

GHOST NOVELS: HAUNTING AS FORM IN THE WORKS OF TONI MORRISON,
DON DELILLO, MICHAEL ONDAATJE, AND J.M. COETZEE

By

JAEEUN YOO

A Dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in English

Written under the direction of

Marianne DeKoven

and approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October 2009

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Ghost Novels: Haunting as Form in the Works of Toni Morrison, Don DeLillo, Michael

Ondaatje, and J. M. Coetzee

by JAE EUN YOO

Dissertation Director:

Marianne DeKoven

This dissertation examines formal innovations in contemporary novels that revise the way reading happens. Reading recent works by Toni Morrison, Don DeLillo, Michael Ondaatje and J.M. Coetzee, I show how these innovative novelists utilize the very impossibility of properly representing others as a narrative device. I argue that the novelists design their works in such a way that reading them becomes an encounter with ghosts that confront the reader. My introductory chapter discusses the use of ghost figures in post-structuralist thought and traces their usefulness back to the Enlightenment. In the first part of the dissertation, I analyze two American novels, *Love* and *The Body Artist* to consider the influence of postmodern spectrality that emerges from reproduction of images. The phantom narrator of *Love* discloses and overthrows the distorted representation of African American women by inviting the reader to witness the “murder” of the Father’s spirit. Chapter Three proposes that *The Body Artist* performs a haunting that is marked with the ghostly traces of tele-technologies. By incarnating the specter that comes out of the internet

on the body of the protagonist, DeLillo attempts to instill in his novel the subversive potential of what escapes visual representation: the body and the spirit. In the second part of my dissertation, I turn to postcolonial fictions to investigate how similar narrative strategies transform the representation of none-western others. My reading of *Anil's Ghost* reveal that its convoluted narrative functions like the spiritual ritual it depicts—by suggesting alternative ways to become perceptive to others, it forces the reader to experience the void and grief the disappeared leave behind. In my final chapter I argue that an authorial ghost in *Slow Man* highlights fissures in the text, including the individual histories of Australian immigrants. Through my analysis of these texts, I demonstrate how these writers seek to return what has been forgotten or dismissed to disturb the reader's comfortable and safe reading space with the “real” power of ghosts. Their ghosts break out of the world of phantoms, paradoxically representing the corporeality of others and traversing the border between the book and the reader.

Acknowledgement

Early versions of the chapters in this dissertation were presented at University of Karlstad, the Northeast Modern Language Association conference, and the American Comparative Literature Association conference. I would like to thank my hosts and the audiences on all of those occasions. Parts of the first and the second have appeared in other forms: "'The Site of Murder: Textual Space and Ghost Narrator in Toni Morrison's *Love*" in *Space, Haunting, Discourse* ed. Maria Holmgren Troy, Elisabeth Wennö (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and "A Ghost Book Haunting Itself: Performing Return in The Body Artist" in *Perforations* 29 (2007).

I like to thank my committee members, Richard Dienst, John McClure and Louise Barnett, for their discerning comments, insightful questions, and emotional support. I could not have written this dissertation if it were not for Marianne DeKoven, who have led me intellectually and emotionally from its inception to its completion. I am deeply grateful to her. My warm thanks to my friends and colleagues for their scholarly help and friendly support during various stages of writing this dissertation: Sanja Bahun, Heather Robinson, Malgi Choi, Ji-yeon Lee, Leslie Dovale, Soo Yeon Lee, Sungyeon Park, and Jung-hyun Choi.

I thank my husband, Eun-Gu Baik, for his love, trust, and encouragement. He fills my work and life with meaning and hope. I should also like to thank my parents for their inexhaustible love, patience and prayer that have sustained me through all these years. Finally, God, as imperfect as it might be, I dedicate this work to You. I owe everything to You.

"Ego sum, nolite timere"

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgement	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	29
Chapter 2	96
Chapter 3	133
Chapter 4	133
Bibliography	169
Curriculum Vita	182

Introduction

If it—learning to live—remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death *alone*. What happens between two, and between all the “two’s” one likes, such as between life and death, can only *maintain itself* with some ghost, can only *talk with* or *about* some ghost. (Specters of Marx xvii)

Ghosts of the Enlightenment

In the climax scene of the horror movie *The Ring*, a cursed video tape plays itself. On a TV screen that turns on by itself, a female ghost crawls out of an old well, and continues to come toward the camera until it comes out of the screen and approaches its viewers¹. The next day, people who watched the tape are found dead. The horror effect of the movie *The Ring* is a classic example of the uncanny; the border between what is real and what is spectral is so violently disturbed that the spectator, encountering the ghost through the viewer’s eyes, experiences the simulacra, the ghostly images on the TV screen, as “real.” At yet at the same time, it bears a peculiarly postmodern twist; its female ghost emerges from and haunts an electronic zone consisted of videotapes and TV screens, and the ghost’s demand is not justice, nor remembrance, but endless reproduction of the videotapes. Thus the movie *The Ring* simultaneously inherits and deforms the legacy of the Enlightenment. While the dichotomy of the unreal and the real—‘the unreal’ is the images on the screen and ‘the real’ refers to everything outside the screen—is the legacy of the Enlightenment, the female ghost that crawls out of a TV screen with real killing power

¹ Originally from a Japanese novel, *Ringu*, the scene has held the popular imagination so strongly that it resulted in three variations of the movie (Japan, 1998, Korea, 1999, Hollywood, 2002), two serial movies, and numerous parodies on both sides of the globe.

signifies a desire to resist and revise it. The same contradictory impulse conditions the structures of the novels that I discuss in my dissertation.

As is well known, Freud defines the “uncanny” as a feeling of ‘dread and creeping horror’ that arises when ‘infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when the primitive beliefs which have been surmounted is seen once more to be confirmed (245).” Employing this concept as a historical paradigm, Terry Castle argues that the uncanny was “invented” by the Enlightenment:

The very psychic and cultural transformations that led to the subsequent glorification of the period as an age of reason or enlightenment—the aggressively rationalist imperatives of the epoch—also produced, like a kind of toxic side effect, a new human experience of strangeness, anxiety, bafflement, and intellectual impasse (Castle 8).

Modern systems of reasoning, generated in the Enlightenment period, inevitably create an unseen realm beyond knowledge. In metaphorical terms, the “light” of the Enlightenment creates “darkness” by banishing what cannot be rationalized, drawing a clear boundary between the ‘real’ and the ‘unreal.’ Inexplicable phenomena are internalized as mental problems, and the unreal gets “repressed,” setting off uncanny returns in the future.

It is not a coincidence, then, that Freud’s description of the uncanny in “The Uncanny” resembles that of a phantom, emerging out of unconscious darkness. In Freud’s schematization, an archaic fantasy or fear, long ago exiled to the unconscious, nonetheless ‘returns to view’ in a distorted and disguised form; the uncanny is a psychoanalytic term for the return of the ghosts that are evicted to a realm that exceeds theorization. The essay “The Uncanny” displays a wide variety of uncanny figures, all of which intrude on

ordinary life, making what was hidden visible. They are uncanny precisely because they subvert the distinction between the real and the unreal, and for the same reason, they are read as symptoms of the fragmented modern subjectivity. Yet the essay “The Uncanny” notoriously fails to elicit an unambiguous definition of the uncanny. According to Hélène Cixous, Freud’s mistake in the essay lies in his attempt to substitute the uncanny with the fear of castration in his effort to analyze what is not analyzable by definition.

Consequently, Freud reduces the uncanny into a set of controllable referents that are not necessarily relevant. This replacement results in the problematic uncertainty of the essay “The Uncanny” itself (546). Interestingly, Cixous traces fictional devices in “The Uncanny” as the essay attempts to represent the uncanny. In other words, the essay “The Uncanny” itself almost reads like a parable of the Enlightenment.

Consequently, Freudian psychoanalysis provides insightful tools in illuminating the fragmentizing impact of the Enlightenment uncanny on human mind. In the following chapters, I first focus on analyzing the characters’ traumatized psyche in psychoanalytic terms. In the process, it is often discovered that the authors encourage their readers to identify with the troubled selves of the characters in order to let them see that they share the same prejudice or trauma that possess the characters. I examine this traumatized and fractured self not just to detect the different symptoms of the modern subject that the authors choose to explore, but to identify and trace the subsequent reversal process that the novels perform: the novels conjure up ghosts as the authors reverse the process of Enlightenment by summoning specters back to “reality” after discovering them in the minds of the characters and the readers.

In Henry James' *Turn of the Screw*, arguably one of the prime modernist gothic fictions, the ghosts the governess witnesses are easily understood as the projection of her unstable and suffering psyche. In contrast, the revivification of ghosts I discuss in this dissertation is imbued with a peculiar spectrality of the postmodern global² age, which criticizes and attempts to undo the Enlightenment project. The specters invoked not only retain atemporal, elusive traits that hauntologists utilize after Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, but also challenge and compete against culturally dominant modes of seeing and visual technologies that proliferate it.

Slavoj Žižek suggests that the return of ghosts in the late twentieth century deserves to be called the “fundamental fantasy of contemporary mass culture” (Žižek 22). Of course, he goes on and finds a concordance between this fantasy and Lacanian psychoanalysis: “the answer offered by Lacan [to the question of why the dead return] is the same as that found in popular culture: *because they are not properly buried*, i.e. because something went wrong with their obsequies. The return of the dead is the sign of a disturbance in the symbolic rite, in the process of symbolization; the dead return as collectors of some unpaid debt” (Žižek 23). However, as many critics have noted, “the return of the dead” fantasy is not characteristically modern. Ghost stories have been around as long as any human civilization. Nevertheless, the peculiar way that the ghosts I discuss in this dissertation claim an “unpaid debt” reveal much about contemporary American and global cultures as much as they reflect them; they antagonize the spectral images mass produced and

² When I mention globalization or the global age in this dissertation, I have in mind a less America-centered cultural field that is nonetheless closely connected to that of the postmodern in various degrees. In other places than the west, the modern and the postmodern were never quite distinct nor temporally apart. For most of the former colonies, the modern and the postmodern, though they do induce often significant cultural

circulated by electronic media and choose to confront the reader, instead of the other characters in the novels, to demand an accountability.

Hauntology and Textual Haunting

After I discuss the characters from a psychoanalytic perspective, I move on to discuss the textual effects of the specters that haunt the novels, as the reading site and time is the primary haunt of these ghosts that originate from the Enlightenment's psychological and discursive darkness. I would justify this rather inconsistent combination of critical perspectives as follows. In his book "*Haunted Subject*," Colin Davis schematizes the difference between the two perspectives thus: "deconstruction is about learning to live with ghosts, psychoanalysis is about learning to without them" (89). For the characters who do not realize that they are haunted, I borrow psychoanalytic terms that provide penetrating insight to their mental and emotional condition. After ghosts materialize in a novel's narrative form, drawn out of the unconsciousness of the characters and the reader's reading practice, I utilize deconstructionist textual analysis to discuss the effect of the ghost text on the reader, as the ghosts that speak to the readers directly seem to justify the use of this critical frame. Because the formal innovation of these novels is best exemplified in the very process that they turn the psychological and/or tele-technical specter into formal haunting of the narrative, I need to employ and connect both perspectives in order to identify and explicate this transformation.

Speculating on the paradoxical nature of the figure "specter," Derrida utilizes it to reflect on the new direction that the Western philosophy is taking in order to find a better

and economic changes, are only different phases of the same process: globalization driven by capitalism.

way to recognize and relate to other cultures, articulated as the self–other relationship in philosophical discourse. The trope of spectrality is a useful theoretical tool for Derrida that crosses the question of history and the question of alterity. According to him, the specter “*is* something that one does not know precisely, and one does not know if precisely it *is*, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence. One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge” (Marx 6). Due to the shifting and elusive nature of the specter, what he terms as hauntology—the logic of haunting—illuminates how the oscillating ontology of the specter, when introduced into the present, destabilizes its coherency and shatters the construction of History as a self-present totality. The silent “h” in French term “hauntology” stands for a hovering presence over the certainties of ontology.

Drawing on Derrida’s speculation on the specter in *Specters of Marx*, Julien Wolfreys argues that any text has the same spectrality and that it transpires through the act of reading. According to his account, the spectrality of a text arises mainly from the withholding of belief that occurs when reading:

Textuality brings back to us a supplement that has no origin, in the form of haunting figures –textual figures—which we misrecognize as images of ‘real’ people, their actions and the contexts in which the events and lives to which we are witness take place. We ‘believe’ in the characters, assume their reality, without taking into account the extent to which those figures or characters are, themselves, textual projections, apparitions if you will, images or phantasms belonging to the phantasmatic dimension of fabulation. And it is because they

are phantasmic because they appear to signal a reality that has never existed, that they can be read as all the more spectral, all the more haunting... what reading does in effect is to bear witness to the existence of something other, which is neither 'read into' the text nor of the text itself in any simple fashion (xiii).

Seen this way, all fictions are fundamentally spectral, that is, all texts conjure up ghosts regardless of their genre because all reading opens the self to the disturbance of the other. There is nothing ethical or political in this textual haunting, except what is inherent in the notion of reading as imaginative displacement.

Naturally, classic gothic narratives best suit the hauntological text analysis. Using a ghost story published by Daniel Defoe as an example, Wolfreys illustrates how a ghost can be created by disrupting the narrative order. In the story, a woman is visited by an old friend of hers and later finds out that her friend died a day before the visit. According to Wolfreys, what is uncanny in this story is not the ghost but the act of telling. The effect of haunting occurs not because the reader is confronted with a dead person, but because the reader is discomposed in her/his perception of time by a disruptive process of revelation. By re-visiting the haunted scene, the narrative itself haunts the reader (5). Thanks to this textual haunting, Brad Fruhauff argues, the ghosts that appear in gothic narratives "haunts the distance between material and thought and generates the ethical force of narrative itself—it calls me out of myself and opens me to the identifications and sympathies with the other that the text invites and requires (Christmas 3-4)." For Fruhauff, as with many other hauntology critics, the deconstructionist analysis offers a way to imagine the relationship between the text and the reader as that between the self and the other.

However, while I argue that the authors I discuss model their texts after haunting of a ghost, thus transforming their novels into an immediate other that confronts their readers, I also maintain that it is important to acknowledge the very contemporary ways they formulate their ghosts and their haunting. For Toni Morrison, Don DeLillo, Michael Ondaatje and J.M. Coetzee, a ghost is a useful figure in contemplating the problems of alterity and responsibility because of the very reason it escapes fixating theorization and visualization. And because of this very reason, the ghosts that they imagine are deeply affected by an aspect of contemporary culture that the authors find most problematic: the domination of the visual that is enhanced and supported by electronic tele-technologies that cover the world as never before.

In her discussion of the 18th century England, Castle points out that the “historic Enlightenment internalization of the spectral—the gradual reinterpretation of ghosts and apparitions as *hallucinations*, or projections of the mind”—made complex understandings of the human mind possible (Castle 136). This, however, had a side effect, too. Analyzing the romantic infatuation with the human psychology that is featured in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Castle remarks that “The terrible irony—indeed the pathology—of the romantic vision is that even as other people come to hold a new and fascinating eminence in the mind, they cease to matter as individuals in the flesh (136).” As Castle points out, the Enlightenment’s preference for the spectral persists today, producing “technologies like movies, TV, holography and virtual reality” (136). Ironically, these modern technologies of reproduction, as Jacques Derrida remarks, are akin to the dismissed realm of ghosts: “When the very first perception of an image is linked to a structure of reproduction, then we are dealing with the realm of phantoms” (Derrida 61).

Indeed, many scholars see a strong connection between images produced by new visual technologies and the way the specter is conceived in the discourse of hauntology. Wendy Haslem, for instance, argues that “haunting is the effect of modernity. Spectrality emerges from the reproduction and repetition of images” (5), suggesting that there is a distinctive resemblance between modern technology of images and the figure of specters, ghosts and haunts. Fred Botting makes a similar point by claiming that “[s]pectrality instead describes ordinary operations of new technologies and their hallucinatory, virtual effects” (200). This connects to Botting’s larger argument about the inherently Gothic nature of new technologies, highlighting a Baudrillardian simulacral effects of technology. Another exemplary connection is made in Jeffrey Sconce’s concept of “haunted media.” In his book *Haunted Media*, Sconce analyses what he refers to as “media metaphysics” and is particularly interested in the cultural history of electronic presence, a presence which is not an essential property, but a variable social construct which has changed across media history (Sconce 7). Marina Warner surveys how ghosts, spirits and other ephemeral phenomena all crop up as metaphors when new technologies emerge. In other words, technology and media generate new ways for the cultural imagination to refashion representations of specters, just as specters, ghosts, etc reconfigure emerging media in specific ways.

Likewise, in the four novels I analyze in this dissertation, the spectral fingerprints of visual technologies show in their ghosts and the way they haunt. In the novels, the era of postmodern globalization is portrayed as being faithful to its inheritance from the Enlightenment: attempting to replace the actualities of the world and its diverse people with virtual maps and images that support and disguise reordering of the world by

global capitalism. It is a world marked by the fantasy of hypervisibility. And as Avery Gordon argues, “in a culture seemingly ruled by technologies of hypervisibility, we are led to believe not only that everything can be seen, but also that everything is available and accessible for our consumption (16).” In a hypervisible culture, the world and other people are replaced by simulacra and thus consumed in the dominance of visual media.

