lake-

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<sup>5</sup> Jay Arthur, "The Eighth Day of Creation," *Journal of Australian Studies*, June 1999, 67.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia*. Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 151.

front hotels and motels, and a retirement haven for the wealthy. Māori are invisible in the text, and in Jim Phelon's account of Lake Taupo's development by settler colonists, and of camping and fishing with his father in the remoter reaches of the lake: "How quiet it was in those parts, as history, no settlement there at all and never would be" (1994, 31). He tells Janey how he and his father would walk up one of the rivers flowing into the lake and sometimes come upon a clearing in the bush with signs of colonization: "Perhaps the bush would be cleared, in parts, into scrubby farmland with a few mangy sheep. A dog might have barked outside a hut made of sheets of corrugated iron, rusted red and black, and maybe someone lived there, or maybe they were dead" (7).

The colonizer's maps, boundary lines, plans of the land, and its division into sections (36) are to the fore in the land auction of 1960 when Janey's father buys the section on which their house is built. Jim Phelon's story of buying the section references the instrumentalization and commodification of land by the white speculator who sees profit in the purchase of 'empty' land:

[S]ome speculator drove up from the city and put a bid in, won it. [...] Before the month was up he'd divided the spit for auction, section by section. He must have been a gold tooth when he retired, people said, a shiner. He knew the value of our summers before we did – the place for tying up boats, the sheltered beaches, fly fishing off the spit at dusk – he saw money in all of it, glinting like the sun. (28)

By the time Janey is twelve in 1972, holiday-makers had already discovered "our summer town" (2) with its "few pale, wooden houses" (ibid.): "[T]he beach would be crammed with people and there would be boats jetting across the lake, the bladed sound of them cutting down any silence we might have. There would be the noise of families with beach umbrellas and huge coloured picnic rugs, and teenagers running in packs [...]" (15-16). Gunn adds the layer of an individual tragedy to the land's palimpsest of meanings, situating Janey's lived experience of place, and the loss of her brother, in the ruptured and damaged landscape.

Janey's narrative recollection, as an adult, of her childhood blurs the boundary between the present and the past. Other than the ongoing impact of unresolved childhood trauma on her life, she reveals very little about her adult life. Her narration moves between temporal layers; the constant prolepses and analepses and consequent

fragmentation of the text reflect the close connection between content and form that Anne Whitehead regards as constitutive of trauma fiction (2004.1, 83-84, 86). In *Rain* the borders between the past and the present collapse, attesting to Dominick LaCapra's observation that "[t]rauma is a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence; it has belated effects that are controlled only with difficulty and perhaps never fully mastered" (2001, 41). Janey is haunted by the memory of her brother's drowning, reflecting Cathy Caruth's definition of trauma and its belated and repeated ghostly possession of the survivor: "The pathology [of trauma] consists [...] solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time" (1995, 4). As the text's autodiegetic narrator, Janey tells the story in the present tense, 'writing back' to the summer holidays her family spent at the lake. The use of the present tense serves both to convey and intensify the immediacy of her memories, and the haunting impact of the traumatic event in the present, evoking the indelibility of the traumatic wound, and the endless return and atemporality of trauma. In the words of Arthur W. Frank, "[t]he past is remembered with such arresting lucidity because it is not being experienced as past" (1995, 60). Janey does not simply relate her memory of the circumstances of her brother's drowning: she re-enters the experience, and re-experiences the event as if it were happening in the present.

Gunn situates Janey's recollection of the past, her traumatization, and her depiction of the dysfunctional Phelon family within a damaging social and cultural environment, reflecting Michelle Balaev's observation that "trauma is a constellation of individual and social forces that convene at a local landscape to generate both the meaning of the experience and the texture of its remembrance" (2012, 41). Balaev argues that the use of place, and highlighting its significance through magnification of its landscape effects, connects the individual to the social, situating individual trauma, regardless of how private or solitary the experience, within a larger cultural context and social sphere (54). Janey and Jimmy suffer emotional harm and neglect within their family, and are vulnerable to sexual predation at the nightly parties their parents host. The familial and social environment that the children experience in the domestic locus is as disturbed and fractured as the "unjointed" (1994, 76) land on which the Phelons' "summer-house" (11) is built.

Janey's name for the family holiday home, "summer-house," sitting on "unjointed" land, suggests something impermanent or unfixed about the settler family, and its possession of the land. She recalls that "[n]one of the houses was old. They felt old,

when I was a child, blistered paint peeling off, rusted tin roofing patched over in parts with sheets of new red, but really, nothing built on that south-west side of the lake was more than a generation” (27). The house, set among “the few pale, wooden houses that marked our summer town” (2) feels makeshift, isolated, and vulnerable to the irruptive forces that are without and within it. Jim Phelon’s stories of fishing with his father always have the same ending; his purchase of the land and building of the house. Janey describes her father sitting on the porch, drinking whisky sours, instead of following his usual pattern of spending the afternoons sleeping inside or sunbathing on the lawn: “His voice was thick and syrupy now, most of the bottle was gone” (37-38). Sinking “deeper and deeper” (ibid.) into his “rotted chair” (38), he tells Janey they built the house the year she was born: “Family history [...]. The land’s protected...Prime real estate...A house for all our summers” (ibid.).

The settler family’s history, figured as one generation, confident in its *entitlement* and safety on land that is ‘protected,’ glosses over the historical and cultural trauma suffered by the Māori through the misappropriation of their land by nineteenth-century settler colonists, and the lake’s multiple histories. The detritus of the wasteland of their family life decays around them: “Chairs, empty bottles, an oar from a boat, torn nets...all piled up in the back porch because there was nowhere else for them to go. [...]” (38). Running back to the beach, and Jimmy, Janey realizes that her father was sitting on the side of the house, where there was no view of the lake, and the memories of the past that it evokes for her father.

Janey and Jimmy are as neglected as the “summer-house.” They can stay outside all day, and their parents do not come looking for them. They are left to fend for themselves with food from cans when they return home, where a party is usually in full swing. Their father says to them, “What are you two doing here?” (21). Their mother, who never gets out of bed until the afternoon, when it is time to dress and groom herself for the evening’s party, is more interested in the reaction of her friends and attracting their attention to herself. Smiling brightly, she says: “They run around all day like little savages and I never see them at all...” (20). A now unused sailboat becomes a refuge for them from the “hot and dirty” (14) house.

