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**TRAUMA THEORY IN MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S MARIA:
OR, THE WRONGS OF WOMAN***TRAUMA THEORY IN MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S MARIA: OR,
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ABSTRACT

Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman, asserts and protests strenuously against the rigid laws that enslave women. The piece of work sheds light on the prevailing morality, which believes that chastity, repentance and submission should be the only virtues of women. Mary Wollstonecraft's posthumous work is equipped with such powerful political statements. Maria's character is nothing but a written defence against her oppressive and abusive husband's misconducts against her. Wollstonecraft pens this feminist manifesto to denounce the numerous wrongs that are done to women. Her proclamation stands tall, demanding women's right to be free of male oppression. In this research work, we would like to draw not only on the measurements of *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* but also take a different path, focusing on a theme that is central to the novel and its feminist politics which has received little attention so far: trauma. The novel is a structuring of intertwined life events of suffering and ruptured relationships. We would here delve deep into the novel; the protagonist's life events and the writer's concerns through Trauma Theory.

Keywords: Mary Wollstonecraft, Feminism, Trauma, Trauma Theory, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*

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RESUMO

Maria: ou, Os Erros da Mulher, afirma e protesta energicamente contra as rígidas leis que escravizam as mulheres. A obra lança luz sobre a moral prevalecente, que acredita que a castidade, o arrependimento e a submissão devem ser as únicas virtudes da mulher. O trabalho póstumo de Mary Wollstonecraft está equipado com declarações políticas tão poderosas. O caráter de Mary Wollstonecraft nada mais é do que uma defesa escrita contra as condutas errôneas de seu marido opressivo e abusivo contra ela. Wollstonecraft caneta este manifesto feminista para denunciar as numerosas injustiças que são feitas às mulheres. Sua proclamação é alta, exigindo o direito da mulher de estar livre da opressão masculina. Neste trabalho de pesquisa, gostaríamos de nos basear não apenas nas medidas de Maria: ou, Os erros da mulher, mas também tomar um caminho diferente, focalizando um tema que é central para o romance e sua política feminista que tem recebido pouca atenção até agora: o trauma. O romance é uma estruturação de eventos de vida entrelaçados de sofrimento e relações rompidas. Aqui aprofundaríamos o romance; os eventos da vida do protagonista e as preocupações do escritor através da Teoria do Trauma.

Palavras-chave: Mary Wollstonecraft, Feminismo, Trauma, Teoria do Trauma, Maria: ou, Os Erros da Mulher

Introduction

The work, which William Godwin published posthumously in 1798, slips into the feminist consciousness; therefore, it is not surprise that its politics have attracted a lot of scholarly attention. The predominant paradigms for reading Wollstonecraft's book are feminist and biographical; as Claudia Johnson notes, most critics see *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* as an expansion of her life story or as a fictionalised version of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Johnson, 2002). Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) ends with Maria fiercely denouncing the strict rules that bind women and the prevalent false morality that says women's only virtues are chastity, submission, and the forgiving of wrongs (Kelly, 2007, 171). Such potent political remarks abound in Maria's written defence of her against the adultery accusation brought against her by her oppressive husband Venables. This endeavour serves as a feminist manifesto, criticising the multitude of injustices suffered by women and announcing their right to be liberated from the shackles of male oppression.

Our main goal in this research project is to read *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*, but we also want to take an alternative path and highlight a concept that is important to the book's feminist politics. It is also important to note that hardly

any attention has been paid to this aspect of trauma. The novel presents a sombre picture of the nuclear family as being ruled by shattered connections. It is written as a collection of interconnected life tales of pain. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* emphasizes the painful experiences that women and children have, the effects of these mental traumas, as well as the methods by which trauma is narrated, shared, and transmitted, contributing to the Romantic obsession with suffering and psychological disturbances. Trauma is a key component of the novel's feminist vision because it mediates between the person and the society, between a psychological study of the injured psyche and a political insight of oppression against women. But, trauma also goes beyond and undercuts this narrative in multitude of manners. The connections and conflicts between trauma and feminist politics must therefore be understood in order to comprehend the politics and psychologies of trauma in *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*.