Moreover, as Appadurai points out, hypervisibility is not “just a matter of Third World people reacting to American media” (Appadurai 7). For Appadurai, electronic media, one of the two definitive features that shape globalization, transforms preexisting worlds of communication and conduct. Electronic mediation of images, along with mass migration, creates “the sense of distance between the viewer and the event” (Appadurai 3-4). In the process, the particular ‘others’ of flesh and blood are easily abstracted and consumed as virtual images, which becomes the reason why these novels become ghostly and begin haunting their readers.

In fact, the word specter itself used in an ambivalent way in hauntology. That is, the way the pseudo-concept specter is imagined to function is not free from historical and cultural condition they are produced. As Peter Buse and Andrew Stott maintains, today’s ghosts mirror “workings of telecommunications, the activities of the media, that omniscient absence-presence, in which our ‘contemporary’ spectrality is to be found” (Ghosts 17). Real or virtual, the images produced and circulated by tele-visual technologies are also spectral, because they can be reproduced infinitely without the “aura”—to borrow Walter Benjamin’s term— of original objects; not to mention that the images of the “real” people are not a faithful and integral reproduction of what it is thought to reproduce. More problematically, even the so called “live” images are so easy to be

censored, framed, and filtered, if not overtly manipulated, and are not free from inherited prejudices against certain ethnic, cultural, and gender group. And more often than not, the controlled images of others justify a certain form of power. And when the same images circulate globally across national borders, the same problem is reiterated, if not aggravated as their quantity and reach are unprecedented.

Just as contemporary conceptualizations or semi-conceptualizations of the specter are profoundly affected by the spectrality of images produced by modern technologies, ghost novels I discuss in this dissertation needs to be distinguished from both the fundamental spectrality of texts and the haunting in the conventional Gothic stories. The four novels are concerned with spectral images produced and circulated by televisual technologies, although in various degrees and ways. Granted, the question of ghosts is useful for these authors, too, as it crosses the synchronic questions of the respect for cultural, national and geographical others and the diachronic question of remembering the past in a responsible way. A ghost's haunting implicates the unsettling of a self by an other that exceeds conceptualization, and this prepares an experience of the other as the other, i.e. discarding preconceived ideas and expectations to open oneself to be shocked by the incommensurable difference the other present. And yet, the four novels I discuss not only provide for such an encounter, but also carry various historical and cultural burdens to their reader by performing ghosts that works against spectralized images of others.

For instance, L the ghost in *Love* is wary of the effect TV soap opera has on her narrative, while complaining about the way sexual images of the female body are disseminated and consumed. These images are problematized not only because they are oversimplified simulacra that displace actual women, but also because they conceal and

aggravate the representational problems of African American women that have been handed down for generations. As can be seen in the author's portrayal of the African American teenagers, Fay, Junior and Rome, this problem still cripples and distorts young African Americans' lives in the late 1990s as it did in the 1950s. It is L's job to exorcise the Father's ghost as a way of tackling this problem, but only the reader knows that L's ghost is around.

Don DeLillo's specters have been long infused with the spectral aspects of teletechnologies. In *Underworld*, a ghost of a murdered girl, Esmeralda, appears as an image displayed on a visual device, a billboard with an ad for Minute Maid orange juice. According to John McClure, there is something "spiritual" about this image, and "this astonishing and absurd apparition is a hyperbolic example of the already hyperbolic popular genre of the miraculous apparition" (McClure 95). The image has momentary liberating influence on Sister Edgar, providing an important turn in the plot of the novel. Likewise, in *The Body Artist*, the spectral and the virtual are often indistinguishable in the traumatized protagonist's mind. A live streaming video on the internet serves as a conceptual and isolating escape for the protagonist until she performs the spectrality with her body and looks back at the reader. Nevertheless, even her performance is accompanied by the projected live streaming video on a screen to the last minute. As Sister Edgar also ends up in cyberspace, DeLillo's ironic implication seems to be that there is no way we can sever our perception of reality from televisual images that surround us.

On the other hand, Ondaatje's Sri Lankan ghosts in *Anil's Ghost* call for a certain spiritual and artistic ritual that feels less pertinent to the specific historical and political setting of the novel. Yet on a closer look, the ritual is rendered meaningful precisely

because it is set against a western journalist's view that considers people of Sri Lanka mere objects of investigation and represents them as such to the west. The non-visual and relational way of recognizing people the ritual represent makes the reader realize the absence of the real people and their tragic deaths in a poignant way as it should be recognized. In *Slow Man*, an old amputee's idea of the sacred originality of art is thwarted by an immigrant teenager's playful computer modification of some old photos. The electronic media in the novel thus plays a paradoxical role of confirming the spectrality of all pictures in the first place. Meanwhile, a peculiar ghost of the author, whose former haunting is known only to the reader, ironically and paradoxically urges him to attend to the mundane needs of the body, to other people with flesh and blood. The ghosts of these novels, thus, are also radically different from those in other popular gothic narratives in the sense that they ultimately attempt to dissociate from and cancel the effects of technical specters that facilitate an amnesia of the "real" people that, by definition, cannot be represented through spectral devices.

These ironic attempts to restore immediacy through ghosts resonate with a need that is pertinent to various cultural challenges the authors recognize. For Morrison, it is superficial postmodern culture which is preoccupied with surface images only, as Fredric Jameson describes the culture in "Postmodernism or the Cultural logic of Late Capitalism." For DeLillo, it is the real-time or live streaming videos on the World Wide Web, along with other visual and communicative teletechnologies he stages. For Ondaatje, it is the straight, one-directional gaze of the western journalist in the globalized world, and for Coetzee, it is the self-immersed, detached insistence on fixed pictures of the past that erases specificities of the present immigrant's lives and histories. Naturally, Ondaatje and Coetzee's

challenges are more relevant to the so-called globalization, the world-wide domination of late capitalism and postmodern culture supported by multiple technologies of telecommunication like the internet, satellites, TVs, etc.

Thus, while combining general and familiar literary functions of ghosts, these novels add another plane where their spectrality functions. This multi-layered modes of spectrality facilitate a reading in which the text, as a spectral other, demands the reader to notice the figurative and physical absence of certain people with flesh and blood. As the novels themselves coincide with the ghosts they summon, creating an illusion of facing the ghosts directly, it transfers the subversive messages that the ghosts of cultural and political victims carry to the reading time and site. These novels become both a subversive force and a spectral mechanism in contemporary cultural fields.

Ghost Novels

This dissertation attempts to identify and explore the innovative ways contemporary authors devise their narratives after a ghost's haunting in order to experiment and revise the ways they relate to their readers. In the process, I discuss the significance of such formal innovations in the context of the specific cultural and social problems that the respective novels choose to challenge. To this end, I chose novels that reverse the Enlightenment process of the uncanny while still bearing strong traces of it. *Love*, *The Body Artist*, *Anil's Ghost*, and *Slow Man*, the four novels I have chosen to discuss in my dissertation, exemplify various ways this literary haunting can be formulated and utilized to negotiate historical and contemporary cultural tasks the authors set for their novels, while imagining new ways to position their readers. Taken together, these novels

stage ghostly figures that not only haunt the fictional world created by the novels themselves, but also the space between the novel and the reader.

In *Love*, *The Body Artist*, *Anil's Ghost*, and *Slow Man*, Toni Morrison, Don DeLillo, Michael Ondaatje, and J.M. Coetzee undertake extreme experiments with the form of the novel and the trope of ghosts. By employing ghosts that primarily affect the reader's experience of the novel, they explore new ways to interact with the reader. For instance, the four novels at first replicate a dominant mode of seeing or representation, and then shock the reader by performing the ghosts that arise from the blind spots such a mode of seeing inevitably creates. Because these ghost novels thus expose how dependent the reader is on popular spectral images, the reader is made to see that the disavowal of what cannot be perceived through usual frameworks of observation generates epistemic violence. Moreover, the authors have designed their novels in such a way that the discovery of their ghosts is a surprise and shock to the reader. Because of this, the novels force their readers to become conscious of their act of reading, challenging them to examine unarticulated assumptions that their reading practice involves and shares with the cultures the novels problematize.

The fact that these novels are written by the writers whose name is recognized in the international book market signifies a new mode of staging and challenging a postmodern problem in the global age: proliferation of over simplified images and their reproduction system that obliterate contemporary others as well as history. The ghosts resuscitate both the disconcerting effect of textual haunting as well as that of repressed cultural and/or political memories. Through these multifaceted haunting, the authors attempt to magnify the potential of their fiction in a cultural field saturated with superficial

visual images that replace flesh and blood. The novels seek to return what has been forgotten or dismissed—the specific faces of other people—to disturb the reader’s comfortable and safe reading space with an imaginary “real” power. By designing the novel as an encounter with the ghost it conjures up, these four authors imbue the narrative with the disturbing power of haunting. Their ghosts break out of the world of phantoms, paradoxically representing the corporeality of others and traversing the border between the book and the reader—like the female ghost that crawl out of the screen in the movie *The Ring*.

In so-called ethnic American novels, ghosts mark lost heritage and history, and Morrison’s ghosts, including Beloved in *Beloved*, are no exception. To demonstrate that past or shadowy social forces control present life, social analyst Avery Gordon mentions *Beloved* in her book *Ghostly Matters*. According to Gordon, a phase of history that is too horrifying, too debilitating or too brutal to be registered in direct historical narrative impinges on the present as phenomena of “haunting,” and *Beloved* is one of those instances of haunting. Indeed, ghosts like the baby Beloved in *Beloved* do appear to represent powerlessness of a certain social class and the repressed memory of them. Similarly, in *Cultural Haunting* by Kathleen Brogan, *Beloved* is a prime example of literary ghosts that “signal an attempt to recover and make social use of a poorly documented, partially erased cultural history” (2). At the very end of the novel, it is indicated that the reader is to remember that *Beloved* the ghost is still haunting, but for the characters, the baby ghost is exorcized by the end, which is presented as a more desirable condition than its constant presence.

In her next novel, *Paradise*, Morrison also portrays the women of the Convent as living presences after some of them have been murdered. According to Linda Krumholz, this requires of the reader an act of imagination so that “readers ‘raise the dead’ insofar as the dead characters on the page come alive within the reader” (307). In *Paradise*, however, it is Morrison’s focus lies more on exploring “whether or not race-specific, race-free language is both possible and meaningful in narration” (Home 9), to “free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially informed and determined chains” (Playing xi). Morrison continues with her experiment with the narrative voice in *Jazz*: the book itself turns out to be the omnipresent ghostly narrator at the end. *Love* is the novel in which Morrison combines all these experiments with ghosts and narrative voice. In *Love*, Morrison employs yet another eponymous female ghost. Yet this time, Love in *Love* is a ghost that is a character in the novel, the main narrator of the novel, and the novel itself. Significantly, *Love* is Morrison’s novel whose setting is in the late twentieth century. I chose Morrison’s novel *Love*, thus, to discuss the connection between this formal and thematic innovation and the way Morrison portrays and diagnoses the contemporary American society and culture.

In *Love*, Morrison tricks the reader into trusting the narrator to be a specific character in the narrative, and in identifying with her point of view, the reader witnesses her murder the patriarch of the novel. Only toward the end of the novel is it revealed that the narrator has been dead all along. This plot reversal makes the reader become more conscious of what consists of a common reading practice, and look for something more than what the reader can “see.” Morrison contrasts the images of “wild women,” sensual bodily images of women that are constantly produced, circulated and consumed, with

“the winsome baby girl” inside African American women. The novel shows that 20th American society defined African American women only in their symbolic relationship to the Father, portraying them only as a good daughter or a slut. To give another option to the women, the ghost of *Love* kills the patriarchal authority in the novel. Morrison creates an inter-space between the world inside the novel and the reader’s world, and by making the space a haunted murder site, makes the reader an accomplice in this symbolic murder. At the end of the novel, the spectral site is left without a Father, and an unobstructed dialogue between female characters’ ghosts begins to fill the space.

For postmodern writers like Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo, the spectral is often strangely connected with modern technologies. Pynchon’s work, indeed, abound with ghostly entities: the Yuroks and Thanatoids, who exist in the state of being "like death, only different," in *Vineland*; the ghost of Mason’s wife and a murdered ghost from Cock Lane in *Mason and Dixon*. However, the author does not give these ghosts any thematic preeminence; they are just a part of broad spectrum of supernatural beings that Pynchon displays in his works. Pynchon’s supernatural entities include: an amorous mechanical duck that achieves eternal motion, Chinese martial arts expert, a talking dog named Fang, a Golem, a performing electric eel, a man who turns into a beaver when the full moon is out, a huge evil worm, people who live underground, and talking clocks. These wild varieties of beings endow Pynchon’s novels with what Brian McHales calls “ontological pluralism” of postmodern novels.

In a similarly motley way, as I have mentioned above, DeLillo makes a ghost haunt a commercial billboard in *Underworld*. Also, at one moment, the toxic storm in *White Noise* almost becomes spiritual. I discuss *The Body Artist* to investigate this peculiar

concoction of the spectral and the technological, because the short novel not only continues to pursue this kind of mixed spectrality, but also pushes it to the extreme so that it is made to mark the absence of what it supersedes: the body. By the end of *The Body Artist*, the body of the protagonist fleshes out the ghost that has been haunting her and looks into the reader's eyes. A Lacanian analysis of the protagonist reveals the how the perennial problem of human subject is newly thematized and framed by tele-technological devices that are inseparable from everyday American life.

As many critics have pointed out, *The Body Artist* is dissimilar to DeLillo's previous novels in its small scale and limited focus on the trauma of an individual. What seems less noticed in critiques of this novel is the direct way it aspires to transfer the confusion and the loss the protagonist feels to the reader. Contemplating on the spectrality of the novel, Nicholas Royle points out that

The Body Artist is concerned with ghosts in a relatively traditional sense, in other words, with the ways in which a loved one doesn't die when he (or she) dies: ghosts are about mourning refused or impossible. And the text is also about more distinctively contemporary manifestations of spectrality, for example in the form of voice-recordings and webcams. But ghostliness in DeLillo's work is perhaps, above all, about the littlest things (a paper clip, for example) and the eerie ways in which this is connected to and disconnected from everything else.

(Clippings 2)

In my second chapter, I focus on analyzing the narrative structure of *The Body Artist* that enables this haunting—of both “littlest things” and “voice-recordings and webcams”--, and discuss the impact it is designed to have on the reader.

As the novel *The Body Artist* closely follows its protagonist's psychology, I place a psychoanalytic reading of trauma at the center of this chapter. Borrowing from Lacan's theory of the Real, I analyze how the novel returns the gaze of the reader, catching the reader in her conventional distanced reading practice that is replicated and then deconstructed in the novel at the same time. Traumatized by her husband's sudden suicide, the protagonist of the novel, Lauren, attempts to turn away from her reality by absorbing herself in a live video webcam. A mysterious figure abruptly materializes in her isolated house and disrupts both the protagonist's traumatized life and the reader's understanding of the narrative. The visual image of the skull-shaped blot in Holbein's *Ambassador* that Lacan uses in his illustration the Real is a useful metaphorical tool in analyzing the textual haunting of this novel because Lauren is a body artist, and the novel dramatizes its performance in a visual way through her. The performance of Lauren at the end of the novel challenges a tendency that survived the 18th century: "our antipathy toward the body and its contingencies, our rejection of the present, our fixation on the past (or yearnings for an idealized future), our longing for simulacra and nostalgic fantasy. We are all in love with what isn't there (Castle 137)." More recently, DeLillo stages a similarly performing body that embodies trauma and absence in *Falling Man*.

As in the works by ethnic American writers, it is not difficult to find ghosts that mark an absence in cultural or historical representation in postcolonial writers' works. Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* is a good example of this. Ghosts frequently appear in the book, as when Rosa Diamond, an old English woman who has "the gift, the phantom-sight (130)" recount her story to Gibreel Farishta, a protagonist of the novel, who might be a ghost himself, having been on the plane that exploded over the English Channel.

However, I chose to discuss Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, because the novel not only traces the question of the spectralized others to the formation of Western subject, but also suggests a different way of conceiving and dealing with ghosts by introducing a unique artistic tradition.

Drawing on Benjamin's notion of animating the remains of history, David Eng and David Kazanjian take up the question of how loss can be productive. Rather than being merely a lack, the empty spaces left behind by loss can be thought of as "a field in which the past is brought to bear witness for the present—as a flash of emergence, and instant of emergency, and a moment of production" (Loss 5). As *Love* found creative use of African American women's absence in the symbolic plane of visual images, *Anil's Ghost* conjures up ghosts from the absences left by the Sri Lankan civil war. *Anil's Ghost* has been heavily criticized for its lack of active engagement in the local Sri Lankan politics; nevertheless, I argue that by pointing to the absence of those who were murdered, Ondaatje aims to elicit respect and sympathy for those who suffered. As he did in *The English Patient*, Ondaatje initiates a textual haunting to ask us to reckon with the unremembered. The novel stages the tension between the desire to create a totalizing narrative of the past and the disruption of that order due to the shifting ontology of the specter memory invokes (Textual Haunting 226). While the narrative haunts the readers, what become prominent are the ghosts of those people who were victimized in the political turmoil of Sri Lanka.

