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TRAUMA AND SPACE IN PATRICIA SARRAFIAN WARD'S *THE BULLET COLLECTION*

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Trauma and Space in Patricia Sarrafian Ward's *The Bullet Collection*

This thesis examines the spatiality of trauma in Patricia Sarrafian Ward's *The Bullet Collection*, and it links this spatiality to the notion of working through trauma. Combining a text-led close reading of Ward's novel and contemporary notions of place and the body, this thesis analyzes the correlation between trauma and space, that is place and the body, and writing to a lesser extent, to examine whether trauma can be worked through via space.

In the first chapter of the thesis, a definition of trauma will be presented and related to trauma theory, and the spatiality of trauma will be explored profoundly. A third section will examine recovery in trauma and reveal the role of narration in healing from traumatic experiences. The concept of space per se will then be described and delimited for the purposes of the thesis. The scholarship on the novel will also be surveyed in light of Ward's labeling as an Arab American and Anglophone Lebanese postwar writer.

The second chapter of the thesis will examine the relationship between trauma and geographical space, while the third chapter will explore the correlation between trauma and corporeal space, and to a lesser extent textual space. In the second chapter, it will be shown that placemaking and re-inhabitation of places even in the context of exile correlate with working through trauma. The third chapter will show that trauma can be voiced through the foreign and transformed body, whereas self-mutilation remains a futile means to work through trauma and may only lead to transitory moments of comfort and agency. In addition, this chapter will establish the narrator's trauma narrative as emerging from her healing wounds.

This study concludes that trauma is more efficiently worked through via places which are constructed by the body, than via the body itself. The findings of this thesis also seem to contest readings which have found the ending of *The Bullet Collection* to be dismal. The characters' working through their traumas via re-inhabitation in the United States suggests their acceptance of their traumatic past and their positive outlook on the future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

To my parents, especially my mom
who always knew I could.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Lebanese Civil War whose absurdity and atrocity lasted for about fifteen years did not really end. The war lives on in its traumatized, mutilated, scarred, and missing bodies, and in its annihilated places. The war lives on in the narratives which attempt to mimic and reiterate its horridness. Published almost a decade ago, and about a decade and a half after the supposed ending of the Lebanese civil conflict, Patricia Sarrafian Ward's novel *The Bullet Collection* (2003) faithfully captures the traumatic and destructive impact of the conflict which tore apart a country and continues to fragment its people. As Marianna, the novel's narrator, recounts her sister's, Alaine's, her family's and friends', and her personal and war experiences and traumas, the war is unmasked and the wounds it has caused begin to surface. Yet, despite the profundity and sting of the two sisters' wounds, and in spite of the apparent permanence of their (self-inflicted) injuries, a subtle process of working through, coming to terms with, and recovering from, trauma via space seems present in the novel. Closely examining the novel's spaces, this study hopes to show that in the face of terror and pain, spaces, whether geographical, corporeal, or even textual, retain a redemptive dimension which helps attenuate personal and war traumas.

The roots of this thesis began in a simultaneous interest in Ward's *The Bullet Collection* and the concept of space. As research on the novel and space unfolded, two issues became apparent: the complexity of the notion of space, on the one hand, and the impossibility of examining this notion without regard for the equally significant notion

of trauma in the work, on the other. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to closely examine the spatial dimension of trauma in *The Bullet Collection.* This spatial dimension, whose tripartite constituents will be shortly described in this introduction, had been disregarded in many analyses of Ward's novel.

This chapter thus aims to elucidate the distinct concepts of trauma and space, to explain the spatiality of trauma, and to establish the significance of a study of this spatiality in *The Bullet Collection*. To achieve these purposes, the following literature review will first briefly survey trauma theory and expound its spatial dimension. It will then attempt to disambiguate the term *space* and establish its definition for this study. Finally, it will conclude by analyzing the scholarship on Ward's novel and stating the research problem, claim, and theoretical framework. As the review of literature will reveal, although studies on *The Bullet Collection* examined trauma and space in the novel, they mostly scrutinized the two concepts separately, and when they did combine trauma and space, studies overlooked particular definitions of space. However, prior to surveying the literature on the novel, it is essential to define trauma and clarify what is meant by its spatial dimension.

A. Defining Trauma and Trauma Theory

Crudely depicting the events of the Lebanese Civil War from Marianna's, the narrator's, perspective, *The Bullet Collection* is a trauma narrative par excellence (Hout, "Revisiting Lebanon" 275; Wolters 125). As such, any examination of space in the novel must be preceded by an examination of the concept of trauma, whose main attributes have come to form the tenets of trauma theory. In fact, the definition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the fourth, revised edition of the *Diagnostic and*

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) highlights the main characteristics of trauma which are at the heart of Geoffrey Hartman and Cathy Caruth's branch of trauma theory.

The manual emphasizes trauma's latency, repetitive nature, paradox, and transmissibility, and subtly alludes to its spatio-temporal dimension. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of undergoing a traumatic experience that the manual states is the latency of the symptoms. Rather than occurring in the immediacy of the traumatic experience, PTSD might start in the first three months following the traumatic experience, and even sometimes, months or years after the experience (American Psychiatric Association 466). This fact thus sheds light on trauma's temporality. Another significant characteristic of PTSD is the repetitive reenactment and continual recall of the traumatic experience. As such, victims of trauma are prone to "acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring" (American Psychiatric Association 468). In contradiction, PTSD is also distinguished by an "avoidance of stimuli" such as "activities, *places*, or people" that might be reminiscent of the trauma (468; emphasis added). This fact subtly alludes to trauma's spatial dimension, on the one hand, and reveals the victims' paradoxical tendency to repeat the trauma and shun it and the places related to it altogether, on the other. Expounding the causes of PTSD, the manual states that it arises from direct "exposure to" public events, such as war, or personal ones, such as rape or individual violence (American Psychiatric Association 463). Significantly, the manual also adds that PTSD results from "witnessing" or "learning about" the violence or death befalling a closed one (American Psychiatric Association 463). The fact that PTSD can be acquired from witnessing others' traumas emphasizes the transmissibility of trauma, a notion which was not included in earlier editions of the

DSM-IV (Luckhurst 1). As such, the DSM-IV establishes latency, repetition, paradox, transmissibility, and an elusive spatio-temporal dimension as features of PTSD. While trauma's transmissibility has been perceived to be a vague concept (Visser 275), its latency, repetition, paradox, and spatio-temporality are fundamental to trauma theory.

Trauma theory underlines trauma's latency and repetitive nature. Cathy Caruth, one of the major contemporary trauma theorists, describes trauma as the experience of an event so horrific at the time of its occurrence, that it is not processed by the mind (*Unclaimed Experience* 9). However, despite its lack of comprehension at the time at which it took place, the traumatic experience "returns to haunt the survivor later on," and as such is characterized by latency (Caruth, Introduction 4). Caruth also adds that PTSD manifests itself in "repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors" (Introduction 5). Her statements thus shed light on trauma's delay and recurrence, whether in actions or unconscious thoughts.

Geoffrey Hartman, another prominent trauma theorist, also underlines trauma's latency. Referring to Ruth Klüger's memoir *Still Alive*—a trauma narrative which Wendy Wolters compares to Ward's *Bullet Collection* in a pedagogical review—Hartman likens trauma to "an inoperable bullet" (257). Echoing the title of Ward's novel, the analogy between trauma and an inoperable bullet highlights trauma's latency and its inherent paradox and spatial dimension. Survivors of an inoperable bullet might not be aware of the bullet's presence in their body, yet with time, the toxicity of the bullet's lead will engender multiple side effects. Thus, key to trauma theory is the traumatic event's "belatedness" (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 92), and its future "repetition" and "reenactment" (*Unclaimed Experience* 2), two characteristics which

had already been mentioned in the DSM-IV. PTSD's third attribute, its paradox, differs slightly in trauma theory from its definition in the manual.

While Caruth and Hartman, in their definition of trauma, perceive PTSD to be paradoxical, their conception of trauma's paradox remains distinct from that of the DSM-IV. In accordance with the DSM-IV, Caruth considers that PTSD can be caused by public events such as war or natural forces, or private ones such as sexual violation or loss (Introduction 3). However, whereas the manual explains trauma's paradox by stating that victims of trauma have a tendency to both repeat the event and avoid any "stimuli" of it (American Psychiatric Association 464), Caruth states that trauma's paradox resides in its belatedness. She explains that although the traumatic event is experienced by the subject, it is not fully understood at the time of its occurrence, and as such its "immediacy" becomes a "belatedness" (Introduction 6; *Unclaimed Experience* 92). Similarly, in an interview with Caruth, Hartman also highlights this paradox in trauma by describing trauma as "an experience that is not experienced" (Caruth and Hartman 631), and "an unknowing knowing" (632). In fact, this inherent paradox of trauma, the fact that an experienced event remains unacknowledged by consciousness, presents one of the main challenges to the representation of trauma and becomes central to trauma's spatiality. Yet, prior to examining the spatiality of trauma, it is significant to highlight the controversy of the issue of transmissibility in trauma theory.

Although Irene Visser perceived transmissibility to be problematic in trauma theory, the concept remains essential to any study of *The Bullet Collection*. In her study, "Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Literary Studies," Visser questions the extent to which trauma theory could be combined with postcolonial theory. In particular, she perceives the concept of transmissibility as "fuzzy" in relation to trauma theory (275),

especially when it is to be combined with postcolonial theory. In postcolonial theory, the notion of transmissibility seems to suggest that the sufferers of historical trauma can be equated to those who did not experience it firsthand (LaCapra ix). Nevertheless, transmissibility remains central to Ward's novel. Indeed, as this study will show, while Alaine could be considered to be a primary victim of rape, Marianna might be perceived as a " 'secondary' victim," of trauma in Luckhurst's terms (1), for her trauma arises from "witnessing" or "learning about" the traumas of others, in particular her loved ones. Hence, trauma theory highlights trauma's latency, repetitiveness, paradox, and transmissibility, despite the fact that the latter term remains problematical in combinations of trauma theory and postcolonial theory. In addition, trauma theory underlines trauma's spatio-temporal dimension.

Trauma's spatio-temporal dimension can mainly be attributed to its latency and repetition. According to Caruth, "since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another *place*, and in another *time*" (Introduction 8; emphasis added). Thus, belatedness and reenactment in trauma cannot be dissociated from the spatio-temporal. As the final section of this chapter will reveal, studies of *The Bullet Collection* have mainly examined the temporal dimension of trauma in the novel. Moreover, even when these studies examined the spatiality of trauma, they restricted this spatiality to one dimension and disregarded the other two. In fact, the spatio-temporal dimension of trauma, and in particular the elucidation of what is meant by the spatial, only become apparent upon the examination of Caruth's discussion of the poem of Tancred and Clorinda as well as Marinella Rodi-Risberg's reading of Caruth's interpretation.

B. The Spatiality of Trauma

Despite the fact that Caruth's analysis of Tasso's story of Tancred and Clorinda rests on Freud's account of the poem in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, her reading of the poem differs from his. As a matter of fact, Freud's version emphasizes the repetitive nature of trauma and focuses on its temporal rather than spatial aspect. In his relation of Tancred and Clorinda's story, Freud describes how:

> Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a duel while she is disguised in the armour of an enemy knight. After her burial he makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the Crusaders' army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved once again. (qtd. in Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 2)

As such, Freud's version of the story focuses on the recurrent killing of Clorinda. Like Freud, Caruth perceives Tancred and Clorinda's story as emblematic of the recurrence of trauma. However, her analysis further points out to Clorinda's painful moan, to the "moving and sorrowful *voice* . . . that is paradoxically released *through the wound*" (*Unclaimed Experience* 2). According to Caruth, this voice seems to "bea[r] witness" to the traumatic events that Tancred could not fathom (3). As such, Caruth's reading of Freud's version of the poem of Tancred and Clorinda emphasizes the significance of voicing traumatic experience. However, despite her substantial analysis of the voice in the story, some authors, namely Laura Di Prete, Kathryn Robson, and Marinella Rodi-Risberg, have found her reading of the story lacking.

Laura Di Prete and Kathryn Robson consider that Caruth, in her interpretation of Tancred and Clorinda's story, does not apprehend the weight of Clorinda's body. In

particular, the two critics state that, to begin with, Caruth fails to perceive Clorinda's bodily change, which is the main cause of her double wounding (Di Prete, " 'Foreign Bodies' " 13). They add that she also fails to accentuate the wound from which Clorinda's voice is released (Di Prete, "Don DeLillo's" 501) and to discern that the wound remains open (Rosbon 26). While Di Prete's and Robson's detailed analyses of Caruth will be expounded in the third chapter of this thesis, it is important, at this point, to indicate that their analysis of Caruth's reading remains restricted to Clorinda's corporeality. In fact, the other two dimensions of the spatiality of trauma, along with trauma's corporeal dimension, only become apparent in Marinella Rodi-Risberg's interpretation of Caruth.

In her Ph.D. dissertation titled *Writing Trauma, Writing Time and Space*, Marinella Rodi-Risberg extends Caruth's definition of the spatial. Rodi-Risberg states that although Caruth considers that Tancred and Clorinda's story highlights both the "temporal and spatial aspects" of trauma (*Unclaimed Experience* 114), Caruth fails to flesh out trauma's spatial dimension (Rodi-Risberg 31). Caruth's definition of traumatic space, Rodi-Risberg clarifies, mainly denotes "the space of the mind" (32). Referring to, and close-reading, the original Tancred and Clorinda story, Rodi-Risberg develops Caruth's conception of space to include the corporeal, textual, and geographical.

Rodi-Risberg's definition of traumatic space encompasses the gendered body, which is central to *The Bullet Collection*. In her reading of Tancred and Clorinda's tale, Rodi-Risberg gives special attention to Tancred's slaying of Clorinda. She perceives this slaying as an act of "sexual violence," a rape, "not an uncommon 'weapon' of war" (31). Rodi-Risberg also emphasizes the sectarian nature of Tancred's killing of Clorinda. Clorinda is Moslem while Tancred is Christian (Rodi-Risberg 33). Hence, the

"sexual violence" cannot be dissociated from the political and religious (Rodi-Risberg 32). In fact, such a reading of Tancred and Clorinda's story not only echoes the Lebanese Civil War context during which events of *The Bullet Collection* take place, but also agrees with Syrine Hout's claim that in the novel Marianna's sister Alaine is raped by Fadi ("Revisiting Lebanon" 281), who in fact is from a different religion than hers. Although Alaine's rape will be discussed more elaborately in the course of this thesis, it is important to point out at this stage that Ward's text does not offer any explicit hints to the fact that Alaine was raped by Fadi. Furthermore, Rodi-Risberg's reading of Tancred and Clorinda's tale emphasizes the significance of the traumatized body which has been disregarded by both Caruth's and Freud's studies (Di Prete, "Don DeLillo's" 501"; Di Prete, " 'Foreign Bodies' " 13; Robson 26; Rodi-Risberg 33). Fadi's rape of Alaine will be subsequently discussed in the second and the third chapter of this thesis, and the traumatized body, in the third.

Apart from emphasizing the gendered, sexual, and, in a sense sectarian, nature of the violence inflicted upon Clorinda's body, Rodi-Risberg describes the body itself as a "text-body . . . as a site of both pleasure and pain" (32). Such a definition further highlights bodily space and reveals its intersection with the textual. This correlation between the bodily and textual, between the wound and writing, has been discussed by Kathryn Robson and will be developed in the third chapter of the thesis. However, Rodi-Risberg's discussion of the spatial dimension of trauma is not restricted to the bodily and textual.

Rodi-Risberg also closely examines the geographical space of the tree scene where the second killing of Clorinda takes place (34). She perceives the forest in which Tancred pierces the tree, the "landscape" as she puts it, as "a place for traumatic

memory" (34). In other words, the landscape, or nature, needs to be understood as a witness to Tancred and Clorinda's trauma (Rodi-Risberg 35). Chapter two of this thesis will examine the correlation between trauma and geographical space in *The Bullet Collection* in light of Geoffrey Hartman's concept of "memory places," his emphasis on the therapeutic function of place and nature, and Anne Whitehead's statement that nature can reduce the impact of trauma. Subsequently, the third chapter will closely probe trauma and the corporeal and textual in the novel taking into consideration Laura Di Prete's and Kathryn Robson's works on the relation between trauma and the body, writing and the wound. However, at this point, after having established the main symptoms of PTSD, the way in which these have been replicated in trauma theory, and trauma's spatiality, it would be significant to examine the possibility of recovery from trauma. In fact, the notion of recovery has been considered to be the major cause for inconsistencies in trauma theory.

C. Trauma, Recovery, and Narration

The possibility of recovery from trauma has led a number of trauma theorists to state that narration is the key to cure. Before examining the relation between narrating trauma and recovering from it, it is noteworthy to mention that the DSM-IV does not disregard the prospect of total recovery from trauma. Rather, it mentions three possibilities for those suffering from PTSD: either "complete recovery" might take place within a period of three months, or signs of PTSD might continue to appear for about a year after the trauma, or the signs might disappear but resurface when triggered by "reminders" of the trauma (American Psychiatric Association 466). In this light, the

capacity of narrating a traumatic experience has been considered an indication of healing in trauma theory (Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* 142).

Central to this notion of narrating trauma is the distinction between "traumatic memory" and "narrative memory" first made by French psychologist Pierre Janet. Basing their article upon Janet's psychological findings, Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart state the differences between the two kinds of memories (163). While narrative memory stands for ordinary memory, traumatic memory is that of a horrendous event; moreover, unlike the former, traumatic memory is longer and unsocial (163). Thus, when traumatic memory is transformed into narrative memory, a form of remembrance that the traumatized can fathom, healing would have taken place (Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart 176; Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* 142). A staunch proponent of the possibility of recovery from trauma, Judith Herman also holds that narration of traumatic experience is curative. In particular, she emphasizes that the telling of trauma "transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be reintegrated into the survivor's life story" (175). Narration of trauma, however, must not necessarily be oral. Clinical psychiatrists Karen Baikie and Kay Wilhelm find expressive writing to have a number of positive psychological and physical outcomes on both clinical and non-clinical trauma patients (343-44). In addition, Anne Whitehead states that it is in novels that traumatic memory is transformed into narrative memory (143). Significantly, novels continue to retain the "incomprehensibility of trauma" (143). As such, trauma narratives, whether oral or written, whether actual or fictional, are seen to replicate traumatic experience and consist of a form of cure from trauma. Apart from Herman and Whitehead, other thinkers have emphasized the healing function of narration.