We could sit there for hours if we wanted, we were so generously alone. [...] We were dreaming, I suppose. Making plans for leaving. I thought about all the places we could go in the boat, how we could escape the summer-house forever. Our father,

badly sunburned with his poor pink eyes, could line up the glasses on the table for cocktail hour and we'd never have to see him. Our mother could be sick again, bringing up those animal sounds, and we wouldn't hear. In our boat we could be safe [...]. (11-12)

The two children have a stronger feeling of safety outdoors than in the family house. Janey imagines escaping the house, and her parents, by taking her brother into the wild, and building a tree-house, where “[n]othing could touch us, nothing, no other people. It was almost as if we'd been born unparented” (14). The life she imagines with Jimmy offers safety from other people, as well as her parents: “But I was growing up. I think I knew already the whole sad fact of children trying to escape. We're always trying, always thinking: tomorrow” (19).

Their unhomely home, “a house fit only for parties” (74), holds dangers for the children from the partying adults. Janey remembers how often Jimmy gets into her bed in the middle of the night, wakeful after a bad dream, and saying to him: ““It's not good for you to be walking around the house at this hour. There are too many people here. You know it's safer in your own room, darling”” (41). The parties, and the adults, who have been drinking, coming up the stairs, and looking into their rooms, frighten the children:

The truth is, how can either of us be restful when downstairs the noise of people at my parents' party is like water in a dungeon? Their voices smack and rumble, they laugh and the sound of it slops up and hits against the walls. We should be used to the parties by now, my brother and I, but we can still hear monsters in them. (42)

Janey's awareness of the possibility of sexual predation by inebriated adults often keeps her awake in “the late, dangerous hours” (43), fearful for their vulnerable bodies lying in bed at night: “They would love too much a boy in Wild West pyjamas” (ibid). Sometimes, however, they manage to sleep right through the night. Janey's recollection suggests there are other nights when she wakes to hear her mother and some of her parents' guests whispering in the doorway of Jimmy's bedroom:

Not awake to the things that may happen we're protected. Unseeing, unhearing, we're safe against the people who come creeping, who huddle like witches there at the doorway of Jim Little's room.

'See how sweet he is,' they whisper.

'I'd like to wake him up and kiss him.'

'Do you want to?' My mother detaches herself from them. 'Shall I get him up and we can bring him down?' She walks towards him where he lies. 'He's lovely when you pluck him straight from bed. So warm... And his skin smells like cake.' (44)

Other times, Janey remembers how they are called into the parties "like little dogs" (45), when Jimmy is made to sing, she has to mix the drinks, and they are not allowed to leave until late. She describes her mother's provocative behaviour with other men, and remembers her father's repeated entreaty to his wife to stop drinking, "'Don't you think you've had enough, Kate? [...] Don't you think it's time to wind down for the night?'" (24).

Gunn depicts an adult world that is dangerous for the children, in which they hear and see things they should not within the supposedly safe locus of the family home, and from which their parents, too enmeshed in the bubble of their own fractured relationship and morbid co-dependency, fail to take action to protect them and to provide an environment in which they feel safe. At one of the parties, "a man with big bulging eyes" (22) approaches Janey: "I saw how pink his stomach was, curling with dark hairs. He leaned towards me and I had to step back so his skin didn't touch me. 'You're a big girl,' he was saying. 'There must be some little party piece you could do'" (22). Later, when Janey is mixing drinks, the man puts his hand on her knee, "'Making yourself useful, little lady?'" (26). Whether or not any adult at the party observes the gesture, Gunn raises the uncomfortable question of what adults know, and what they choose to ignore, deny or conceal about other adults preying on, and sexually abusing children and adolescents.

From almost the time of Jimmy's birth, when she was seven, Janey sees herself as his 'mother,' comforter, and protector in a familial environment that poses a threat to them both:

Upstairs, in her room, our mother shifted in her sleep. Quickly my little brother took my hand.

‘Don’t worry, Jimmy,’ I said. ‘It’s OK.’

It was early morning but it would be hours yet before she would rise. The curtains were drawn, the darkness around her complete. Our father’s cups of coffee, set down beside her, only formed skins and went cold and undrunken. She would sleep on.

‘From now on we have to look after ourselves,’ I told my brother. ‘Make a picnic, sandwiches. You tell me what you need...’ (15)

Janey remembers watching “the whole play” (49) of her mother’s infatuation with Jimmy when she brought him home from the hospital. Her mother declares she feels she has won him “in a cracker as a prize” (*ibid.*), as though Jimmy is an object. When her parents start going out again in the evenings, they leave their seven-year-old daughter to babysit, feed her baby brother and change his nappies. She recalls: “I felt such ownership for him that I was the one now who stood by in the darkness and watched him sleep. It seemed I could never tire of the responsibility for that shallow, even breathing” (50). Her feeling of responsibility for him, of needing, and wanting, to ‘mother’ him begins in his babyhood: “For five years he occupied my life, all his movements, his few words, mine” (9). She does everything for him; her mother’s comment, on one occasion, reflects only concern for how old Janey’s competence makes her feel, and none about the responsibility she places on Janey for Jimmy’s care. It is their mother who gives Jimmy his nickname, Jim Little, “[b]ecause I’ll never let you grow...” (3). She calls to him, “Come here my little fishy tadpole, I want you for my supper!” (4), and holds out a towel to “trap him. ‘Come in now or I’ll cuddle you to death’” (*ibid.*). Janey remembers the intimidating, unmaternal nature of her mother’s way of talking to a child, and a comment she overhears her mother making about Jimmy when he is five to a woman at one of the “summer-house” parties: “Between you and me [...]. I’m mad about the boy” (45).<sup>7</sup>

As an adult remembering back, Janey accuses herself for thinking she could be Jimmy’s all-protecting mother: “There was my vanity. Thinking she’d [their mother] forget about her darling boy if I kept him out of her way, thinking I could keep him. [...] Who was I to settle so fully into his belief that I could protect him, when I myself was just another fish-belly kid?” (17). Her use of “fish-belly,” and description of children as spawn in sacs (18), who later have to “share their [parents’] lives, their

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<sup>7</sup> Noël Coward’s somewhat louche song, “Mad about the Boy,” (1932) gained new popularity in 1992 when Dinah Washington’s rendition was used in the Levi’s overtly sexualized television commercial, “Swimmer.”

homes and all their tricks” (ibid.) articulate the vulnerability of children, like hooked fish, to harm within the family and in the adult world. She recalls watching the now five-year-old Jimmy sleep, and thinking, “[h]ow long now before sickly adolescence claims him, claims us both? Thickens the blood, turns a quick run into those girls’ slow roll?” (ibid.).