The Enlightenment sought to visualize the unseen as a way to rationalize it. For instance, the thermometer, the "so-called weather-glass" was "a bold manifestation of the urge toward the rationalization of the unseen (Castle 15)" This fascination with light and seeing is also informative of the modern western philosophical tradition. In Kas Saghafi's

words, “Philosophy needs to *know*, to comprehend, it must have *knowledge*. It needs to be certain. For this knowing, philosophy relies on sight, on a certain seeing.” (Apparitions 2)

Anil, a forensic scientist educated in the west, follows this tradition and attempts to play the role of the detective by collecting visual evidences of a political murder in chaotic Sri Lanka of the novel. Yet the author implies that such an impulse is caused by vulnerability and immaturity like those of a scared child. In the process, the narrative figuratively blinds the main characters and the reader as in an eye ceremony in which the artist does not look at his artwork directly. Ondaatje emphasizes the fact the reader cannot but be blind to a certain aspect of these horrific experiences of the others. Ondaatje also highlights the importance of acknowledging one’s inability to grasp the other totally, and of remitting the control over the other, while also conveying the importance of sympathy. Among the ancient remains and dead human bodies, and in a political situation where proper memorial is still impossible, the novel attempts to open up a dialogue with those who lost their lives.

Coetzee, according to Nicho Israel, is one of the few innovative writers of globalization, probably because he reflects on colonial remnants and the western literary tradition in a world with porous national borders in his works and his life (1). *Slow Man* is the first novel Coetzee published after he moved to Australia for permanent residency. Coetzee carries the postcolonial and literary questions he had dealt with in his previous books, but *Slow Man* is peculiar in the sense that Coetzee employs a ghost double of himself as an author to pursue these topics further. In the late 1990s, as if to elude the chronic criticism against the lack of political interest in his works, Coetzee replaced himself with a female fictional author, Elizabeth Costello, in his public speeches. In the collection of these lectures, Costello appears to face death in the second to last chapter, “At

the Gate.” In *Slow Man*, however, Coetzee resurrects this puzzling double of his and lets her enter the novel. Ironically, Costello the ghost is the possible author of the novel *Slow Man*, yet she still carries her solid body in the novel. Through the aching body of an aged amputee, Paul, and the old, unattractive body of Costello, the novel insists that the reader focus on the banal materiality of individual bodies and their relationship to each other.

Paul, however, is a photographer who prefers pictures to real human beings. He is a character who represents the tradition of Enlightenment, as photography, according to Castle, is an invention that exemplified the process in which “real human beings” become “ghostly,” as people found that “one’s mental images of other people are more real in some sense, and far more satisfying, than any unmediated confrontation with them” (135).

Through interaction with Costello and with his Croatian caretaker Marijana, Paul learns the limitations of his preferences. Marijana’s family immigrated to Australia only recently, fleeing from the Yugoslavian civil war. At first, Paul only sees stereotypes in place of her and her family members. Peculiarly, however, a breakthrough comes from electronic technologies. The teenage son of Marijana playfully modifies two of the pictures from Paul’s collection and displays them on the internet, destroying Paul’s rigid concept of precious original and stereotypical images of others. The author seems to argue that the philosophical question of alterity cannot stand without considering and respecting real people with flesh and blood. Ironically, by employing a figure he used to erase himself, Coetzee emphasizes the importance of the reader taking the experience of reading as a significant and urgent task as taking care of another’s body.

Conversing with Ghosts, or Ethics of Reading

Speculating on the effect globalization on the form of contemporary novels, Nico Israel remarks that “contemporary era’s most powerful, path-breaking literary writers” conveys “the import of globalization as both multilateral ethical conundrum and horizon of promise (4).’ Indeed, for some of most influential and innovative contemporary writers, conjuring up a ghost that haunts the space between the novel and the reader seems to be a way to convert political issues to those of ethics. This does not mean that Morrison, DeLillo, Ondaatje and Coetzee underestimate the significance of historical and cultural problems that generate the ghosts they invoke in the first place. Yet without dismissing the possibility of political intervention, the authors seem to be primarily interested in exploring a relationship that can incur responsibility between their novels and their readers.

Their novels’ narrative strategy is indicative of postmodern response to globalization in its way that transforms political problems of representation into those of the ethics of reading through sometimes playful and often experimental employment of spectral figures. Because their novels are fashioned after haunting of a ghost, for their readers, reading becomes a singular event³ of encountering the ghosts that the books summon—a reality of an other that the reader has to deal with first and foremost. Yet because this other is presented as a ghost, an oscillating entity that points to something else—an absence in history, discourse, cultural field, and/or consciousness—than itself, the reader’s response to it needs to be more creative and complex than what Derek Attridge seems to imply by comparing a text to a human other⁴. Consequently, by analyzing the

³ For Derrida, the event is “another name for that which, in the thing that happens, we can neither reduce for deny. It is another name of experience itself, which is always experience of the other” (Echographies, 11). In other words, it is unrepeatable experience of encountering an unexpected other, which, in the context of my dissertation, is the ghost that the novels simulate.

⁴ See Derek Attridge, *JM Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading: Literature in the Event*.

narrative strategies of these novels, it is possible to discern the ethical options the authors experiment within a cultural field inundated with visual differences that are ubiquitous and common, yet because of this very fact, are mediated and manipulated.

This tendency is most conspicuous in Ondaatje's and Coetzee's novels, but is also present in the work of DeLillo, who has shown great interest in exploring implications of globalization in his previous works. In his next work after *The Body Artist*, *Cosmopolis*, the author moves on to contemplate on the same issue with another ghostly figure. Similarly, while Morrison is more concerned with investigating contemporary images of female body that disguise the limited roles that have been traditionally available to African American Women, her narrative scheme is exemplary of the spectral that contemporary novels employ to negotiate the problems of representation and alterity. And even her novel reveals that isolation is not a feasible alternative in the contemporary world, and therefore, it is important to explore how best to approach interactions between different cultural and political identities while constantly revising history.

Thus, despite these novels' ethical inclination, their potential of political power exceeds that of the general textual haunting. While dealing with the specters, the reader cannot but realize how reality—the social conception of it— is “constructed,” and how there are important elements excluded from it. The function of reminding the reader of the gap between the representation and the real can be transformed into a potential for political subversiveness. When reading *Love*, the reader learns of the disabling gap between individual African American women and conventional and historical representations of them. The ghost in *The Body Artist* warns of the dangerous similarity and difference

Attridge argues that the reader is responsible before a work of literature just as he or she is before another human being.

between real-time and the reality. The disappeared in *Anil's Ghost* confronts the reader demanding drastic revision of the way the readers see and relate to the people in the third world. The ghostly yet corporeal author in *Slow Man* reminds the reader of the need for responsible and direct interaction with and care of the others.

Of course, it is not possible to generalize and theorize what happens when a reader reads the novels, as individual reading time is not accessible to scientific analysis (Heise 15*). However, it is possible to analyze the endeavors to affect and control reading experience. Indeed, what makes a story a ghost story is not haunting of a ghost, but a particular sequencing of events and narrative style. Indeed the tradition of gothic stories includes active manipulation of the reader's experience of the narrative. In Jill Matus' words, "In ghost stories, as in trauma, the sanctity of ordered time is violated as the past intrudes on the present" (Matus 427-8). Most often, the sense of disturbed linearity or chronology arises also from the fact that the reader seems to be taking part in something that has already happened. That is, the narrative is itself part of some uncanny repetition. Ironically, this experience of disruption in narrative linearity emphasizes the reader's present in which the reading happens, the present that does not belong to the linear chronology that any fiction establishes and then disturbs in turn. An ethical reading that *Love, The Body Artist, Anil's Ghost* and *Slow Man* provoke would be active and responsible response to their ghosts and particular others whose absence the ghosts marks, which will initiate, in turn, a radical and constant revision of the reader's self.

As Derrida points out, dealing with specters demands consideration of responsibility and justness, as the haunting of the specter forces the present to carry within it an "impossible history" (Derrida 1994, 39), a history that disorders the present. As noted

in the epigraph, the present can only be accessed through its relationship with the past, and the way we live the present formulates the future. Opening a dialogue with ghosts as *Love*, *The Body Artist*, *Anil's Ghost* and *Slow Man* do, thus concerns reconfiguration of the past and the present, as well as reformation of individual and communal responsibility to the dead and the unborn:

It is necessary to speak *of the* ghost, indeed *to the* ghost and *with* it, from the moment that no ethics no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable and *just* that does not recognize in its principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born... (Specters of Marx xix, italics original)

Therefore, the specter also is predicated on the future: “without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who *are not there*, of those who are no longer or who are not yet *present and living*, what sense would there be to ask the question ‘where?’ ‘where tomorrow?’ ‘whither?’” (xviii) Thus, conjuring up a ghost that haunts the reader reveals the novelists’ desire to confront the reader from a position that is pertinent and responsible to local and global histories. However, because the specter emerges from the limits of human understanding, this position is an absent and shifting.

In a short postscript to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno points out that “the disturbed relationship with the dead—forgotten and embalmed—is one of the symptoms of the sickness of experience today. (215).” If this is true, then, the four contemporary authors’ effort to make their readers speak to and hear from ghosts is an attempt to restore a wholeness in human experience. In a short eulogy for

the dead of September 11, Morrison writes: “If I can pluck courage here, I would like to speak directly to the dead” (154). Talking to the dead needs courage because it requires one to reorient oneself in relation to the past and opening one’s present for the unknown future without any pretense or excuse. And even though talking to the dead does not amount to an active political consciousness, it does offer a platform for engagement across cultural borders. Morrison calls upon “those children of ancestors born in every continent on the planet: Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas, Australia; born of ancestors who wore kilts, obis, saris, gelees, wide straw hats, yarmulkas, goat skin, wooden shoes, feathers and cloths to cover their hair” indiscriminately, as “the dead are free, absolute, they cannot be seduced by blitz” (154). Thus, “Speaking to the broken and the dead is too difficult for a mouth full of blood” (154). Conversing with the dead occurs beyond or below political and cultural differences, and consequently compels a reading ethics that is anti-universalist, anti-fundamentalist and non-prescriptive; ethics that is derived from a respect and responsibility for the Other and thus retains the political potential in its very conception.

Chapter 1

Exorcising the Father's Ghost: *Love* as a Ghost Book

Ghosts are scary because the person who is haunted by them cannot dismiss them at will; ghosts return on their own, intruding into the safest place. Ghosts' autonomy is what differentiates them from simulacral images. The living cannot affect ghosts in the way that we can control the spectralized and internalized images of the other people. As a result, we cannot forget about ghosts or the demands they make. In the movie *The Ring*, the video tape that contains the murderous ghost plays itself even though people turn it off. In other words, it is the ghost who is active while the haunted remain passive. Coming out of the screen, the female ghost kills the terrified viewers with a glare from her empty eye sockets. Consequently, like Hamlet facing his father's ghost, the viewer cannot distance herself from the simulacra and just consume it; the viewer has to assume the responsibility of responding to the task the ghost presents if she wants to stay alive.

Toni Morrison's latest novel, *Love*, employs similar gothic tricks to play on the reader's assumptions about reality. In the preface to *Love*, Toni Morrison explains the experiment she performs in the novel thus:

I liked so much the challenge that writing *Jazz* gave me: breaking or dismissing conventional rules of composition to replace them with other, stricter rules. In that work, the narrative voice was the book itself, its physical and spatial confinement made irrelevant by its ability to imagine, invent, interpret, err, and change. In *Love*, the material struck me as longing for a similar freedom—but this time with an embodied, participating voice. (x)

She continues to say that the observer and narrator of *Love* is “not restricted by chronology or space—or the frontier between life and not-life” (x). Through a ghost narrator that is not restricted by chronology or space, but is embodied and participating, the primary site of haunting is transferred to the reader’s familiar experience of reading, troubling and questioning the reader’s subjectivity and sense of reality. Like the spectator of *The Ring*, the reader of *Love* encounters a ghost protruding out of an ordinary medium, as L, the ghost narrator of *Love*, transforms the novel into a ghost that crawls out to the transfixed reader with a certain glaring absence. By transgressing the boundary between the text/the imaginary and the reader/ the real, *Love* activates a spectral space that intrudes into the reader’s safe reading space, radically revising the text’s relationship with the reader.

Through the spectral space opened by the visitation of the ghost novel/narrator, the reader witnesses a murder committed in an attempt to redress the historical process in which American daughters become re-subjected to their fathers. As a result, the in-between spectral space becomes a haunted site of crime, and the text positions the reader as a witness, accomplice and victim, pressing her with complex and vital responsibilities each of the positions entails. Furthermore, Morrison portrays African American women’s failure to develop a self-sufficient and autonomous individuality due to their psychological as well as economic subjection to the murdered father in the novel. As Morrison said in an interview, *Love* is as much about how African American women participate in their own oppression as it is about the patriarchal system that oppresses them: “Patriarchy is assumed, but women have to agree with the role. You have to say, ‘This is the most important person in m life.’ It’s not that [Cosey] gobbles them up, but they allow

themselves to be eaten” (O’Connor 1). Likewise, the reader not only indirectly witnesses the harm this symbolic lack has done, but also partly experiences the harm herself, as Morrison partly replicates the fracture in the representation of the African American women characters in the novel to expose that the reader’s reading practice endorses such a failure. By enticing the reader to read the narrative in a certain way until a surprising truth is revealed at the end, Morrison forces the reader to revise her reading of the text and understanding of reality substantially.

The Father and His Daughters

Set on the Atlantic coast, *Love* portrays lives of three women whose lives are shaped by Bill Cosey, the African American proprietor of the once “best known vacation spot for colored folk on the East Coast,” even after his death (6). In the present of the novel, 1993, Cosey has been dead for several years already and his resort is closed down. Heed, Cosey’s second wife, hires Junior, an 18-year-old girl freshly out of prison, to secure her ownership of his property against Cosey’s granddaughter and her own childhood friend, Christine. L is the second narrator who narrates about one third of *Love*; L, also, is already dead at the start of the novel, though it is not revealed to the reader. When alive, L, who was the head chef in Cosey’s resort, is said to have had priestly authority that checked and balanced the “kingly power” of Cosey (45).

In her essay "Unspeakable Things Unspoken," Morrison emphasizes the important work of first sentences in her novels. In *Love*, the first sentence the reader hears is the ghost L’s humming: “The women’s legs are wide open, so I hum” (3). In this sentence, a sensual image of women’s body visually eclipses the effect of the short second part of the sentence,

“so I hum,” but as almost inaudible as it is, L’s humming does accompany the image, as it does the reader’s comprehension of the narrative. Throughout the novel, the reader directly listens to L’s voice. The fact that L is dead is not revealed until the last pages of the novel when Christine and Heed, during their final dialogue, casually mention L’s death. Until then, as Jean Wyatt notices in her essay “*Love’s Time and the Reader*,” L’s authority as a narrator is overshadowed by “the third person narrative apparatus,” which is “biased toward the interests of the man and permeated by patriarchal assumptions about human relations” (200).

In the last chapter of the novel, the reader finds out that L dies before Christine returns to One Monarch Street, the family residence of the Coseys, to live; and at the start of the novel, Christine has been living in the house for more than ten years. As in most Gothic genres, the appearance of a ghost here disrupts the perception of temporal order. However, contrary to *Beloved*, who appears with a concrete body to disrupt the characters’ lives in *Beloved*, L’s haunting is never fully recognized by the living characters.⁵ Since none of *Love’s* characters are affected by the existence of L’s phantom, haunting in this case works exclusively on the reader’s memory of the narrative. It is only the reader who can hear L’s voice—her inaudible “humming” as L calls it. Because the reader directly listens to L without any reservation, L becomes the central figure in the reader’s experience of reading. When L’s death is revealed belatedly, the reader realizes that she has been haunted by L’s ghost all the time she was reading the novel.

Because L is a specter that oscillates between life/presence and death/absence, her voice opens a chasm in the orderly representation of reality ruled by patriarchy, and

⁵ For a comparison of how love is featured in *Beloved* and *Love*, see Wardi, Anissa. “A Laying on of Hands: Toni Morrison and the Materiality of *Love*.”

through the fissure, the reader confronts another kind of ‘reality,’ that is, the repressed reality of African American women’s lives in the latter half of the 20th century. Heed and Christine first meet in 1940, and fifty-two-year-old Cosey marries eleven-year-old Heed in 1942. As many sociologists have noticed, girls began to grasp popular, as well as academic, attention beginning in the early 1940s in America.

In the 1940s, when Christine and Heed entered their teenage years, American culture witnessed unique change in the representation of the father-daughter relationship. Rachel Delvin, in her book *Relative Intimacy: Fathers, Adolescent Daughters, and Postwar American Culture*, argues that the relationship between fathers and adolescent daughters was highlighted and eroticized in the period during and after World War II. Heed and Christine’s teenage years coincide with the period in American history that witnessed a reconfiguration of the relationship between fathers and their adolescent daughters. Because there were fewer men at work during World War II, adolescents and women had to assume economic responsibility previously unavailable to them, and thus became socially more active and culturally more visible. American society perceived this change as a threat to its traditional patriarchal order and contrived ways to re-contain women and adolescents under patriarchal authority.