Referred to as "working through," "bearing witness," and even "testifying," the narration of a traumatic experience is perceived to be a significant therapeutic medium for overcoming trauma. The term "working through," which has more recently been used by Dominick LaCapra, can be traced back to Freud's paper "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through." In his paper, Freud emphasizes a relationship between the analysand's "working-through of resistances" and the release of repressed emotions (155-56). LaCapra's definition greatly draws on Freud's as LaCapra uses the term to refer to the process of recognizing and recounting a traumatic event one has experienced in the past (22). According to LaCapra, working through is an "articulatory practice"—that is a form of communication, of telling, of narration—which enables a traumatized person to prevent the reenactment of a traumatic event (22). LaCapra explains:

> 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 (or one's people) back then *while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future*. *This does not imply either that there is a pure opposition between past and present or that acting out . . . can be fully transcended towards a state of closure or full ego identity*. But it does mean that processes of working through may counteract the force of acting out and the repetition of compulsion. (22; emphasis added)

In fact, LaCapra's explanation of the concept of working through is extremely significant, for it does not imply a sense of closure or a total rupture between the traumatic past events and the patient's present life. Rather, it hints at the recognition of the past as past, and it establishes the victim's hopeful outlook on the future. Such a

concept will be greatly significant in examining *The Bullet Collection*, not as an articulatory practice, but as an indication that the traumatic events of the past have been apprehended whereby the victim can now embrace ordinary life and the present, and possibly plan for the future.

Similarly, perceiving the narration of trauma as a form of survival, Laub describes it as "testifying" or "bearing witness" to "the affirmation of survival, to the breakage of the frame of death" ("Bearing Witness" 62). Laub states: "The survivors [of trauma] did not only need to survive so that they could tell their story; they also needed to tell their story in order to survive" ("An Event" 78). In a very similar statement, Felman establishes that "one must *survive* in order to bear witness, and one must bear witness in order to affirm one's survival" ("Camus's" 117). Elaborating on the notion of bearing witness, Douglass and Vogler state that survivors bear witness to "their own suffering," whether in "the past as victims" or in the present as "survivors" who must narrate their trauma (34). Therefore, as the above authors establish, narration is at the core of trauma survival. Nevertheless, this curative function of narration has been questioned and perceived as one of the major limitations of trauma theory.

Visser and Luckhurst consider that Cathy Caruth's and Judith Herman's traumatic models are in opposition. In fact, Visser perceives Caruth's "dominant" trauma model in which a traumatic event is experienced but not apprehended by consciousness—a notion best phrased by Hartman as "an experience that is not experienced" (Caruth and Hartman 631)—to be in opposition to Herman's (273-74). Indeed, if trauma is not recognized by consciousness, then how can it be narrated? Similarly, Luckhurst describes this opposition between the two models as a "flat contradiction between cultural theory . . . and various therapeutic discourses" (82). In

light of this opposition between the two models in trauma theory, a question remains: how can trauma, an irrepresentable experience, be represented?

Many critics have answered this question by referring to literature as the key to resolving trauma's representation paradox. Rodi-Risberg highlights the role of literature in resolving trauma's paradox by stating that "Literature becomes the forgotten unforgettable place of trauma that it so urgently needs" (2). Similarly, asking how trauma, an experience which is not experienced and cannot be represented, can be narrated, Whitehead emphasizes the relationship between trauma and fiction. She states that what is significant in trauma (fiction) is not "what is remembered" but "how and why it is remembered" (3). Hence, along with the catalysts for remembering traumatic experiences, the language and style of trauma fiction become central.

In light of the emphasis laid on the style and language of trauma literature, many writers perceive trauma fictions as exterminating the polarity between "the real" and the postmodern. In its attempt to authentically simulate traumatic experience, trauma fiction cannot be dissociated from "the real." In fact, Anne Whitehead considers that, by adopting postmodern narrative techniques and challenging traditional ones, trauma narratives attempt to depict and transmit the harmful effects of a traumatic event (82). Hence, trauma fiction appropriates postmodernist techniques to represent "the real." Similarly, Douglass and Vogler state that trauma fiction "seemingly reconciles the opposition between the poststructuralist emphasis on the text, with the real understood as an effect of representation, and 'the real' understood as an event marked by trauma" (4). The two writers thus consider that the text is a medium to represent actual trauma. Significantly, given that trauma fiction combines "the real," on the one hand, and the postmodern and post-structural, on the other, Deborah Horvitz perceives the emergence

of a new genre which she calls "postmodern realism" or "poststructural realism" (Horvitz 76, 104). Thus, trauma narratives embrace postmodernist techniques as a means to depict "the real."

As the above introduction has revealed, despite its insightfulness and richness, trauma theory itself seems to encompass many inconsistencies. PTSD's latency, repetitive nature, paradox, transmissibility, and spatio-temporal dimension have become key to trauma theory. Yet, many of these concepts, such as its paradox, have been re-interpreted, and some, like transmissibility, are still being questioned. In addition, trauma's spatio-temporal dimension has been elucidated through a re-reading of Caruth's interpretation of Tancred and Clorinda's story. In particular, Rodi-Risberg's reading of the legend establishes a tripartite spatial dimension for trauma which consists of the traumatized body, the textuality of the body, and geographical space. The possibility of recovery from trauma, though established by the DSM-IV, remains yet another cause for the contradiction in trauma theory. While many perceive the narration of traumatic experience as key to healing from trauma, others question the way in which trauma, which remains unrecognized by consciousness, can be narrated. In this light, many consider that literature or trauma fiction resolves this inconsistency in trauma theory. Distinguishing between the possibility of complete recovery from trauma and LaCapra's notion of working through trauma, this thesis seeks to resolve some of the inconsistencies in trauma theory by revealing that, indeed, trauma can be worked through and perhaps healed via spatiality, whether geographical, corporeal, and—to a lesser extent—textual. Nonetheless, at this point, the word *space*, and in spite of its established three-dimensional definition, remains ambiguous. The following section will

thus establish the definition of *space*, one which will best serve the purpose of this study.

D. Defining Space

Discussing the various meanings of the term *space* in the introduction to their work *Thinking Space*, Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, like Rodi-Risberg, also include the body and text (8, 22). In this light, the second chapter of this thesis will discuss the correlation between trauma and geographical space, and the third chapter will thoroughly discuss bodily space and examine the relationship between writing and the corporeal. However, this section probes the main theories addressing geographical and bodily space to be used in the study. As the following survey will reveal, even studies on geographical space comprised notions of the corporeal and the textual.

The earliest attempts to define and delineate space coincided with the rise of human geography, and as such were as significant as they were flawed. Heavily relying on existentialism and phenomenology, human geographers Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph distinguish between the two terms *space* and *place* and perceive places to be concrete and meaningful spaces (Relph 3, 8; Tuan 136). Both authors also agree that the body plays a role in defining space (Relph 8-15; Tuan 50). The role of the body in constructing space has been discussed by a number of thinkers, namely Michel de Certeau and Edward Casey, and will be accordingly examined later in this section. However, despite their many similar findings, Tuan and Relph differ. While Tuan perceives place as a "pause in movement" (6, 138), Relph considers it to be in constant flux, as "emerging or becoming" (Relph 3). Relph further stresses the correlation between persons and the houses they live in (26). Although criticized for its essentialism

and binarism (Cresswell 21, 25), and for the unreliability of the phenomenological approach on which it is based (Hubbard, Kitchin, Bartley, and Fuller 41), human geography remains significant in establishing the role of the body in defining space and the relationship between identity and place. These two notions are indeed central to any analysis of *The Bullet Collection*.

Other studies were more political in their interpretation of geographical spaces and places. Marxist geographer Doreen Massey challenges the time-space binary advocated by Tuan and Relph. Massey considers that space and time are "inextricably interwoven" ("Politics and Space" 152). Neither can be dissociated from the other, as "[s]pace is not static, nor time spaceless" ("Politics and Space" 155). Indeed, as it will be established in the second chapter of this thesis, space in *The Bullet Collection* cannot be dissociated from time. Massey also challenges Tuan's definition of home as fixed in her article "A Global Sense of Place." She holds that a "progressive"—as opposed to "reactionary"—notion of place could be established whereby it is not fixed, does not "have boundaries," and is "full of internal conflicts" (*Space* 154-55). Hence, not only does Massey deconstruct the time-space binarism, but she also considers place to be characterized by "openness and change" in Cresswell's terms (40). Yet, as Cresswell adds, Massey's emphasis on flux and movement seems to promote "placelessness or non-place" (50). Despite its flaws, Massey's definition of place remains noteworthy in that it promotes a mobile conception of home essential to Ward's novel.

Like Massey, Lucy Lippard's definition of place and home encompasses the mobility of the modern world. Perceiving place as endorsing dynamism and "hybridity," Lippard states: "Each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all 'local places' consist of. By entering that

hybrid, we *change* it; and *in each situation we may play a different role*" (6; emphasis added). Lippard's quote is indeed significant in that it depicts identity as affecting places, and places as the context for the performance of new identities. In another quote of hers, Lippard clarifies the relationship between place and identity. She affirms that ". . . reciprocal identity is inevitably altered by the place, by the relationship to the place itself and the people who are already there. Sometimes the place, or 'nature,' will provide nourishment that social life cannot" (6). Apart from highlighting places' influence on identity, Lippard establishes their comforting role. Such a role will be discussed more elaborately in light of trauma theory in the second chapter of this thesis. As such, Lippard's definition of home and place must be taken into consideration in any study of *The Bullet Collection* as it sheds light on the soothing function of place. Simultaneously, Lippard's work paves the way for a discussion of the possibility of transforming places, which in turn can give rise to the performance of new identities.

Lippard also deconstructs the time-space binary, establishes home as changing, and ascertains a correlation between place and the body. To begin with, Lippard's definition of home in a shifting world is also worthy of note. Lippard asserts: ". . . the center doesn't hold forever, and neither do the margins. Home changes. Illusions change. People change. Time moves on" (23). Hence, Lippard both emphasizes the relationship between the spatial and temporal and establishes home as a center which may not hold. The latter notion becomes particularly important in light of Casey's concept of re-inhabitation, which will be explored later in this chapter. Furthermore, like human geographers, Lippard perceives the body as essential to places. In fact, she identifies ". . . place . . . as an extension of the body, especially the walking body" (34). Her focus on the body is also important, as it will be revealed in a discussion of

placemaking theories and de Certeau's notion of spatial practices in the following paragraph. Yet, prior to discussing de Certeau, it is noteworthy to mention that Lippard's depiction of home as alterable is crucial because Marianna's family is displaced to the United States.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau underlines the role of the body and movement in the creation of spaces, a term which he uses differently from the human geographers. Comparing walking in a city to writing a text, de Certeau combines the geographical, the corporeal, and the textual. He describes the "ordinary practitioners of the city" as "walkers, *Wandersmänner,* whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (93). As such, de Certeau compares the practice of walking through the city, an act realized through bodily movements, to writing. Like writing, walking the city imbues elements with meaning and as such is a process of territorialization—a notion Neil Leach makes use of in his tripartite theory of identification. De Certeau further establishes a relation between space and narratives. He perceives "stories" as "spatial trajectories" (115), and states that they "constantly transform places into spaces or spaces into places" (118).

However, at this point, it would be significant to point out that although de Certeau, like Tuan and Relph, distinguishes between *place* and *space*, his definition of each term seems to challenge the human geographers'. What de Certeau deems to be space, the human geographers define as place, and vice versa. In fact, according to de Certeau, space, referred to as place by Tuan and Relph, "*is a practiced place*" (117). De Certeau thus considers that actions and activities transform places into spaces. He further clarifies his distinction between place and space by stating that it is a difference between "the *being-there* of something dead, the law of a 'place' " and "*operations*

which . . . specify 'space' by the actions of historical *subjects* . . . " (118). However, de Certeau's distinction between place and space is not merely a distinction between stability or statis, and action. In fact, his statement that "*movement* always seems to condition the production of a space and to associate it with a *history*" (118; emphasis added) both emphasizes the role of the body and does not dissociate the spatial from the temporal. It would also be significant to establish that de Certeau's "practices" are "daily practices" and thus, rather than being occasional or haphazard, are repetitive and habitual (118). De Certeau's conception of space as practiced place is indeed important to the study of *The Bullet Collection* and will be further discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. Other authors like Casey have developed the notion of place in the modern, mobile world.

In his re-emphasizing the notion of place, Edward Casey establishes the importance of re-inhabitation in an era of displacement as well as the role of the body in the creation of place. Casey opens his work *The Fate of Place* by establishing the significance of place. He writes that: "To be at all—to exist in a way—is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place. . . . We are surrounded by places. We *walk* over and through them. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them. Nothing we do is unplaced" (*The Fate* ix; emphasis added). Key to Casey's description of place are the body and walking, two notions that he will further develop in his work. Clarifying that his approach traces the development of place as a concept rather than the development of actual places (*The Fate* xi), Casey establishes that place has been regarded as subordinate to time and space, as "a mere 'modification' of [the latter]" (*The Fate* x).

Casey also emphasizes that the concept of place has been disregarded in the modern era as a result of war, relocations, and so on, in such a way which "suggest[s] that the world is nothing but a scene of endless displacement . . ." (*The Fate* xii). As such, Casey establishes that "*dromocentrism*," which is the equivalent of accelerated temporocentrism, is the "essence of the era" (xiii). This dromocentrism, he considers, has made the world a "placeless place" (*The Fate* xiii). Stating that displacement and placelessness might lead to hopelessness, melancholy, and anger (*Getting Back* 302, 308), Casey perceives that the "re-inhabitation" of the "homeplace," a notion he attributes to bell hooks, is essential to counter the arising hopelessness, even "if [the homeplace] is located in a land of exile" (*Getting Back* 302). In light of Marianna and her family's emigration to the United States, Casey's re-inhabitation becomes important to *The Bullet Collection*.

In his discussion of place, Casey also emphasizes the role of bodies. He states that "To be in the world, . . . is to be in place" (*Getting Back* xv), only to establish "how can one be *in* a place except *through* one's own body?" (*The Fate* 204). Focusing on the role of the body in the creation of places, he further adds that "bodies animate places" and, like de Certeau, emphasizes the significance of walking (*The Fate* 228). Casey thus stresses the role of the moving body, of walking in particular, in the creation of places. Despite the fact that the body is moving, it is highly dependent on places. As such, Casey's findings are central to this thesis, in particular when combined with Neil Leach's theory of identification with place.

In "Belonging: Towards a Theory of Identification with Space," Neil Leach attempts to flesh out a tripartite theory that explains the way in which people identify with, and develop a sense of belonging to, places. Leach bases his theory on de

Certeau's notions of "territorialisation" and "narrativisation," Butler's performativity theory, and Christian Metz's concept of mirroring. Using de Certeau's theory, Leach explains how a person is able to create a sense of place. He states: "Through *habitual processes of movement,* by covering and recovering the same paths and routes, we come to familiarise ourselves with a territory, and thereby find meaning in that territory" (299; emphasis added). Leach, drawing on de Certeau, thus establishes walking and repetitive bodily movements as essential to placemaking. Nonetheless, Leach states that although de Certeau's theory establishes how a person partakes in placemaking, it falls short of describing how a person identifies with places, how practices "help to forge a sense of identity" (300). For the purpose, he refers to theories by Judith Butler and Christian Metz.

It is by combining de Certeau's notions with those of Butler and Metz that Leach is able to develop his theory of identification with place. Perceiving " 'belonging' as a product of performativity," Leach establishes that it could also lead to identification as it consists of imbuing one's surroundings with value through performance (303). As Leach states, such a conception of belonging indeed extends de Certeau's notion of territorialisation to include that of identification (303). Basing his notions on Metz's concept of "mirroring," Leach considers that to allow identification to occur, "we should look for an equivalent process of 'mirrorings' . . . [which consists of] the 'introjection' of the external world into the self, and the 'projection' of the self on the external world, such that there is an equivalence—the one 'reflects' the other—and identification may take place" (304). As such, Leach makes use of de Certeau's, Butler's, and Metz's theories to help explain the process of identification with places.

The aforementioned discussion paves the way for a definition of geographical space in the novel. Indeed, the analysis of *The Bullet Collection* will highly rely on the notion of place rather than space. Instead of perceiving place as a rigid and fixed binary opposite to space, this thesis will hold that place is changing and dynamic, a product of movements and performances, of the human body. In addition, the definition of place in this thesis will greatly draw on de Certeau's notion of space as practiced place. In accordance with its dynamism, place will not be perceived as dissociated from time or history. Furthermore, places in the novel will be considered as central to notions of identity and belonging. As such, the definition of geographical space in the novel embraces that of place which is highly reliant on the body, and for that the body itself, for the purpose of this research, needs to be defined.

Just as place, in this thesis, is not considered to be in opposition to space, and both terms in opposition to time, the body in this thesis is not perceived as distinct or inferior to the mind. In fact, a number of authors, among whom Elizabeth Grosz, have criticized the mind-body dualism. In her work *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz reveals the implications of such a binary. According to her, a dichotomy between the body and mind further entails a rift between "reason and passion, sense and sensibility, outside and inside, self and other, depth and surface, reality and appearance, mechanism and vitalism, transcendence and immanence, *temporality and spatiality*, psychology and physiology, form and matter, and so on" (3; emphasis added). Interestingly, as Grosz points out, the body has been associated with spatiality, and the mind with temporality and history. Furthermore, as Doreen Massey establishes time to be masculine and space, feminine ("Politics and Space" 149), Grosz adds that perhaps the most prominent binary associated with the mind-body dichotomy consists of associating the mind with the male

and the body with the female (4). As such, a perception of the body and mind as binaries is extremely reductive.

Yet, a close examination of Caruth's definition of trauma seems to echo such a dualism. Referring to Freud's definition of trauma, Caruth states that trauma is "a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (*Unclaimed Experience* 3). Her statement itself thus seems to imply a dualistic approach. Caruth adds:

> . . . the wound of the mind—the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world—is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that . . . is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore *not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor*. (*Unclaimed Experience* 4)

Caruth's quote seems to imply that trauma causes a split between the mind and body, and it is through repetitive movements—which have also been established as central to defining place—that a survivor can acknowledge trauma. Similarly, Di Prete considers that trauma causes a "split between body and mind" (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 18). As the thesis will unfold, it will also become clearer whether Caruth's dualistic perspective is another flaw in trauma theory or a mere indication of the mind-body split resulting from trauma. After delineating the notions of corporeal and geographical space for this thesis, it would be essential to explore the scholarship on Ward's novel to determine why an exploration of these concepts in the context of trauma theory is essential.

E. Scholarship on *The Bullet Collection*

In light of the tripartite dimension of space established by Rodi-Risberg, this section will closely examine the literature on *The Bullet Collection*. Although relatively scarce, the literature on the novel seems to emphasize the need for a study which probes the correlation between trauma, and the body and place. This section begins by revealing how Ward has been positioned as both an Arab-American and Anglophone Lebanese postwar writer. It will then survey the main scholarship on the novel, which includes articles, a thesis, and a comparative review. The section will finally conclude by stating the thesis's main claim. However, before examining the literature on *The Bullet Collection*, it would be noteworthy to consider the way in which Ward has been perceived as a writer.