Reading *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* through Trauma Theory

After the edition of 3 significant novel publications on the psychoanalytic concept of trauma as it interacts with literary works, literary concept, history, and present cultural phenomena, it is worthwhile to consider why, at this time, trauma also must garner such focus and become a crucial topic linking many such areas of study. In *Studies in Hysteria*, Freud's first concept focused on the processes of trauma, repression, and symptom generation. According to Freud, a traumatic experience that is too overwhelming for consciousness to handle can be forgotten, but it can later resurface as physical symptoms or obsessive, repetitive behaviours. When Freud came to the conclusion that neurotic symptoms were more frequently caused by repressed urges and desires than by traumatic experiences, this early idea of trauma and symptom became troublesome for him (Berger, 1997, 569-582).

The book's constant concentration on depictions of the traumatic experiences of women and children stands in stark contrast to its powerful attempts to control the aftereffects of trauma and turn post-trauma into a source of strength and resistance. It is possible to interpret the feminist politics of the work

to include both of these seemingly conflicting tendencies. The feminist politics of the text combine a vision of women's capacity for resistance with a strong critique of male brutality and patriarchal dominance. The book also implies that the two-pronged feminist worldview of the text does not fully encompass trauma and its aftereffects. Maria's life story shows that pain has its own power that repeatedly manifests as striking force. Trauma appears to overrule the feminist trajectory at these times and establish its own dynamics. A variety of significant episodes, a collection of imagery based on visions, dreams, and nightmares, as well as other narrative, structural, and linguistic features of the text all serve to depict the trauma. According to Michelle Balaev's article *Trends in Literary Trauma Theory*, "Trauma, in my analysis, refers to a person's emotional response to an overwhelming event that disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self and the standards by which one evaluates society. The term 'trauma novel' refers to a work of fiction that conveys profound loss or intense fear on individual or collective levels. A defining feature of the trauma novel is the transformation of the self-ignited by an external, often terrifying experience, which illuminates the process of coming to terms with the dynamics of memory that inform the new perceptions of the self and world" (150).

Psychological and psychiatric viewpoints will also be discussed in relation to the novel's portrayal of the conflict between efforts to mend past wounds and the uncontrollable, enduring powers of the pathological; trauma theory is going to reveal that *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*, through a persistent contrast of the verbal and the visual, underlines the dynamics of trauma and opposition, retrieval, and progress. Speaking and listening, words and stories are linked to attempts to connect with others and healing processes throughout the book, while the visual is linked to posttraumatic pain, highlighting the effects of trauma and the protracted crises it brings about. These themes of isolated vs shared pain and the psychopathological as uncontrollable, are related to the novel's overall response to current debates in the study of psychology. One interpretation of the book is that it depicts how the notion of lunacy changed from the eighteenth century to the Romantic era. Beyond the Enlightenment's concern with insanity and the fallibility of reason, it reflects a Romantic fascination with the intricacy of the disordered mind as well as a willingness to allow exposure to and involvement with pain and

mental disease. Given the aforementioned, this piece of writing analyses Wollstonecraft's writing as a negotiation of Romantic era responses to mental illnesses as well as a nuanced exploration of the potential and limitations of language and storytelling in the face of trauma.

We can also examine how family dysfunctions, such as child abuse, incest and spousal abuse, are frequently discussed in the media, most notably on talk shows. Both the idea that the family is the only chance for treating all social evils and the idea that the family is irreparably broken seems to be prevalent. *“Along with the interest in family breakdown and violence comes the interest in the enigmatic figure of the survivor, the one who has passed through the catastrophe and can tell us what it is like”* (Berger, 1997, 571). A startling number of accounts of women who were mistreated by their fathers, husbands, families or society may be found in *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*. Several of these ‘wrongs,’ whose central significance to the work is summed up in the title, are so unpleasant, upsetting and emotionally draining that they beg to be read in the context of trauma. The female characters, Maria and Jemima, have experienced numerous tragedies, and their stories also contain a number of other accounts of women’s pain, including their emotional and physical wounds. The text contains several life stories that are dispersed throughout and integrated into an episodic and dialogic framework that creates strong resonances between the various tales. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* has overtones of case studies, yet the book as a whole has the tone of a treatise. The idea that the book blurs the distinction between the personal and the political is supported by the sheer volume of these occurrences and the numerous commonalities among them.