Girls, doubly alienated by their age and gender, became the primary target of this project. From the Forties to the Fifties, an unprecedented rise of teenage girls’ “delinquency”⁶ was reported, and applying the Oedipus complex, the psychoanalytic

⁶ This is the beginning of the cult of teenagers that persists even today. Already in the late forties and early fifties, as the cultural historians have already studied, American adolescence was recognized as a distinct generation with its own worldview and consumer power. “The 1940s and 1950s have widely been envisioned as the historical moment when teenagers dramatically and self-consciously separated themselves from adults, including their parents, and America became an “age stratified society” (Delvin 4).

paradigm that dominated the contemporary American cultural scene, post-war American sociologists interpreted the phenomenon as the result of girls' unsatisfactory relationship to their fathers. According to the contemporary application of Freudian theory, girls' sexuality should have been recognized and appreciated first by their fathers in order to prevent them from growing up to be "sluts." All the loves that would come later in the daughters' lives were thought to be the shadows of this primal erotic relationship. Consequently, the importance of the paternal role in daughters' sexual growth was greatly emphasized at the expense of mothers'. Maternal control over children was severely criticized to have bad effect on the psychological health of the children. Instead of mothers, it was now the fathers who had to play the important role in a daughter's growth, and girls were defined by the relationship to their fathers, i.e. as daughters. By making fathers responsible for girls' sexual development, the dominant culture sought to keep its control over female sexuality. Girls were mainly defined by the relationship to their fathers, i.e. as daughters, and thus brought back under their fathers' authority in a full circle⁷:

Though adolescent girls might have been more "on their own" in certain ways, in others, their relationship with their fathers was imbued with unprecedented intimacy, sexual power, and cultural prominence (significantly, at the expense of their relationships with their mothers.)... the locus of the father's role might have shifted—from protector and occasional 'companion' to Oedipal object—but in the process the paternal role was actually enhanced rather than diminished. (Devlin 135)

⁷ L resists such a vicious circle by spotting another primal relationship—that between Heed

One other important aspect of the ‘ideal’ relationship between fathers and daughters that was advertised by the media of the time was girls’ power and need to consume products. Fathers and daughters were often portrayed together when fathers were buying dresses, hats, cosmetics, etc. for their daughters. Cosey buying Heed new clothes and accessories during their honeymoon eerily reflects this phenomenon. Under the father’s superior monetary authority, girls were introduced as the consumer at the same time when they were becoming the object of desire—initially, in the oedipal paradigm of the forties and fifties, of the father, and later, of other men. The necessary economic wealth to provide for daughters made this new type of father- daughter relationship as a hallmark of white middle and upper class families. Thus, Christine’s belated sixteenth birthday and graduation party reveals how African American families sought to emulate “the modern, Oedipally inflected, and commercially oriented relationship established between fathers and adolescent daughters” that served as an assertion of class and racial status (Delvin 145). At her sixteenth birthday party, Christine wears a new dress, is led by Cosey to the party, and dances her first dance with Cosey; she is thought to be “an oh-so-pretty-girl-in-perfectly-beautiful gown, proof and consequence of racial uplift and proper dreams” (168). This party scene parodies the popular stories of beautiful debutantes that were frequently covered by *Ebony* and *Jet* in the 1940s.⁸

Christine’s birthday party scene, however, also stages complications African Americans faced in their attempt to imitate white middle class conventions. The eroticization of the father-daughter relationship necessarily evoked the taboo of incest, and

and Christine.

⁸ The African American debutante’s famous fathers always served as their daughters’ symbolic and economic reference point. See Delvin, 134.

this problem was particularly troublesome to African American families. First of all, in a racially discriminatory society, an African American man could never occupy the symbolic place of the Father. Second, medical and cultural discourses of the time represented African American men as hypersexual, so African American fathers were thought to lack the sexual constraint that ideal white fathers were thought to possess. Thus, due to the “cultural tensions surrounding the sexual status of African American men and the historic representation of African American people as hypersexual in medical and cultural discourses (135),” such father-daughter relationship was impossible to replicate for African Americans. During Christine’s birthday party at the Cosey Hotel, Heed shows up wearing a red slip dress and dances with other men to impress and irritate Cosey. Cosey humiliates her before all the guests, and escapes the place to meet Celestial. Read through the Oedipal paradigm of the period, Christine competes with, and then is defeated by Heed and Celestial in her sexual appeal. When she is about to be sent away again, Christine inwardly protests to Cosey to “look at [her] good now,” because Cosey “never once looked at her,” who was “standing there in a movie star’s gown, rhinestones glittering its top”(135). That night, Christine runs away to arrive at Manila’s, a whore house, “Celestial territory” (92). In other words, Christine consciously applies the Oedipal, wealthy father-daughter relationship formula of the time to her life and resents the absence of its content--the father’s recognition of and affection for her.

Girls of the Fifties were pictured as flirtatious and bossy, using their sexual charm consciously and profitably. The white middle class fathers were supposed to be sarcastic yet secretly proud of the girl’s control over her sexuality. However, due to the racial prejudice concerning African Americans’ sexuality and the lack of a trustworthy Father

figure, African American girls were thought to be in danger of growing up to be prostitutes. And as African Americans were commonly thought to be sexually excessive, the aspiring African American families tried to keep away from even the slightest hint of sexuality, not to mention incest.⁹ May's desperate attempt to separate Christine from the minutest hints of sexuality can be understood in these terms.

Understandably, Up Beach, where Heed's family is from, is detested by May, the daughter of a preacher, mainly because of their sexual licentiousness. In the eyes of the aspiring, insecure, and anxious African American class to which May belongs, the onset of adolescence, a moment when sexual desires emerge just as it is depicted in Heed's first encounter with Cosey, threatens the very foundation they stand on—the assumption that they are superior to other African Americans because they resemble white Americans. Preacher was among the handful respected jobs available to African Americans, and as a preacher's daughter, May tries to “ennoble” Cosey's family by making up stories about its “respectable” history. May's concerns, along with that of Julia, Cosey's first wife, echo that of African American elite class of the time. Rich, lighter-skinned African American elite class tried hard to ascend the social ladder by emulating white upper class and discriminating other African American people.

It seems that Morrison purposely mentions *Anna Lucasta* (1945), the first popular play with all-black casting, because the play dramatizes the father-daughter incest motif.

The protagonist of the play, the daughter of an African American family, is a whore; and

⁹ Rachel Delvin reports that there existed a similar fascination with bobby-soxers in the 1950s. “Depictions of the consumerism, achievements, an debutante balls of the African American middle-class teenage girl were a staple of *Ebony* magazine, which began publication in 1945. However, such depictions, up until the early 1960s, included fathers and daughters pictured in ways that were much more restrained and physically distanced than they were in white culture.” (11)

not surprisingly, the African American father in the play is portrayed as not only lacking economic ability to provide for his daughter, but also the sexual detachment from his daughter. African Americans of the 1940s were proud of the success of *Anna Lucasta* because it dealt with African American life as its main subject, and because it was played by African American actors; yet they refused to see the play as representing specifically African American experience. The play was successful, however, because white Americans, who constituted most of the audience of *Anna Lucasta* because they could afford it, praised the play for being true to the life (Delvin 139).

In *Love*, the image of the patriarch of the novel, Cosey, quickly dissipates into its antithesis, the girl, exposing a paradoxical burden African American men have to shoulder. Because there is no Father to emulate, African American sons do not have a foothold for their male identity. This makes sons feel that he is in constant danger of becoming feminine. Such anxiety characterizes both Cosey in the 1950's, and a teenage boy, Romen, in the 1990's,¹⁰ indicating that the same problem persists today. The racial prejudice presented a paradoxical double burden to African Americans—they had to resist racial stereotypes designated to them, yet in order to accomplish it, they had to employ another racially marked stereotype whose defining characteristics were defined as the lack or absence of the qualities manifested in the African American stereotypes. Morrison thus enwraps not only the women characters, but also Romen, and even the Father of the female characters, Cosey himself, with the image of the girl. Sandler, Cosey's friend for occasional fishing trip, remembers that Cosey's complaints against his women were "girlish." Moreover, Cosey follows "childish yearnings that could thrive only in a meadow

¹⁰ For the implications of the name Romen, see Tessa Roynon's "A new 'Romen' Empire: Toni Morrisons' *Love* and the Classics."

of girlish dreams” because he lives under the influence of his own father, Dark (45). Cosey’s easy-going, fun-loving style results from his desperate attempt to distance himself from Dark, who was a courthouse informer who reported to the white police “where a certain colored boy was hiding, who sold liquor, who had an eye on what property, what was said at church meetings, who was agitating to vote, collecting money for a school” (68). Cosey confesses to Sandler that he once informed on an African American man to help his father, and when the man was publicly punished, a little girl followed the convicted man, crying helplessly. The girl eventually tripped in horse shit and everybody laughed at her (45). The tellingly confessional tone of the story reveals Cosey’s tacit guilt at causing the girl’s misery. The story can also be read as Cosey’s attempt to become like his father. However, Cosey feels guilty because he cannot stop identifying with the girl. Cosey unconsciously apologizes to this girl by marrying 11-year-old Heed later (139), and Heed’s impoverished family was happy to sell her off. However, L suspects that despite Cosey’s effort to live a life that defies his father’s life, “Dark won out” because Cosey dominates his child bride Heed as Dark dominated the helpless (200).

When we examine Dark closely, the father behind the father Cosey, the image of the African American Father recedes even farther away. Living in a racially discriminating society, Dark was himself only a “boy” to “whites” (68). Even on the level of the narrative, Dark is only a shadowy figure whose name appears only twice in the text. Thus, lurking behind the father, constantly sought for by the girls, “Big Daddy (189)” is always already not there in *Love*.

In the early chapters of the novel, Morrison simulates problems this absence of the Father causes in terms of literary representation. As previously discussed, women are

conceived as daughters in the Fifties. That is, they are only perceived through their subordinate relationship to their fathers, and thus, they owe their existence and position to the Father. However, as the representation of African American men falls apart, it becomes impossible to represent African American daughters. Accordingly, living African American daughters become ghostlier than the nonexistent African American Father.

Cosey's choosing eleven-year-old Heed as his second wife seems to be a part of his doomed attempt to become 'the Father.' Julia, Cosey's beloved first wife, despises Cosey for his sexual appetite and his father's dishonorable history. Julia dies asking for her father, and Cosey, after losing his son, to whom he could have been the Father, marries young Heed wanting "to raise her" (148). The wish for or the wish to become the ideal father in turn creates an ideal and unreal daughter, and this image blocks Cosey from seeing Heed as a real person. When Heed is a mature woman, Cosey reminisces about Heed "as though she were dead" (148), and Cosey's description of the child Heed is that of "a fashion model" (148), far from the real child Heed once was. This is the major problem of representation that produces ghosts in *Love*: the paradoxical position in which African American women are placed in patriarchal society and its representational system.

What happens to Heed happens to Christine and May too; they are displaced by an impossible ideal daughter. In spite of being the only mother in the Cosey Hotel after the Forties, May is more a dutiful daughter than anything else: "Her whole life was making sure those Cosey men had what they wanted. The father more than the son; the father more than her own daughter" (102). May, the daughter of a preacher, reveres the absolute authority of the Father and believes that her life depends on the Father's impeccable moral authority and invincible economic power. Since Billy Boy, May's husband, dies early, her

status and safety rest solely on her position as Cosey's daughter-in-law. May's anxious attempt to keep Christine away from any suggestion of sexuality can be understood as protecting her impossible ideal of Fatherhood, which promises her and her daughter's safety under it. Ultimately, it is through May that patriarchal censor infiltrates the pristine friendship between Heed and Christine—the one relationship that did not need the Father to mediate it.

As for the supposed-to-be-Father, Cosey, he cannot see his daughters, and blinded by his wish to become the Father, he disowns the daughters when their real needs interrupt his image of an ideal daughter. Women, even though they are the main characters of *Love*, are absent in this earlier part of the novel in the sense that their internalized Father, Cosey, who always serves as the symbolic reference point even to the women themselves, is fundamentally impossible. Real women who do not fit into the stereotype cannot be represented in patriarchal conventions, which determine what is real and what is not. Consequently, the portrayal of daughters itself crumbles when *Love* is narrated by the third person narrator, and the reader is lured to read the novel as centered on the character Cosey, or on his failure to be the Father.

While May is the “good girl,” Cosey's long-time mistress, Celestial, is the “bad girl,” the ultimate desire and fear of patriarchy. She stands for repressed female sexuality, the “slut” that girls were to be warned against for fear they might become one. The slut stands on a relatively equal footing with the Father in terms of sexuality, and L reports that as young girls, Heed and Christine are both frightened and thrilled by the female sexuality Celestial suggests. Young Heed and Christine use Celestial's name as a secret code to commend daring acts and speech among themselves. Yet, as noted above, in a patriarchal

representational system, it is impossible to represent a woman without referring her back to her father. Being a slut unattached to a father, Celestial is unrepresentable. Celestial's absence in the third-person narrative thus marks the erased possibility of an autonomous woman.

In contrast, in L's first person narration, women are more important than Cosey. Celestial, for instance is a principal figure in L's hummed story. Police-heads are, according to L, "dirty things with big hats who shoot up out of the ocean to harm loose women and eat disobedient children" (5). In their name, shape, and deeds, these mysterious monsters symbolize the patriarch's authority to proclaim laws, and monitor and punish women and children who do not obey them. The period when they are most active also coincides with the heyday of Cosey's resort, the fifties. When alive, L heard the story of police-heads as a child, and was afraid of them until she saw Celestial openly defying their power. On the night of Christine's belated birthday party, after having sex with Cosey who ran away from the conflict between his women in his hotel, Celestial bathes and swims in the sea. L, who was returning to her home at that moment, sees that police-heads are "on the move then" (106). Celestial, however, is not afraid of them. Police-heads does not, or cannot hurt her. After a graceful dive, Celestial resurfaces and makes "a sound" (106). A sound, that L "wanted to answer" (106). After this moment, L does not mention police-heads or their punishment anymore. It seems that Celestial's voice has exorcised them from L's mind. For the ghost L, the sea is not the home of police-heads, but her lover, "her man" (106). Accordingly, it is Celestial that frees L to secure Cosey's property for May, Christine and Heed against Cosey's resentful will to give it away to Celestial by killing the man she admired as a child.

What is interesting and radical in Morrison's rendering of the father Cosey and the whore Celestial is that they are hooked to each other as the two intertwined Cs engraved on the linens and silverware of Cosey's Hotel. In the 1940's, recovering from the death of his beloved first wife, Cosey ordered new sets of silverware and linens for his resort. While many people thought that the hooked Cs were just ornamental, L suspects that they meant Celestial Cosey (104). However, Christine, who cherishes a small spoon from her childhood with the same engravings on it, likes to believe that the two Cs meant Christine Cosey (73). Indeed, at the intersection of the two Cs, Celestial and Cosey, the whore and the father, Morrison places the image of girls, and it is through this inconspicuous center figure that the father and the whore slide into each other in *Love*.

Even harder to define than the slut, Celestial, L and her ghost complicate the problem of representation further. Morrison makes it clear that L does not fit into any of the stereotypes available to an African American woman, so that even though the reader can "hear" her ghost's voice, it is impossible to "see" her as she is only an elusive presence in the third person narration. In this way, Morrison takes the representational challenge of L and her ghost, and transforms that challenge into a troubling task for the reader. As Megan Sweeney remarks, L is a unique figure that defies "measurement, systemization, and equivalent" (444); in other words, she escapes patriarchal and capitalist stereotypes. In this sense, L is a ghost that comes back as the uncanny of the American patriarchal and capitalist society. And as a ghost narrator, L serves as a transducer that transmits both figurative and literal haunting of the ghosts of the women and the father to the reader.

Ghosts of the Father and the Slut

Celestial and Cosey are presented as individuals with their own personality when they are alive; after death, as specters, they become connected to two culturally invested images, heavily burdened with a long cultural history of America, the father and the whore. As Avery Gordon points out, “the ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life” (Gordon 5). Celestial’s and Cosey’s ghosts reflect a historically specific process that began in mid-20th century America to modify traditional fatherhood in its relationship to female sexuality. L’s effects on ghostly Cosey and Celestial, however, are contrasting. In the 1990’s, the present of the novel, Cosey is a fatherly phantom that is the projection of an absent ideal Father, a spectral image of what the African American community wanted to see. L ultimately banishes Cosey’s ghost. On the other hand, Celestial stands for the repressed female sexuality—what African American community refused to recognize. L conjures her up. By exercising her influence on Cosey and Celestial, L the narrator modulates the spectral dynamics between the two ghosts whose spectral presences haunt *Love*.

Cosey’s figuration as the African American Father begins to change as the dynamics inside Silk and Up Beach alter in the Sixties. Cosey is not revered as the father figure anymore, but is challenged as a race traitor whom the region’s African Americans hate and envy at the same time. Cosey’s hotel begins to decline as it loses its guests to multinational resort corporations. In the present of the novel, the Nineties, the Forties and the Fifties exist only in the reminiscences of the characters who survived the revolutionary Sixties. However, as Christine realizes during the last moments of the Sixties, cultural norms on how a girl should behave do not easily change. Running away from Cosey and

May, Christine joins a revolutionary party during the Sixties. She becomes disillusioned about the party and its cause when she finds out that even a revolutionary party cannot help a girl to be freed from her “Good Daddy Big Man” (166).

In the wake of the long Sixties, the postmodern sets in without solving the problems the rebellious era challenged¹¹. Cosey’s resort, through which he tried to build his illusory fantasy world, is gone; nevertheless, the postmodern world has its own spectral elements to deal with. Raised by May, both Heed and Christine conceive their female sexuality as the original sin and grow up longing for the impossible Father. As a result, when Christine comes back to her home, even long after Cosey’s death, Heed and Christine fight each other for his favor and endorsement despite the fact that they detest him as a person. May becomes crazy as a consequence of Cosey losing his status as the Father during the turmoil of the Sixties. As Anissa Wardi notes, Cosey’s “death has done very little to stop the Cosey women from having intimate relations with this powerful patriarch [Cosey]” (205).