The literature on *The Bullet Collection* posits Patricia Sarrafian Ward as both an Arab American and a postwar Anglophone Lebanese writer. Born in Lebanon in 1969 to an American father and a Lebanese-Armenian mother, she spent the first eighteen years of her life in Lebanon—twelve of these amidst civil strife—prior to her subsequent departure to the United States (Hout, "Revisiting Lebanon" 274). As such, Ward's war experiences greatly resemble Marianna's, the narrator in *The Bullet Collection*. In the novel, eighteen-year-old Marianna is, like Ward, a hybrid of an American father and a Lebanese-Armenian mother with Egyptian roots. Having fled war-torn Lebanon to the United States with her family, Marianna painfully re-members the war, and her childhood and adolescence spent in Lebanon. Thus, while apparently Ward can be considered either an Arab American or postwar Anglophone Lebanese author, each nomenclature suggests a distinct approach to the novel.

The literature positioning Ward as an Arab American writer has mainly examined issues of identity, gender, sexuality, exile, and belonging in *The Bullet Collection*, and compared her work to Rabih Alameddine's—another American writer of Lebanese origin. For instance, Layla Al Maleh describes *The Bullet Collection* as an Arab American novel concerned with notions of loss and exile (43), and Lisa Suhair Majaj situates Ward's work alongside the more recent Arab American novels which boldly approach questions of gender and sexuality. In her article, "Transnational Diaspora in Rabih Alameddine," Carol Fadda-Conrey states that Ward's *The Bullet Collection* and Alameddine's *I, the Divine* are two Arab-American novels whose main protagonists, Marianna and Sara respectively, "liv[e] in suspension between the two places [Lebanon and America] but belon[g] to neither" (168).Thus, Fadda-Conrey establishes that the two novels are similar in their questioning of the notions of home and belonging amidst the erosion of boundaries in the contemporary world. Steven Salaita also compares Ward to Rabih Alameddine (13). In his particular discussion of *The Bullet Collection*, Salaita focuses on Ward's comparison of gender roles in Lebanon and America. He further describes the "disjunctions" in Ward's novel as similar to those of Alameddine's *Koolaids* (107). As such, studies classifying Ward's *The Bullet Collection* as an Arab American novel have focused on issues of identity, gender, and exile rather than on trauma or space.

Despite her being described as an Arab American writer, Patricia Sarrafian Ward does not perceive herself as such. "I don't know what I am other than being a writer. . . . I have come to realize [that] my past of war and loss is a thread I pull through every tale; maybe that is a kind of identity," asserts Ward in a statement describing the weight of war and loss on her identity as a writer (qtd. in Hout, "Revisiting Lebanon," 273).

Thus, central to Ward, and consequently her fiction, is the impact of the war and loss on her, both of which cannot be dissociated from trauma. Moreover, Hout's statement that Ward does not perceive herself as an Arab American or Lebanese American but rather as "a war survivor who reflects (on) . . . [war] from multiple angles and in different genres . . ." ("Revisiting Lebanon," 274), becomes particularly significant in the light of trauma theory. Ward, and consequently Marianna, can be seen as a trauma survivor bearing witness to the unpleasant events of her youth through narration. This correlation between Ward's identity as a writer and trauma is important in approaching *The Bullet Collection*.

Rather than locate *The Bullet Collection* as an Arab American novel, Syrine Hout situates the work among other "Lebanese anglophone postwar narratives" ("The Last Migration" 149). As such, Hout places Ward among a number of Lebanese authors—who also include Alameddine—whose childhood or adolescence was entirely or partly tainted by the Civil War (Hout, "Cultural Hybridity" 3; Hout, "Memory," 219; Hout, "Post-War Anglophone" 4-5). Along with Ward, Rabih Alameddine, Jad El Hage, Tony Hanania, Rawi Hage, and Nada Awar Jarrar are a few of these "first-time authors" who wrote about the Lebanese Civil War from a distance which is at once geographical and temporal (Hout, "Memory," 219). Depicting issues of home, memory, exile, identity, trauma and so on, these authors' distance from the war did not merely characterize their works with "hindsight" and "critical distance" (Hout, "Memory," 219). Rather, their texts, like Ward's, can be considered as bearing witness to the horridness of the Lebanese Civil War. As such, while a discussion of Ward as an Arab American author and Lebanese Anglophone postwar writer might imply that the two categories are mutually exclusive, a close reading of *The Bullet Collection* could reveal

them to be in dialogue. As this thesis will progress, it will become clear that, as traumatized war refugees, Marianna and her family are also immigrants engaged in the process of re-inhabiting the land of the American Dream. However, studies on *The Bullet Collection* have mainly examined trauma and the atrocious bearing of war in the novel itself.

Although scholarship on *The Bullet Collection* has taken into consideration trauma and space, in its textual and corporeal dimensions, it has failed to examine the spatiality of trauma in its geographical dimension, and to look into both Marianna's and Alaine's traumas. In her article, "Revisiting Lebanon: Testimony, Trauma, and Transition in Patricia Sarrafian Ward's *The Bullet Collection*" (2009), Syrine Hout establishes Ward's novel as a trauma narrative distinguished by its narrator's sense of "belatedness"—a term that Hout expands beyond Cathy Caruth's original description of the term—and its stylistic characteristics of "repetition," "temporal fragmentation," and "indirection" (274). In fact, Hout's tripartite definition of the term *belatedness* focuses on Marianna's belated birth which prevents her from enjoying a peaceful pre-war Lebanon, her belated departure for the United States with her family, and her belated conception of war events. However, while Hout emphasizes the narrativization and temporality of trauma, she disregards trauma's spatial and corporeal dimensions. Also, Hout argues in her article, in a claim that I do support, that Alaine was raped when she was eleven by Fadi, an adolescent whom she later murdered ("Revisiting Lebanon" 282). However, Hout does not further explore the implications and reverberations of Alaine's rape; for her study, like the majority of those on *The Bullet Collection*, only closely addresses Marianna's trauma. Thus, Hout's article on Ward's novel neither takes into consideration the geographical and corporeal spatiality of trauma, nor does it

expound the implications of Alaine's rape. Other articles on *The Bullet Collection* have also examined trauma but have adopted a comparative approach to the novel for the purpose.

In another article published in 2011, "Cultural Hybridity, Trauma, and Memory in Diasporic Anglophone Lebanese Fiction," Hout examines trauma in four postwar Anglophone Lebanese novels: Ward's *The Bullet Collection*, Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*, and Alameddine's *Koolaids* and *I, the Divine*. Arguing that all four texts are a "testimony" to the atrocities and consequences of war (1), she considers that the three authors "re-enact . . . the traumatic experience of war" (2). In her extensive analysis of *The Bullet Collection*, Hout establishes the novel as a piece of trauma writing and interprets Marianna's suicide attempts in terms of a lost sense of place and belonging (8). As such, although Hout addresses the issues of trauma and space in the novel, she does not consider their relationship, nor does she examine Alaine's trauma alongside Marianna's. Other studies have also adopted a comparative approach to *The Bullet Collection* in view of novels which were not necessarily written by Anglophone Lebanese authors.

Wendy Wolters's comparative review of *The Bullet Collection* and Ruth Klüger's *Still Alive* establishes the two novels as bearing witness to two traumatic events, the Lebanese Civil War and the Holocaust, respectively. In her article " 'A Bridge between My Memories and Yours" (2005), Wolters argues that the two works, in which the process of "sorting out" trauma memories is prominent, can be used for pedagogical purposes (Wolters 118). Central to Wolters's study is her claim that both Ward and Klüger posit their "readers as witnesses" to the narrators' traumas (Wolters 118). In addition, Wolters's analysis of *The Bullet Collection* echoes Hout's third

meaning of belatedness as Wolters states that Marianna, as a young adult, is attempting to reinterpret events she watched and underwent during the war but could not fully comprehend. Although Wolters briefly alludes to the changing geographical space of the city caused by the Lebanese Civil War (123), her review does not further elaborate the correlation between trauma and space in the novel. Hence, Wolters's review, like other studies on *The Bullet Collection*, did examine trauma but disregarded its bodily and geographical spatiality. Other analyses of the novel did take space into consideration but failed to connect it to trauma.

One of the earliest academic studies of *The Bullet Collection*, Rula Salam's unpublished thesis "Internal and External Wars" (2004) is perhaps the only research which extensively takes into consideration the body in Ward's novel. Salam's thesis is a comparative approach to Hanan al-Shaykh's *The Story of Zahra*, a 1980 novel highlighting issues of sexuality and belonging during the Lebanese Civil War, and Ward's *The Bullet Collection*. In her study, Salam argues that Zahra, in al-Shaykh's novel, and Marianna and Alaine, in Ward's, have recourse to self-destruction when they are unable to express themselves through language as a result of their suffering (18). Central to Salam's work is her correlating the corporeal mutilation to the textual one. Integrating Mark Ledbetter's notion of "narrative scarring" into her reading of the two texts, Salam considers Ward's novel as an "[un]healthy text" produced by a "scarred body" (72). Since Salam's thesis was completed a year after the publication of Ward's novel, the study is greatly insightful in its correlating bodily and textual spaces, an aspect that most studies of *The Bullet Collection* have failed to attend to. Moreover, Salam's thesis does not merely closely examine Marianna's self-mutilations; it also takes into consideration Alaine's. Nonetheless, Salam's work remains lacking in its

disregard of trauma theory, and consequently the traumatic nature of the girls' self-mutilation and the fact that the text itself is a trauma narrative. Furthermore, the framework Salam adopts for her thesis is debatable. Salam neither justifies her choice of the two novels nor does she support her argument with theory. For instance, Salam fails to contextualize the reactions the novel wishes to incite in the reader within reader-response theory. However, Salam's framework is not the only limitation to her otherwise substantial thesis.

Perhaps another major shortcoming of Salam's work is her hasty reading of *The Bullet Collection*'s ending. Examining the novel's ending outside of the context of trauma theory, Salam writes: "The ending of *The Bullet Collection* is also a sad one. . . . Knowledge of self and identity comes too late, thus it does not have the cathartic effect it should" (Salam 102). Salam also considers that Ward and al-Shaykh do not offer "hope" for their female subjects (103). Her reading thus implicitly suggests that writers of literature are expected to offer hope for their readers. Contradicting herself, Salam further adds, on the same page, that "[t]hrough Marianna, Ward seems to suggest that there is hope, but it is only in exile . . ." (103). While my analysis of *The Bullet Collection* does not expect literature to offer some hope, I do support Salam's statement that Marianna is able to opt for a new beginning in exile. In particular, I aim to show that not only Marianna, but also Alaine is able to work through, come to terms with, and gradually recover from trauma in exile. As LaCapra states, the very process of working through trauma implies, apart from an acknowledgment of the past, "openings to the future" (22). By working through their traumas, the two sisters are thus able to embrace the future with a more positive outlook.

Although studies of *The Bullet Collection* have examined notions of trauma, the body, and place in the novel, they have failed to examine the correlation between them. In addition, much research on Ward's work seems to have scrutinized Marianna's trauma without regard for Alaine's equally significant traumatic experiences. This emphasis on Marianna's trauma could be attributed to the fact that she is the narrator bearing witness to her family's trauma. As such, this thesis focuses on the correlation between trauma and space, in particular the body and place, in the novel. The aim of this thesis is to reveal the extent to which the personal and war traumas of Alaine and Marianna can be worked through places, and voiced and healed through the body—and through writing to a lesser extent. As such, on one level, this study will help establish whether and how trauma can be worked through, and perhaps healed, via space. It will also help understand the role of space in coming to terms with traumatic experiences. Another purpose of this thesis is to elucidate Salam's equivocal reading of the ending of *The Bullet Collection* as dismal and unpromising yet offering Marianna "hope . . . in exile" (103). The clarification of Salam's statement will thus enable readers to gain additional insight into the novel. The twofold ambition of this thesis is therefore to explore the possibility of working through, and coming to terms with, trauma via geographical and corporeal spaces, and to clarify Rula Salam's interpretation of the novel's ending.

The methodology for this study will mainly consist of a text-led close reading of Ward's novel framed by findings in trauma theory and contemporary notions of place and the body. Given trauma theory's postmodern and post-structural yet realistic nature, this study will also rely on a combination of psychological, post-structural, and postmodern approaches which will help explore the correlation between trauma and

space. The first chapter will explore how Marianna and Alaine are both able to come to terms with their trauma through specific places.

CHAPTER 2

TRAUMA AND GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

As the introduction has shown, trauma has a significant spatial dimension which has been disregarded in studies on *The Bullet Collection*. This chapter seeks to closely examine the geographical dimension of trauma in the novel. After surveying Geoffrey Hartman's and Anne Whitehead's findings on the relationship between trauma and space, it will analyze the possibility of working through trauma through place. Revealing the way in which the novel's italicized introduction defines places in the novel, this chapter further contends that Marianna's recollection of places hints at her coming to terms with her trauma. Following an examination of Alaine's, along with some other subjects', compulsive need to return to the initial scene of their trauma, the chapter then goes on to argue that Alaine's working through her trauma does not take place in Lebanon but in America. As such, the process can be traced to Alaine's re-inhabitation practices in the new country. The chapter also shows that even Marianna's shy re-inhabitation and placemaking practices are part of her coming to terms with her trauma, despite the fact that the two sisters' traumas are different. However, prior to examining trauma and place in the novel, the chapter will introduce the correlation between space, trauma, and memory.

A. Space, Trauma, and Memory

One of the most prominent theorists to examine the correlation between trauma and geographical space, Geoffrey Hartman introduces the idea of "memory places" and

establishes the healing dimension of place. Although Hartman's studies on the spatiality of trauma are based on analyses of the Romantics, specifically Wordsworth, his findings remain integral to cultural trauma theory. In his interview with Cathy Caruth, Hartman presents the notion of "memory places" (Caruth and Hartman 643), a term which he uses differently from Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*. Substantially distinct from Hartman's concept, Nora's *lieux de mémoire* refer to certain "objects," "products of reflection," or places (18), that is "certain works of history . . . [which] reshape memory in some fundamental way or [which] epitomize a revision of memory for pedagogical purposes" (17). Geoffrey Hartman's definition, however, lacks an educational dimension and is primarily based on his reading of Wordsworth's poetry. Hartman observes that particular places affected Wordsworth to the extent that these became "memory places" or "spots of time" (Caruth and Hartman 643); apart from being actual geographical locations, such places also existed in Wordsworth's mind, thus acquiring a "temporal consciousness" (Caruth and Hartman 644-45; Whitehead, "Geoffrey Hartman" 285). Hartman further argues that memory places following the Holocaust have been lost. Questioning whether the Holocaust can be recalled without causing "secondary trauma" (645), Hartman thus rejects the notion of camps as memory places after the event (647-48). Although Hartman's findings reveal a noteworthy correlation between memory and place, their main significance lies in introducing the therapeutic dimension of places.

In his interview with Cathy Caruth, Hartman additionally states that, on the one hand, nature can reduce the impact of trauma and, on the other hand, places are central to healing. To begin with, he perceives that in Wordsworth's work, nature seems to attenuate the shock of trauma (Caruth and Hartman 642). Elaborating the role of nature,

Hartman tells Caruth that "nature aims at growth of the mind which can absorb or overcome shock" (Caruth and Hartman 642-43). He further tells her that there is no healing without place:

> And there is recovery. For the recovery to be effective, salutary, it has to be associated with place. It cannot be simply a feeling. There are feelings without place in Wordsworth, but he is not satisfied with those, he wants to follow them to a surreptitious source. . . . But clearly it is impossible to envisage an origin without thinking of emplacement. *So the recovery, the retrieval process, insofar as it can be called healing or therapeutic, involves the notion of place*, the image of a power place. (645; emphasis added)

Hartman thus perceives that healing cannot be dissociated from place. However, far from establishing place as a mere location, Hartman emphasizes "emplacement," being in place. Emplacement is indeed central to *The Bullet Collection* as, later in this chapter, Alaine's recovery from trauma will be traced to her placemaking and re-inhabitation practices in the United States. In addition, a close reading of the opening of *The Bullet Collection* reveals the way in which Marianna transforms places into memory places. Depicting the therapeutic role of place in trauma, Hartman's findings have been developed by Anne Whitehead.

In her work *Trauma Fiction*, Anne Whitehead further explores the relationship between trauma and place in the context of the Holocaust. Stating that Hartman's research has shed light on the significance of "place" in "trauma theory" (48), she expounds his notion of the loss of places after the Holocaust. Whitehead writes: "Although memory is strongly attached to place, the effect of [Holocaust] trauma, it seems, has been to destroy the symbolic function of place" (10). Furthermore, like

Hartman, she underlines the fact that nature can help absorb traumatic shocks. Examining Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Places*, Whitehead argues that "landscape after the Holocaust . . . can help to absorb the shock of trauma" (10). Hence, Whitehead's *Trauma Fiction* confirms many of Geoffrey Hartman's notions on trauma and place; however, it is in another article of hers that she more elaborately develops his findings.

Anne Whitehead's article "Geoffrey Hartman and the Ethics of Place" both highlights and amplifies Hartman's contribution to trauma studies and space. In the article, Whitehead argues that Hartman, who has been mainly located in romantic studies, is a great contributor to trauma theory (276-80). She particularly commends the correlation he establishes between landscape and place, and memory and trauma. Emphasizing the concept of positionality, or the notion that the way in which "we see is always and inevitably a question of *how* we see and *from where* we see," Whitehead states that "[a]ll efforts to confront and remember the past must be preceded by an ethical consideration of the perspective from which we, as belated witnesses, view the event" (276). In other words, "working through," or healing from, trauma cannot be dissociated from the place from where, and the way in which, a traumatic experience is being looked back at. She states that the ethical dimension of Hartman's analysis lies in the fact that it requires the reader to position him/herself with respect to the poem just as the viewer of a landscape positions him/herself with respect to the natural world (284). Whitehead concludes her article by re-emphasizing the concept of positionality and accentuating Hartman's contribution to trauma studies—the fact that he has "*give*[*n*] *traumatic memory a place*," especially through his notion of memory place (292). Hence, perceiving a relation between trauma and place like Hartman, Whitehead goes further in introducing the notion of positionality.