The book contextualizes its trauma psychology inside a broader view of gender difficulties and family trouble, placing individual psychiatric narratives of disturbed lives inside larger socio-political systems of oppression and violence. Hence, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* clearly exhibits generic hybridity, as several critics have noted. Johnson (2002b) points out, *“all of [Wollstonecraft’s] works are of a piece in their very diversity, blending overlapping discourses of education, political commentary, travel literature, autobiography, moral philosophy, and fiction”* (189). Even the dual title *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* exemplifies

how different genres have been combined. The conjunction "or" merely flimsily connects the title's first and second halves, which center on the fictional heroine and the text's wider ramifications and political aspects. In reality, the title encapsulates the blending of fiction and politics that is distinctive of the Jacobin book. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*, as Anna Wilson underlines, is greatly impacted by the "intense politicization of the novel in the 1790s" which can be termed as "the last Jacobin novel published" (31). In fact, Wollstonecraft actually admits in the prologue of *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* that her work, which she calls a "novel," is motivated by politics and is, thus, much more than just a book., "the abortion of a distempered fancy, or the strong delineations of a wounded heart" (67). The key motive, as she says is "the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society" (67). In this situation, the individual and the governmental converge in various manner. In an endeavor to establish a more equitable society, judicial, and governmental ideology for women, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* blends deeply felt human experiences of suffering, a string of mental trauma, with these goals. Gary Kelly (1989) in *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, (Introduction xxviii)* asserts that the autobiographical resonances in the text serve as a means of presenting political views with stronger rhetorical force and as a method of evoking a sense of autobiographical validity and, consequently, authority. By interpreting Wollstonecraft's fusion of life observations and political vision as an example, Elizabeth Dolan develops this notion even further, 'ethnographic' project: "Offering the reader autobiographical resonances, Wollstonecraft becomes a participant observer, and ethnographer who situates her own experience within the social structures or culture she describes" (196). The voice of human experience is transformed into the voice of political authority in this reading.

Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman seeks the political objective of bringing women's suffering into the public eye by using an analytical gaze to examine various classes existing in the society. The two female characters, Jemima and Maria, are an expression of this socially expansive gesture. In Jemima's life narrative, a female servant who encountered a number of hardships that threw her into the lower classes of society is depicted by suffering. While Jemima and Maria's

narratives are interspersed with inset tales that cross different social groups, Maria's story highlights the hardships and unhappiness of a woman who is much better situated in society. The grim portrayal of lovers, husbands and parents who exhibit carelessness, callousness, abuse and brutality is what unites all of these stories. Indifference, anger, or greed damage parent-child and marriage relationships while also depriving them of warmth, caring and affection. The life tales that are interspersed throughout the book do not go into great length about the effects that these traumatic experiences have on marriages or families, but their dense texture nonetheless illustrates how devastating and frequently fatal these effects can be. Every narrative, no matter how brief, adds to the overall image of a society where traumas are pervasive by highlighting the significance of the stories that came before and after it. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* expresses its frank and uncompromising condemnation of patriarchy through its titular protagonist Maria. Maria serves as the spokesperson for the author's feminist politics in addition to being the epitome of the woman abused and hurt by males. Barbara Taylor cites Maria and Jemima as two examples of the "polemical constructions" characteristic of the Jacobin novel. Maria is a heroine whose feminism emerges at the extremities of female experience. (236).