Janey is aware of her changing body, and knows that she can no longer run out of the house at night and into the lake naked: “I’m nearly teenaged now and I must wear jeans” (46). Lying in bed at night, she wonders “[if] the warmth of the day is still contained in the packed dried earth outside, a baked jar I could put my cheek against. I imagine how its texture might feel like a man” (43). Of her sexual encounters with Cady, and her awakening into what she earlier describes dismissively as “sickly adolescence [...] thicken[ing] the blood”, as if it would never claim her, she says: “It was just once at first, letting myself be taken, then more times, over and over until it was me myself going back for more. Leaving my family, leaving my little brother playing while the tides in the river were rising” (81).

Through guilt, Janey over-invests a scene at one of her parents’ parties as another instance of her abandonment of Jimmy, imagining the possibility of people trampling him underfoot. Jimmy refuses to go into the kitchen on his own to get some milk and supper, because he is fearful of the partying adults there, and puts his arms around her legs. When her mother commands her to mix her drink, pointing her finger and “staring with frightening doll’s eyes” (25), Janey castigates herself for pushing a clinging Jimmy so forcefully off her that he falls to the ground: “Only much later that night when I was nursing him in bed did I imagine how his body could have been trampled” (25). A woman at the party comments loudly to Janey on how she is helping her mother with the hostessing, but whispers: ““There now. Chin up. It’s not so bad”” (25). But it is so bad; she and the other partying adults contribute to the damaging social landscape of the Phelon “summer-house.” Each morning the children are greeted with the sorry aftermath of the night before: “The dawn would be ashy with cigarette ends when Jim and I came downstairs in the morning. People were sleeping on the sofas, spilt food around them and the empty sound of a record spinning in its groove” (5).

Gunn depicts the dysfunctional relationship between Janey’s parents as emotionally damaging for the children: “I didn’t like to be there with them, kept my brother away too, when I could, for his innocence. No one should have witnessed the shameful way they were together, a woman keeping herself so private from the dry man always at her

back” (69). The moments when they feel like a family, when it feels as though they have learned, or “could have learned, with time, the trick that makes other families real” (71) are fleeting, and occur after their mother has dressed herself for the evening ahead and before guests arrive. At these times, “she might play with my little brother [...], talk to us all like a mother” (70) about ordinary things like shopping for new jeans. One particular memory of such a time, when they seemed like a happy family, is suffused with “golden light” (81): “[F]or those last few minutes while the sun still lit the room, before darkness came, I believed. Ice shifted in the glasses. Our family. For minutes, seconds, we were held in light” (81-82). The “minutes, seconds” indicate the fleeting duration of the warmth of “golden light” that suffuses Janey’s memory of familial harmony, when their mother behaves to them like a mother. The shifting of ice in the glasses, with its hint of danger and impending tragedy, undercuts the illusion of a safe and happy family.

Janey, as a child, senses the traces of something buried, shadowy, and unspoken in her parents’ past, an unexplained gap in her father’s monochrome, one-dimensional family history of buying the lake-side section as a “prize” (35) for his fiancée, “a girl who wore her clean hair brushed back, [...] there was about her the cool smell of lavender” (ibid.). She knows something changed for them, after Jimmy’s birth and before his drowning: “By the time Jim Little was old enough for swimming lessons I no longer went and my parents’ lives had changed too much for them to want to continue old habits” (63). She notices how they both now stay away from the lake, “lying like dead bodies on their broken loungers” (69), as if it contains or represents something they are unable to confront, their circumscribed existence a symptom of their inability to deal with their ghosts, and their endless partying, “a disguise for forgetting” (78). Their avoidance of the lake signifies their inability to engage with submerged material<sup>8</sup>, and suggests that the lake is possibly the site of what caused their relationship to fracture.

Janey’s description of her parents lying like “dead bodies” on loungers indicates more than a state of intoxication from their habitual use of alcohol to numb; the metaphor suggests a state of emotional anaesthesia and apathy, as if the future holds nothing for them. In the early years of their marriage, they sailed on the lake, and went fly-fishing together in its rivers. Those days are over, and also, like the casting and

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<sup>8</sup> The lake with its drowned trees becomes the image of submerged or repressed material.

drawing of the line, the intimacy of “thoughts looping through each other like the fine lines overhead, forming arcs, touching, releasing” (74). The sailboat sits neglected. Her father tells Janey about drownings at the lake, boats going down, and says that the lake is “treacherous” (55). In that word, Janey hears the danger of “all the stranded ice of winter water” (ibid). She recalls how her father fills his days preparing for the evening parties, and attending to his wife’s needs: “My mother giving just enough instruction to keep my father at her hem, and she in turn used to his attentions” (75). She remembers how her mother would roam around the house at night after the parties finish, opening doors and cupboards, while her father waits up and watches. As an adult, she dreams she hears her father’s voice entreating her mother to go to bed: “How did it happen to him? That his life was left such a thin bit of cloth for him to twist?” (72). She remembers her father “desiccated with waiting” (72) on his wife: “All the time waiting. All the time holding back, holding himself in for the minute he was allowed to wake her, looking at his watch to check the exact minute when he could mix up the drink that she would sip while he sat on the bed beside her, carefully, like she was his own patient” (70).

The relationship between her parents is as disturbed as it is disturbing for Janey to observe. Her father’s neediness for the “thin bit of cloth” (the “hem” of his wife’s dress?) that he tormentedly twists; the subservient role he plays in the relationship; the indications of psychological disturbance in her mother as she wanders the house, searching in cupboards late at night; the extreme contrasts in her mother’s conduct, secluded and comatose in her bedroom, but bright and glittering at the evening parties invoke an undisclosed traumatic history, and a familial environment that has the potential to traumatize children.