In their studies, Hartman and Whitehead describe a number of major findings on trauma and space. Apart from accentuating the destructive impact of trauma on places and on memory places, they also establish that nature or the landscape does attenuate traumatic shock (Caruth and Hartman 642, 645, 647-48; Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* 10). Notably, Hartman further argues that healing cannot be dissociated from place, from emplacement (Caruth and Hartman 642-43). Whitehead, in her turn, emphasizes the significance of the notion of positionality, or the distance from which the traumatic event is perceived ("Geoffrey Hartman" 276). Building on Hartman's and Whitehead's respective notions of memory place and the role of place in healing, and positionality, this chapter will examine whether trauma can be worked through place. To achieve this purpose, it will combine Neil Leach's theory of identification and belonging, which includes de Certeau's territorialization theory; Edward Casey's notion of re-inhabiting; and bell hooks's conceptualization of the homeplace as a site of resistance. However, before examining the correlation between trauma and place in the course of the novel, it would be significant to explore the way in which *The Bullet Collection's* italicized introduction reveals the significance of place—a place that is, nonetheless, not detached from time or history.

B. Marianna and (Memory) Places

While Ward's novel opens with a temporal reference, "*Before the war was real*" (3), and each of the subsequent paragraphs also refers to moments in time (3-4), a closer reading of the two first pages reveals that as much emphasis is laid on place. The first two paragraphs, initiated by the famous "*Before the war was real*," are ones in which Marianna describes her past ventures to the "*dry, rocky hills*" as well as her family trips

to "*places*" such as "*Shtaura, the Barouk Mountains, Trablos, Saida, Sour*" (3). Similarly, the third paragraph begins with "*In winter,*" but is directly followed with the spatial reference "*Beirut*" whereby Marianna recounts how her family and she spent their pre-war winters in the city (3). In that same paragraph, the expression "*In summer*" is followed by a mention of the family's summer locale, "*Shemlan*," and an account of details pertaining to the summers spent there and then (3-4). The last two paragraphs of the opening pages are also initiated by temporal references but denote places. The penultimate paragraph opening with "*On summer days*" is followed by images of persons walking "*along the bottom terrace near the road*" or "[*standing*] *in the shade of a tree*" (4). Finally, the last paragraph reiterates the first two paragraphs' "*Before the war was real*" but actually depicts "*stone steps* [*which*] *led . . . to a field swaying with red poppies and daisies and heather*" as well as "*an old mansion owned by a Macedonian family*" (4). Thus, the opening of *The Bullet Collection* is replete with temporal references which are directly followed by citations of places and memories pertaining to these places.

The emphasis on place in the introduction can be perceived as disputing "temporocentrism" or the "subordination of space to time" (Casey, *Getting Back* 6). Such an emphasis is also noteworthy in light of Ken Seigneurie's statement that Lebanese authors who wrote on the Lebanese Civil War shifted their attention from time to space, or what he terms "social space" in accordance with Lefebvre's work (Introduction 23-24). However, the italicized introduction in *The Bullet Collection* does more than reveal the weight of place in the novel; it further presents a definition of place in the novel and introduces the notion of memory places.

In fact, the first few paragraphs of Ward's novel serve to define places. Initially, it is significant to note that places in *The Bullet Collection* are not mere static locations but are rather productions of habitual—for indeed Marianna's formulation of temporal references does indicate recurrence—corporeal movement. Marianna "*climbed the dry, rocky hill*" and "*gathered thyme*" (3). She and her family "*unroll*[*ed*] *the carpets and chas*[*ed*] *naphthalene balls*" during winters in Beirut (3), and "*harvested the lavender*" during summers (4). As such, places in the novel recall the role of bodies in place creation as emphasized by Relph, Tuan, Lippard, Casey, de Certeau, and Leach. In fact, it is bodily movement in space which creates places, which "finds as well as founds them" as Casey maintains (*The Fate* 226). Casey further states that "[*t*]*he body itself is place-productive*, bringing forth places from its expressive and orientational movements, its literally kinetic dynamism" (*The Fate* 236). Casey's emphasis on the role of the body, of movement in the creation of places agrees with de Certeau's. Interchanging the traditional definitions of space and place, whereby place becomes abstract and space, an outcome of repetitive practices, Michel de Certeau writes:

> A *space* exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. *It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function* in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. (117; emphasis added)

De Certeau's statement thus applies to places in *The Bullet Collection* which are simultaneously temporal and created by corporeal movement. Another characteristic of places in the novel is that they are fluid.

The opening paragraphs of Ward's novel do not merely associate place with the body, but subtly reveal its inseparability from change and flux. Depicting how "*Mummy's uncle Ara built his house*" (4), Marianna thus alludes to the fact that places are not stable entities; they are themselves susceptible to change, to production, and to building and destruction. In fact, in the novel, places are "emerging or becoming" as Relph states (3), or "*at work*" as Casey considers (*The Fate* 286). Hotels in Beirut are transformed into military strongholds (26), a mansion becomes a military camp (50), and Ziad plans to convert a barn into a disco (116). Hence, the opening of Ward's *The Bullet Collection* establishes the role of the body in the creation of spaces as well as the fluidity of places. The novel's opening lines also reveal the inseparability of place from time.

Despite the greater significance of space in *The Bullet Collection*, time remains crucial; places described at the onset of the novel are not detached from it. Rather, as Doreen Massey states, time and space are "inextricably interwoven" ("Politics and Space" 152). Such a relationship between space and time in the novel is significant for a number of reasons. First, it reinforces studies on space and time in Lebanon and the Lebanese novel which have emphasized the correlation between the two (Aghacy 97; Seigneurie, "The Everyday World" 111). Such a relationship also destabilizes binary notions of space and time. In fact, Miriam Cooke describes how the new war imagery deconstructs binary notions of the war:

> . . . war discourse today participates in the deconstruction of a particular way of re-membering and representing war by deploying a new arsenal of war imagery. Such imagery undoes the conventional binarisms, for example, war/peace,

> good/evil, victory/defeat, stability/instability, self/other, masculinity/femininity, soldier/civilian, front/home front. (200)

The time/space duality is another binarism that the war deconstructs, but that Cooke does not mention. At this point, it would be significant to point out that despite the fact that this thesis examines the correlation between place and trauma, it does not consider space to be detached from time. As a matter of fact, many of the places and their evolution cannot be detached from history, from the context of the Lebanese Civil War, and from memory.

Not only does the opening of *The Bullet Collection* reveal the inseparability of space and time, but it also highlights the relationship between place and memory. Places described at the outset of Ward's novel are in fact "memory places," or as Whitehead defines them "specific sites and landscapes [which] create a temporal consciousness" ("Geoffrey Hartman" 285). In remembering her family's and her own pre-war idyll, Marianna cannot but associate her family's and her serenity at that time with the places in which it was experienced. Yet, her memory of these places is not separate from an awareness of the civil war and its horrors. In fact, Syrine Hout considers that Marianna "places her few but precious memories of her early childhood in italics to emphasize their qualitative difference from what followed them, namely war" ("Cultural Hybridity" 9). Thus, the italicized introduction of the novel, along with its spatial references, stands in clear contrast to the war.

Recalling places from her childhood with a temporal consciousness of the impending war, Marianna thus comes to greatly resemble Wordsworth in Hartman's analysis of the *Prelude*. Anne Whitehead, in her article "Geoffrey Hartman and the Ethics of Place," cites Hartman's analysis of the excerpt in which Wordsworth, as a

young boy, waits on a cliff to be taken home from school for Christmas holidays. Ten days later, however, his father would pass away, and Wordsworth would come to associate his father's memory with that of the cliff despite the fact that what connects the two events is "merely a contiguity in time" (Whitehead, "Geoffrey Hartman" 286). As Marianna associates the war with places from her childhood, she similarly is "merging [an] awareness of time with sensation of place, [and that] allows [her] to physically perceive or 'spot' time" (Whitehead, "Geoffrey Hartman" 287). As such, the opening of *The Bullet Collection* shows that places in the novel are in fact memory places. It also emphasizes the temporal and spatial distance, the positionality, from which Marianna recalls her past. Describing her past memories from a distance that is at once temporal and spatial, Marianna reveals her ability to look back at her past and the pain, an ability which might indeed attest to her working through her trauma. In addition, Marianna's ability to recall places from her childhood testifies to the fact that she can remember them, that their memory has surpassed the destructive impact of trauma. Marianna's endeavor to come to terms with her trauma will be discussed more elaborately later in the chapter.

Despite the significance of Marianna's recollection of places, an examination of the novel shows that not all of the memories she recounts in the opening pages are actually hers. At this point, it would be significant to refer to Frances Ferguson's definition of romantic memory. Ferguson's statement that "memory comes not to record the past but to represent the power of seeing a past that one didn't experience at the time of its occurrence" (533) seems to echo Caruth's definition of trauma. However, a closer reading of *The Bullet Collection* does reveal that Ferguson's statement also has a literal resonance; Marianna might not remember several of the experiences she describes at the

outset of the novel because she was indeed too young when these occurred. In the course of the novel, Marianna mentions that she has transformed "stories" into "memories":

> I don't know when the war began. There is so little from before, but I invent how it must have been. There are the memories that became stories, and there are also the things I cannot possibly remember but do, and these are the stories that have become memories. (16)

Thus, Marianna admits that not all of the memories are hers. Significantly, the extent to which Marianna herself recalls the family trips she and her family used to make to the various Lebanese regions becomes uncertain. In fact, one of Marianna's neighbors during her family's residence on the American University of Beirut's campus, Mrs. Awad, tells Marianna about her journeys with her family through Lebanon and simultaneously dismisses the possibility of Marianna's recollection of the trips: "You were just a baby!. . . . Do you know your parents took you all over Lebanon before the war? And then, with a sympathetic smile, But you don't remember" (93). Hence, Marianna's memories of her parents' trips throughout Lebanon are not her own. They might be stories she had been told by Mrs. Awad and others, stories which Marianna appropriates as her own memories.

Despite the fact that many of the memories are stories that Marianna had turned into memories, many are also actual memories that Marianna turns into stories. The transformation of memories into stories thus agrees with Janet's statement that cure from trauma relies on the transformation of traumatic memory into narrative memory (Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart 176). By transforming memories, including traumatic memories, into narratives, Marianna reveals her ability to confront the past, to re-

member it. As such, Marianna's recollections could be perceived as another evidence of her working through her trauma.

As such, the italicized opening of *The Bullet Collection* reveals the most prominent issues in the novel. Apart from shedding light on the significance of places, the opening lines also provide a definition of places as fluid and produced by bodily movements. Notably, rather than being perceived as separate from time, places in the novel also have a temporal dimension. In fact, the places Marianna remembers are memory places from her childhood which she associates with a time before the civil war. Indeed, the remembrance of places also foreshadows their change and destruction, for war inevitably brings along "no-place[s]" or an "annihilation of places" as Casey considers (*Getting Back* ix). Looking back at the past from her American exile, Marianna thus reveals her willingness to re-member that past, to face it, and narrate it—and by so doing, a willingness to overcome it. Thus, the introduction of the novel, which is replete with Marianna's memory of places, does echo her working through trauma and her courage to face her war memories and narrate them.

C. Alaine: Rape and Re-Inhabitation

While the previous section focused on Marianna's process of working through trauma, this section seeks to explore Alaine's re-inhabitation efforts in the United States and to attempt to discover whether these efforts are a possible indication of her working through and coming to terms with her own trauma. It begins by supporting Hout's contention that Alaine had been raped by a young man, Fadi, when she was eleven. The section then seeks to examine Alaine's repetitive return to the place in which it is assumed Fadi had raped her. After questioning the claim that Alaine's recovery begins

in Lebanon before the family leaves for the United States, it then goes on to show that Alaine's home-making contributes to her working through her traumatic experiences. However, in order to be able to analyze Alaine's building endeavors, it would be significant to examine the causes of her trauma.

In her article, "Revisiting Lebanon," Syrine Hout not only argues that Alaine's trauma can be attributed to her being raped by Fadi, but she also states that Alaine would later murder Fadi herself (281-82). Hout supports her claim by referring to several incidents in *The Bullet Collection*: to Fadi's winking at Marianna and caressing her hair, to Alaine's reaction to Fadi's disappearance, and her being well-equipped to murder him (281-82). Hout also refers to Alaine's knowledge that Huda, their neighbor's friend who had attempted to commit suicide on several occasions, was raped as well (281-82). The reasons Hout presents are indeed valid, and a close examination of the novel reveals even more indices which support the claim that Alaine was subjected to sexual abuse.

At various stages of the novel, Marianna presents a number of hints which confirm that Alaine was raped. For instance, during a discussion of the Scandinavian spy Michel, thirteen-year-old Alaine tells eleven-year-old Marianna that she trusts her "Because she's innocent. . . . [She's] just [her] baby sister" (102). Alaine thus considers that Marianna is too young and innocent to comprehend her rape, an event which occurred when Alaine was Marianna's age. A second detail further supports Hout's argument. In the summer of 1982, while Israel besieged Beirut and fifteen-year-old Alaine and thirteen-year-old Marianna were sent to Rome in order to spend their time at their mother's cousin, Vartan's, Marianna recalls that Alaine displayed an aggressive attitude towards any man who approached them:

> No one bothered us, because the moment anyone approached, and they were usually men, Alaine gave a death stare. Her eyes went black with rage, and her hair itself seemed to stand on alert. Her whole body said *fuck off*, and they did. (154)

As such, Alaine's aggressiveness towards men and protectiveness towards Marianna could be perceived as an indication that she has been raped and does not want the same fate to befall her "baby sister." Marianna presents a third and equally significant piece of evidence of Alaine's abuse in her narrative. While Hout merely contends that Alaine was raped by referring to Alaine's statement that Huda was raped as well, an examination of Marianna's description of Huda reveals a significant similarity between her and Alaine: both are "scarred from trying to die" (82). Interestingly, Marianna also points out an even more noteworthy difference between the two; unlike Alaine, Huda "would never be cured" (82). In fact, the third chapter of this thesis will closely examine the relationship between Alaine and Huda, and establish the latter as Alaine's foreign body. However, at this point, it is significant to consider the reverberations of Marianna's comparison between Huda and Alaine. When scrutinized in light of the spatial and temporal difference from which she narrates, Marianna's distinction between Huda and Alaine could be understood as an indication of Alaine's coming to terms with, and possible recovery from, her trauma. However, the question that remains is, if indeed Alaine does come to terms with, and perhaps heal from, the event of her rape, then where and how does her working through her trauma take place?

Although I agree with Hout's argument that Alaine was raped by Fadi, I contest her statement that "Alaine finally emerges out of her 'depressive withdrawal' before leaving Lebanon" (281). As I hope to show, Alaine's healing only begins at the end of

the family's first summer in the United States, and as such coincides with two occasions: her burning all of her war remnants, except her bullet collection, and, more important, her frenzied quest to renovate the family's house in America. However, prior to examining the way in which Alaine's home-making practices enable her to work through, and come to terms with, her trauma, it would be significant to inspect her compulsive return to the scene in which it is highly assumed she was raped.

In her examination of *The Bullet Collection*¸ Hout seems to insinuate that Alaine's murder and possible burial of Fadi did indeed precede her future killing and burial of the Syrian soldier. In fact, Hout states: "The fact that Fadi's body was never found, when we know that *Alaine later developed the morbid habit of burying dead soldiers' bodies*, suggests that she might have taken the law into her own hands" ("Revisiting Lebanon" 282; emphasis added). However, the order of events is far more complex, and Marianna's fragmented trauma narrative renders it even more confusing. Although Alaine was raped at the age of eleven (47), it is only at the age of thirteen that she kills Fadi (48). In between the two events, during the summer of her twelfth year, she kills and buries the Syrian soldier (74). The symptoms of her trauma, in particular her reenactment of the burial of the Syrian soldier, would begin to appear in the fall of that year.

In a substantial moment in the novel, Marianna establishes that Alaine changed in the fall following her burial of the Syrian soldier. In particular, Marianna's discernment of change in her older sister is followed by a description of the frenzy with which Alaine filled clay pots with dirt:

> One day in the fall Alaine did not go to school, and *after this everything was different*. This was the beginning of everything, of blood on her arms and face,

> of the psychiatrists and the pills she would be forced to take, of her running in the night, pursued by those who love her. She sat on the living-room floor surrounded by piles of dirt and clay pots. I could not believe that this was allowed, this dirt everywhere. *She scooped the dirt and it was under her fingernails and smeared on her arms with sweat. I could see that it was important to fill the pots, and I was afraid because there were not that many and what would she do when they were all filled?* (75; emphasis added)

Alaine's pot-filling could thus be interpreted as a repetition of her burying the soldier. As such, it is particularly significant because it agrees with Cathy Caruth's statement that the "traumatic event . . . is fully evident only in connection with another *place*, and in another *time*" (Introduction 8; emphasis added). Occurring in the fall at home, months after the incident with the Syrian soldier in the vicinity of Crystal Mountain, Alaine's filling of pots indeed emphasizes trauma's repetitive nature and latency (Caruth, Introduction 4, 5). Later, Alaine would develop a fixation on burying food and ammunition (144). However, trauma's recurrence, and especially the geographical-spatial nature of its recurrence, becomes clear upon examining Alaine's, among many others', compulsive return to the scene of trauma.

Although the locale in which Alaine was raped is only hinted at, there is a great possibility that it is the same location in which she murders and buries the Syrian soldier and, later on, Fadi. On the day on which she was raped, Alaine had asked Marianna to accompany her in her walk with Fadi. Marianna refuses, mainly because she "hate[s] the house where [Alaine] was going . . . because the summer before, the boy had drowned a whole litter of puppies" (47). I have reason to believe that the "house" Marianna alludes to is the "*old mansion owned by a Macedonian family*" that she refers

to in the opening pages of the novel (4). The mansion is most probably located at the top of Crystal Mountain and would later be occupied by Syrian soldiers. In her description of Crystal Mountain, Marianna writes:

> Behind Uncle Ara's house lay several terraces, beyond which was the barren, rocky expanse we called Crystal Mountain, a treasure trove of fossils, bits of flint we pretended were ancient arrowheads, animal skulls and bones. *There was a soldier's camp at the top, surrounded by empty land where later Alaine found the dead Syrian*. . . . This camp was in a pine forest, and when we sneaked closer our feet made no sound on the pine-needle floor, *and the great stone wall around the occupied mansion closed in the soldiers and hid everything from us*. . . . (50; emphasis added)

Hence, as the passage confirms, it is in the vicinity of Crystal Mountain that Alaine did bury the Syrian soldier's cadaver. It is also highly probable that it is in the same region that her rape occurred and that her killing of Fadi took place. Alaine thus seems bound to return to the place where her first trauma, her rape, took place.

Another momentous instance in the novel also underlines Alaine's urgency to return to the mountains. Marianna recounts how one day, Alaine disappeared from home, and her destination was only revealed when Fadi's mother contacted her family (79). Interestingly, Fadi's mother tells Alaine's family that their older daughter "wants to live with [her and her family]" (79). Hence, not only does Alaine feel bound to return to the scene of trauma, she also seeks to remain as close as possible to that scene. However, she is not the only character compelled to return to the place in which her traumatic experience occurred.