The representation of the present of the novel is heavily layered with ghosts that return from the past. The Nineties is a time dominated by specters and spectral simulacra. The father, Cosey, along with his problematic relationship with Fatherhood, returns as a ghost in the Nineties. The daughters of the Fifties, as spectral as their place once was, also return as even more displaced—and thus more troubling—ghosts to haunt the lives of those who survived the Sixties, the new generation of the postmodern era, and the form and the content of the novel.

Morrison times Junior’s coming of age with the 1990s, the period cultural historians agree that teenage girls reemerged as the prominent concern of the American

¹¹ I owe this understanding of the era both outside and inside the novel to Marianne DeKoven’s *Utopia Unlimited: The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern*.

public and academia. Traditionally, girls are thought to lack the physical and economic power to protect themselves and consequently are thought to be fragile in body and status. *Love* shows that this prejudice still prevails; girls like Junior are heavily affected by the lack of mental, financial and physical security, the security readily symbolized as the Father. In the confinement of the novel, therefore, the girl and the father are paired like Saussurian binary terms: one is defined by the lack or the absence of the other. Since all the female characters in *Love* are economically and mentally dependent on Cosey, they are all “girls” in relation to Cosey. An exceptional success, Cosey looks after poor African Americans as a feudal lord would do with his subjects; he is generous yet superior. Accordingly, not only women, but all the members of the African American population in the area treat him as an amiable, yet difficult father. In the 60’s, this somewhat friendly relationship changes as people want whole-hearted commitment to the racial cause rather than occasional favors from Cosey; yet, the fatherly image of Cosey persists in the memory of the older characters through the present of the novel.

This, in turn, is the reason why there is no proper mother figure in *Love*. Even after his death, Cosey is the sole grid on which the women characters chart their lives. And because of this, at the start of the novel the reader receives the impression that Cosey is a kind father to any girls who are in need of help. For instance, when Junior first meets Heed, Heed boasts about her life in terms of Cosey’s love and recognition. She elaborates on how Cosey and she were in true love despite the huge age difference, and even when she ruminates alone, she confirms her worth to herself according to what she thinks Cosey must have seen in her (72). Heed imagines that she is worthless to all other people, but Cosey recognized how clever she really is. Because Heed is ashamed of her

impoverished, uneducated family, she denies her original family, and adopts Cosey as her only father and family.

Junior as a Nineties girl materializes the social anxiety that new generation of girls re-evokes. Still named and defined by the relationship to her father, even though he is her father only in the biological sense, Junior—despite the fact that she cannot imagine having anything in common with the two old women, Christine and Heed—craves for the Father, his protection and his definition, just as Julia, May, Christine and Heed did before her.

During years of longing for her father, Junior begged relentlessly to visit him...she kept on looking out for the tall, handsome man who named her after himself to show how he felt about her. She just had to wait. (55)

After Junior hears from her mother that her father went into the army, she steals a G.I. Joe, which led to her time in a juvenile correctional institution. When Junior sees Cosey's portrait in Heed's room, she recognizes the "G.I. Joe chin" (30) on his face. It is not surprising, then, that—hearing Heed call Cosey Papa and learning how he took care of the poor girl Heed once was—Junior feels 'protected' by Cosey's spectral presence, which only she can feel. The old longing for the Father ensnares Junior into Cosey's ghost.

Junior's desire for the Father reveals the trap in which "wild women," a Nineties' version of sluts, are caught in the new decade. In her opening monologue, L calls the women who voluntarily commercialize their bodies "wild women." According to L, these women have experienced violence, tyranny and abandonment during their childhood, and they carry the hurt as adults. They are "wild," that is, they expose and sell their bodies and/or the images of their bodies, because they want to protect themselves by hiding their vulnerable selves behind a bold surface. Yet this cover-up only exacerbates their

psychological problem because “the winsome baby girl curled up somewhere inside” these women continues to long for a fatherly authority that can defend them (4). As L implies, certain parts of the female body have traditionally been considered as taboo in the public view. Sexual freedom does accompany the commercialization of women’s bodies, yet it does not bring liberation. Rather, the mass production of the superficial images of the female body erases the ‘otherness’ marginalized women can have in a male-dominated society, because the oversaturation of the images from a voyeuristic male point of view takes away the shock that the encounter with the Other can produce. As Jean Baudrillard points out, postmodern culture can increasingly bring within view (for consumption) that which previously remained at the margins, but hypervisibility inevitably nullifies the potential for impact and change (Gordon 15). While patriarchal culture thus produces and conditions the images of exposed female flesh, the longing for the impossible Father neutralizes and contains “wild women” like it did with “sluts” in the Fifties.

This loss of the potential of the Other is what Morrison problematizes in L’s first monologue. Morrison interprets the loss of uncanny impact as a major threat to novelistic potential. Under the postmodern condition, even the traditional disrupting power of ghosts seems to be lost. Avery Gordon, the author of *Ghostly Matters*, argues that “in a culture seemingly ruled by technologies of hypervisibility, we are led to believe that neither repression nor the return of the repressed, in the form of either improperly buried bodies or countervailing systems of value or difference, occurs with any meaningful result” (16).

Indeed, superficial images produced for easy consumption silence L, who knows wild women’s “real stories” that cannot be represented in the images of the naked female body (5). L complains that her silence/humming began in the Seventies, when,

according to L, visual images of women's sexual body parts began to replace real women and their bodies:

I used to be able to have normal conversations, and when the need arose, I could make a point strong enough to stop a womb—or a knife. Not anymore, because back in the Seventies, when women began to straddle chairs and dance crotch out on television, when all the magazines started featuring behinds and inner thighs as though that's all there is to a woman, well, I shut up altogether. (3, Italics original)

In 1958, L wakes up Heed from her imaginary pregnancy and stops Christine's knife thrust at Heed at Cosey's funeral. Both events occur because Heed and Christine continue to look for the Father's favor and approval. In this sense, L's language stops Heed and Christine from making their lives dependent on Cosey's arbitrary authority. It is significant, then, that L's ghost "shut up altogether" in the flood of the fetishized images of the female body. Consequently, the world becomes a place "where all is known and nothing understood" (6). The commercialized images of the exposed female body replace the "real story" with nakedness. This, in turn, nullifies the power of language whose goal is to penetrate and convey what lies behind those fragmented images of the female body. Women are still controlled and exploited in postmodern culture, but in a new way that neutralizes their status as the Other of patriarchal society. And as the characterization of Junior and Romen reveals, the Father's authority persists, mutated, yet still strong in its control over the law of representation.

In the Fifties, Cosey is the manufacturer of a pleasant illusion in which all African Americans, including those whom he exploits, want to believe. In this respect, Cosey is not

very different from the Nineties' TV, movie complex, and shopping malls, which create the illusion of "the counterfeit world ... the real one set aside for a few hours so" (145). In the Nineties, the present of the novel, Cosey is a fatherly phantom that is the projection of an absent ideal Father, a spectral image the Forties' American culture had prescribed. As discussed above, when Junior meets Heed for her job interview under the portrait of Cosey, Junior is caught up in Heed's nostalgic, and as it turns out later, false fantasy regarding Cosey, whose larger-than-life portrait presides over the room. Heed's longing reminiscence of Cosey as a perfect husband, which, in Heed's mind, is synonymous with a caring, protective, and providing father, makes Junior regard the man in the portrait as the man who saves her in her repetitive dreams, her protector, her missing father. Junior begins to detect the ghost of Cosey soon after the interview and feels supported by his imaginary haunting. The desire for the impossible Father thus manifests itself as a specter of the Father and returns Cosey's ghost into the Nineties. But, as Nancy Holland complains in regard to Derridian hauntology, there is no place for daughters in the world haunted by the Father's ghost who comes back and leaves a legacy (however problematic it is) only to sons. Because daughters are absent in the hereditary line, the haunting of Father's ghost eliminates daughters on the symbolic plane.

Romen's experiences, like those of Junior, expose the fact that the unsettling net of projections and identity constructed in the Forties persists through the Nineties. A teenage boy of the Nineties, Romen faces an identity crisis by witnessing a girl's humiliation and suffering. Because fathers are not there for African American boys to model their masculinity after, Romen's friends attempt to vindicate their maleness by violating a girl, Pretty-Fay. The boys differentiate themselves from Pretty-Fay by consuming her as a

sexual object, because being a girl implies vulnerability and insecurity. They try to secure their male identity by enlarging the imaginary distance between the vulnerable girliness and their crude, presumably masculine, power over the weak. Yet the fragility of the African male authority necessitates extreme measures. As a result, these seven high school boys produce one of the most disturbing scenes in the novel: they rape one girl in the back room of a house where a party is held. Romen is an appropriate focal point of the scene because he vacillates between “the real Romen,” who cares for other people and sheds “girlish tears,” and the new Romen, “chiseled, dangerous, loose” (46). Romen feels that his caring side is girlish, because it forces him “to hide under a pillow and shed girl tears” (49). Under heavy peer pressure, Romen has to negotiate between his caring nature and his desire to assert his maleness.

In the prologue, as discussed above, L claims that all “wild women” are defending certain unrecognized baby girls inside their heart, thus maintaining and hiding their naiveté. A reverse process occurs when Romen tries to paralyze his moral sensibility by forcing the whore’s image on a raped girl. Watching the girl being raped, Romen experiences an acute identity crisis; he recognizes the crying little girl inside him, but to acknowledge it would place him in the same vulnerable position as Pretty-Fay, whose name he cannot even remember. Romen tries to distance himself from the victim by playing an active role in the violence, and he tries to escape his guilt by glorifying the violence as maleness as his friends do. Nevertheless, waiting in the line to rape the girl, Romen cannot stop noticing the girl’s little hands tied to the bedpost. Romen unconsciously attempts to justify himself by conjuring up an image of a “slut” from the girl’s hands, thereby trying to evade the moral questions that a rape naturally evokes: “And

the plum polish on nails bitten to the quick gave the mitten-tiny hands a womanly look and made Romen think she herself was the slut—the one with no regard for what people might think” (46). “The mitten-tiny hands” whose nails are bitten to the quick suggest an image of a young girl, rather than that of a mature woman. Moreover, it is a huge jump from “a womanly look” to “the slut,” not to mention from “the slut” to the rape. Here, being a girl does not simply mean being a physically young woman; it implies imminent danger of becoming a ‘slut,’ who is considered to justify those who victimize and consume her. This is why Romen is so desperate in his attempt to dissociate himself from the girl inside him, and why he and his peers alike are most horrified when called a “girl.”

Nonetheless, Romen, to his own surprise and remorse, unties the girl and leads her outside when his turn comes. Noticing the girl’s trembling and wide frozen eyes, yet unable to feel any sympathy, Romen feels truly ashamed of his saving act, and the other boys openly laugh at his “girlishness” (47). The connection Romen struggles against, but is made in his mind as well as in his friends’ minds after the rape day, proves the link between girls and sexual vulnerability. It is the reason why the boys have to antagonize such a quality to establish their male identity: “If he [Romen] fought back, he would be fighting not for himself, but for her, Pretty-Fay; proving the connection between them—the wrong connection. As though he *and* her had been tied to a bed; his legs *and* hers forced open” (48). Even in the Nineties, “girl” is a quality that boys have to separate themselves from at all cost. Girls serve as alienated Other that men set themselves against to define their identity, and because of this very reason, they are the reminder of boys’ lack of manhood. In other words, girls are defined by lack, not by their own terms. After a few days, Romen suffers a group beating—victimized and feminized as he dreaded. Yet while Romen

survives the attack and lives on to have his own sexual adventures with Junior, Pretty-Fay is never heard or seen again in the novel.

The discrepancy between the actual image of Pretty-Fay and the slut's name forced on her is typical of the identity problem African American characters have in *Love*. The violence the girl Pretty-Fay suffers carries over to the other implied scenes of sexual encounters, such as the ones Heed, Christine, and Junior experience. Moreover, the same vulnerability and insecurity spills over all other characters, including the male ones, because all of *Love*'s main characters harbor certain girlishness. Thus, in a sense, the rape episode can be read as a dramatic staging of the identity dilemma of the African community around Cosey's resort. Up Beach, the poor African American neighborhood, suffers dire poverty and social discrimination. Cosey's resort, discriminatory against them as it is, is the source of Up Beach people's pride and anger. In the 1970s, after Cosey's hotel closes down, Up Beach disappears under a storm in social neglect. Its people move into Silk. In the present of the novel, lured by shopping malls and movie complexes built during urban renewal, people do not remember the past anymore. However, the specters continue to come back; the contemporary culture is still haunted by the images of the slut and the father, as young people like Junior and Romen suffer an identity crisis infected by the conceptual relationships inherited from the past. Yet no one, except the ghost L, remembers the past or watches the present with care. As the young generation fails to find a solid basis on which to ground their identity, the slipperiness of the spectral ideas becomes the cause of the community's self-inflicted violence.

Since there is no Father to begin with, there is no point in criticizing the mal-functioning father figure. L also makes it clear that Cosey cannot be held personally

responsible for ruining Heed's and Christine's lives. Inside the novel, Morrison implies that the image of the slut, the pit into which the father constantly slips, can be read as a sign of self-sufficiency. This is the possibility that 'wild women' in L's prologue also perceive when they disguise their vulnerability (4). The women ultimately fail to cure their fragility, yet Junior, a modern species of wild women, does humiliate Theo, the boy who led the group rape of Pretty-Fay. Junior also takes the initiative in her sexual relationship with Romen.

Celestial is the character that embodies this elusive self-sufficiency, as she is first introduced in reference to Junior. After witnessing Junior mercilessly humiliate Theo, L mentions Celestial for the first time. According to L, Junior's control over her own sexuality and body reminds her of Celestial: "something about her [Junior] puts me [L] in mind of a local woman I know. Name of Celestial" (67). The impression of rebellious sexuality sticks to Celestial's name. Heed and Christine, hearing a man address Celestial on the beach when they are little, also perceive something potent in Celestial's name (188). Afterwards, they use the man's greeting, "Hey, Celestial," as their secret code to congratulate any daring act.

In L's mind, Celestial is the slut with positive potential. L "doubt[s] if Junior or any of these modern tramps could match her [Celestial's] style," because whereas Junior, the "modern tramp," is mentally dependent on Cosey's fantastic specter (67), Celestial makes Cosey dependent on herself mentally and sexually. The slut stands in equal footing with the father in terms of sexuality, an equality Heed and Christine perceive and envy as young girls. Cosey returns to Celestial time after time, especially after crucial disappointments in his family life. L reports that Celestial "came from a whole family of sporting women"

(106) much like Heed and Junior. However, among all the female characters in the novel, only Celestial is free from the longing for the wealth, security and class that Cosey's resort symbolizes to the surrounding African American community. According to L, if Celestial inherited Cosey's resort hotel, she "would have blown it up" (201).

L and Daughters' Ghosts

Morrison tries to appropriate the force of haunting by making L haunt different levels of the novel. L is the ghostly axis on which both the content and the structure of *Love* is played out. L's monologue opens and closes the novel, and her reminiscence of the past follows most of the chapters, like afterthoughts or comments on the present events. Furthermore, in the final chapter, "Phantom," L, whose full name is a mystery to everyone in the novel, intimates that her full name is Love, same as the title of the novel. The coincidence of L's full name with that of the novel's title suggests L's potential identification with the novel itself. Yet L never mentions her name outright; she just refers to it as the subject of First Corinthians, chapter 13 (199). Quite literally, L, not only as a character of the novel, but as a mysterious capital letter on the pages, thus serves as a visual trace of haunting in/of the text. Matching her spectrality, which is neither presence nor absence, and her humming, which is neither sound nor silence, a fluctuating gap exists between L's name and its inscription. Moreover, L's narrations are printed in italics, marking the entrance of an 'other' voice into the otherwise smooth typological texture of the text with its eerie slant. In other words, L haunts the pages of the novel, affecting the way the stories of African American women are represented and transmitted to the reader.

Thus, L's humming literally and visually haunts the actual pages of the book and interrupts the form of the narrative more directly than it does the world inside. To all others, according to L, L's voice is inaudible humming; only to the reader is it meaningfully articulated language. As L's "humming" marks the silence of the real story, L inscribes the empty space for a missing kind of love, banished to complete the representation of a reality where only heterosexual love with physical deployment of a woman's body is recognized. Because L makes it her job to watch Christine and Heed's childish yet fierce love for each other, she becomes the chasm through which the potentialities of the other stories can be glimpsed. L's spectral status thus registers both the presence and the absence of cultural otherness. *Love* thus carries Morrison's wish to re-imagine the way a narrative functions.

In her literary essays, Morrison repeatedly emphasized the importance of the reader's engagement in her fictions. In "Rootedness," she says that she leaves "spaces and places" for the reader to fill in (341), and in the essay "Home," she remarks she wants her fiction to invite and "expose the readers' own politics" (7). L, as a narrator of *Love*, is a crucial device in engaging the reader and exposing her politics.

When the fact that L is a ghost is revealed, the narrative authority moves from the third-person narrative to L's first person monologue. Just as L murdered Cosey, L's humming usurps the authority of the realist third-person narrative. And because this shift of authority happens only in the last chapter of the novel, it forces the reader to revisit and reconfigure the story that she thinks she has read and comprehended. Like a specter, the novel cannot force the reader in physical way; yet it can haunt the reader in a powerful way

by shaking the reader off from her familiar assumptions about herself and the society she belongs to.