Janey’s relationship with her beautiful, but self-absorbed, manipulative, and damaged mother is as complicated as her father’s. She notices that her mother uses her “loveliest voice” (23) when she wants her to mix her favourite drink:

Sometimes she kissed me then, on the mouth, and I left the lipstick stain there as proof that she had done it and because I could imagine, with the fruity taste of it smeared lightly on my lips, that one day I would be a lady too, who would wear earrings that jingled and high gold sandals for parties. I would be my mother’s daughter then, made fresh in her mould, fully grown and smooth. (ibid.)

Perhaps a physical gesture of affection like a kiss from her mother, adept at dispensing conditional love, is so infrequent that Janey needs to keep its imprint to savour. Janey remembers how frightening her mother is when she does not get what she wants immediately, and how quickly she uses charm, to hold the person fast, when her command is satisfied. After the incident when Janey pushes Jimmy from her and mixes the whisky, her mother says: “‘Be my valentine?’ that’s what she’d said, when I’d given her the Johnnie like I should have all along. ‘Kiss me?’” (26). Janey knows that when her mother reminds her, “‘Don’t forget your Daddy’s always ‘My Boyfriend’” (3), it is a way of still believing herself to be young and his girlfriend: “She was beautiful, that was all. With her it seemed worse when the worm got in, but really she was no different from anyone else. She was alone too. Scared at how life turns out and with nothing left to do about it. The future wasted and only the past now, rolling up from behind” (26). The precise nature of the “worm” that eats away at her is not revealed, but its damage is palpable. Janey believes (perhaps needs to believe) that her mother would never let harm come to a child (44), but years later, she remembers the day of her first sexual encounter with Cady and sitting beside her mother, later that same day, watching her as she puts on her make-up: “Now [...] I think my mother knew it all. [...] Somewhere under her smooth expression she knew it” (79).

Gunn situates Cady’s sexual predation on Janey, who is awakening to adolescent sexuality, in the context of a harmful familial environment, and portrays it, and her family’s social life, as heightening her vulnerability to risk. A new arrival in the summer town, Cady comes round drinking every night to the Phelons’ house. A sexually charged scene occurs one evening. Janey is upstairs in bed, when she hears footsteps coming up the stairs:

My wild heart starts up beneath the sheet, I think I know who he is. [...] Perhaps, I hope, he might be someone else. I must be quiet now, must not move. Not a breath, not a sound. There’s the image of a baby sleeping while wolves howl around it, red tongues lolling... I want that to be me. Let me be a pebble, a pillow... Some still object, not a girl. I feel the blood will burst in my veins I’m so quiet and unmoving, he can’t believe I’m awake, but still the man whispers, ‘Janey? You there? Sweetheart, it’s me...’ (51)

Cady's sexual intent is clear as he approaches her bed, telling her not to be a "spoilsport" (52). At the sound of light steps, which Janey knows are her mother's, he stops, and begins his 'excuse' with "Kate, I —" (53), but she stills it, and whispers, "I don't want her to wake..." (ibid.). Janey hears her mother cry out, when she and Bill Cady reach the bottom of the stairs, "Look who I've found!" (53). Janey is left in a confusion of thought:

Poor idiot girl, what am I thinking? People will get drunk at any party, come stumbling in, my mother, a hostess, will come after. What am I thinking that Mr Cady would rouse himself to come to me, wake me? Do I think I'm one of those girls, with their slow roll? Do I think I'm so full and lovely? I imagine things, that's all. (ibid.)

Her mother comes back upstairs, and, in one of her few maternal gestures towards her daughter, she strokes her head and closes her eyes with her fingertips, whispering, "You're my dreaming girl. I don't want you to wake" (ibid.). 'Wake,' in both instances, lends itself to the interpretation of sexual awakening. The mother's use of the word, and following him upstairs, indicate her awareness of Cady's intent, which sheds a disturbing light on her subsequent failure to act to protect Janey from him. She finds a man in her daughter's bedroom, and announces loudly to the partying adults that she found him upstairs. Janey and Jimmy continue to be free to explore all day on their own, with no textual evidence to suggest that Janey receives guidance from her mother on how to avoid or deal with situations in which she feels at risk, or that her parents caution Cady to stay away from her.

There is both menace and intent in the way Cady, unobserved, watches the two children on the beach. Jimmy wants them to play a game where he is Peter Pan,<sup>9</sup> Janey plays the other children, and together they discover Captain Hook at the river. He leaves Janey on her own to go ahead to the river to prepare for their game. When she walks back through the shallows after her swim, she notices a man watching her. Like an angler, watching and waiting for the moment to cast his line, he puts out his hand to detain her, when she thinks she hears her brother's cry, and hooks her in. He takes her to a place in the bush that he has prepared: "Come closer, honey... I've been waiting so

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Pan, the fictional character created by J. M. Barrie, is the boy who never grows up. Captain Hook is Peter Pan's arch-enemy.

long for you” (78). She is caught, hooked in by an unscrupulous older man who exploits her vulnerability, her unconscious wish to emulate her desirable mother, her too early exposure to adult sexuality at her parents’ constant parties, and her own emergent adolescent sexuality. She continues to meet him for more assignations until, one day, Jimmy is not there. That dread moment is an early example of the proleptic shifts in her narration.

How my awful voice pierced the opaque sky, sent out alone for his returning. ‘Where are you?’ it cried. ‘Where are you?’

The cry came back from the hills empty. ‘Where are you?’ it echoed, quieter now. ‘Where are you?’ As if the hills could have saved him. Their massive shoulders rose straight out of the water, the darkness of their reflection cast like a cloak about them.

Old mothers, they had no children. (8)

Janey, as an adult, comes to look like the mother she loves and fears, as her mother knew all along, “That I would take her limbs, her hair. That some day I would become her, smooth with cosmetics and calm to the mirror’s surface, all the time carrying hooks in my pockets for men” (79-80). The image, “calm to the mirror’s surface,” invokes in its echo of the lake’s surface the hidden material beneath. Gunn depicts in Janey the intense, ambivalent attachment a child feels for an emotionally damaging parent, and whose identity formation is warped on the cusp of childhood and adolescence by the powerful crosshatching of sex and guilt, love and loss.