Other subjects in *The Bullet Collection* also seem anxious to return to the scene of trauma. One of these is Sabha, an elderly Palestinian maid living by herself in the apartment the family she worked for fled. Marianna and her family come to know Sabha when they move to the apartment Sabha occupies during the shelling. Having lost her young sister Amina in a falling accident, Sabha remains deeply affected, rather traumatized, by Amina's death. As Marianna states, Sabha's "gaze was turned *backwards* and inwards" (40; emphasis added). Sabha's fixation on the past becomes most obvious in her inability to behold the present or future, and her inaccurate and altering re-telling the story of her sister's accident. In fact, Marianna's mother tells Marianna that Sabha "doesn't believe there's a war . . ." (39). A primary and secondary victim of trauma, Sabha seems bound to return to Palestine, the land where her distress first began. Marianna recalls the incident when Sabha decides to leave Marianna's family and head back to Palestine, despite the impossibility of the task (42). Fortunately, Marianna's mother is able to bring her back home. Unable to work through her trauma, Sabha cannot behold the present or future and hence seeks to return to the land where her trauma began. In the novel, Marianna also seeks to return to the land in which she first experienced a trauma.

Traumatized by Ziad's death, among many others, Marianna seems to have an urge to return to Lebanon, even when her family has fled the war-torn country for the United States. As Marianna repeatedly re-imagines the moment of Ziad's mysterious death when her family and she were still in Lebanon, it becomes clear that she was greatly affected by his loss. In fact, Marianna's trauma will be discussed later in the chapter; however, at this point, it is important to note that she began experiencing the symptoms of PTSD following Ziad's death. At the beginning of her stay in the United

States, Marianna perceives Lebanon as the home to which she will eventually return. She tells her family that "[they] can't possibly live here [in America] forever, [they] have to go back when it's safe . . ." (7). Marianna thus seems unable to behold herself or her family living in the United States in the future. Her family even tells her that "[she] look[s] towards the past too much" (7). Hence, in a way, in her early months in the United States, Marianna seems to resemble Sabha in her clinging to past times and places. She had not begun yet her process of working through her trauma, and consequently felt chained to the past and Lebanon, the scene of her first traumas. As such, as they have not yet come to terms with their trauma, Alaine, Sabha, and Marianna seem compelled to return to the country or place where their traumas took place. In this light, it would be significant to reveal whether, and the way in which, Alaine and Marianna's traumas can be worked through via place. Nevertheless, prior to discussing the significance of Alaine's home-making practices in the United States, I hope to show that Alaine's working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma begins in the United States and not in Lebanon.

Several indices in *The Bullet Collection* suggest that Alaine's reconciling with herself does not begin prior to leaving Lebanon. By scrutinizing the development of Alaine's condition throughout the years, it becomes clear that Alaine continues to exhibit the same symptoms before immigrating to the United States. During Marianna and Alaine's stay in Italy in the summer of 1982, Marianna reflects on Alaine's supposed recovery:

> I kept a wary eye on Alaine, who was reading, or *pretending* to. I saw the stiffness in her face, the grim lines that meant will, only will and *not something deep-down* and permanent. *Wouldn't do anything here*. *Her recovery was all an*

> *act*. She was doing it for me, for Vartan, for the larger cause of the Israeli invasion and our parents suffering without food or water. (156; first, second, and last emphasis added)

Hence, as Marianna's statements show, about four years after the rape incident and four years before leaving for the United States, fifteen-year-old Alaine still had not recovered. A year after the Israeli invasion, Marianna's description of sixteen-year-old Alaine indicates that she was still exhibiting symptoms of her trauma: "Alaine played soccer with the [Palestinian] refugees, she traded bullets and shrapnel around the neighborhood, *she smashed her fists through the bathroom window and tried to climb out*" (184; emphasis added). Two years later, at eighteen, Alaine "was still broody and depressed"; she was "*dying inside*," Marianna states (218). In that same year, some months before the family leaves Lebanon, Alaine still seems to be sorrowful:

> Alaine brooded during the weeks of fighting. . . . She sat on the floor of her empty minimalist room with paper and pens, her wild dark hair shrouding her face, and she explained that she had invented a new game for mankind, and that for this game one would need at least four or five people, and that it involved each person being hooked by the flesh onto one chain suspended from something strong. (282)

Hence, as Alaine was still exhibiting symptoms of melancholy a few months before the family's departure, it becomes clear that her coming to terms with her trauma did not take place in Lebanon.

Alaine's working through her trauma, rather than being initiated in Lebanon, coincides with her home-making practices in the United States. By combining Leach's theory of identification and belonging—which mainly relies on de Certeau's notions of

spatial practices—and Edward Casey's and bell hooks's respective notions of re-inhabitation and resistance, I hope to correlate Alaine's process of recovery with her home-making in the United States. In particular, I hope to argue that Alaine's coming to terms with trauma can be traced to the moment she builds a fire and burns the majority of her civil war items.

When Marianna describes the fire Alaine makes in the United States, she clearly marks it as a crucial moment for her sister. Marianna describes the event thus:

> At the end of summer, six months after we came to America, Alained burned most of what she owned—books, things collected from the war, everything she had ever written. She kept her trumpet though she didn't play it anymore, and she kept what could not be burned, such as her bullet collection and shrapnel, and she kept a basic set of clothes. I don't go anywhere, she said, and at the time it was true, *she never left the house* but gave Daddy lists of what she needed, if she needed anything at all. *It was after the fire that she changed*. (257; emphasis added)

The aforementioned passage does not merely depict Alaine's severance with her past after the fire; it further shows that before the fire, Alaine confined herself to the house. This fact, combined with the knowledge that the family mainly commutes on foot and by bus (7, 88, 129), becomes noteworthy.

Alaine's voluntary confinement to her home before the fire becomes significant in light of theories perceiving walking as fundamental to dwelling. De Certeau, among other thinkers, compares walking to writing and emphasizes the former's significance in placemaking (98). His depiction of walking as a "spatial acting-out of the place" (98) is important in this context, especially when his inversion of the definitions of space and

place is taken into account. Similarly, Tim Ingold compares "wayfaring" to "storytelling" (91), and states that it is a "mode . . . [of] inhabit[ing] the earth" (81), of "place-*making*" (101). Edward Casey additionally suggests that "[d]welling is accomplished not by residing but by wandering" (Casey, *Getting Back* 115). As such, before the fire she made, Alaine clearly contrasts with her parents, who do commute outside, and in particular, her father, who seems to engage in placemaking through wandering (8). In fact, Marianna's depiction of their father reveals how wandering enables him to re-inhabit his country after so many years: "[Daddy] storms outside and heaves up the roads and telephone poles and shops and cars that don't drive the same, and from this destruction, my huge *Daddy reshapes the place he left behind*, all in black and white, *and we live here*" (8; emphasis added). Hence, Alaine's father, unlike her, wanders outside their home, a process which enables him to reside in the United States. As such, Marianna's description of Alaine's fire highlights two issues. The first is that Alaine's recovery from her traumatic experience did not begin in Lebanon; rather, it began in the United States after Alaine set fire to her war's artifacts. Furthermore, as Marianna's passage indicates, Alaine's suffering correlates with her confinement. Thus, Alaine's working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma cannot be dissociated from placemaking and from inhabiting the family's United States home. Other instances in *The Bullet Collection* further support this claim.

The first mention of Alaine in the novel emphasizes the significance of her inhabiting activities. Referring to her sister for the first time in the novel, Marianna states:

> . . . [Alaine is] hunched over the garden ground, . . . frowning at whatever task she sets herself. She follows her private schedules like a soldier. After years of

> being our family's sorrow, *she is determined to help us settle here. Most recently, she has decided to transform this house within and without. She has learned about wallpaper, paint, sanding and staining wood*. (11; emphasis added)

In the above passage, Marianna depicts Alaine's gardening and construction activities and links them to the change Alaine underwent. She thus clearly distinguishes between an Alaine who had been a "sorrow" to the family in the past, and an Alaine who now engages in renovating the house and helping the family inhabit it. In fact, even Alaine's gardening practices in the United States seem to contrast with her aforementioned compulsive reenactment of the burial of the Syrian soldier. Hence, apart from highlighting her positive outlook on the future, Alaine's home improvement further corresponds with what Misha Myers terms "re-inhabitation in the context of forced displacement" (171). Myers's notions in fact are based on Edward Casey's description of forced exile as "dangerous displacement" (*Getting Back* 302). Casey explains:

> If return to this land of origin is barred . . . more than homesickness ensues; a profound sense of placelessness in the new society may lead to profound despair. With literal re-inhabitation of the homeland precluded, the only way out is through re-inhabitation of another sort. This is what [bell] hooks in effect recommends: *re-inhabit the homeplace*, even if it is located in a land of exile. (*Getting Back* 302)

Thus, as Marianna describes Alaine's engagement in renovating the United States home, she is also depicting her sister's efforts at re-inhabitation, efforts which further enable the latter to work through her trauma.

However, most central to Marianna's portrayal of Alaine's gardening is the phrase "private schedules" which indicates a habit in Alaine's gardening and reconstructing activities. The notion of habitual gardening in fact agrees with de Certeau's claim that place, or what he terms *space*, is created, imbued with meaning through habitual practices or bodily movements (De Certeau 130; Leach 299). While establishing that de Certeau's territorialization theory helps create a sense of belonging to place, Neil Leach argues that identification with places can only be explained in light of Judith Butler's performativity theory. In fact, it is the repetitive performances of territorialization which enable persons to identify with places (Leach 302-3). In this light, a broader examination of Alaine's inhabiting practices, as described by Marianna, seems to emphasize their repetitive nature. Marianna writes:

> Every morning Alaine got up, made her bed in silence, and she'd never been this tidy, it was a message to me: *There is order in this room*. She cleaned the rest of the house too. She cooked. That was when she embarked on the garden; she surveyed it from our window like territory to be seized, plotting, consulting books. (254)

The word "territory" in the above passage clearly recalls de Certeau's notion of territorialization and sheds light on Alaine's inhabitation practices. The mention of the phrase "Every morning" also emphasizes the repetitiveness of these practices. However, what is most significant in Marianna's portrayal of Alaine is the change that has taken place in her sister. In fact, at the beginning of *The Bullet Collection*, Alaine's room seems to be in a different condition; her bed is "unmade, her pajamas tossed on the pillow" (5). Alaine, who previously had been chaotic, now eagerly seeks to imbue the new home—and her life—with order. Alaine, in fact, seems to "[reconnect] with

ordinary life," a stage which Herman considered essential to recovery (155).Her re-inhabitation practices thus cannot be disconnected from her working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma.

Marianna's description of Alaine's gardening and inhabiting activities does more than shed light on Alaine's growing sense of belonging to, and identification with, the United States home and garden. It further contrasts them with Marianna's own lack of interest in home-making and re-inhabitation. In the same passage in which she depicts Alaine's making of her bed and engagement in housework, Marianna also refers to herself and thus highlights her indifference:

> But I was a dummy, dumb and crumpled, my button eyes staring at nothing. Deep inside, nestled inside stuffing of straw and cotton and grit, the remorse, and the longing of pouring out. The dummy failed, circled by worry, losing one opportunity after another. (254)

Marianna's indifference to the house contrasts with Alaine's identification with it. As a matter of fact, the two sisters seem to perceive the United States home differently. For instance, whereas Alaine plants tulip bulbs in the hope that Marianna would be able to see them from the window in spring, Marianna admits: "To me, the ground looks empty" (174). The different ways in which Marianna and Alaine gaze at the land correspond with Christian Metz's idea of mirroring, which Leach considers to be essential to his theory of belonging and identification with place. According to him:

> For identification to take place with an architectural environment we should look for an equivalent process of "mirroring". This process would itself be dependent on the "introjection" of the external world into the self, and the "projection" of

> the self on the external world, such that there is an equivalence—the one "reflects" the other—and identification may take place. (304; sic)

Thus, the different ways in which the two sisters perceive their environment reflects their distinct manners of relating to it, their difference in projecting and introjecting themselves unto it.

Hence, as the above analysis has shown, Alaine's working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma can mainly be traced to her inhabiting activities, in particular her renovation of the house and her gardening. Because Alaine did not exhibit any signs of healing when she was in Lebanon, her recovery must have begun in the United States. Additionally, a close reading of Marianna's description of Alaine reveals the fire to be a significant moment in the older sister's recovery. Before the fire, Alaine rarely went out. However, it is after she burned her war items that she began to change. Significantly, her change corresponded with her dwelling activities. Thus, Alaine's identification with the United States home could be perceived as both a means and proof of her working through her trauma. While Alaine's processes of re-inhabitation enables her to develop a sense of belonging in America, Marianna cannot but feel displaced in the new country. The way in which the two sisters conceive their new home further suggests Alaine's coming to terms with her trauma. Even the last page of the novel includes a mention of Alaine's reconstruction of the homeplace; Marianna relates that Alaine is discussing insulating the house with their father (307). Indeed, such a reference highlights the positive outcome of re-inhabitation and contests Rula Salam's claim that *The Bullet Collection* does not offer hope for its female subjects (103). Alaine's practices can in fact be perceived as what LaCapra terms as "openings to the future" (22). LaCapra's notion of "working through" seems to agree with Herman's

statement that "The best indices of resolution . . . [is becoming] more interested in the present time and the future than in the past, [and being] more apt to approach the world with praise and awe than with fear" (Herman 212). As such, a positive lookout to the future could also be considered emblematic of healing. The last section of *The Bullet Collection* might be titled "Winter"; however, the nomenclature only hints at a coming spring.

At this point, it would be significant to evoke bell hooks's notion of the home as a site of resistance. Arguing that the home could be a place for African-American women to resist white supremacy, hooks quotes Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, who says:

> . . . resistance, at root, must mean more than resistance against war. It is a resistance against all kinds of things that are like war… So perhaps, resistance means opposition to being invaded, occupied, assaulted, and destroyed by the system. The purpose of resistance, then, is *to seek the healing of yourself* in order to be able to see clearly. . . . (qtd. in hooks 43; emphasis added)

In light of Hanh's correlation between healing and resistance, Alaine's re-inhabitation activities gain an additional dimension. They are no longer a mere means to working through, and coming to terms with, trauma. Rather, Alaine's practices become an instrument of resistance of the Lebanese Civil War and "of things that are like war"—of rape and trauma. Hence, Alaine's re-inhabitation practices are a means to coming to terms with her trauma, to resist it and similar other outcomes of war. Having examined the significance of Alaine's re-inhabitation practices, it would be noteworthy to explore if Marianna also engages in placemaking and re-inhabitation, and whether her spatial practices do enable her to work through, and come to terms with, her trauma.

D. Marianna: Openings to the Future

Despite the fact that Marianna seems distant from the re-inhabitation practices in which Alaine, her mother, and father engage, she gradually—and hesitantly—begins to partake in their home-making endeavor. At the beginning of *The Bullet Collection*, however, Marianna perceives Lebanon as her home, and as such contrasts with Alaine. In the very first paragraph of the novel after the italicized introduction, Marianna nostalgically recalls Lebanon:

> Again: I wake up with my hands reaching for shining sea, cracked summer road, falling away of hills. I'm a child standing at the lower gate of our cottage in the mountains, I look down at my scratched, tan legs, feel the sun beneath my bare feet. . . . But I am in this room again, this place. (5)

Thus, Marianna does not perceive America as a home. Yet, as the novel progresses, she begins to involuntarily engage in dwelling practices. Although she is unaware of so doing, she does help Alaine and the rest of the family in re-inhabiting. For instance, Marianna describes how she helps Alaine and their father spread spackle in the bedroom: "My job is to make sure she doesn't miss any cracks, and I lie on the bed, pointing without speaking. There. Over there. Lower" (58). Hence, even if Marianna is not the active renovator of the house, she still does help the rest of her family. In addition, while Marianna seems aloof from her family at the beginning of *The Bullet Collection*, around autumn, she begins making efforts to please them. Her attempt to carve the Halloween pumpkin is greatly significant:

> I heave up one of the pumpkins, open the front door, and place it on the stoop. I have a notion of a gift, a surprise for when they wake up in the morning. Me

finally doing something good. *I imagine their delight. I imagine Daddy lighting a candle inside my pumpkin*. (133-34; emphasis added)

Hence, Marianna eagerly wants to please her family; she wants to share their sense of belonging to their new American home. Her sympathy with her family and her engagement in home-making can thus be perceived as hesitant but concrete hints at her working through her trauma. Marianna even comes to consider the possibility of making a home in the United States. Reflecting on her mother's chores, her homemaking practices, Marianna writes: "I want to shout, *Stop,* because it is futile to try and live here, there is no future, *but I know, also, that I must be wrong, I must be missing something*" (244; second emphasis added). In as much as she appears to be distant, Marianna wants to partake in her family's homemaking endeavors. The novel offers other indices at changes in Marianna.

Indeed, Marianna's recovery cannot be dissociated from placemaking and re-inhabitation. A close reading of the novel also shows a subtle but actual change in her as the family's stay in the United States is extended. While at the outset of *The Bullet Collection* Marianna is unable to apologize to her mom, she later not only apologizes to her mother, but also summons the courage to leave the house and walk to the station to thank Walter for saving her life. Interestingly, when Marianna is finally able to break her silence and apologize to her mother, her apology is followed by images of home-making:

---I'm sorry, I say, blubbering. I mean it this time, I do. There are pictures in my head at once: Me cooking a dinner for everyone. Me cleaning up my clothes. Me saying brightly, *OK!* about going to the library. I can fix it, I can. (240)

As the above passage reveals, even Marianna's apology cannot be dissociated from re-inhabitation. In another instance in the novel, Marianna even agrees to accompany her father downtown (290). In so doing, Marianna further engages in placemaking. As such, Marianna seems to gradually come to terms with her trauma. Nevertheless, in spite of the apparent similarity between the two sisters, it must be pointed out that Marianna and Alaine have not experienced the same type of trauma.