However, haunting can be effective only when it bridges the world of the dead and the living, and an idea cannot be powerful if it does not retain a certain hold on reality. Thus, while L's full name seems to invite an allegorical reading of her figure, Morrison is quick to dismiss the possibility right away. During L's last monologue, the reader learns that L killed Cosey by poisoning him. L found out that Cosey was going to disown May, Heed, and Christine, and was planning to leave everything to Celestial, tacitly blaming the Cosey women for his degenerated dream. To protect the three helpless women, L poisons Cosey. In other words, by killing Cosey, L gives the three Cosey women their reward for serving Cosey all their lives. These details of the murder reveal Morrison's intention to bind L on specificity. Ontologically oscillating as specters do, L thus refuses to degenerate into an empty concept, and the reader has to struggle with this uncontainable ghost, as she is, and is not, the concept love, the character Love, the ghost narrator L, and the novel *Love*.

I have called the Nineties the present of the novel, because most of the present events, beginning with the arrival of Junior at Silk, happen in the winter of 1993. Strictly speaking, however, only one verb in the first seven chapters is written in the present tense, indicating another level of present-ness in the novel. The only verb in the first chapter that is used in the present tense outside quotation marks is "remember." The first chapter "Portrait" starts when Sandler Gibbons meets Junior who is looking for Cosey's house, and the whole episode is narrated in the past tense except where it is said that "he [Sandler] remembers the crack from her heels..." and "he remembers the pleasure of her voice..." (13). The use of the past tense pushes the scene back into the past while the present

“remembers” signals another level of present from which the act of remembering is occurring. The present tense in the main narrative only recurs at the very last moment of *Love*—the last two chapters titled “Father” and “Phantom,” in which Christine and Heed enter the Cosey Hotel for the last time.

Most notably, all of L’s narrations are in the present tense. The present tense returns in the last two chapters precisely because L’s ghostly presence and voice infiltrate and dominate those two chapters. In the penultimate chapter, ironically titled “Father,” L’s spectral immediacy permeates the world of the living characters to dispel Junior’s fantasy father, her “Good Man,” the ever-returning Father’s ghost. Heed brings Junior to Cosey’s Hotel hoping to forge evidence that can secure her inheritance. Christine follows Heed and Junior on foot to stop them. Inside the Hotel and on the way to it, the tense of the verbs suddenly switches to the present. In traditional Gothic stories, the haunted place is usually a house, where original subjectivity is constructed, or a castle, where hereditary identity is founded. Likewise, in the long-deserted Hotel building, a place full of memories of their childhood and Cosey, Heed and Christine face the most repressed memories of their lives: their lost friendship. As L—whose muffled voice has been hovering over the main plot so far—penetrates into the main narrative, the hotel, where the haunting occurs, becomes the container of the present tense. Life and death, the ghost and the living, the past and the present, the young and the old confront, overlap and cross each other. It is in this temporal space where L, the dismissed and unrecognized ghost, breaks open the symbolic plane with patriarchal conventions and their representation of daughters. At the site of haunting, the postmodern hyper-visibility is suspended, letting the daughters “escape from watching and watchers” (194). L’s ghostly presence expels the specter of the fantasy father, “Big Daddy

(189),” who defines and shapes “wild women’s” lives, so that women can be something other than daughters or sluts.

L’s elusive presence at the hotel is confirmed by the characters. As Junior and Heed search for an old box in the deserted Cosey Hotel’s attic, Junior smells “baking bread, something with cinnamon” (175). Heed sniffs and says, “smells like L” (175).

Significantly, Junior mistakenly hears “L” as “Hell.” L is Hell for Junior, because L’s ghost stands for the loss of her certainty that she is in control of her life, a belief that ironically needs constant support from her spectral “Good Man,” Cosey’s ghost. Under the influence of L/Hell, Junior’s bond with her “Good Man” evaporates: “the aroma of baking bread was too intense. Cinnamon-flavored. He [her Good Man] wasn’t there” (177). As a result, L’s smell drives Junior away from the Hotel. Eventually, Junior cannot feel Cosey’s ghost anymore, and loses the feeling of protection and security she felt upon sensing his ghost. In this way, L opens a space where the women cannot hide behind their desire for the Father but have to face the problems of their identities on their own.

Under L’s spell, Cosey’s Big Daddy influence on Heed and Christine is also exorcised, preparing the ground for the long delayed reconciliation of the two childhood friends. When L’s “intense” smell drives Junior out, the mention of L’s name brings Heed and Christine to the realization that their lives have been driven by the search for the nonexistent Father.

L used to say that.

Jesus, I miss her.

Me too. Always have.

We could have been living our lives hand in hand instead of looking for Big Daddy everywhere.

He *was* everywhere. And nowhere. (189)

Following the reconciliation, Christine and Heed recover the secret language they shared as children. Despite the fact that one of these two friends dies soon after this dialogue, the resumed conversation between the friends continues, opening up the spectral space where the voice of daughters' ghosts can be heard. To signal that the boundary between life and death has become porous, Morrison does not reveal which of the two friends died. L's return as a ghost thus points to the loss of a certain kind of relationship between women—the kind of love that is not mediated by the Father. Through her ghostly humming, L clears a space where the other spectral presences, daughters and their love for each other, can float in.

Therefore, strictly speaking, the immediate 'now' of the novel belongs to L's narrations and to the reader. This is the third timeline of the novel, the immediate present of reading. The narrative is 'remembered' from this time; the memory of the narrative haunts the present of reading as the past of Cosey's resort haunts the daughters who survived it. L's monologue opens and closes the novel, and her reminiscence of the past follows most of the chapters, like afterthoughts or comments on the narrated events. True, L is silenced in the flood of images of the naked female body and so her humming is inaudible to the living; yet the reader can still hear and understand L's humming in the present tense.

Consequently, the reader witnesses L's figurative murder of the Father of the narrative. L kills the ghost of the Father by expelling the spectral effect of the fantasy father, "Big Daddy," as Christine and Heed call Cosey (189). Accordingly, the text

becomes the site of murder and L, the ghost that haunts the site. L makes sure that the reader is in the same 'space' as she is by making comments like "see that window over there?" in her narrations (104). In *Love*, the site of haunting is transferred onto the reader's familiar reading experience, forcing the reader to react to the ghost novel that haunts itself.

Significantly, in the very final scene of *Love*, only the voices of the female ghosts remain. Christine and Heed talk over the breach between the living and the dead. In L's concluding humming, Cosey's gravestone appears, signaling that the textual murder of the Father is complete. Celestial comes back through the space L has opened in the field originally ruled by the Father's ghost. As Celestial sits upon Cosey's gravestone, her red dress covers the inscription "Ideal Husband, Perfect Father" (201). Again, it is L's language that conjures up this forgotten figure fully in front of the reader's eyes, or, rather, ears. Celestial sings, and L joins her and hums. Through the final slip into the ghost world, the reader encounters the unexpected, totally alien story of these "others." L and her ghostly humming thus reveal Morrison's ambition to imbue the novel with the disturbing and uncontainable power of a ghost, an absence so disturbing that it kills.

In the movie *The Ring*, the familiar TV screen, the solid border between the real outside and the images inside, is suddenly found leaking. Likewise, in *Love*, the pages of the novel become a porous screen, and the erasure of the boundary signals the transformation of the medium into a ghost. The ghostly space that swallows the text by the end of *Love* resembles Fredric Jameson's postmodern hyperspace where there is no distinction between inside and outside. The spectral space opened up is inside the novel, yet it is in contact with the reader in a direct way as s/he listens to spectral voices. In this sense, *Love* shares some aspects with contemporary culture. However, at the same time, the

novel's ghostly potential rivals the postmodern virtual space, because by rendering the violation of the border shocking, the novel rather emphasizes the boundary between the real and the spectral. Moreover, instead of nullifying historicity as hyperspace does, Love's spectral space reminds the reader of history. In the space where forgotten ghosts of daughters roam, the reader is forced to "remember," as L incessantly reaches back to the painful past in her narrations, competing with "malls and movieplexes" that lull people to forgetfulness (9).¹²

Love/L thus performs an unmediated confrontation with the Other—daughters and sluts and the love between them. In this sense, the novel becomes a ghost with its own claim, distinct from an easily dispensable simulacrum of reality. The reader is present at the murder scene and haunted by the ghost of the murderer at/of the site. This "performativity," to quote Derrida, "calls for responsibility on the part of the readers. A reader is not a consumer, a spectator, a visitor, not even a 'receiver'" (51). L's humming serves as the ghost's empty eyes, the fissure through which the African-American daughter's ghostly status can be glimpsed. The ghost novel forces the reader to confront and respond to the absence of daughters' practical as well as representational autonomy in the twentieth century American history by performing the same absence so as to expose, fracture and challenge the reader's conventional reading practice. Morrison thus not only reveals the absence in the representation of women, but makes the absence itself potent.

¹² L is conscious of the rivalry as she mentions a melodramatic movie, *Mildred Pierce*, at the start of the novel. *Mildred Pierce* was a box-office hit in 1945, and has the mystery of the murder of a father at the core of its plot. L hopes her humming would have the power like the one the movie's music has on the characters, yet checks herself as she feels the sentimental influence of popular culture on herself. She says she "best leave off the TV for a while," when she imagines a soap-opera-like ending to Christine and Heed's story (10). For more detailed discussion of the resonances between *Love* and the movie, see Megan Sweeney's "'Something Rogue': Commensurability, Commodification, Crime, and Justice

Consequently, after reading *Love*, that is, after being haunted by L, the reader has to decide what to do with the dismal injustice the ghost novel has presented to her/ him.

Anyone who confronts the ghost dies in *The Ring*, unless she undoes the wrong the female ghost suffered in the past. The reader of *Love*, likewise, is called to answer to the task of a ghost—a ghost that is humming directly into the reader's ears, now.¹³

in Toni Morrison's Later Fiction," pp 458-460.

¹³ This is a faint mimicry of the ending of *Jazz*, Toni Morrison's other novel that confronts

Chapter 2

The Blot: Spectral Time and Ghost Body in *The Body Artist*

“But why are you here?” Lauren Hartke, the protagonist of *The Body Artist*, asks the mysterious man who suddenly materializes in her lonely house. Because neither the character nor his appearance does have any discernable relevance in terms of the novel’s main plot, it is also a puzzling event for the reader. Published in the first year of the new millennium, Don DeLillo’s *The Body Artist* depicts a short period in the life of a body artist, Lauren Hartke—from the morning her husband committed suicide until a few days after her performance in Boston. In contrast with the global scale in the novelist’s previous novels, *The Body Artist* mainly stays in an isolated seashore house Lauren and her husband, Rey Robles, had rented. Perplexed, DeLillo’s critics have raised questions concerning the author’s drastically changed scale and interests.

As the novel is structured around the above mentioned man, the answers to some of the questions can be answered by analyzing the figure. However, the man does not act or speak in normal ways, making it hard to understand him as a character. Critics and reviewers have found symptoms of echolalia and autism in this figure with “a thinness of physical address” (48); others have called him ghost (Begley), medium (Jones), heteroclit muse (Coward), pure embodiment poetic inspiration (Osteen), and foreign body of traumatic memory (Di Prete). All of them, however, admit that this spectral figure cannot be explained in a neat way. Accordingly, most of the readings of *The Body Artist* treat the figure as a mere embodiment of Lauren’s trauma or a projection of her recovery process. This kind of reading, however, fails to do justice to the centrality of the figure or the

the reader face to face.

perplexity it is designed to cause both to Lauren and the reader. I suggest, thus, a reading that centers on the very opaqueness of the spectral figure. The enigmatic man, literally placed in the middle pages of the novel, resists the organizing reading of the reader. In order to analyze the function of this figure, it is important to translate his spatial existence in temporal terms; that is, his spectrally oscillating existence in space into temporal rupture in the novel's time. In this chapter, I will partly borrow Jacques Lacan's analysis of the "Gaze," because its temporal reading of the spatial block that resist a subject's grasping gaze is analogous to the kind of reading that *The Body Artist* induces. In fact, by positioning a spectral figure that causes time-ruptures at the center of his novel, DeLillo once again reflects as well as challenges a mode of representation that is deeply influenced by contemporary American culture.

Lacan's account of the "Gaze" that lurks behind *The Ambassador* has a narrative quality to it so that "looking" in his interpretation of the picture can be easily translated into a "reading" process. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan discusses Holbein's picture to demonstrate his concept of "Gaze." Gaze in this later work of Lacan refers to the gaze of the object of desire; when the subject realizes that the object is looking back of its own will, the uncanny realization undermines the subject's position as a subject. The stain-like "object depicted in a flying position in the foreground of" *The Ambassadors* at first seems to be an unimportant and meaningless detail, but when viewed from a point above the top-right corner obliquely, it turns out to be a very realistically portrayed human skull. Looking at the flat surface of the picture, the viewer might feel that he is in control of his eyes' look; however, this feeling of mastery is undone when he

realizes that the skull, unnoticed by him, has been staring back at him. Lacan describes the experience as the following:

What, then, before this display of the domain of appearance in all its most fascinating forms, is this object, which from some angles appears to be flying through the air, at others to be tilted? You cannot know—for you turn away, thus escaping the fascination of the picture. Begin by walking out of the room in which no doubt it has long held your attention. It is then that, turning round as you leave—as the author of the *Anamorphoses* describes it—you apprehend in this form... What? A skull. (Lacan 88)

In this account, temporally dramatic events occur between the recognition of the stain and the discovery of the skull. The viewer recognizes the symbols of power, art, and science displayed in Holbein's picture first, and then realizes the skull's gaze which was there already. Lacan's interpretation of the picture, in this sense, is reminiscent of a retroactive reading that happens while reading a ghost story, and proves that focusing on a resistant part of the artwork can be productive in a number of ways. As Slavoj Žižek suggests in his book *Looking Awry*, this kind of anamorphic reading can make visible a textual grain that is not available to the direct gaze. This insight is especially valuable to the reader of *The Body Artist* because the novel not only endorses but demands the similar kind of reading that "looks back." The novel performs returns on various levels, making the reader turn back in narrative sequence often.

The skull, for Lacan, stands for "the Real," the material reality that exceeds any symbolic order people construct and project onto the world to produce meaning out of it. Once discovered, the skull compels the viewer/reader to reassess the entire painting,

making him realize that the floating object actually “reflect our own nothingness, in the figure of the death’s head” (Lacan 92). The object’s gaze reveals the gaping lack behind our narcissistic belief in the order and the meaning of our life. Assuming that *The Body Artist* stages the mysterious man with same purpose as the skull in *The Ambassador*, the meaning of the figure lies in the very fact that the figure resists any easily accessible meaning that is produced by linear reading practice. Also, Lacan’s rhetoric in his presentation of *The Ambassadors* endows the picture with a performing quality, signaling a reversal of the traditional viewer-picture dynamics. In his account, the picture actively works on the reader, rather than passively laying itself for the reader to appreciate it.

Read in the same oblique way, the mysterious figure in *The Body Artist* stands in the heart of the reader’s experience of the novel, and rearranges the novel’s relationship with the reader. The spectral man, literally placed in the middle pages of the novel, resists the organizing reading of the reader. The reader’s inability to make sense of the incoherence lays bare the fabricated order and meaning she has constructed around her. The spectral man in *The Body Artist* thus materializes a gap inherent in the narrative and, because it overturns the narrative’s basic functional assumptions, appears uncanny to both the protagonist and the reader. This reversal of passivity is emblematic of a new reading experience that *The Body Artist* imagines: reading as an uncanny encounter between the reader and the text. Mr. Tuttle, *The Body Artist*’s mysterious character, embodies the dismissed time of trauma, a “time out of joint” that enables multiple returns. By conjuring up a time-defying spectral character that disrupts narrative time, DeLillo not only complicates the reader’s experience of time in *The Body Artist*, but also revises what it means to read by transforming the experience of reading into that of encountering a ghostly

other. By performing the haunting Gaze through its characters and sentences, the novel transforms itself into a ghost that haunts the reader of its own will.

Real-Time versus the Real

The first chapter of *The Body Artist* describes an apparently routine breakfast of the couple, Lauren and Rey. Critics have found modernist-inflected poetics in the first chapter of *The Body Artist* as if the novel is returning to a previous moment in literary history. However, while it is true that *The Body Artist* is concerned with staging language's inability to represent death, the loss and lack that lies in the heart of any being, instead of expressing despair at the incapacity as a modernist novel would, this contemporary novel actively performs the permanent deferral of meaning, empowering it as a spectral blot that looks back at the reader. At first, DeLillo uses sensory language to make the impression of the morning as vivid as possible. As Lauren watches a blue jay outside the window, she feels that "she'd never seen a thing so clearly...the clean shock of its appearance among the smaller brownish birds, its mineral blue and muted blue and broad dark neckband" (24). The vividness of the bird makes Lauren become "alert to the clarity of the moment," but at the same time, she "knew it was ending already. She felt it in the blue jay" (24). Here, Lauren seems to be having a mock-modernist epiphanic moment. It is not surprising, therefore, that Philip Nel, tracing modernist aesthetics in *The Body Artist*, finds most of his examples in this first chapter. Mark Osteen, likewise, discerns echoes of *Ulysses* from this breakfast scene. However, Lauren adds, right after the above-quoted sentences, "Or maybe not" (24). This is not a statement that is interested in "bridging the gap between word and

world” (Nel 736). On the contrary, “or maybe not” holds the gap open. The phrase is an example of a counteractive layer of the novel that functions against the “modernist” grain.