Gunn exercises tight control of imagery to reflect the text’s traumatic content in its form. All the figurative devices loop back referentially to water, to associated activities like swimming and fishing, the lake and its landscape, and drowning, all gaining in force through each repetition and re-iteration. With reference to Gail Jones’s use of recurrent images and symbols in *Sorry*, Dolores Herrero describes it as a way of “binding various parts of the text together” (2011, 290), endowing them with “different layers of meaning” (ibid.), while “creat[ing] cohesive structures of parallels and contrasts” (ibid.). The hook is one such multivalent image that first appears through its absence, when the children are paddling in the shallows of the lake: “Nothing bad could happen. There were no hooks to catch or lines to bring you down, no ledges or treacherous currents could tug your body away” (1994, 6). It appears in the “summer-house” as a coat-hook for the mouldering raincoats. Janey’s swimming-coach carries “a

pole with a hook” (65) which he uses to hook the swimsuits of struggling pupils and fish them out of the water. Her mother has invisible hooks to ensnare people. Janey describes her “as a woman who could make addicts of even casual acquaintances” (72). She remembers watching her father take the hook from a salmon’s lips and “slit[ting] open its bright guts” (18), and listening to her father’s memory of going fishing with her grandfather as a boy: “The fish, inches from his eyes, writhed in the string mesh, hooked deep in its pale mouth” (33). She refers to herself as “just another fish-belly kid” (17), vulnerable to hooks and visceral gutting, while Jimmy is a “little fishy tadpole” (4), “Jim Littlefish” (*ibid.*), “light as bone” (10), and finally changed by death into a fish-bone: “Darling, little fish-bone. Show me you can breathe” (67). Like an angler, the adult Janey carries hooks in her pockets to ensnare men as her victims, signifiers of a compulsion to repeat an unresolved past experience. As the perpetrator of presumed pain to others, she is, however, still a victim with the pain of the “hook still in” (32): “This is the part I’m left with, to understand. I had these things in me, the hook [...]” (66). Now “her parents’ dry survivor” (*ibid.*), who avoids water, she was supposed to teach Jimmy to be a strong swimmer and to pass on all the techniques learnt at the lessons her father paid for. The hook appears for the final time in Janey’s attempts to resuscitate Jimmy after she has brought him out of the lake. She describes using the forefinger in a “hooking action” (84) to remove matter lodged in the gullet. Hooks are invariably negative images in the text. While they may have positive potential, the contexts in which they feature invest them with a sinister connotation.

Janey’s account of her attempts to resuscitate Jimmy bears the hallmarks of a traumatic event that is not “assimilated [...] fully at the time” (Caruth 1995, 4). She recounts the scene as if she were watching herself, maintaining an emotional distance, as she goes through the actions: “If there really is no air at all you must act quickly. You have no idea how long this body has been unconscious; even if you took him from the water just seconds ago it takes only a very few minutes for the brain tissues, deprived of blood flow and oxygen, to die” (1994, 83-84). The lack of feelings expressed by Janey underscores the dissociative nature of her traumatic memory of the event. The focus is all on technique, but gradually details break through the factual, impersonal register of the account of her valiant, but failed efforts which, in their fragmentation, reveal the traumatic nature of the event. She refers to Jimmy impersonally as “your patient,” “this body,” “him” (83), “the victim” (84), “a child” (89), and “the cold boy” (90), with Jimmy’s cry ““Don’t leave me!”” (88) disrupting the linearity of the text. As she

attempts to resuscitate Jimmy, she ‘hears’ him calling: “There was a glint on the water, a call in thin air. Don’t think about that. ‘Help me!’” (ibid.). The recital of instructions becomes more and more “unjointed,” with details of the unfolding scene punctuating the resuscitation processes:

It’s process, process. You don’t stop this thing. Even after the others have come and pulled you off him, still you don’t want to stop it. He’s yours. You took him from the water. You know what to do. You’ve been with him there all along, before someone on a boat saw you, before people came. Before they called the doctor, before, you alone were all his company. You were the one natural with the body, all the time it was you. Your lips around his cold lips, your hands around his wet head. He was yours. All the time you knew what to do. (91-92)

The description of the physical processes involved in resuscitation, and its emphasis on anatomy and material corporeality, invoke the concept of the incorporation of the loved lost object. Through her bodily performance of resuscitation, “mouth-to-mouth ventilations” (90) and “[her] lips around his cold lips” (92), functioning as an analogue to incorporation: “He was yours” (92).

In the subjective flux of Janey’s recollections of her childhood, the trope of incorporation occurs proleptically in the text: “On into the deep we swim, out to where the lake is lapping into endless night, slipping away from us, always further and further, until even the dark sky is filled with stars and water” (46). In real life, Jimmy plays and splashes only in the shallows. The trope of incorporation is repeated in the text’s concluding paragraphs, when Janey apprehends Jimmy as herself and merges the two of them to the point of absorption: “I remember how, long ago, my little brother and I used to go out into the summer rain. We were disappearing or returning, I don’t know. We were going into water. [...] There was no telling where land ended, waves began. Sand and water dissolved into each other, blotted in mist” (94-95). Her repeated recollections of the past reflect “the Freudian motif of re-enactment and hyper-remembering of the lost object” (Andermahr 2011, 76).

Janey’s ghostly possession by Jimmy is such that she is unable to renounce her attachment to him, creating what LaCapra describes as “a more or less conscious desire to remain within trauma” (2001, 23). While LaCapra acknowledges the possibility of working through and recovery from trauma – “to the extent one works through trauma

[...], one is able to distinguish between past and present” (22) – he qualifies the possibility of recovery in all cases by adding that the survivor of an extreme experience may resist recovery, or be incapable of working through its processes. He describes such resistance or inability as “invalidat[ing] any form of conceptual or narrative closure” (23), and possibly “involv[ing] the feeling of keeping faith with trauma in a manner that leads to a compulsive preoccupation with aporia, and endlessly melancholic, impossible mourning [...]” (ibid).<sup>10</sup> Janey’s traumatization by the loss of her brother and the circumstances of his drowning, and her “endlessly melancholic, impossible mourning,” lead to her encryption of him, the lost object, to whom she remains bound.