E. Trauma and Transmissibility

Although studies of *The Bullet Collection* have emphasized that both Marianna and Alaine are subject to traumatic experiences, none of the analyses of the novel have probed the difference between the two sisters' traumas. Alaine is the direct victim of rape, of sexual abuse, whereas Marianna is a witness who has internalized others' suffering and thus become a victim. Hence, while Alaine's trauma is the result of her direct experiences, Marianna's is caused by "transmissibility" or "the contagious impact of trauma" (Visser 275). Indeed, in several instances in the text, Marianna internalizes the suffering of an actual trauma victim. Extremely sensitive towards others, Marianna sympathizes with others, whether they are victims or not, to the extent that she identifies with them. When young Marianna's school friend Sawsan dubiously informs her that her family "had to drink peepee when there was no water" (24), Marianna is so moved that she exclaims "I wanted to suffer , too" (24). In another instance, Marianna befriends Rana, a young girl from the South who had lost both her legs by stepping on an Israeli landmine. Marianna sympathizes with Rana so extensively she states: "I lay in bed and willed myself to lose feelings in my legs. I had stepped on the bomb and everyone was feeling sorry for me" (168). Also, having witnessed the murder of a traitor

on television in Lebanon, Marianna dresses up as his ghost for her first American Halloween (179). Marianna is in fact torn between suffering and being a witness to others' pain and traumas. Although Marianna's therapist tells her that her suffering is authentic even though she is a witness, Marianna is still not convinced:

> ---Your pain is as real as anyone else's, the first counselor told me.
>
> . . . Seeing things, I knew, is never as bad as being part of them. . . . *Nothing happened to me,* I kept thinking, and this seemed clear and sad. *I was a witness*. *I was the one in the window*. (255)

Marianna's trauma thus differs from Alaine's as it is the result of the internalization of others' traumas and her exposure to loss.

What mainly initiates Marianna's trauma is her knowledge of Ziad's death. Upon hearing that Ziad died, sixteen-year-old Marianna attempts to commit suicide for the first time in Lebanon (217). ". . . I sought to join him, I did not want to make mistakes. I took as many as I could, one pill after another," writes Marianna (217). However, although Marianna's first suicide attempt is a direct outcome of Ziad's death, her first contemplation of self-mutilation dates back to 1983, when she was just fourteen. Indeed, it is the explosion of a place, the American Embassy, which first instigated her to mutilate herself. She states:

> The idea had lived inside me for so long, through nights of my ear pressed to Alaine's door, through nights of folding sodden bandages into the garbage. It was familiar as my own name. . . .
>
> There was the day the American Embassy blew up. The top windowpane moved. In the heartbeat of time, I saw the glass bulge inward, an optical miracle only just filling me with surprise before the glass yielded to the pressure of

> sound, shattered the room. . . . I looked at my bared feet. Blood trickled down my thigh and I touched it with my fingertip. I felt no pain. Perhaps this is how the bright idea beckoned me, that old friend, with the promise that there wouldn't be pain. (186)

Marianna's contemplation of corporeal mutilation cannot be dissociated from a spatial destruction. Likewise, Marianna's first mutilation of herself takes place in a geographically significant place—in "the thick privacy of the foliage" of the university forest near her school (194). Furthermore, as she states, her self-injury coincides with the Druzes' clashing with the Lebanese army (194). Hence, just as the landscape has been perceived to be a witness to Tancred and Clorinda's trauma (Rodi-Risberg 35), the university woods can be considered a witness to Marianna's trauma. Such incidents reveal that, despite their disparity, the two sister's traumas remain relatively similar.

In fact, at the heart of both Marianna's and Alaine's traumas is the war. While the above discussion might have portrayed Alaine's trauma as solely stemming from her rape, it is important to highlight the devastating impact of the war on her. The above examination of Marianna's self-mutilation has shown that her contemplation of self-injury and her self-injury itself cannot be dissociated from the political, from war events. In addition, referring to Marianna's description of her sister's suffering, Hout states that "Marianna seems to be suggesting that her sister's psychological pain stems from two sources—the general one (the violence) and the personal one (the violation)—a fact that compounds Alaine's suffering" (282). Hout thus emphasizes that even Alaine's trauma is not the sole product of her rape, but also of the war.

F. Conclusion

Following a discussion of Hartman and Whitehead's emphasis on the healing power of spaces, this chapter has attempted to show that place is integral to both Alaine's and Marianna's—though to a much lesser degree—working thorough, and coming to terms with, their traumas. The chapter began by closely examining the italicized opening of the novel to reveal how it helps define place in *The Bullet Collection*. Places in the novel cannot be dissociated from time or history, are created by bodily movements, and are subject to change. In addition, places are "memory places" in Hartman's terms, and as such they are emblematic of Marianna's consciousness of the impending war. By remembering these places, Marianna reveals her spatial and temporal distance from them only to establish that she distances herself from them and the war, and that she is working through her war trauma. The close examination of *The Bullet Collection*'s introduction also brings to light the fact that Marianna has appropriated many narratives about herself and her family as her own memories. As she herself admits, she has additionally transformed many memories into narratives. Her latter statement brings to mind Van der Kolk and Van der Hart's statement that the transformation of traumatic memory into narrative memory is representative of recovery from trauma (176). In addition, Marianna's narration of her trauma, which extends throughout *The Bullet Collection* itself, could be read as an "affirmation of survival, [a] breakage of the frame of death" (Laub, "Bearing Witness" 62). Hence, the opening of the novel mainly helps to establish how Marianna's coming to terms with trauma cannot be dissociated from her memory of places, and subsequently spatiality.

This fact is further confirmed by Marianna's change of perception of the United States home. During her family's first few months in the United States, Marianna

mainly considers Lebanon to be her home. Nevertheless, she gradually engages in placemaking and comes to feel that the house might be a possible home for her and her family. Although Marianna hesitantly embraces her family's and her re-inhabitation in the United States, the novel shows her determination to reconcile with her traumatic past and behold a future life in the foreign country. Marianna's working through her trauma thus contests findings in the literature which deemed that *The Bullet Collection*'s conclusion is rather dismal. Even Alaine's more evident re-inhabitation practices seem to be an indication of her settlement with her past.

A close reading of Alaine's trauma revealed that her working through her trauma did not begin in Lebanon, but can rather be traced to the fire she makes in the United States and the subsequent home-making practices she engages in. The section on Alaine began by supporting the claim made by Hout that Alaine was indeed raped by Fadi, an adolescent she knew and whom she later murders, when she was eleven. Re-structuring the order of events of *The Bullet Collection* reveals that Alaine was raped by Fadi at the age of eleven, killed and buried the Syrian soldier at the age of twelve, and later murdered Fadi at the age of thirteen. As such, her frenzied filling of clay pots in the fall of her twelfth year can be read as a reenactment of the burial of the soldier and supports Caruth's statement that trauma recurs in another place and time. Furthermore, Alaine, among many other subjects in the novel, namely Sabha and Marianna, seems compelled to return to the scene in which her initial trauma took place—the Macedonian mansion in the vicinity of Crystal Mountain. Her return to the place of her first traumatic experience further demonstrates the recurrent nature of trauma. Nevertheless, a text-led reading of the novel suggests that Alaine is able to break the recurrent of her trauma.

Alaine's gradual recovery manifests itself in her re-inhabitation and placemaking practices, and as such, begins in the United States and not in Lebanon. In fact, the fire she makes to burn her war remnants marks the beginning of her home-making, and subsequently her working through, and coming to terms with, her traumatic experiences. While before the fire, Alaine rarely went out, following the fire, she begins to engage in walking, in placemaking. A close reading of her behavior in accordance with Leach's tripartite theory of identification with place also shows that Alaine seems to identify with the United States home. Her identification with the house thus reveals her keenness to work through her past trauma and establish a life in the United States. Therefore, her home-making can be read, in bell hooks's terms, as a "resistance" to war and its consequences—trauma. Yet, although *The Bullet Collection* seems to suggest that Alaine and Marianna, to different degrees, are able to overcome their respective traumas through re-inhabitation, the novel also establishes a difference in the two adolescents' traumas.

Alaine could be considered to be a primary victim of trauma whereas Marianna is a secondary victim who internalizes the traumas of others. In particular, Marianna's secondary trauma is initiated by her knowledge of Ziad's death. Nevertheless, despite their apparent difference, the two sisters' traumas seem to be also partially caused by the war, especially that Marianna's contemplation of mutilation and even her self-mutilation seem to correlate with explosions and battles. Hence, as the chapter has shown, trauma seems to have a significant geographical dimension. Furthermore, as the analysis of *The Bullet Collection* suggests, this geographical dimension might not necessarily be related to nature, as Hartman and Whitehead suggest. The next chapter will discuss the correlation of corporeal spaces and trauma.

CHAPTER 3

TRAUMA AND CORPOREAL SPACE

While the previous chapter has examined the correlation between trauma and geographical space, namely place, this chapter seeks to explore the relation between trauma and the body. Although place and the body might seem unrelated, their association has been discussed in the previous chapters of this study. In particular, the second chapter of this thesis has expounded the way in which the opening pages of *The Bullet Collection* emphasize the role of the body in the creation of places. However, the significance of bodies in the novel extends beyond place creation, for the body in the novel has its own import, one that cannot be detached from trauma.

Drawing on contemporary trauma theory on the body, this chapter seeks to examine the correlation between trauma and the corporeal in *The Bullet Collection* to argue that trauma can be voiced and worked through via the body. It begins by exploring Laura Di Prete's and Kathryn Robson's research on trauma and corporeality. Di Prete's notion of the "foreign body" is then used to expound the way in which trauma can be voiced through the body. The notion further reveals how Marianna is alienated from her corporeality, which embodies loss and pain. Alaine's trauma, nonetheless, is voiced through her bodily transformation. Taking into account Di Prete's and Robson's findings on trauma and the body, the chapter then examines the correlation between self-mutilation and working through, and coming to terms with, trauma. However, prior to probing the way in which trauma can be voiced through the

body, it would be significant to explore the established relationship between trauma and the corporeal.

A. The Foreign Body, the Wound, and Writing

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, Rodi-Risberg's tripartite definition of space was established as including the gendered body. Nevertheless, her study was not the first to emphasize the relationship between trauma and corporeal space. In fact, in their re-reading of Caruth's story of Tancred and Clorinda, Laura Di Prete and Kathryn Robson considered that trauma can be voiced and worked through via the body. The two authors further elaborated on the correlation between trauma and the corporeal, including the wound, in their works.

In her thesis " 'Foreign Bodies': Trauma, Corporeality, and Textuality in Contemporary American Culture," Di Prete argues that the body is a "vehicle" for voicing and working through trauma (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 3). Referring to Caruth's interpretation of the legend of Tancred and Clorinda, an interpretation which is based on Freud's reading of Tasso's story, Di Prete claims that it is not only Clorinda's voice and the reenactment of wounding her which plague Tancred, but also her "transformed, transfigured, and thus unrecognizable body" (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 13). Indeed, Tancred misrecognizes Clorinda twice, the first time because she is disguised as an enemy soldier and the second time because she is embodied in a tree. In her article, Di Prete adds that while the mind might still disavow the traumatic event, trauma inscribes itself onto the body (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 18). In other words, the body might acknowledge trauma before the mind. At this point, it would be significant to note that the body Di Prete alludes to in her thesis is not neutral, but both cultural and sexual, as she herself

states (“ ‘Foreign Bodies’ ” 19). Likewise, the body in *The Bullet Collection*, in particular Marianna’s and Alaine’s, is not neutral but rather imbued with sexual and cultural meanings. Alluding to Roberta Culberston’s notion of “body memories” or recollections of trauma which are “locked” in the body, Di Prete emphasizes “a shift . . . from ‘body memory’—a memory retained by the body—to textually codified ‘embodied memory’ (185)—a memory voiced through the body” (“ ‘Foreign Bodies’ ” 26-27). Thus, according to Di Prete, trauma can be articulated by means of the corporeal, a notion that she reemphasizes in another article of hers on Don DeLillo’s novella *The Body Artist*.

In her article “Don DeLillo’s *The Body Artist*: Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma,” Di Prete uses the concept of the “foreign body” to further emphasize the role of the body in voicing trauma. Defining the foreign body as a ghostly but existent bodily figure embodying traumatic memories (“Don DeLillo’s” 483), Di Prete explains that it reveals what the traumatized is unaware of but continues to reenact (185). As she does in her aforementioned thesis, Di Prete also underlines the role of the body in recognizing traumatic events before the mind (“Don DeLillo’s” 499). Similarly, referring to Caruth’s emphasis on the voice and disregard of the body in Tancred and Clorinda’s legend, Di Prete states that at the heart of trauma is a “failed recognition (or misrecognition)” (“Don DeLillo’s” 501). According to Di Prete, Caruth fails to see that the voice “released from the wound” (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 2) emanates from an “unrecognizable ‘foreign body’ ” (Di Prete, “DeLillo’s” 501). Thus, in her article, Di Prete further elucidates the correlation between trauma and the body, and in particular the transformed body. She concludes that “. . . the body speaks the otherwise ineffable language of trauma” (“DeLillo’s” 505). Hence, according to her, the body is central to

resolving trauma's inexpressibility, its paradox. Nevertheless, Di Prete, along with Rodi-Risberg, was not the only scholar to highlight Caruth's lack of emphasis on the body.

Kathryn Robson's work on trauma and the body agrees with Di Prete's on the idea that trauma is voiced through the corporeal, but extends beyond the latter's scope to closely examine the relationship between writing and the wound. In *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life-Writing* (2004), Robson states that the wound "acts as a figure for the *psychic rupture*, spilling out *words* and *blood* in an attempt to convey a message we could not otherwise hear" (14; emphasis added). As such, her quote emphasizes that bodily lesions do not merely stand for psychological ones, but are also a means for the voicing of trauma. In fact, the notion of the wound that Robson utilizes is particularly significant with respect to *The Bullet Collection* in which both Marianna and Alaine's personal and war traumas lead them to self-mutilation. While Di Prete considers that Caruth, and subsequently Freud, disregard the significance of the body in Tasso's Tancred and Clorinda story, Robson considers that the two authors specifically overlook the image of the wound, a " 'wound' that remains open, unhealed, an image of bodily vulnerability and rupture" (26). Robson hence focuses on unhealed wounds, and her analysis of French autobiographies written after 1968 emphasizes wounded and falling bodies (26). Ultimately, re-reading Freud's and Caruth's interpretations of the legend of Tancred and Clorinda, Robson states that both authors seem to imply that the "wound of the mind" cannot be dissociated from "the wound of the body" (31). She thus perceives a strong relationship between psychological wounds, such as trauma, and actual corporeal injuries. Yet, Robson's

accentuation of the wound and not merely the body in her analysis of trauma is not the only trait which distinguishes her from Di Prete.

In her study of trauma and the corporeal, Robson also examines the correlation between writing and the wound. She refers to Cixous's statement that the wound implies either downfall or restoration, and the "scar" stands for the "story" (Robson 28). However, Robson points out that Cixous's writing, with its lack of closure, resembles a wound that does not heal (28). Subsequently, Robson considers that trauma narratives "emerge from the wound, from a time between injury and healing, a time when the effects of trauma remain as powerful and insistent as ever" (28). Robson thus rejects the notion of writing as an indication of healing, for according to her "writing finds its roots in the open wound rather than the closed scar" (28). As such, Robson further fleshes out the relationship between the body and trauma to include the wound and the relationship between the wound, writing, and healing.

Both Di Prete's and Robson's findings are central to this study on trauma and space, in particular to the exploration of corporeal space. Di Prete mainly argues that trauma can be voiced and worked through by means of the body (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 3), and the "foreign body" which embodies the subject's trauma ("Don DeLillo's" 483). Significantly, she further states that the body experiences trauma before the mind ("Don DeLillo's" 499; " 'Foreign Bodies' " 18). Re-reading Caruth's interpretation of the legend of Tancred and Clorinda, Di Prete emphasizes two points. She first stresses the fact that Clorinda's foreign body undergoes transformation (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 13) to then reveal how it is unrecognized by Tancred ("Don DeLillo's" 501; " 'Foreign Bodies' " 13). Another significant point Di Prete makes is that memory, as well, can be voiced through the body (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 26-27). Concurring with, yet expanding

Di Prete's notions, Robson states that the body, and specifically bodily wounds, more than reflect a psychological wound as they make possible the voicing of trauma (14). Even Robson's re-reading of Tancred and Clorinda's legend centers on the wound, and in particular the "unhealed" wound (26). Channeling the image of the unhealed wound to the act of writing, Robson states that trauma narratives, and consequently writing, are not an indication of healing, but rather of an open wound (28). Her statement thus seems to contradict with the assertion that writing and trauma fiction are emblematic of healing. In light of Di Prete's and Robson's findings on trauma and the corporeal, the following sections will attempt to further explore the correlation between trauma and the corporeal, and the relationship between wounds and writing in *The Bullet Collection*.

B. Voicing Trauma through the Foreign and Transformed Body

While the link between language, that is the voice, and the body has been highlighted in studies on *The Bullet Collection*, in particular in Rula Salam's thesis *Internal and External Wars*, the significance of Alaine's and Marianna's scarring of themselves in the context of trauma has been overlooked. Examining the two sisters' self-injuring and suicide attempts, Salam considers that the girls' harming themselves is a result of their inability to express themselves in language (18). Salam's analysis further links the girls' bodily scarring to the narrative or textual scarring (18). Although Salam's remarks are insightful, they remain lacking as they have not been examined within the framework of trauma theory. As a matter of fact, in light of Salam's interpretation, both Marianna and Alaine can be considered as voicing trauma through their bodies (Di Prete, " 'Foreign Bodies' " 3), and in particular through their wounds

(Robson 14). The following section thus aims at elucidating the correlation established by Salam between the body and the voice. In fact, it will be shown that when language fails in transmitting a subject's traumatic experiences, these can be represented by the body. The notion of the "foreign body" will be further used in examining the correlation between trauma and the body. Similarly, that of the transformed traumatized body will reveal that the changing body can articulate traumatic experience.

In her analysis of Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*, Di Prete establishes that Mr. Tuttle, a stranger whom Lauren Hartke discovers in the attic of her coastal house following the sudden death of her husband Rey Robles, is in fact a "foreign body." Making use of Nicolas Abraham's "Notes on the Phantom," Di Prete considers that Mr. Tuttle is a " 'stranger' or 'foreign body' [who] points to what the subject does not know but still unwillingly produces" (qtd. in Di Prete, "Don DeLillo's" 485). The concept of the foreign body thus helps elucidate trauma's paradox, that of knowing and not knowing. Furthermore, as it has been established in the second chapter of this thesis, the fact that Alaine was raped by Fadi was mainly confirmed by comparing her body to that of Huda, a young woman who had also been raped and who exhibits symptoms similar to Alaine's. However, while in her analysis of DeLillo's short story, Di Prete establishes the death of the subject as a prerequisite to the appearance of the foreign body, the definition of the term foreign body will be slightly expanded for the purpose of this study. Rather than being a phantom of the deceased subject, the foreign body will refer to the subject's doppelganger which enables the subject to voice his/her unapprehended trauma and thus resolve trauma's paradox. As such, Huda could be considered as Alaine's foreign body.