Thus alluring the reader with vivid language only to betray her, DeLillo makes his reader experience a deferral of meaning. It is not that the longing for “narrowing the gap between words and things” is completely denied (Nel 738). What I want to point out here is that the text makes double movements; it does state the impossible transparency of a moment, but then it cancels it out at the same time. The reader, like Lauren, has to “see” the meaning of this morning “belatedly (93),” always conscious of the closely following “or may be not.” In this first chapter, however, the text does not disclose the meaning of these counteractive movements. While Lauren is so alert to the bird outside the window, she is not so attentive to other, closer things around her. Absorbed in her own thoughts, she is somewhat detached from both what she is doing and what is happening around her. Interestingly, instead of describing the details of her thoughts, the text focuses on tracking her late responses to the present events like Rey’s comments on their house. The sentences weave in and out of Lauren’s mind, making the reader accompany her experience from the inside:

She went to the fridge and opened the door. She stood there remembering something. She said, “What?” Meaning what did you say, not what did you want to tell me. She remembered the soya granules...She reached in for the milk, realizing what it was he’d said that she hadn’t heard about eight seconds ago. (11)

As an effect, while the narrator repeatedly emphasizes the “clarity of the moment,” the reader shares the distance and the belatedness of Lauren’s perception of things that constantly nullify “the clarity of the moment” (24). In this way, instead of pointing to an

impossible yet ideal moment and form of transcendence, the language of *The Body Artist* focuses on immersing the reader in Lauren's hazy "reverie (25)." In the first chapter, this hinders the reader from recognizing what is outside of Lauren and limits the reader to the boundaries of Lauren's consciousness.

Consequently, when Rey's obituary, directly quoted from a newspaper, unexpectedly appears between the first and the second chapters, it is perceived as a violent intrusion into the text. The obituary announces that Rey Robles, a once famous movie director, committed suicide with a gun in his first wife's apartment. The obituary then goes on to summarize Rey's life, but the initial crisp objective tone changes as the following pieces of information mystify rather than clarify Rey's life. It turns out that what is known about Rey's earlier life was all fabricated by himself, and the only verifiable facts about his life are his movies and his death. The various details of Rey's life that the obituary manages to report only intensify a feeling of absence rather than understanding. All of this, moreover, is completely new to the reader. The morning described in the previous chapter seemed so normal and peaceful. Confined in Lauren's consciousness, it is not easy for the reader to perceive that anything is amiss in Rey's presence or behavior. Figuring out the meaning of a blue jay outside the window seemed to be the novel's most important project. Rey appears to be a constant, well-known, and therefore comfortable presence in Lauren's life. Suddenly, an alien voice intrudes and announces that nothing is known about him, and that he is lost forever for both Lauren and the reader. In "this final morning," "there were too many signs to understand and finally just one," (37) and Rey is the ultimate and inscrutable sign that remains. It took only several seconds for Lauren to recognize and

respond to her husband; death turns out to be lurking behind those deferrals that seemed so innocent.

After the traumatic incident, Lauren's language falls through the gap that has opened in her self and her perception of the world. She thinks "things she saw seemed doubtful—not doubtful but ever changing, plunged into metamorphosis, something that is also something else, but what, and what" (38). This is not a modernist despair; rather than an epistemological problem, it discloses an ontological trauma of the postmodern novel that Brian McHale points out in *Postmodernist Fiction*.

In addition, when portraying Lauren's crisis, DeLillo seems to endorse a relational envisioning of the self. Lauren suffers from a severe blow to the meaning and the structure of her self and the world because she lost a core element of her self that belonged to the other through the death of her beloved husband. In turn, the loss illumines the terrible hole in Lauren's self—her vulnerability to death, the irreversible loss of her self and the other. As Judith Butler argues in "Violence, Mourning, and Politics" concerning a loved one's death, "it is not as if an 'I' exists independently over here and then simply loses a 'you' over there, especially if the attachment to 'you' is part of what composes who 'I' am. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself" (Butler 12). In this sense, Lauren is unable to grasp the world around her because she does not understand what belongs to her self and what does not, and her wandering language reflects her confusion. As Michael Naas remarks, Lauren's suffering illustrates "the necessity and impossibility of incorporating the absent other into oneself" (Naas 95).

In order to regain her sense of a whole self, Lauren attempts to substitute her important 'other,' her husband, with a static impersonal order. Her desperate attempts

appear as the imposition of a strictly linear frame of time in her thoughts and sentences. In her need to take control of her life back, she cleans the house, restocks the pantry that does not need restocking, and divides her time between meaningless yet systematic routines. She repeatedly calls these days after Rey's suicide "the first days back," putting numerical order to highlight that these days are passing and becoming past fast. Lauren also desperately tries to think ahead of time, "always thinking into tomorrow" (36). In order to make time pass faster, Lauren organizes her time around fixed schedules. Her plan "was to organize time until she could live again (39)."

Paradoxically, however, this desire to process the time as quickly as possible in order to move away from the trauma coexists with the desire to hold on to the previous moments with Rey or to return to them. For example, while cleaning the bathroom tile, she intentionally emphasizes the "pistol-grip" of the cleaning bottle she is using as if to repeat Rey's suicide in an unarticulated and futile attempt to understand the incident. She even feels it is "hard to stop pressing the trigger" while using the cleaning spray (36). She repeats to herself that "it was okay. She wanted to be here and she'd be okay," revealing that indeed she is not "okay" (35). The reason why Lauren feels that she will be "okay" in her lonely house is because "all their marriage, all the time they'd lived together they'd lived right here" (35). Lauren's return to the house, therefore, discloses her unspoken longing for the impossible return to the past.

What is peculiar about Lauren's treatment of time is that she is not trying to form a narrative—a meaning-forming process, thus potentially healing—out of her experience. Rather, like the video stream she watches on the internet, she wants to cover the incomprehensible moments that remind her of death with an excess of meaningless chores.

Lauren's schedule feature time as an unbreakable, excessive flow, which corresponds to the formulation of time generated by the live streaming video on the internet:

It emptied her mind and made her feel the deep silence of other places, the mystery of seeing over the world to a place stripped of everything but a road that approaches and recedes, both realities occurring at once and the numbers changed in the digital display with an odd and hollow urgency, the seconds advancing toward the minute, the minutes climbing hourward, and she sat and watched. (41)

Lauren regularly watches this "live" video stream feed because it provides an alternative experience of time, and thereby an alternative virtual reality, to which Lauren can escape. She spends hours at the computer screen: "it was interesting to her because it was happening now." The "now" in this sentence is a substitute for the present she finds impossible to face because of the indelible mark of death left on it. The time that appears on the computer screen covers "twenty-four hours a day, facelessly," and thus it feels "real enough to withstand the circumstance of nothing going on" (42). The illusion that the video stream transparently delivers another reality, a physical world outside one's cognitive reach, parallels the digital time marked on the computer screen that does not recognize any interruption. This version of "reality" and "time" transforms the images on the screen into a preferable alternative reality. The word "live" becomes Lauren's justification for believing it as "real": "Kotka was another world but she could see it in its realness, in its hours, minutes and seconds" (42). The impersonal numerical count replaces "reality," a field for personal experiences and relationships. The digital numbers on the screen substitute a life experience that is harder to cope with, and the excess of numbers and images supplants a fullness and an immediacy of experience occurring in the present.

In this way, DeLillo contrasts traumatic time—a haunting sense of time that, by definition, refuses to be processed—and the ever-proceeding real time of tele-technologies that does not recognize any disruption, to absorb and then point beyond the image of time that is produced and circulated by these “live” technologies. In the novel, the impression of the unbreakable, numerical flow of time is intensified by the free streaming video Lauren watches on the internet. As the “real time” of the live video instigates a sense of realness that replaces the painful reality of Lauren, it helps her look away from her immediate reality rather than face it, which isolates her from other people. The importance of the live video can be seen in the body art performance piece Lauren plays by the end of the novel. The live video screen with a digital clock display visually dominates the stage where Lauren replays her struggle to survive the trauma. By juxtaposing mechanically produced real-time with the deadly yet static present, *The Body Artist* reveals that as mechanical “real time” becomes the prevalent mode of temporal perception, people with flesh and blood and specific locations where they live are erased and forgotten. Thus, it ultimately changes and limits the self’s potential to relate to others’ lives.

Thanks to the screen that contains it, regardless of the fact that Kotka does exist in the real world, the place is rendered as spectral—only as fragmented visual traces of what has passed on one of its local highways. Lauren cannot experience the place in full, nor is she interested in learning more about it. Just the illusion of real time becomes her excuse to replace it with the painful “now” of hers. It creates another “reality” that is deeply spectral, and the same name, “reality,” though different in content, creates a rather deliberate confusion through which Lauren can evade her present confusion, loss, and vulnerability. The video stream is a realness that is “contained in an unyielding frame (40).” She likes

“the dead times” of the video best (40), because the “dead” times of this virtual reality are safely separated from her as the solid frame of her computer screen keeps Kotka, Finland as an unreal and separate place from her. In other words, Kotka is displayed in front of her eyes real-time, but it is derealized as it is safely framed and distanced through the screen. Lauren replaces the present with the real time video feed because even though she “did not know the meaning of” it, the meaninglessness of it does not threaten her unlike the traumatic present whose meaning she cannot find. Absent-mindedly and passively watching the cars pass on the road in the screen, Lauren can confirm the irreducible distance between herself and the images, which, in turn, enables her to safely contemplate “the dead times” (40) from a distance. It cannot hurt Lauren because she recognizes no connection to its reality in any conceivable way; instead, it renders itself to the arbitrary and subjective interpretation of the viewer. The screen offers its viewer an illusion of mastery over the objects that are projected on it.

The screen that displays live video feed has another effect on the world and the people: when projected on it, they are flattened down, reduced to superficial images. Lauren’s description of a Japanese woman she saw in town reveals the way Lauren perceives the world and other people in it: “In town she saw a white-haired woman, Japanese, alone on a stone path in front of her house. She held a garden hose and stood weightless under lowering skies, so flat and still she might be gift wrap” (38). Lauren labels a white haired woman as Japanese without noticing any specific traits of the woman that made her judge the woman so: “she thought of the Japanese woman, a beautiful and problematic thing, if she is Japanese at all” (38). The very specific labeling of the nationality means that Lauren is consuming this other woman’s exotic image, thereby

distancing herself from her. As a result, using Lauren's own words, this "Japanese woman" becomes "flat," making it impossible for Lauren to form any kind of meaningful relationship with the woman. Lauren's use of the terms "flat" and "gift wrap" shows that DeLillo is critical of the shallowness of her perception. At another time, Lauren mistakes "a paint can on a board that was balanced between two chairs" as a stereotypical middle-aged man, and imagines she "completely" saw the man's whole life instantly, only to find out her mistake "in the pull of the full second" (72). These incidents reveal how deeply Lauren is influenced by watching cars pass by on her computer screen. She wants to see people and events around her as flat as the fleeting images on a computer screen, because, that way, she can safely contemplate on them without being open to them in any way. She is hurt by Rey's suicide; she wants to eliminate any chances of another wound to her self.

In a similar way, the telephone disconnects, rather than connects, Lauren from other people. When Isabella, Rey's first wife, calls Lauren, she continues to reminisce about Rey's suicide that occurred in her apartment, ignoring Lauren's plea that she does not want to hear about it. Instead of consoling, Isabella's call only highlights Lauren's ignorance about Rey, his life, and his character. When Lauren's closest friend, Marriella, calls, instead of listening to her friend's concerned queries, Lauren persistently asks Marriella what she is doing as if to make the phone call another live-stream reality. Yet the call still ends with Marriella's comment on the short period Lauren has known Rey. Later, Lauren listens to the ringing of her telephone without answering it, and calls Marriella to hear the recorded mechanical voice of the answering machine. Lauren listens carefully to

the pauses between the syllables voiced by the machine, thereby eclipsing the content and meaning of language with its tempo.

Interestingly, the movie, the prime example of spectral devices in Walter Benjamin's "Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction," exists only as a fading memory in *The Body Artist*. The obituary inserted in between the first and the second chapter reports that Rey was a rather famous movie director in the 70s, but it is all the information the reader receives about his movies. After Rey's death, Lauren realizes there were only fabricated versions of Rey from the very first. Without his body that anchors his total being beside her, Lauren is left only with traces of Rey. Yet she does not even consider his movies to be a faithful artistic expression of him. At least in the world of *The Body Artist*, the movies are replaced by the 'live' videos on the internet in its function of producing easily consumable spectral images.

Thus, the spectral aspect of *The Body Artist* is more historically specific than it first seems to be because it depends more on the "real time" of free video streams on the internet than on the timeless spectrality of language, or even the spectrality of movies. In *The Body Artist*, DeLillo is very conscious of the prevalent specter-producing technologies that do not necessarily produce an uncanny moment, the moment in which a subject is knocked out of its comfortable construction of her self and the world to realize her own vulnerability. Instead, just as in the case of Lauren's Kotka video stream, the technologies provide an illusion of reality that replaces and thereby numbs the painfulness of the immediate present imbued with a subject's incompleteness. Even as its tactics are deeply influenced and conditioned by the spectral effect produced by tele-technologies, *The Body Artist* challenges and strives to move beyond/below the "real time" of them. The novel disrupts

the smooth flow of real time through a ghostly figure that facilitates textual returns on different levels of the narrative.

The Blot

The mysterious man Lauren finds on the third floor of her house embodies the counter- movement of time that the novel initiates against the false real-time. Named inadequately and condescendingly as Mr. Tuttle by Lauren, this man marks the absence of the impossible image, death, on the orderly linearity Lauren puts up around her. Because Lauren is so consciously focused on processing time after Rey's death, the most disturbing trait of Mr. Tuttle for her is his misuse of tense in his speech. One of the first things he said was "it rained very much" (46). Amusing herself by thinking he came out of cyberspace, Kotka of the free video stream, she corrects him: "It did not rain. It *will* rain" (47). Her effort to straighten his tense out is a part of her attempt to let him fit into the linear, one-directional time flow. Nonetheless, Mr. Tuttle continues to nullify the most basic order of everyday life Lauren is trying to establish— time. As language registers time in a linear way, Lauren cannot figure Mr. Tuttle in her language: "It was always as if. He did this or that as if. . . . She needed a reference elsewhere to get him placed (47)." In a sense, Mr. Tuttle resembles Rey's death that Lauren can hardly articulate in her thoughts. Like the leaf Lauren finds outside the window on the third floor when she went searching for Mr. Tuttle, this spectral figure exists "in midair, tuning" (43), without any attachment to the strands of the text, and thus marks a fissure in symbolic and temporal order. While struggling to figure Mr. Tuttle into her speech that is composed of linear tenses, Lauren comes to

understand that people “engender” “sequential order” in order to “make us safe in the world” (85).

As the skull-blot is useful for Lacan in illustrating the rupture in the symbolic order, so is Mr. Tuttle for DeLillo in illuminating the fissure that lies in the heart of narrative. The meaning of the figure lies in the very fact that the figure resists any easily accessible meaning that is produced by linear flow of narrative and reading practice. Lauren often asks Mr. Tuttle to gain a perspective on the shock he causes. In terms of Žižek, her attempt is for “the illusion of ‘seeing [herself] seeing, of seeing the gaze itself’ (Žižek 114); that is, visually grasping the outline of one’s body and gaze, because it creates an illusion of solid definition of oneself—something Lauren is in desperate need of. Mr. Tuttle does stare her back, yet his look does not provide her an outline of her self because Mr. Tuttle’s eyes do not project his own assumptions. Instead, because he does not recognize linearly unfolding time, his empty stare only reveals the fragility of the temporal order Lauren so desperately wants to believe in. He remains to be “the gaze erupting like a traumatic, disharmonious blot’ (Žižek 114). Mr. Tuttle’s eyes are not “able to search out and shape things. Not like normal anyway” (82).

Because she cannot find anything she can relate to and empathize with, Mr. Tuttle’s physical closeness does nothing to help Lauren’s disintegrating self. His eyes only intensify Lauren’s feeling of loneliness because they do not show any “stirrings of tremulous self” (87). Later, when Mr. Tuttle looks at her, it makes her severely agitated as he “look past her or through her” to bring moments of past and future into ‘the Now,’ distressing her struggle to keep a sequential order “that make us safe in the world” (85). Thus, looking into the eyes of Mr. Tuttle, Lauren realizes that the normal eyes project

rather than receive: “The eye is supposed to shape and process and paint. It tells us a story we want to believe (82).”

Moreover, Mr. Tuttle’s bland body resists easy abstraction or flattening down to a mere image. Lauren does not take Mr. Tuttle to the town where anyone might recognize him; this reveals Lauren’s ironical desire to own and control Mr. Tuttle in a distanced, safe and anonymous way. However, when Lauren comes back from a shopping mall, he is sitting in his piss and shit. Mr. Tuttle’s eating, peeing and shitting body presents itself as an undeniable, though inexplicable, material reality to Lauren. Mr. Tuttle’s body is a material presence that marks the absence of concrete others in Lauren’s perception of the world.