For Janey, there is no decaathesis from the lost object. Her incorporation of Jimmy calls to mind the words of Roger Luckhurst, “[t]o incorporate the object is to de-figure the swallowing of loss by literally swallowing the object” (1996, 252). Like Maria in *The Book of Secrets*,<sup>11</sup> Janey is unable to renounce her attachment to the lost child, and she encrypts Jimmy, whom she calls her “elastic boy” (1994, 3), forever tied to her by invisible bonds, and “twine[d] [...] in to me like wire” (46).

Even today I think how my brother, running out of the low milky cloud, his cotton shorts a blur of faded red, is me. It lasts a lifetime, that moment of him coming towards me. His whole self, mine, is caught up there in that particular combination of muscle and bone and skin and hair. And how strange it is that, for the complexity of it, for all the gathering up that there was in his running, when he reached me it was as if he had simply stepped out of the air to be by my side. (9)

As Luckhurst puts it, “[r]ather than acknowledging loss, the ego secretly identifies with the object, thus internalizing it” (1996, 245). Luckhurst goes on to observe that the melancholic’s “self-accusations [...] are the result of an interjected identification with the lost object returning to accuse the ego of its negligence” (ibid.). Jimmy’s appealing

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<sup>10</sup> LaCapra’s term, “an endlessly melancholic, impossible mourning,” is a conceptual echo of Freud’s later model of “endless mourning,” which he developed in his 1923 essay, “The Ego and the Id.” Sonya Andermahr also references Freud’s later conception of mourning in her study of maternal grieving in Julie Myerson’s novel, *The Story of You*, observing that “Freud now posits grief work as an interminable labour of endless mourning in which the subject affirms the endurance of attachments to lost and loved others as condition of its own selfhood” (2011, 74).

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Chapter Four on *The Book of Secrets* (169-170) for Maria’s encryption of her lost child, and Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok’s earlier work on the concept of the crypt and encryption of the lost object in a psychic crypt.

and accusatory cries of ““Don’t go!”” (1994, 2); ““Don’t drop me, Janey! [...] I’ll drown if you do”” (46); ““You’re supposed to look after me”” (65); ““Don’t leave me!”” (88) and ““Help me!”” (ibid.) echo throughout Janey’s recollection, emblematic of her guilt over leaving him on his own by the lake. Despite promising to herself that she will not be like the “puberty girls” (47) and their boyfriends she sees on TV and in films, and at the lake, she does abandon Jimmy to meet Bill Cady for repeated sexual assignations.

Janey is haunted by her memory of her brother’s death, with the “texture of its remembrance” (Balaev 2012, 41) conveyed in the flood of images and metaphors relating to the lake, the rivers that flow through it, and the omnipresence of rain, reflecting the persistence of her grief:

Out across the river rain fell, from behind the hills, rain. Rain into water, rain on leaves. Raindrops dripping from the white blossom of the tea trees, rain sliding down the muddy channels of the river-bank, rain on us. We let it do that, cover us, the sky could weep. My little brother tilted his face up to the last of the light and closed his eyes. Under water he was transparent. (1994, 12)

The image of the sky weeping suffuses Janey’s memory of finding Jimmy’s drowned body in the lake. She invests the lake and its landscape with her mourning, depicting it as grieving through the pervasiveness of *leitmotifs* of rain and water in her recollection: “Even in dry summer, water. That part of the country was a carved-out bowl for rivers running through it, rain” (93). Like the ice, suggestive of danger, that shifts in her parents’ glasses and which she hears in her father’s description of the lake as “treacherous,” Janey’s memory of the lake and its waters is inflected with her knowledge that it is also a place of danger. Her allusive references to the caldera, “the carved-out bowl,” and the still potent threat of its underground volcanic vents, invoke an unsettled and submerged but agential world of “underwater caves, one shelf of water tipping over into another, vast secret lakes, a whole world of water beneath, prehistoric” (94). Swimming far out into the lake, she senses the cold of the “arctic, rising from somewhere deep and frozen in the earth” (65), forcing her to swim back to shore.

Water functions for Janey as one of the “visual and sensory triggers” (2005, 12) described by Tumarkin as constituent of traumascapes and their ability to evoke emotions. One of the few things Janey reveals of her adult life is her avoidance of water. Of her swimming lessons from four or five years of age (1994, 55), which

continue for five years, she says that “[t]hey’re lodged into me, they live with me. Me. And now I never go near the water” (62). Lodged into her is the memory of her own sensation of drowning at her first lesson when the swimming coach pushed her in the deep end: “There was pain in me when I went down. I remembered blackness too, of clenched eyes first, that first black fright, then the simple black endlessness of falling. Nothing else. Beneath the flat, impassive surface of the pool...There was my nightmare” (60). The nightmare of drowning haunts Janey’s existence in its persistent and insistent return, leading her to avoid the trigger of water, and the somato-sensory arousal of swimming, in her adult life. It is a textual echo of her parents’ own avoidance of the lake which pre-dates Jimmy’s drowning.

Janey describes the day when she first has sex with Cady as “the day it began for our family” (76), referring to the reverberations of trauma on her life and family from Jimmy’s drowning, and herself as the cause: “Although in later years I taunted myself that I was the one in our family who had to change things, that it was my role to cast the first sin.<sup>12</sup> I know now the falling away, the darkness of our summers had started years ago and it was nobody’s guilt” (78). Her situation of Jimmy’s death in the context of her family’s “dark summers” moves its locus of referentiality “by [...] placing the individual responsibility within a larger historical framework” (Luckhurst 1996, 244). Luckhurst’s observation relates to comprehending individual trauma, the traumatic event or act for which an individual is responsible, within its historical context, and acknowledging the interconnectedness of the individual to a family, and a family to a cultural context and social sphere.