Many contextual clues indicate that Huda is Alaine's foreign body. Indeed, the similarities between the two young women are striking. For instance, Marianna states that upon seeing Alaine, "Mrs. Awad knew everything. . . . because of her cousin Huda" (82). Hence, Alaine and Huda are so similar, that even Mrs. Awad is able to perceive a correspondence between them and to understand that Alaine, like Huda, was raped. In addition, both Alaine and Huda seem to engage in self-mutilation (82). This fact highlights yet another similarity between them and could be perceived as the outcome of their rape traumas. What is further interesting is that both are perceived as mentally deranged by others. When some workmen come to paint the family's house, Marianna expresses her shame of Alaine's incomprehensible writing, which she perceives as that of a "crazy person" (82). Ironically, Alaine also describes Huda as "crazy" when telling Marianna the reason behind the former's strange behavior (83). However, what is most noticeable in both Alaine and Huda is their incomprehensible language, their lack of a coherent voice, whether in speaking or in writing.

A noteworthy similarity between Alaine and Huda resides in their incomprehensible language. Marianna describes Alaine's writing, an activity which began after Fadi's disappearance, as indecipherable. Marianna explains: "Fadi disappeared and Alaine did not care, she *wrote in code* on her cast and when the cast was full, she continued on the walls" (79; emphasis added). Not only does Alaine's writing correlate with Fadi's disappearance, or her murdering him, it remains unintelligible, consisting of "dizziying spirals of signs that the cat . . . [thought] insects" (79). Likewise, Huda is unable to express herself coherently. Marianna reports that Huda used to "mumbl[e] things that made no sense" (82). In another instance, Marianna describes how "Huda sobbed and told stories [Marianna] did not understand . . ." (83).

Hence, like Alaine, Huda seems to be incapable of voicing her trauma. The striking similarity between Alaine and Huda may thus justify perceiving Huda as Alaine's foreign body.

The fact that Huda can be considered Alaine's foreign body is central to resolving the inherent paradox of trauma. Despite the fact that Alaine and Huda have many similarities, among which are their inabilities to voice their traumas, it is Alaine who explains to Marianna the reason why Huda behaves as she does. "She was raped, Alaine told me bluntly," Marianna writes (83). By telling Marianna that Huda, who represents Alaine's foreign body, has been raped, Alaine simultaneously reveals that she has been raped as well. Therein lies paradox in trauma, as formulated by Di Prete: "one knows what seems unknown and does not know what seems familiar" ("Don DeLillo" 502). Although Alaine knows that Huda has been raped, she is unable to see how she resembles Huda, and how she, as well, has been a victim of rape. As such, the perception of Huda as Alaine's foreign body allows for the understanding of Alaine's trauma and the unraveling of trauma's paradox.

Another definition of the foreign body which Di Prete presents in her article on DeLillo's *The Body Artist* pertains to the subject's own body. Di Prete writes that "a body that knows about loss before the mind does is a foreign body, a body the traumatic experience has taken away" ("Don DeLillo's" 501). Describing the foreign body of a traumatized Lauren in DeLillo's novel, Di Prete adds: "What is foreign, of course, is the pain, the affect, problematically banned from consciousness" (501). Suffering hence estranges the body from the mind and must influence the way in which the body perceives the world. In fact, Di Prete's assertion agrees with Caruth's statement that the ". . . the wound of the mind . . . is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully

known and is therefore *not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor*" (*Unclaimed Experience* 4; emphasis added). Trauma is experienced by the foreign body prior to being absorbed by the mind. Similarly, in *The Bullet Collection*, Marianna's own foreign body, in particular the body's dissociation from the mind, voices her trauma.

The Bullet Collection opens with Marianna's description of one of her mornings in the United States after she has returned home from hospital following her second suicide attempt. A close reading of her account reveals a clear divide between her consciousness and corporeality, subsequently indicating that her body is in fact a "foreign body." Lying in bed, daydreaming of Lebanon and Amer, Marianna feels her body to be a foreign element. Marianna writes: "I sense my body's shape, *its* weight on this mattress beneath the weight of the dark morning" (6; emphasis added). Marianna's statement thus reveals her estrangement from her own body which she "senses" and perceives as foreign. As such, her highlighted use of the pronoun *it* to refer to her body serves to emphasize such an estrangement. In fact, later on the same page, Marianna states: "Guilt transforms *my body* into a stiff wooden thing with burned eyes. *It* fills the kettle, sets it on the stove. *It* spoons instant coffee into its favorite mug. Then *it* stares out the window" (6; emphasis added). Indeed, Marianna's choice of words in the aforementioned statement is highly notable. Where Marianna is expected to use the first personal pronoun *I* and *me* to refer to herself, she explicitly uses the phrase "my body" and the distancing third personal pronoun *it* thus laying emphasis on her alienation from her own flesh. When Marianna attempts to commit suicide in the United States, she explicitly establishes her foreignness from her own body, describing herself thus:

> I am *feet in shoes*, I am *wooden legs and socks* sagging from wet, the *bulk of me* working a path through the gray air. . . . A finished *thing* still moving and breathing, *doing the work of the body to keep the body alive*, but the work's for nothing, poor little body, betrayed. (249; emphasis added)

Marianna betrays her body, which she clearly describes as alien to her, because she plans to commit suicide. In the event of her suicide attempt, Marianna even describes her hand as foreign to her: ". . . then the sense of my hand, which lies nearby, *like something out of a box*, and I cannot link myself to it. The approach of dark" (250). Hence, Marianna feels alienated from her body which seems driven to hurt itself.

Numerous moments in the novel further highlight the foreignness of Marianna's body. Referring to the nights when she planned on watching over Alaine lest the latter hurt herself, Marianna admits: "I used to beg *the* body *Don't sleep . . .*, but the body sighed helplessly, pulling me down with it" (135; first emphasis added). Thus, Marianna's statement, along with her usage of the definite article *the* rather than the possessive adjective *my*, also emphasizes her alienation from the body. Not only is Marianna's body foreign to her, but also her body's will seems to surpass hers. Reflecting on her involuntary running back home during her first American Halloween, Marianna states: "I can't make my body do what it does not want; I know this feeling, helpless, trapped in the body that rushes on its own trajectory, feet full of fire and hatred. . ." (181). Hence, it is the body which guides Marianna who describes herself as lacking a sense of agency. She adds that "*The* body's melted down now, tired of its own pretenses, so tired and guilty *it* can barely crawl its way to its favorite place on the floor" (181; emphasis added). Hence, Marianna feels estranged from her corporeality. In another instance, following a conversation with her mother on her father's departure to

the United States, Marianna writes: "I tried to stay in the doorway, but my body turned around and walked off . . . , and the body went to read a magazine and paint its toenails, sick with inertia" (233). Marianna's statement thus reveals a tension between her body and consciousness. Marianna even refers to her body as a "prison" (182). Thus, the fact that Marianna is alienated from her body, which seems to have a contradicting will of its own, highlights the fact that Marianna's body is indeed a foreign body. Further indices reveal that Marianna's body could be considered foreign.

In fact, in the novel, Marianna's body seems to experience trauma and loss before her mind does. Describing her longing for Lebanon following her family's compulsory fleeing from the country, Marianna writes: "The missing runs through my body" (10), thus revealing the significant role of the body as an agent which experiences loss before the mind. Marianna also describes the intensity with which she experienced the loss of one of her relatives, Aunt Lupsie, in corporeal terms. She writes that she "felt the strangeness of grief, like light passing through [her] flesh" (23). As such, her emotional pain is felt corporeally. However, it is Marianna's reaction to Ziad's death which best underlines her corporeal reaction to loss. Describing the moment when she knew about Ziad's death, Marianna writes: "It was just before Christmas. I was wrapped only in a towel, and the cold winter breeze stroked my dripping hair, froze my nails, and in this moment *the years of sorrow to come made themselves known in my body, opening it like a soft, ripe thing, penetrating my lungs and settling there*" (214; emphasis added). Trauma and loss thus seem to manifest themselves in Marianna's body. This fact further highlights the rupture between corporeality and consciousness in her, which could mainly be attributed to trauma. Marianna's inability to recognize or

control her own body becomes particularly crucial when examined alongside of Judith Blackstone's distinction between "inhabiting the body" and "being aware of the body."

In one of her blog entries, "Healing Trauma through Embodiment," psychotherapist Judith Blackstone examines the impact of trauma in light of the distinction between the two concepts "inhabiting the body" and "being aware of the body." According to her, inhabiting the body implies a unity of body and self:

> Inhabiting the body is actually living within your body, actually being there. When you embody yourself, you are your body. *There is no noticeable difference between your body and your subjective sense of self. Your self sits in the chair, walks across the room.* Instead of feeling that you exist in just your head, for example, or your gut, *the integration of body and self is an experience of existing everywhere in your body at once*. ("Healing Trauma"; emphasis added)

Blackstone's definition of inhabiting the body clearly contrasts with Marianna's alienation from her own body. As the above discussion has shown, Marianna's body is foreign to her, and she seems to have no control over it. Hence, rather than inhabiting her body, Marianna is merely "aware" of it. Blackstone's explanation of "being aware of the body" emphasizes the self's dissociation from corporeality. She states: "If you look at your hands, you may see them as made of flesh, muscle, bone and blood. You may feel the warmth that they emit or even feel subtle movement within them. . . . This is how you may experience being aware of your hands" ("Healing Trauma"). As such, being aware of one's body implies perceiving one's corporeality as alien, as foreign. In this light, it can be considered that, as a result of her trauma, Marianna is aware of her

body, but is unable to inhabit it, to embody it. Yet, as Blackstone states, it is the process of inhabiting one's body which is therapeutic.

Following her distinction between being aware of one's body and inhabiting it, Blackstone highlights the curative function of inhabiting one's body. She begins by comparing inhabiting the body to feeling at home, an image which cannot but bring to mind Alaine's working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma through her re-inhabitation and home improvement practices. Blackstone writes:

> Inhabiting the body develops a sense of self-possession, and *a sense of there being "someone at home."* . . . [O]nce you are living within your body, it feels much safer than not being there. . . .This provides some weight or substance to the sense of self that is empowering. . . . ("Healing Trauma"; emphasis added)

As such, the process of inhabiting one's body, like that of Casey's re-inhabitation, paves the way to a coming to terms with traumatic experience. As a matter of fact, Blackstone perceives the process of re-inhabiting one's body as part of a healing exercise she devised, the "Realization Process Embodiment Exercise" ("Realization Process"). Interestingly, she adds that the exercise, which according to her reinforces the relationship between consciousness and the body, can be "practiced standing and walking" ("Healing Trauma"). Elaborating on the healing exercise, she adds that it "help[s] develop the ability to remain within [one's] body, and in possession of [one]self, while moving through [one's] daily life" ("Healing Trauma"). Hence, according to her, walking does contribute to inhabiting the body. Interestingly, such an emphasis on walking and "daily life" brings to mind Michel de Certeau's theories on walking and placemaking. Such theories on walking and inhabiting the body will be elaborated in the course of the chapter. However, at this point, it becomes clear that the

notion of the foreign body contributes to revealing how trauma is voiced in the novel, and to resolve trauma's paradox, that of knowing and not knowing. Yet, it is not the only notion which helps clarify the way in which trauma is voiced through the body.

Corporeal change is yet another indication of traumatic experience. In her re-reading of the legend of Tancred and Clorinda, di Prete emphasizes the fact that Clorinda's traumatized body undergoes transformation (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 13). Further analyzing DeLillo's *The Body Artist*, she states that "it is as important to take notice of what transformed bodies . . . tell us as of what actual voices say" ("Don DeLillo's" 501). At this point, a close reading of Ward's novel reveals Alaine's body to be a transformed body voicing her trauma. Throughout *The Bullet Collection*, Marianna subtly describes the changes Alaine's body undergoes. In fact, Alaine's corporeal transformation begins when she is twelve, in the wake of her killing and burying the Syrian soldier (74-75). Significantly, her corporeal change coincides with her self-mutilation and loss of voice (75). Marianna depicts Alaine's condition when the latter begins mutilating herself by stating: "Alaine no longer talked. Her lips looked thinner and harder than usual, and her sad black-brown eyes looked lost. In the photographs of us at the beginning of this time, . . . she gazes into the camera with the knowing eyes of an adult" (75). Marianna's description indicates a change in Alaine's facial expression. However, it is not only Alaine's gaze and countenance which changed, but also her body. Alaine's "body . . . [was] swollen from the medications" (77). As such, Alaine's loss of voice coincides with changes in her features and body, whereby her body becomes her voice, and she seems to "[know] what seems unknown," in Di Prete's terms ("Don DeLillo's" 502). As the novel progresses, Marianna continues to reveal the way in which Alaine's body changed.

Almost two years after the burial of the Syrian soldier, Alaine loses the weight she had gained. Marianna states that Alaine's body "was as slender and taut as before" (99). She adds that "[Alaine's] muscles were defined and her breasts so small that they were invisible beneath her T-shirts, and she insisted on having her hair clipped right up against skull. . . . *She was almost fourteen but she looked like a ten-year-old boy*" (99; emphasis added). Hence, by the age of thirteen, Alaine had dramatically lost weight. Even her gaze had changed. Marianna states, "[Alaine's] eyes were bigger and darker and resisted gazes with a flatness that was unshakable, but still, this was better than the moist, dazed look of the other medicine" (99). As Marianna establishes, Alaine's body had changed, and she was on medicine, most probably an anti-depressent. By that time, Alaine was about to turn fourteen, the family had moved to the campus of the American University of Beirut, and Michel the spy had rented an apartment in the building. Two years later, Alaine was still thin. After her return from Rome, and the Israeli invasion, sixteen-year-old Alaine had a "thin bony body" (162). As such, Alaine's fluctuating weight, which can be mainly attributed to her anti-depressant, is yet another indication of her voicing her trauma through her body. Therefore, the notion of the foreign body and that of the changing body both reveal the way in which trauma can be voiced through the body.

Hence, the previous section has elucidated the correlation established by Salam between the body and the voice. It has shown that when characters fail to articulate their traumas, their foreign and changing bodies can do so. Not only does Huda's body help to reveal that Alaine has been raped, it further contributes to resolving one of trauma's main paradoxes, that of knowing and not knowing. Just like Alaine's trauma is voiced through Huda's body, Marianna's is voiced through her own foreign body. In addition,

Alaine's changing body, her fluctuating weight, is yet another expression of her trauma. Marianna and Alaine's voicing of their traumas through their bodies thus depicts the transfer from "body memory" to "embodied memory" which Di Prete refers to in her work (" 'Foreign Bodies' " 26-27). At this point, it becomes significant to explore Alaine's and Marianna's scarring of themselves in the context of trauma and recovery.

C. Working through Trauma via Corporeality

Examining the two sisters' self-injuring and suicide attempts, Salam considers that the girls' harming themselves is a result of their inability to express themselves in language (18). Salam's analysis further links the girls' bodily scarring to the narrative or textual scarring (18). Although Salam's remarks are insightful, they remain lacking as they have not been examined within the framework of trauma theory. As a matter of fact, in light of Salam's interpretation, both Marianna and Alaine can be considered as voicing trauma not only through their bodies (Di Prete, " 'Foreign Bodies' " 3), but also through their wounds (Robson 14). Furthermore, Salam's link between textuality and the body agrees with Robson's statement that trauma narratives emerge from the open wound (28). Nevertheless, although Robson states that trauma can be voiced through the wound, she does not clarify whether the wounding of one's body enables a working through of trauma. Rather, her statement that trauma narratives emerge from an open wound implies that she suspiciously regards any possibility of working through, coming to terms with, or recovering from, trauma. As such, Robson contrasts with a number of critics, namely Judith Herman, who emphasized the therapeutic outcomes of self-harm. In this light, this section aims at exploring whether Marianna's and Alaine's self-injuries enable them to work through their traumas.

According to Herman, self-harm is not a form of emotional blackmail through which victims of child abuse attempt to emotionally "manipulate" other persons, but rather serves to "relieve unbearable emotional pain," and as such can be perceived "as a form of self-preservation" (109). Describing self-injury as a "soothing mechanis[m]," Herman adds that it can lead to an "internal state of well-being and comfort" (110). While Herman perceives self-mutilation as an attempt to achieve inner comfort, Brenda Daly warns against "the inevitable perpetuation of the abuse" (115-16). Hence, according to Daly, self-harm does not only denote the inability to overcome the traumatic experience, but it also indexes an extension of the suffering. As such, a question arises about whether Alaine's self-mutilation, and perhaps Marianna's too, is a means of comfort, of working through trauma, or a maintenance of the suffering. In fact, a close reading of Ward's text reveals that indeed the girls' self-mutilation enables them to achieve internal comfort.

Although Herman's analysis of self-injury focuses on childhood victims of abuse, a close reading of *The Bullet Collection* reveals that it does apply to Alaine and Marianna. As Marianna describes her own self-mutilation, she emphasizes how it enabled her to purge herself. Describing her first conscious self-mutilation in the university forest near her school, Marianna emphasizes the tranquility which enveloped her: "Now a calm draped over me, muting the wilderness, pushing it farther inside until it was a mere pinpoint of light . . ." (194). Marianna thus found relief in cutting herself. The soothing impact of her self-injury is emphasized in another moment, wherein she states: "Then the years of waiting, between the mind's first alighting on the thought and the body, that drone, yielding for its own good, waiting until that day, at last, when I felt the popping open of skin, the red surprises of bubbles in a row and *pain like light*

pouring out" (133; emphasis added). Hence, Marianna's self-mutilation can be considered a medium to "relieve unbearable emotional pain," as Herman states (109). Similarly, Alaine's purging of her suffering through self-harm becomes distinct when Marianna's mother tells her that Alaine "hurts herself to let out the pain inside" (144). As such, it can be considered that both Marianna and Alaine mutilate themselves to attain an "internal state of well-being and comfort" (Herman 110). Subsequently, Robson's notion of the wound as a mere means to voice trauma can thus be extended, so that the wound, like the body, becomes a possible medium for working through trauma. However, despite its being a means for working through traumatic events, the wound cannot lead to permanent healing.

Despite their soothing impact on both sisters, Marianna and Alaine's self-mutilations seem to fall short of LaCapra's definition of working through. In his previously mentioned definition of working through trauma, LaCapra establishes that the process of working through can reduce trauma's recurrence. In particular, LaCapra states that ". . . processes of working through may counteract the force of acting out and the repetition of compulsion" (LaCapra 22). Throughout the novel, Marianna and Alaine seem bound to scar themselves again and again. Rather than being attributed to the inefficiency of the act itself or to Marianna and Alaine's numbness, this replication of the act of self-mutilation could be mainly due to the transitory nature of the comfort and agency which result from injuring oneself.

Although Marianna's self-harm endows her with relief, the comfort that arises is fleeting. This fact indeed supports Robson's interpretation of Tancred and Clorinda's story. As a matter of fact, in her reading of the legend, Robson established that the wound "remains open, unhealed, an image of bodily vulnerability and rupture" (26).