Reading Maria's Madness and Trauma

The book depicts Maria's union with Venables, a gambler and a brutal husband, as creating a home that is increasingly shaped by extremes of agony. Maria decides to leave the marriage prison after Venables compels her to extort money from her uncle and even tries to sell her as a prostitute to one of his friends. Maria was leading a secret life when her oppressive husband quickly learned of it. As a particularly harsh measure, he cruelly took away her kid and imprisoned her in an asylum. The work engages with two engaging topics of the day by combining a feminist critique with a criticism of mental institutions in its depiction of Maria's captivity in a madhouse. Maria is thus a victim of both her husband's brutality and the depraved mental facility system. She feels her hapless submission to her husband's oppression most strongly while she is confined in the asylum. The book

Conhecimento & Diversidade, Niterói, v. 15, n. 37
abr./jun. 2023.

makes it abundantly obvious that Maria's horrific encounters and the suffering she watches among women form the foundation of her developing feminism. As a result, Wollstonecraft has Maria describe her husband's mistreatment in increasingly strident and argumentative tones. She brings in the use of a rhetoric of animality which was implemented on her saying, "I was hunted, like an infected beast" (157). She criticises her husband's criminal behaviour and transgressions, saying, "I was hunted like a felon" (152). *Maria: Or, The Wrongs of Woman* also highlights how these injustices are actually supported by the judicial process, which vehemently supports the institution of marriage, making it practically impossible for women who have experienced trauma to flee their oppressors, their violent, tyrannical husbands behind.

The question here is whether, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* really depict the healing process after trauma? Does it demonstrate how its characters deal with trauma-related problems, as Conger argues, "forget their past in their struggle for liberation?" (163). The assumption that trauma is timeless, recurrent, and infectious is reinforced by a literary theory of trans-historical trauma because it establishes a parallel causal relationship between the individual and the group as well as between the traumatic event and pathologic symptoms. According to the theory, people who share traits with a group—like being of a similar race, religion, nationality, or gender—that was severely traumatized in the distant past may still be affected by those traits today. This is due to the fact that traumatic memories and events are persistent, recurrent, and contagious. On the other hand, individuals who belong to the same racial, ethnic, or gender group but did not witness the traumatic event may nevertheless be exposed to group trauma due to their shared social or biological affinities. This bolsters the claim that trauma narratives can recreate and re-enact the experience for those who weren't there, enabling the reader or witness to vicariously experience the historical event (Felman and Laub, 1992). The element that marks and determines current true self, as well as ethnic or cultural identity, is hence historical trauma.

Fictional characters who have experienced trauma draw attention to the particularity of personal suffering, which is frequently linked to broader social issues and cultural beliefs or ideologies. It is visible that the trauma novel presents

a portrait of the victim, but does it in a way that suggests the protagonist is a representative of every individual in society. In fact, one of the protagonist's main goals is frequently to allude to a time in history during which a large number of individuals from a specific race, culture, or gender suffered a great deal of suffering. In this way, the fictitious character exaggerates a real-life tragedy that thousands or millions of people have experienced, such as slavery, rape, torture, war or nuclear destruction. The forces of trauma manifest themselves several times throughout the story, despite the narrative's constant focus on the resilience and fortitude of trauma victims. Maria, who is shown to be substantially more vulnerable than Jemima, serves as the primary conduit through which the unmanageable, impossible to contain, and abnormal qualities of trauma exhibit themselves. Furthermore, Wollstonecraft's portrayal of the uncontrollability of the pathological needs to be understood in the context of discussions on mental disease from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The setting of the book and the narrator's protagonist-reaction to it are important issues in this context. Despite the narrative's emphasis on childhood and family trauma, the action is set in a private asylum's isolated cell rather than a domestic setting. According to Anne Mellor, "[t]he true horror of Wollstonecraft's story is that the terrors previously identified with the supernatural manifestations of the Gothic romance or the 'astonishment' of the romantic sublime literally exist within the average domestic household in England" (419). In addition, Gothic fiction is often associated with conflicted feelings, which we might term, "[t]hreats are spiced with thrills, terrors with delights, horrors with pleasures" (Botting, 1996, 9) – *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman's* opening scene conjures up dangers, frights and horrors devoid of thrilling or elevating impulses.