Janey’s unresolved trauma may be read as functioning analogously to the unresolved legacies of settler colonialism in the present, the pervasive influence of sedimented power relations, and “the generative structures and moving parts of historically embedded social formations” (Gordon 1997; 2008, 19) which, like the layers of a palimpsest, are still discernible in New Zealand society. The unsettled volcanic landscape is figuratively symbolic of unsettled settlement and unresolved historical trauma, marking a disturbance that is specific to the settler colonial context, where the effects of the past are still evident and haunt the present. As expressed by Tumarkin, traumascapes with their dark histories are “precisely the places that remind us that the

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<sup>12</sup> The expression references John 8:7, where Jesus says: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (King James Version). “First sin” appears to identify Janey as the ‘sinner’ who brought misfortune upon the family and the person at whom others could throw stones. As an adult, Janey recognizes that her family’s “dark summers” started years ago.

past cannot simply be erased” (2005, 18), noting that “violence and pain do not disappear without leaving a trace,” but are “held by the land around us” (235). The scars to the landscape are symbolic of the land’s will to remember; its eruptions, flooding, and subsidence accentuate its agency. Avery Gordon emphasizes the importance of confronting the “ghostly matter” (2008, 16) from the past, “to engage the shadows and what is living there” (18). Unlike Jim Phelon, we must not sit on the wrong side of the house in order not to see the lake; unlike him, we must not limit history to one story, securing settlement by erasing the past. Janice Radway comments in her foreword to Gordon’s text that her emphasis on “ghostly matters” is an indication of the importance she places on “attentiveness to the affective, the cultural, and the experiential, those ghostly matters that haunt our houses, our societies, our bodies, and our selves” (2008, xii). The end of *Rain* offers no comforting closure; Gunn emphasizes the lasting, unresolved nature of Janey’s traumatic possession by her brother’s death, and the “power of past suffering to overwhelm and [...] incapacitate the present” (Whitehead 2009, 113).

In light of such an aporetic ending, Gordon’s comment perhaps contains a possible question: “What has been done and what is to be done otherwise?” (2008, 18, question mark added). Continuing vigilance in relationships, alertness to imbalances in power, nurturant and ethical care of the vulnerable, openness to the other, and willingness to engage with what is in the shadows may provide part of the answer. To quote Tumarkin by way of a conclusion:

We inherit these secrets, the unfinished business of our predecessors. We inherit their histories and their haunted places, on top of which we create our own, an infinite number, many more than they could ever imagine. It is crucial to acknowledge that this is happening, because in the world we inhabit, traumascapes are literally everywhere. [...] Whether we care to look or go to great lengths to turn away, traumascapes persist and wield all kinds of powers, and they will continue to do so until we finally take notice of them. (2005, 235-236)

Gunn engages with what is in the shadows, exploring the challenging and unsettling aspects of family in her depiction of children’s vulnerability to emotional harm and sexual predation, and the chain of events that lead to Jimmy’s drowning and Janey’s traumatization. Just as the submerged volcanic vents and smoking fumaroles represent a

threat to our physical safety, the damage to individual lives from family-based trauma presents a threat to our well-being as a society. Until we confront, and deal with what lies in the shadowy and dense interface between historical and sociocultural context and the affective intimacies of family, family trauma will continue to damage lives and to haunt our social life.

## Conclusion

My aim in this thesis has been to examine the depiction of the New Zealand settler colonial family as a site of trauma from a female-gendered perspective in twentieth-century fiction by women writers. In each chapter I have explored the nature of the individual traumatic experience, and discussed the larger social and historical framework in which it occurred and which is imbricated with its aetiology and signification. I show that the female-gendered experience of family-based trauma is inextricably linked with a sociocultural, political, and historical context, and draw attention to the importance of moving beyond a focus on the study of trauma's psychic and somatic symptoms to include an examination of what is behind individual suffering and familial dysfunctionality. My analysis of the selected novels highlights the diverse nature of traumatic experience in relation to particular familial contexts which bear upon an individual's traumatization, and includes an exploration of the narrative methods utilized to convey traumatic symptomology and sequelae.

In Chapter One, I begin with examining the atemporal, non-linear structure of traumatic experience and the delayed manifestation of traumatic symptomology in a site of subjective and physical isolation. The novel depicts the central character's possession by events that occurred in her past in England, and their long-term psychic damage and impact on her life. It portrays her increasing insight into the damage of the past as a transformative and recuperative inner journey, and highlights the importance of telling the story of trauma to an empathic listener as central to any possibility of healing. In Chapter Two, I extend the perspective on trauma through exploring the fragmentation of a patriarchally-constructed identity and the dysphoria that follows the protagonist's internalization that marriage constitutes her as the property of her husband. The bloody violence with which the novel ends is inflected with the layers of violence embodied in the history and current operations of the novel's setting. In Chapter Three, I focus on the analysis of early relational trauma arising from an absent or unavailable mother, compounded by the experience of cumulative trauma from deficits in environmental care in an adverse familial environment. The central character's traumatization takes the form of dissociative identity disorder as a mechanism of psychic defence, which is ultimately damaging in the longer term. The cathexis to her dissociative identities is so strong and the psychic damage she has experienced so great that she is unable to accept

or trust in the promise of a loving relationship in external reality. Chapter Four introduces the matrilineal transmission of trauma. Through the ‘indirect telling’ of the grandmother’s journals which reveal the secrets of the past to the third generation, the novel situates the transmissibility of trauma, across time and geographic locations, in the context of the Scottish diasporas. I draw on Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok’s concept of the psychic crypt to interpret the central character’s intersubjective connection and communication with her encrypted lost loved objects, and her decision to remain in her decaying childhood home until her death. Chapter Five explores the acting out and working through of trauma. The novel delineates the impact of a traumatic experience on a teenage girl’s connectedness with and trust in her family and on her relationship with her future husband, and depicts the effects of repressed trauma in her decline into self-damaging behaviours and melancholic abjection. While the novel details the processes that are critical for recovery, its conclusion conveys that, like the reconstitution of relationality between equal subjects, it is an ongoing process and does not signal the definitive closure of trauma or erasure of the past. In Chapter Six, I focus the argument on the depiction of trauma that resists assimilation or resolution. For the adult survivor of a trauma experienced as a child, the past haunts the present. There is no healing trajectory in the novel; her grief is inconsolable and the loss all-consuming. My analysis of the novels shows that while trauma may manifest itself in different forms, each novel places the individual’s trauma in a wider sociocultural and historical context and draws attention to the interpenetration of larger social and cultural forces and the interpersonal realm of the family. The novels underscore the persistence of settler colonialism’s ideological and material structures and norms into the postcolonial period, and highlight the importance of critically engaging with the settler colonial family construct.