Robson's explanation thus becomes central when Marianna describes the calm which arises from her self-mutilation as only temporary. Referring to her self-mutilation, Marianna writes "I sought the parts of my body that I could not hide, dragged open the skin with knives. *The pain slid out, trailed by that calm I craved, but then it always returned*" (212; emphasis added). Thus, although Marianna's injury of herself is a means of relief, of working through her trauma and pain, the calm which arises from it is only fleeting, and for this reason, Marianna seems compelled to injure herself compulsively. Likewise, the sense of control arising from self-harm remains temporary.

Marianna's wounding of herself enables her to gain a sense of agency, which nevertheless remains deceptive. In fact, any sense of agency following a trauma becomes crucial because, as Vickroy states, the feelings of "helplessness" and "powerless[ness]" are perhaps some of the most difficult aspects of traumatic situations (25). Vickroy then goes on to explain that to avoid "breakdowns," trauma victims resort to "self-destructive behavior such as self-mutilation" (25). She then adds that self-harm allows trauma victims to gain "a sense of agency, *even if illusory*, to help retain a sense of self" (25; emphasis added). Hence, self-mutilation is an unrealistic and an inefficient means to surmount trauma. Vickroy's statement thus becomes significant in light of Marianna's first conscious and voluntary cutting of herself with a razor in the forest near her school. After wounding herself, Marianna describes how the act both empowers and weakens her: ". . . my body was *weak and powerful at once*, laden with guilt and transformed by awe" (194; emphasis added). Therefore, although Marianna feels changed and powerful, her frailty and remorse still weigh down on her. Thus, by injuring herself, Marianna is able to gain a sense of agency, which nevertheless remains transitory.

As the close reading of *The Bullet Collection* has revealed, the body in the novel seems to have a language of its own. Whereas Salam perceives the girls' self-mutilation as arising from their inability to express themselves in language, Marianna and Alaine's scarring of themselves can be recognized as an attempt of working through trauma. Yet, Marianna's, and perhaps Alaine's, injuring of herself remains a futile attempt to achieve lasting healing.

D. Writing: Open Wound or Healing Scar?

In her article, "Revisiting Lebanon," Syrine Hout argues for the healing power of writing in novels composed during, or about, the war. She states: "Releasing the pain by spilling ink on paper innovatively was . . . cathartic in the sense of helping heal fresh wounds, thus preventing them from festering . . ." ("Revisiting Lebanon" 272). Hout thus considers that writing has a therapeutic function in postwar Anglophone Lebanese novels. Relying on Janet's distinction between "traumatic memory" and "narrative memory," Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart also perceive the act of narrating trauma as emblematic of a process of recovery (176). Similarly, a number of trauma theorists consider the act of narrating trauma as curative (Herman 175; Whitehead 175). Such notions on writing and recovery become significant in light of Kathryn Robson's statement that trauma narratives "emerge from the wound, from a time between injury and healing, *a time when the effects of trauma remain as powerful and insistent as ever*" (28; emphasis added). Significantly, Robson, in her quote, sees writing as a direct outcome of the bearing of trauma, of the "open wound rather than closed scar" (28). Robson's statement cannot be dissociated from Salam's assertion that *The Bullet Collection* is an "[un]healthy text" produced by a "scarred body" (72). Hence, a

question arises: to which extent is Marianna's trauma narrative representative of her recovery, and to which extent is it the result of the prevailing impact of trauma?

The fact that Marianna relates her traumatic experience from a distance, at a time when her body wounds had started healing, reveals that her writing is indicative of her working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma. Prior to discussing the weight of Marianna's writing by itself, it is important to point out that Marianna narrates her family's and her war experiences from a distance that is at once temporal and spatial. More specifically, as she was inscribing her narrative, Marianna's corporeal wounds had started healing. As she states, her "scars are smoothing out, pale traces . . ." (241). As such, Marianna's wounds have metamorphosed into scars; they have been allowed to heal, on the corporeal level, at least. The fact that Marianna no longer mutilates herself in turn indicates that she no longer seeks self-harm as a means to achieve inner comfort, in Herman's terms (109, 110). Rather, the healing of her wounds, which cannot be dissociated from her narrating her war experiences, indicates her coming to terms with her trauma. However, Marianna's writing, along with Alaine's, seems to have a weight by itself.

In her thesis on *The Bullet Collection*, Salam comments on both Marianna's and Alaine's writing. In fact, Salam perceives Marianna as a "romantic" who finds escape in fiction, in inventing stories (39). In her discussion of Marianna's writings, Salam even states that Marianna's story-telling sometimes blurs the lines between reality and fiction in such a way that readers cannot distinguish actual events from Marianna's fictive tales (40). Referring to Alaine's coded scribbling, Salam states that they are a desperate means of survival (40). Yet, despite the fact that Salam, in her close

reading of the novel, is able to establish the significance of Marianna's story-telling, she fails to thoroughly probe Marianna's writing.

Marianna's allusions to her writing in the novel are subtle and almost indiscernible. However, a close reading of them reveals how important writing is to her. Following the bombing of the American Embassy in Beirut in 1983, fourteen-year-old Marianna states that she began to write a novel. Her description of the novel and its events is indeed interesting:

> I wrote a serialized novel about myself in which I was a resistance fighter, with an army of my own. *You must leave*, I told the foreign soldiers in clandestine meetings punctuated by the scratching of rats in the garbage, the occasional gunshot that made us all pause and concentrate on the sky. *You're only containing what's bound to come*, I informed them, hoisting my machine gun over my shoulder. *Help us*, they begged, and I led them through the myriad dangers of my territory, and they admired me. One of them became my lover. . . . (188)

As the above passage shows, Marianna's writing enables her to re-imagine the war, to become more than a transparent "window" through which others look at Alaine (210). Similarly, by embracing the role of the leader of a resistance, Marianna becomes more than a secondary trauma victim; she becomes an active participant in the war and a possible rescuer of others. What is further interesting in Marianna's novel is that it heavily draws on the events of her daily life.

After stating that one of the soldiers became her lover, Marianna explains that Ziad came to her house, and she had to change the events of her story: ". . . Ziad came to our house with the news about Uncle Ara. The soldier was killed off in a firefight,

and Ziad entered the story as a spy sent to infiltrate my army, but who turned double agent out of love for me" (188). As such, upon Ziad's actual arrival to the house, Marianna dismissed her affair with the soldier in the novel and began one with Ziad. As the novel's events progress, she ends up "[running] into the hail of bullets, sacrificing [herself] so that he might live" (188). Indeed, the events of Marianna's novel suggest that she is attempting to provide an alternative to the events that actually took place, to Ziad's death. In the course of *The Bullet Collection*, Marianna further establishes the significance of writing for her. In fact, Marianna reveals that when school started, she did not attend classes in order to write. "I skipped classes to write in my notebooks in the café next to the school," Marianna states (188). Therefore, Marianna's writing does not merely draw on reality, but rather enables her to escape war and its atrocity.

Not only does Marianna write a novel, she also keeps a diary in which she records events from her life. Marianna stops writing in the diary upon her knowledge of Uncle Bernie's death when she is in Greece with Paul. Describing pages of her diary following her realization of Uncle Bernie's death, she states: "The pages of this old diary run to empty, what I couldn't write that spring and what reason is there to write a story that cannot be dreamed because it ended from the first moment it began to unfold? It had no other ending than one, and I cannot bear it" (220). As such, it becomes clear that Marianna is unable to write when overcome by a sense of loss, of gloomy endings. As such, Marianna's writing itself seems to emerge from the possibility of changing present horrors.

Alaine's writing, however, seems to be different from Marianna's. While Marianna's writing seems to emerge from the possibility of changing endings, Alaine's emerges from her own loss and trauma. In fact, Alaine's writing seems to coincide with

her murdering Fadi. “Fadi disappeared and Alaine did not care, she wrote in code on her cast and when the cast was full, she continued on the walls” (79) writes Marianna, thus highlighting the correlation between Fadi’s disappearance and Alaine’s writing. Marianna’s account of Alaine’s writing also underlines the fact that Alaine, unlike her sister, does not write on notebooks. Alaine writes on her cast and on walls. It is only when her family decided to move to another apartment that Alaine “cop[ies] her walls into notebooks” (82). Also, different from Marianna who writes legibly and is thus annoyed by her mother’s peeking over her writing (188), Alaine writes “in code” (79), a point previously discussed in this thesis. The way in which Alaine writes could thus imply that her writing emerges from an open wound. However, when Alaine makes a fire at the end of her first American summer, she burns “everything she had ever written” (257). Her destruction of her writing in the fire, which has been established as marking her change and her working through her trauma via re-inhabitation, could thus indicate the healing of her wound. Hence, writing for Marianna seems to be an ongoing coping mechanism. However, while Alaine’s scribbling seems to emerge from her wound, the fire in which she burns her writing could be considered as marking the beginning of her working through her trauma.

E. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to examine whether and how trauma can be voiced and worked through via the corporeal. It began by expounding Di Prete’s notion of voicing trauma through the foreign body. After discussing Di Prete’s re-reading of the story of Tancred and Clorinda and her emphasis on Clorinda’s transformed and thus unrecognized body, the chapter discussed Robson’s statement that wounds make

possible a voicing of trauma, and that trauma narratives are emblematic of an unhealed wound. Building on Salam's statement that Marianna and Alaine's self-mutilation arises from their muteness, their inability to express themselves, the chapter then argued that both sisters voice their traumas through their bodies.

A text-led reading of *The Bullet Collection* reveals that Alaine and Marianna voice their traumas through their foreign and transformed bodies. The many similarities between Alaine and Huda could help establish Huda as Alaine's foreign body. While Alaine knows and states that Huda was raped, she is unable to acknowledge the fact that she was also raped by Fadi. Such a situation highlights trauma's paradox, that it is "an unknowing knowing" (Caruth and Hartman 632). Similarly, Marianna's own body is foreign to her, for her body has a will of its own and experiences trauma before her mind does. As such, in light of Judith Blackstone's distinction between "inhabiting the body" and "being aware of the body," Marianna merely seems to be aware of her body. A close reading of Alaine's body also reveals it to be a transforming body which voices her trauma. As such, the girls' bodies can be considered as embodying the two sisters' traumatic memories (Di Prete, " 'Foreign Bodies' " 26-27). However, not only does the body embody Alaine and Marianna's traumatic memories, it also enables the two sisters to work through them.

The question of whether Alaine and Marianna's self-mutilation enables them to work through their traumas or simply perpetuate their traumatic experiences seems central to *The Bullet Collection.* In fact, the two sisters' self-injury seems to endow them with comfort. Yet Marianna's sense of calm is only short-lived, and the agency gained from injuring herself remains fleeting. In light of the girls' injuring of

themselves, another question arises about whether their writing is emblematic of open wounds or of healing scars.

Marianna's and Alaine's writings differ. In fact, Marianna's trauma narrative itself seems to correspond with the healing of her actual corporeal scars. Her writing thus must indicate a process of overcoming trauma. More interesting is Marianna's writing before her narrative which enables her to survive war and its atrocities. Alaine's writing on the other hand seems to be initiated by her traumatic experiences and as such differs from her sister's. Nevertheless, the fact that Alaine burns her war writing in the United States could be indicative of her intentions to bury along her traumatic past. Hence, as the chapter has shown, the spatial dimension of trauma extends to include the body and, to a lesser extent, writing.

CHAPTER IV

AFTERWORD

This thesis aimed at exploring both Marianna and Alaine's personal and war traumas in the context of the spatiality of trauma. By particularly focusing on place and the body, and writing in relation to the body, this study sought to clarify the extent to which it is possible to work through trauma, and possibly recover from it, via spatiality. Marianna and Alaine's likelihood of coming to terms with their traumas through place and the body does more than merely complement the scholarship on *The Bullet Collection*, for it also helps clarify Rula Salam's ambivalent reading of the novel's ending.

The analysis of Ward's novel in this research has shown that trauma is more efficiently worked through place, whose definition for this thesis has been held as inextricable from the body, than through the body per se. The body, however, seems to play an integral role in voicing trauma in light of Alaine and Marianna's inability to fathom or clearly articulate their traumatic experiences. Through the concept of the foreign body, it has been shown that Huda could be perceived as Alaine's foreign body. In fact, Huda's presence helps resolve trauma's paradox as an unknown knowledge. Apart from Huda's presence, Alaine's own transforming and unrecognizable body helps voice her traumatic experiences more clearly than her coded writing. The concept of the foreign body could also be extended to include Marianna, whose consciousness seems alienated from her corporeality as a result of trauma. Marianna's body is indeed foreign to her as she seems unable to control it, and her body itself seems to apprehend her traumas and losses prior to her mind. Rather than inhabiting her body, Marianna is thus

merely aware of it, in Judith Blackstone's terms. As such, perhaps Casey's notion of "re-inhabitation" could be expanded to include the foreign body. Marianna's re-inhabitation of her foreign body could be perceived as a both a means and an indication of her coming to terms with her traumatic past.

This thesis has also attempted to explore the extent to which the girls' self-mutilation could be considered emblematic of their working through trauma. While Marianna and Alaine's wounding of themselves enables them to reach a sense of comfort, Marianna's attained relief and sense of agency, at least, seem futile. The girls' mutilation of their bodies is thus a limited means of their working through traumas, especially as it seems to have a recurrent nature and as such contrasts with LaCapra's definition of working through. A discussion of Alaine's and Marianna's wounds raises the question of whether their writing is cathartic, in other words, of whether it symbolizes the healing of their wounds. As Marianna's seems to recount her past from a spatial and temporal distance, and as her bodily wounds themselves have begun to heal, her trauma narrative could indeed be considered as indexing her healing scars. In fact, her own allusions to her writing throughout the novel reveal her writing's escapist nature. Only when Marianna's loss becomes too evident is she unable to continue writing in her diary. Alaine's incomprehensible writing, on the other hand, seems triggered by Fadi's disappearance and thus arises from her distress. Yet, her burning of her writing among her other war memorabilia during her first summer in the United States marks a turning point for her trauma.

This study also seems to suggest that the body can be a means of working through trauma, not by itself, but when productively engaged in placemaking and homemaking practices. Establishing the fire Alaine makes in the United States as a

significant turning point for her trauma, this research has shown the change Alaine undergoes. While prior to the fire Alaine rarely went out, after it she becomes engaged in the process of renovating her family's and her home in the United States, in what Casey terms a process of re-inhabitation in an exilic surrounding. Alaine's habitual renovation practices of the home are in fact part of her identification process with the family's new American house. Hence, Alaine's inhabitation of the homeplace becomes, in hooks's terms, a means to resist war and what resembles it. In addition, the older sister's re-inhabitation of the United States home seems contagious as Marianna herself begins to gradually become part of it, though shyly at first. Despite the differences between her trauma and Alaine's—for Marianna seems to be a secondary victim of trauma—Marianna begins to engage in placemaking and renovating, and even comes to embrace the possibility of a future life in the United States. What further denotes Marianna's working through, and coming to terms with, her trauma is her perception of places from the past as memory places, in Hartman's words. By acknowledging the traumatic past as past, Marianna seems set to behold the future.

Marianna's and Alaine's—and to a lesser degree their parents'—processes of re-inhabitation and placemaking can help illuminate and develop Salam's reading of *The Bullet Collection*'s ending. In fact, Salam's allusion to "an element of dissatisfaction in the conclusio[n]" (101), and her claim that "Ward do[es] not offer much hope for [her] women" (103) become debatable. However, her statement that there is "hope . . . in exile" for Marianna (103) seems partially truthful. Prior to discussing Salam's suggestion of a positive prospect solely for Marianna, I would like to contest her usage of the term "conclusion" to refer to the novel's last pages, to its ending. For a work like *The Bullet Collection* which lacks a traditional narrative structure, the term *conclusion*

seems reductive. Rather than perceive the novel's ending as a conclusion, I consider it to be a beginning, or at least the initiation of a new beginning for both Marianna and Alaine, and for their parents. Rather than consider Salam's claim that "Lebanon will never again be a home for the family" (102) as ominous, I perceive it as an affirmative indication of the family's willful process of re-inhabitation in exile. Similarly, rather than agree with Salam's statement that "[k]nowledge of self and identity comes too late, thus it does not have the cathartic effect it should" (102), I would like to point out that both Marianna and Alaine are still young; Alaine is barely twenty and Marianna is only eighteen, technically a teenager. Moreover, the two sisters, along with their more mature parents, show signs of working through their traumas and embracing life in the United States. As such, the "hope . . . in exile" Salam refers to is not restricted to Marianna but encompasses the whole family as the process of re-inhabitation in the United States simultaneously becomes a process of resisting war and the recurrence of a traumatic past.

As a postwar Anglophone Lebanese writer, Ward seems engaged in depicting the atrocity and impact of a civil war whose consequences can still be felt. Yet, in light of trauma fiction's commitment to "the real," this study seems to offer a glimmer of optimism for the many traumatized by the war, for those who emigrated to foreign countries and those who were forced out of their original homes. To those, the process of re-inhabiting their homes in the context of forced displacement would be more than a means to acknowledge their traumatic past and embrace their future openly. To those, the process of re-inhabitation would be a means of resisting an inconclusive war and bringing it closer to its finality. Nevertheless, despite its insightfulness, this study seems to have a number of limitations.

This research on trauma and spatiality is mainly restricted in terms of its scope and final assertions. To begin with, this study focuses on one book by one author, Ward's *The Bullet Collection*. However, at this point, I would like to point out that I personally consider Ward's novel to be the richest, most comprehensive, and most challenging Anglophone Lebanese postwar narrative. Yet, future studies could examine trauma and space, and even the notion of re-inhabitation as detached from trauma, in other Anglophone Lebanese postwar narratives such as Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* and Nada Awar Jarrar's *Somewhere Home*, and posit their findings against the findings of this thesis. Apart from focusing on one work by one author, this thesis is restricted to the context of civil war, in particular the Lebanese Civil War, and the trauma arising from it. Other studies could compare the findings of this study to narratives depicting other civil wars of a confessional nature, for example the Syrian Conflict and the Irish Civil War. Future research could further probe issues of gender in the novel such as the gendered body, and the gendering of trauma and space. Another notion that would be worthy of examination in the novel is the significance of the United States as a country of exile per se. Later research could explore the extent to which the land of the American Dream, the land of socio-economic mobility and opportunity, allows for a working through trauma.

Finally, this thesis remains hesitant in positing a one-on-one correlation between re-inhabitation and placemaking and recovering from trauma. Indeed, although Alaine's working through her trauma is initiated by her burning all of her war memorabilia, she does not burn "her bullet collection and shrapnel," because these, Marianna explains, "[can] not be burned" (257). Echoing the book's title and Hartman's likening trauma to

an “inoperable bullet,” Alaine’s surviving bullet collection is an indication that something of war traumas remains, that complete recovery is yet to be sought.

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