The narrative emphasises Maria's reaction to craziness more than it does to the asylum. As the narrator emphasises, Maria is profoundly affected by the sound and sight of lunacy. She is oblivious to the lunatics' rather of feeling the groans and shrieks with a passionate whim, she experiences them with a painful intensity, as if she were about to die, "tones of misery as carry a dreadful certainty directly to the heart" (69). When Maria came face to face with a lunatic "shrunk back with more horror and affright than if she had stumbled over a mangled corpse" (77). As

Conhecimento & Diversidade, Niterói, v. 15, n. 37
abr./jun. 2023.

described by Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* (1988), the writing here invokes the dread of madness and the fear of the frailty of reason that characterised the classical period. Foucault talks about the classical era saw a rise in the confinement approach to mental illness and attempts to draw distinct lines between lunacy and reason throughout the classical era, madness was displayed, but behind bars; if it existed, it was concealed from the view of reason, which felt no connection to it and would not be compromised by a striking similarity (70). These sentiments of the 18th century, a time that found the concept of insanity alluring and the actuality of insanity horrifying, may be reflected in Maria's reaction of backing away in dread from the mental patients. A closer examination of Maria's approach to lunacy, however, reveals that the book makes a notable break from the customary 18th century customs of ignoring the insane. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* portrays another type of interaction with insanity, because she is compelled to watch the insane people from her cramped cell, Maria observes them up close, as if she were one of them, rather than from a visitor's safe distance. This closeness, the perspective of a deeply invested rather than aloof spectator, is what changes crazy from a spectacle and a source of visual enjoyment into a highly charged emotional experience in which boundaries separating self and other threaten to dissolve.

Maria's experience with lunacy is portrayed as awe-inspiring and openly associated with the sublime. experiencing a mind that has been ravaged by craziness the impact of an earthquake is comparable to the most incredible ruins, which "*throws all the elements of thought and imagination into confusion, makes contemplation giddy*" (76). While reading Richardson, it becomes easy to read Maria's response to insanity as an example of a "*disturbing, negative sublime*" (28). his type of sublime, which Richardson refers to as the "neural sublime," captures the profound impact that going through a psychotic episode or mental breakdown may have on an individual person. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* departs from an Enlightenment fear of insanity and instead presents a Romantic obsession with mental illness as illuminating the shadowy, pathological aspects of the intellect and the maze-like caverns of the brain, as demonstrated by Maria's experience of the neural sublime. Maria exemplifies both the Romantic propensity to accept

proximity to lunacy rather than keep a strict distance from it, as well as the Romantic concern with the intricacy and disturbances of the mind. It's fascinating that the process of mentally connecting with the madwoman happens through hearing rather than seeing, which is consistent with the novel's overall preference for verbal over visual cues for creating emotional relationships. The melody eventually abruptly cuts off and a flood of disconnected exclamations and queries interspersed with silence replaces this feeling of connection, “[*horrid*] fits of laughter” comes forth (80). Maria is astonished and extremely upset by this sudden outburst, but instead of being horrified, she feels a great deal of pity for the woman's situation. The charming crazy, one of the initial subjects of the mini-portraits of wronged women, contrasts sharply with the bulk of strong and tenacious women characters in the book. She represents the damaged lady, whose pain has rendered her irrational. Maria, contemplating her fate, muses soberly: “*Woman, fragile flower! why were you suffered to adorn a world exposed to the inroad of such stormy elements?*” (80). Maria exemplifies a distinctly Romantic attitude to lunacy through her identification with the ‘*lovely maniac*’ and her mixed feelings of wonder and sympathy.