Through their depiction of women’s familial experiences and their interconnections with specific contexts, the novels testify to the necessity of excavating and recovering what has been repressed and silenced in the past. As Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith point out, “[w]hat a culture remembers and what it chooses to forget are intricately bound up with issues of power and hegemony, and thus with gender” (2002, 6). The novels depict the patriarchal construct of the settler colonial family as a site of imbalanced relations of power, and the dominant culture as hegemonic and masculinist. They bear witness to familial relationships defined by patriarchy’s concern with issues of property, possession, and control, and portray those issues impinging on the affective

intimacies of the family, and a woman's struggle to find a sense of self, as opposed to an "encumbered self, identified almost entirely by the social roles concomitant with her biological destiny" (Smith 1993, 12-13).

Following Whitehead who suggests that the "recovery of hitherto marginalized voices signals the ethical dimension of trauma fiction, which witnesses and records that which is 'forgotten' or overlooked in the grand narrative of History" (2004.1, 86), I have read the novels as trauma narratives which are concerned to uncover silenced areas of history and to question the historical and material conditions that render women vulnerable to psychic trauma in the domestic locus. Trauma fiction offers a way of exploring what has been repressed and suppressed in an individual's past and in the historical past, and, to use Hartman's memorable phrase, of "making the wound perceivable and the silence audible" (2003, 259). In their enactment of the processes of remembering and narrating what has been occluded or silenced, the novels call attention to the settler colonial past and the imperative of addressing its pervasive legacy in the construct of the settler colonial family as a site of power and domination.

Veracini's use of the terminology of trauma and its qualities to describe New Zealand's violent past and its effects underscores the haunting nature of settler colonial forms. He compares settlement to the phenomenological experience of trauma, utilizing terms such as primal scene and screen memory, disavowal and repression to describe the settler's anxious suppression of the founding violence of New Zealand's white settler society, and notes their function in representing a fantasy of "settler society as an ideal political body" (2008, 365) comprised of "communities devoid of disturbances or dislocations" (364). His analogical comparison of settlement to trauma and its hauntingly persistent return and *presence* maps on to and underpins my argument that the settler colonial family is a site of trauma and a locus of "disturbances" and "dislocations" that impact traumatogenically on the psychic well-being of women.

I have examined novels which represent the two poles of trauma writing in their depiction of the possibility of healing and their portrayal of the tragic consequences of unresolved trauma. The beneficial impact of telling and narrating the story of trauma to an empathic listener is evident in *The Story of a New Zealand River* and *Enemy Territory*. They depict anamnesis as crucial to the possibility of recuperation and to the processes of acknowledging, reconstructing and ordering the past, and working through trauma. The individual's confrontation with the past and the relationality and intersubjective connection with an empathic other that follow the telling of the past's

trauma are at the core of these processes. Conversely, the novels by Devanny, Hyde, Kidman and Gunn portray the tragic consequences of traumatization on an individual's life. Through the topos of "interminable melancholy" (LaCapra 2001, 76), they depict how trauma disrupts and fatally damages previous formulations of self and relationship to family. In counterpointing the two poles of healing and irresolution in trauma narratives, my thesis highlights that contextual factors play a significant part in any possible resolution of trauma.

Stepping back from the differences between these two poles of trauma narratives, it is possible to discern an important correspondence in their articulation of traumatic experience. Reading the negation of the possibility of recovery and the destruction of the self alongside the possibility of recovery and the reformulation of identity makes discernible the damage that follows from unresolved trauma and the critical importance of acknowledging and interrogating the past. It is a point that Veracini emphasizes in relation to the continuing hegemony of unresolved settler colonial modes of domination: "The decolonization of settler colonial forms should begin from the appraisal of the settler colonial 'situation.' A decolonized post-settler colonial relation must be ongoing" (2016, 178). Delrez's injunction to "descend into one's own history" (2011, 203) and admonition that the examination of the "settler inheritance" (ibid.) requires "strenuous intellectual efforts and lucid self-analysis" (ibid.) place similar emphasis on the necessity of examining the unresolved traumas of the settler colonial past as the basis for any possibility of reconciliation or recuperation from past damage.

I have demonstrated that the settler colonial family is a site where women are vulnerable to psychic trauma through their subordinate positionality and containment within patriarchally and socioculturally prescribed roles. The family represents an important locus for exploring the continuing immanence of settler colonial norms and structures in its postcolonial condition. Exploring and exposing settler colonialism as a damaging and persistent structure is, to quote Kalí Tal and her affirmation of telling the story of trauma, not only a "personally reconstitutive" act (1996, 121), but also a "socially reconstitutive" (ibid.) one. Testifying to trauma operates to bring about possible change at both the conceptual level and the social. The imperative to decolonize imbalanced relations of power, Veracini signals, is an ongoing process of negotiation. Just as recuperation from trauma does not signify the "phantasm of total mastery" (LaCapra 2001, 71) or "definitive closure" (ibid.), the decolonization of the heteropatriarchal settler colonial family and its imbalanced relations of power is

analogous to the ongoing nature of the process of *working* through trauma's "endless impact on a life" (Caruth 1996, 7).

While the earliest and latest published works I discuss, *The Story of a New Zealand River* and *Enemy Territory* respectively, depict the possibility of recuperation for an individual, definitive closure is not assured. The individual must continue to negotiate her recuperation in the unchanged sociocultural and political contexts in which the trauma was engendered. My final chapter, on *Rain*, draws out and exemplifies that the resolution is never complete. Through its ruptured narrative linearity, it instantiates that the experience of trauma retains its referential force and continues to reverberate throughout a person's life. *Rain* calls attention to the persistence of unresolved trauma, the indelible imprint of trauma on a life, and it bears witness to the larger sociocultural and structural forces that affect an individual's lived experiences of family in the postcolonial period, and that demand our attention.

I focus on twentieth century fiction to analyse the depiction of the settler colonial family as a site of gendered trauma in both the settler colonial and postcolonial periods, in their historical specificity. The temporal timespan of my selected novels highlights the continuation of settler colonialism and its hegemonic norms and structures into the postcolonial period. This thesis points to the potential for further work for scholars to examine the construct of the settler colonial family and family trauma in twenty-first century women's fiction, and/or to explore the congruences between women writers' fictional works and their experience(s) of family-based trauma evident in their life-writing.

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