Also, from a linguistic perspective, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* presents a Romantic perspective on lunacy, bringing readers up close and personal with the experience of mental illness. Although Maria is not explicitly depicted as insane in the same way that Godwin's *Mandeville's* protagonist-narrator is, it is plainly clear from the work that Maria is close to going insane due to the circumstances of her captivity and the repercussions of trauma. In the first few sentences, the narrator recounts Maria's state of surprise and wonder, which bordered on distraction and appeared to have suspended her senses, until she gradually awoke to a sharp sense of agony, which stirred her torpid pulse. She was in danger of having her brain explode from the rapid succession of memories and becoming a good companion for the amazing occupants. The narrator draws comparisons between Maria, whose profound traumas threaten to impair her judgement, and the screeching, raving lunatics housed there. In the overarching narrative strategy of the work, Maria's mental illness draws our attention to the fragility of the human psyche, which Maria finds to be amazing. Hence, the story

depicts the transition from observing crazy from a distance to confronting it directly. To underscore the crucial shift from eighteenth-century to Romantic discourses on the mind, it repeatedly emphasizes how crucial it is to interact with suffering and mental illness rather than passively observing them. The piece thus dramatizes the paradigm shift that occurred at the period and was brought on by the introduction of new psychiatric ideas and asylum politics. The book brings about the shift in society from excluding insane to allowing contact with the damaged mind by encouraging the reader's direct connection with someone's mental issues and suffering. The author plays on readers' interest in the psychopathological while simultaneously pushing us to try to comprehend, empathise with, or even identify with those who suffer from disturbed minds.

Maria's Conclusion

The '*Conclusion*,' which includes a number of brief drawings and one lengthier text passage outlining potential novel endings, once again illustrates the jarring effects of trauma through fragment and ruptures. Even if the text's incomplete state is largely to blame for the Conclusion's fragmentary structure, a closer examination of the many fragments and how they relate to one another is nonetheless instructive. As Goodwin (2005) correctly notes, there is a void between the brief sketches that only contain important words, or the '*scattered heads*.' By moving past the romance and concentrating on Maria's interactions with Jemima and her kid, the extended final fragment achieves a substantial shift in focus. The larger fragment continues to execute a substantial shift in emphasis while the "*scattered heads*" portray various grim conclusions to Maria and Darnford's love story, centring on concepts like finding of Darnford's infidelity, "*miscarriage*," and "*suicide*." Many reviewers interpret the larger fragment favourably, seeing it as presenting a space for kinship and community built around the concept of female bonding and maternity. Many detractors also cite Janet Todd's assertion that Maria's history is distinguished by two movements to support their favourable reading, "*one circular and repetitive, and the other linear*

and developmental” as Todd believed that although the linear tends to lead to freedom and maturity, the circular ties her to connections with men (211).

The Conclusion avoids portraying Maria as a happy ‘victim’ because her feminist voice has met with little success and her breakup with Darnford seems far from voluntary, even though the narrative shows how Maria grows and discovers her objectives. A sad recurrence of the protagonist’s painful experiences is actually staged by the ‘scattered heads’: Venables’ mistreatment has been replaced by Darnford’s betrayal, and the death of her daughter has taken the place of her second child’s miscarriage. Maria’s wounds are not fully healed, or as the narrator of Mary puts it, her new wounds, according to the Conclusion, “opened all her old wounds, and made them bleed afresh” (35) – so intensely that suicide seems to be the only escape. In addition, the longer section illustrates how trauma is circular by interjecting interruptions in which Maria relives particularly unpleasant experiences throughout her life: “[O]ne remembrance with frightful velocity followed another – All the incidents of her life were in arms, embodied to assail her” (176). These incursions show how trauma collapses time; the present and the past condense into a timeless instant. Trauma is more frequently recalled as a state than as a sequence, ‘simultaneity’; it “stops the chronological clock and fixes the moment permanently in memory and imagination, immune to the vicissitudes of time” (Langer, 1991, 175). Maria’s vision before she commits suicide mirrors Mary’s vision at the conclusion of Mary, in which the main character also encounters an atemporal union of her different traumas. Maria’s intrusions and attempt at suicide show how deeply her tragic experience has influenced her. At this split-second between life and death, her horrific experiences as a mother and a daughter explode and merge (176). The piece shows Maria in an intensely agitated and hopeless state, implying that her wounds appear to be too numerous and agonising to bear any longer. As a result, the Conclusion ties together several of the novel’s major themes and aspects relating to trauma, because each of the novel’s fragmented endings leaves gaps, and because the relationships between the fragments are rife with disjunctions, it serves as an embodiment of the novel’s fragmentarily and poetics of disruption. Moreover, Maria’s act of using laudanum is shown as the zenith of her propensity for avoiding and escaping: “[N]othing

remained but an eager longing to forget herself – to fly from the anguish she endured to escape from thought – from this hell of disappointment” (176). A profound post-traumatic crisis follows her conscious desire to leave her nightmare of misery and forget her tragic past. Throughout this time, she is tormented by her most upsetting recollections. The section titled *The End* serves as an example of how the novel stages catastrophic past eruptions in vivid ways by enmeshing them in a collection of pictures that are derived from visions and intrusive recollections, dreams and nightmares. The novel’s introduction and the asylum escape, which both show Maria in a frenetic condition, are examples of scenes that are similar to the last one. Even if we take Maria’s intense pain, attempt at suicide, and struggle even after learning she was pregnant as literal interpretations of the final scene’s ending rather than as a vision, they all attest to the trauma’s long-lasting effects, which persist despite Maria’s development and her ongoing efforts to combat them.

Conclusion

Trauma Theory proposes new ways to view significant trends in critical theory. The recent crisis in post-structuralist theory appears to call for a particular method of thinking about how the past haunts the present. More importantly, it could be helpful to re-examine the rhetorics of post-structuralist and postmodern philosophy, with their emphasis on de-centering, fragmentation, the sublime and the apocalyptic, to see how they might relate to the events today. The novel is a strong illustration of the trauma’s ongoing effects. It exposes the nuclear family as a setting of seriously harmed relationships by depicting the titular heroine as unable to break free from the trauma and suffering cycles, cycles that have their roots in childhood and are continued in the domestic sphere of marriage. Because she stands out among the many wounded and broken women who live in the dark social landscapes of the novel, Maria represents the author’s feminist mission of exposing male domination. Maria, on the other hand, is, in contrast to Jemima, who represents feminine power, seems to transcend her crises, and discovers a new identity as a survivor rather than a victim, imprisoned by the weight of her terrible

background right up until the conclusion. The suggested techniques of recovery throughout the book—self-narration, female bonding, and discovering a personal or political mission—have limitations for Maria, which throws into question the book's ostensibly positive feminist outlook.

By illustrating the many stages of development of the two female protagonists, the novel highlights crucial questions about the techniques for remembering and sharing painful memories as well as the potential for rehabilitation contained in a sense of community among trauma sufferers. *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* performs the uncontrollable forces of trauma that seem to elude and escape language by using visions, dreams, fragmentation, and disruption as techniques. On the one hand, it calls attention to the empowering potential of narration from psychological and political perspectives. The text's broader overarching Romantic preoccupation with how the human mind functions can also be interpreted as emblematic of the emphasis on the psychopathological as uncontrolled. At the same time, the book makes a case for the value of interacting with psychic wounds and mental disorders by its in-depth examination of the human mind as well as through its examination of how trauma sufferers could speak to and listen to one another. The book alternates between eulogies for information exchange and society and apprehension about the interruptive forces of trauma that unveil the restrictions of speech and interaction with friends because it is situated at the crosswalks of the personal and the social, psychology and political systems, trauma and feminist discourses. In light of this, Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* exhibits an uncertain and more skeptic attitude toward verbalizing and recounting trauma processes, contending that the traumatic, intrusive visions of a "wounded mind" are ultimately too powerful to be controlled by words.

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