Using Hitchcock’s movies to demonstrate Lacan’s point, Zizek points out that Hitchcock closes on an anamorphic spot, that is, “something that sticks out,” to cause anxiety in the viewer. Parodying Lacan, Zizek calls this anamorphic spot the “Hitchcockian blot” (88), the gaze of the other that reduces the viewer to an object. Mr. Tuttle, in this second part of the novel, is literally “the thing that sticks out,” and his body presents what Lauren cannot directly see and try not to see.

As *The Body Artist* places the reader in Lauren’s position, the reader is also made to face death, the ultimate black hole of time, through Mr. Tuttle’s body and its function. The “surplus of vulnerability” that Lauren finds in Mr. Tuttle actually reflects Lauren’s fear of death, and through her, the fear also affects the reader (98). By “sticking out,” that is, refusing to be explained away, Mr. Tuttle puts what Lauren fears most in front of her and the reader. At first, Lauren detects Rey’s gesture and her own voice from Mr. Tuttle’s seemingly meaningless ranting. Later, Mr. Tuttle acts out Rey in voice and motion. In this way, Mr. Tuttle embodies the impossible glance of death that invalidate any process of

time by absolutely stopping it: “She began to understand that she could not miss Rey, could not consider his absence, the loss of Rey, without thinking along the margins of Mr. Tuttle.” (84)

One morning when Lauren is watching him, Mr. Tuttle returns her look by performing the whole morning when Rey last left Lauren; the morning the first chapter of *The Body Artist* portrays. Mr. Tuttle repeats the scene of the morning starting from where the first chapter left off. At the very end of the first chapter, Rey looks for his car key, right before his obituary interrupts the novel. Mr. Tuttle’s performance of the scene starts from the moment Lauren asks Rey why he needs the car. Observing Mr. Tuttle incarnating the scene, Lauren admits that “it did not seem an act of memory...It is happening now...Rey is alive now in this man’s mind, in his mouth and body and cock” (89). Here, again, Mr. Tuttle is the phallic blot that “sticks out” of the text, unsettling readers along with Lauren and inducing the uncanny sense of temporal dislocation. Through Mr. Tuttle, the past erupts into the present. The spectral figure serves as the place-marker of the empty space where Rey had been, and the empty space reflects the irreparable loss that lies behind Lauren’s desire.

Furthermore, the immediate present-ness of this past scene, repeatedly highlighted by the text, overturns the meaning and the order of the present as something that comes after “the past” and before “the future.” For the reader, this temporal fissure disrupts her linear act of reading once again. She is reading the scene for the first time, yet it is already another return to the previous point of the narrative. As the reader return to the past of the narrative later, she is reminded of the signs of “the present” already fracturing the past. For example, the short pale hair Lauren picked out of her mouth in the first chapter before

Rey's death is most likely Mr. Tuttle's; Lauren picks up the same hair from her mouth while she washes Mr. Tuttle. As the text thus haunts its reader, she can never safely regard the novel as an easily consumable cultural commodity.

Precisely because Mr. Tuttle is a figure that defies time, he is problematic on the level of the main narrative of *The Body Artist* as well. His performance of the future and the past not only confuses Lauren, but also convolutes the narrative as the scene or the speech has to be narrated in advance and then has to be revisited out of order. In this sense, Mr. Tuttle appears as a specter that embodies the spectral nature of a narrative that is constructed to bestow a meaning on the otherwise chaotic, meaningless passing of time or one's experience of it. And to achieve the desired uncanny effect, the narrative of *The Body Artist* rivals with borrows from technologies that use spectral effects for opposite purposes. As in Lacan's account where the viewer looks back at the picture to discover the skull, the narrative of *The Body Artist* embeds returns on various levels to make the reader look back and discover the death's head lurking in the figure of Mr. Tuttle, the resistant present that refuses to be absorbed into meaning system again and again. Facilitating a disruption of time that create uncanny effects in ghost stories, Mr. Tuttle appears as a ghost that haunts the narrative structure of the novel, and as a result of this haunting, the novel becomes much like a specter itself, assimilating the reader's reading experience with that of being haunted.

The Specter of the Narrative

Explaining the Gaze and the defense mechanism of the self it triggers, Lacan describes that after encountering the disturbing gaze of the object, the subject quickly

begins to work on regaining its subject status. The subject struggles to “symbolize his own vanishing and punctiform bar(train) in the illusion of the consciousness of seeing oneself see oneself, in which the gaze is elided” (Lacan 83). Making a similar effort, Lauren tries to visualize herself because visualization confers one a contour of oneself that defines as it restricts. For instance, she often visualizes herself in her mind in terms of the movies: “she sounded like a character in black spandex in a science-fiction film (58).” This synecdoche expresses Lauren’s desire to filter the unexpected and alien through the screen of the movies. Envisioning herself in the movies reveals Lauren’s attempt to objectify her own situation and her struggle to distance herself from her own troubled self. In addition, she continually imagines herself explaining what went between Mr. Tuttle and herself to her friend Mariella. By putting herself in an observer’s position, Lauren is trying to secure a self that is aloof and intact, a self that is not wrecked by the tragic and ungraspable loss.

Thus, when watching Mr. Tuttle perform her last moment with Rey, Lauren imagines seeing herself doing what she could have done, what she wished to have done. The repetition of the past, even though it is a traumatic experience, does have its attraction for Lauren, as she can visualize herself looking at the scene as “the image was in front of her”: “She feels something has separated, softly come unfixed, and she tries to pull him down to the floor with her, stop him, keep him here, or crawls up onto him or into him, dissolving, or only lies prone and sobs unstoppably, being watched by herself from above.” (90) On the one hand, the visual images that appear in her mind aggravates her feeling that the chance has passed forever; but on the other hand, seeing herself in this way helps Lauren to admit the fact that it has passed so that she can move on. Because Lauren believes that time is what “defines your existence” (94), she needs to have confidence in

the linear experience of time in order to live on. As a result, when Mr. Tuttle disappears, Lauren clears and arranges her thoughts as the anxiety and the confusion that has congealed around Mr. Tuttle abates: “If you examine the matter methodically, you realize that he is a retarded man sadly gifted in certain specialized areas, such as memory retention and mimicry, a man who’d been concealed in a large house, listening” (102). However, at the moment when the reader, along with Lauren, is ready to brush off Mr. Tuttle as “a retarded man sadly gifted in certain specialized areas” (102) and veer a way from the speck of doubt that people intentionally forget to live their lives in an orderly way, she experience another surprising turn of the text. Lauren, in front of the reader, turns back and gazes into the reader’s eyes.

DeLillo make sure that the reader receives “the uncanny” impression by employing a different narrator for the scene where the reader confronts the unfamiliar in their familiar heroine. The second inserted article, “Body Art in Extremis: Slow, Spare and Painful,” is written by Mariella, Lauren’s friend. Because Mariella interviews Lauren, the reader is now positioned outside Lauren, and made to look at Lauren. Because the reader was made to accompany Lauren when she so often imagined herself talking to Mariella about Mr. Tuttle, this reversed scene contains uncanny repetition for the reader. According to Mariella, Lauren is “colorless, bloodless and ageless” (105), and this description reminds the reader of Mr. Tuttle whose aspect had “a thinness of physical address” (48). In Lauren’s long performance piece called “Body Time,” the reader witnesses Lauren literally morph into a “naked man...stripped of recognizable language and culture”—Mr. Tuttle (109). Furthermore, when Mariella asks Lauren about Rey’s death after the performance, in front of Mariella’s and the reader’s eyes, Lauren “switches to another voice. It is his

voice, the naked man's spooky as a woodwind in your closet. Not taped but live. Not lip-sync'd but real. It is speaking to me and I search my friend's face but don't quite see her" (11). Mariella cannot but "freeze in [her] seat" (11), because this time, it is not performance. Through the multiple layers of afterimage, the text now makes the reader witness Lauren performing Mr. Tuttle performing Rey. In this way, the text begins to return to the reader on its own. It defies the reader's desire to comprehend and finish it, making the reader come back and stare at the blot that turns out to be a skull that returns her gaze.

During the interview, Lauren mentions "vanity" as an essence of herself as an actor. Her use of the term almost directly invites Lacan's famous interpretation of Holbein's picture. According to Lacan, *The Ambassadors* portrays "a series of objects that represent in the painting of the period the symbols of vanitas" (88), and the skull, once discovered, rearranges the meaning of the vanitas expressed in the picture by revealing how vain indeed it is to look away from death. Lauren's use of the term "vanity" shows that she is mindful of a similar meaning: "It's vanity. That's all it is...But sanity is essential to an actor. It's an emptiness. This is where the word comes from. And this is what I work toward and build on" (106). According to this interview, Lauren's acting is a vanity in the sense that it harbors an emptiness in its core. And if Lauren's "Body Time" is a work of vanity, the emptiness that stands in the middle of it—the stain that turns out to be a skull—is Lauren's colorless body. As Mariella Chapman, Lauren's friend and interviewer, comments on the piece, Lauren's body art is "about you and me. What begins in solitary otherness becomes familiar and even personal. It is about who we are when we are not rehearsing who we are" (110). In other words, what happens to the spectator of *The*

Ambassadors also happens to the audience of Lauren's piece and the reader of *The Body Artist*; the secret of the picture and the piece "is given at the moment when, moving slightly away, little by little, to the left, then turning around, we see what the magical floating object signifies. It reflects our own nothingness, in the figure of the death's head" (Lacan 92).

Lauren's transformation is particularly disturbing because her "depigmented" body uncannily resembles that of Mr. Tuttle's. In fact, Lauren has begun transforming soon after Rey's death. After she recovers from food poisoning, she resumes her bodyworks with breathing exercises. These first exercises are designed to assure Lauren of the fact that she is alive. After finding Mr. Tuttle, Lauren begins to work her body hard to extend the limits of her body. At this stage, she thinks that "her body work made everything transparent" (59), because while timing her movements with her breathing, she feels "what it means to be alive" with her body (60). Her breaths and heartbeats provide Lauren an alternative way of conceptualizing time in an orderly way, a way that she thinks is threatened by Mr. Tuttle's speech and existence. Her body, up until this stage, serves Lauren as an anchor for her existence. Nevertheless, Lauren starts to erase her identity from her body. It is as if she starts to embody the void that lies at the heart of her self. She begins by cleaning her body, but goes on to remove indicators of her identity as completely as possible: "This was her work, to disappear from all her former venues of aspect and bearing and to become a blankness, a body slate erased of every past resemblance" (86). Soon after, Mr. Tuttle disappears, and in the place of the spectral man, Lauren stands, transformed into "someone who is classically unseen, the person you are trained to look through"—another version of Mr. Tuttle (86).

The distress of the exposure is amplified for the reader of *The Body Artist* as this is her second time experiencing it. First, the reader is made to walk away from the breakfast scene of the first chapter to look back and see Mr. Tuttle, “the death’s head,” already embedded in the scene through the hair in Lauren’s mouth. Now, the reader is positioned away from Lauren, who served her as her eyes for the most part of the novel, and discover Mr. Tuttle overlapping her. The reader is caught in her wish to see the narrative over—her desire to be confirmed of the fact that “time is the only narrative that matters. It stretches events and makes it possible for us to suffer and come out of it and see death happen and come out of it” (94). This narrative, instead, comes back, haunting the reader with its “death-head” again and again. In turn, the reader, like the observer of a painting, becomes the object of the text at the moment when the “paradoxical point undermines our position as ‘neutral, objective’ observer...it is the point from which the picture [text] itself looks back at us” (Zizek 91).

Mr. Tuttle’s return as Lauren is different from the spectral effect that a live video stream produces, because while the live video presents the traces of what has existed, its temporal dynamics prevent the observer from “looking back” to contemplate the fact that the images she is looking at are indeed only traces. In contrast, the reader of the novel realizes it is the disturbing sign of Rey’s death that came back in Lauren’s body. Performing what is only possible in a fictional narrative, *The Body Artist* attempts to restore and project a disturbing sensation the haunting of a ghost can bring. This move is critical for *The Body Artist* in restoring the disturbing power of a ghost, since the spectral impact of Mr. Tuttle defeats the mesmerizing influence of “real time” of the internet.

Indeed, DeLillo even builds a revenant, in both the sense of return and of haunting, into the sentences to make the reader look back to face a gap, a loss, an indication of one's incompleteness and dependency on others that should not be covered under the images excessively produced by the "real-time" technologies. The very first verb of *The Body Artist* is indicative of the many performative revenants the reader is made to face. The novel starts with the sentence, "time seems to pass" (9). The verb "seems" implies that time in this novel actually might not be passing. The following sentences in the first paragraph picture a world keenly aware of passing time, as "the smallest falling leaf is stabbed with self-awareness" (9). However, the sinister "seems" insists on the possibility that all this might not be what it "seems" to be. What the verb "seem" negates is not clear at this point, yet the verb "seems" returns, highlighted, in the next chapter: "Everything is slow and hazy and drained and it all happens around the word *seem*" (33, emphasis original). This first paragraph of the second chapter describes how a "you" feel momentarily remote and dream-like during driving. "Then the mood passes," and "you," the subject of the sentence, feel pain in the chest once again (33). The word "seem" in this context then marks the discord between what one fleetingly feels and the pain that is unforgettable and persistent; and this usage of the verb reminds the reader of the first "seem," the first verb of the novel that they encountered. What is stated and cancelled in the first sentence is a confidence in the linear perception of time—the world "coming into being" irreversibly (9). The short sentence performs a return by making the reader return to its double action. The novel repeatedly forces the reader to look back to contemplate textual anamorphic spots like the verb "seem" and the short pale hair Lauren picked out of her mouth in "this final morning."

In this way, the novel generates echoes, not only of other literary masterpieces as Mark Osteen argues (Osteen 67), but also of its own language. The reader is often reminded of key images or words, and made to come back to an earlier point of the narrative to check what those exact words signifies in the previous context. However, like the verb “seem,” the echoes do not provide a “true” meaning, nor are they designed to point to an ever-elusive yet nevertheless ideal interpretation. Instead, the echoes are focused on the acts of return themselves and the disturbances they bring; the word “seem,” for instance, negates the superficial feeling of Lauren’s detachment, but does not identify an underlying “truth.” In the above quoted passage from the second chapter, pain is discovered in the open gap, but pain, by itself, is not the meaning, but the effect of the discovery. Thus always returning, the novel performs a haunting “specter.”

The second paragraph of *The Body Artist* also has an enigmatic start that implies a certain returning: “It happened this final morning that they were here at the same time...” (9). The reader would realize that “this” and “final” are an odd combination when, at the end of the chapter, she learns that Rey, Lauren’s husband and one of the people referred to by the pronoun “they” in this sentence, committed suicide later that day. Lauren did not know her husband’s intention beforehand, so the adjective “final” indicates that this sentence is narrated after Lauren’s learning of Rey’s death; “this” and “here,” however, contradicts “final,” and implies that the sentence is stated “in” the moment. This cancellation of linearity after the first paragraph that “seemingly” emphasizes the passing of time creates the main effect of *The Body Artist*—a deferral of meaning through which the anamorphic gaze can be glimpsed. Because the narrative returns to trouble the reader, *The Body Artist* does not allow the reader to enjoy a safe temporal distance between her and

the specter it stages. What the reader has read is never complete. Through these built-in returns, the novel presents itself much like a haunting ghost.

On the other hand, the way DeLillo depicts Lauren's reading of a newspaper in the same chapter raises a warning against a possible limit that this novel as a text may have:

You separate the Sunday sections and there are endless identical lines of print with people living somewhere in the words and the strange contained reality of paper and ink seeps through the house for a week and when you look at a page and distinguish one line from another it begins to gather you into it and there are people being tortured halfway around the world, who speak another language, and you have conversations with them more or less uncontrollably until you become aware you are doing it and then you stop (21).

This quoted paragraph portrays the contradictory functions of a text. The newspaper article delivers the pains of the "tortured" other people in other parts of the world while it "contains" the story in the flat reality of paper and ink, limiting the world into "the words." At the same time, it does open up another precarious opportunity as it lets one "have conversations with" the other people in the newspaper. Having imaginary conversation with subjectified characters drawn on from newspaper articles, Lauren is so completely immersed in her self that she forgets her surroundings and her soon-to-commit-suicide husband. In this sense, what is more dangerous than distancing is a total immersion into the spectral world, since it is just another version of a complete absorption in one's own self.

As the above quoted passage depicts the negative identification based on the expansion of one's self, it also facilitates an alternative reading practice by addressing the

reader as “you.”¹⁴ If a character in the text becomes a ghost that shocks the reader, as in the case of *The Body Artist*’s Lauren, it is harder for the reader to read the text in the same way Lauren reads the newspaper. The Kotka video stream provides Lauren with an illusion of reality that substitutes the present that is marked by her lack and vulnerability. *The Body Artist*, on the other hand, challenges this substitution process by making a gesture of reaching the reader out of its own “screen,” calling the reader to realize the permeability of the boundary between the imaginary and the real so that the reader will neither be able to distance herself from, nor immerse herself totally in the specters produced by the text.

To intrude into the reading present of the reader, DeLillo inserts another layer of the anachronic time template. Most chapters in *The Body Artists* are preceded by a short paragraph where a certain “you” is addressed and the present tense is used. Mark Osteen assumes that Lauren is addressing herself in these sentences, and argues that the sentences prove Lauren’s fractured self. While Osteen’s argument is valid on the level of Lauren’s psychology, it does not cancel out the impression of a direct address to the reader. The “you” sentences imply an embedded other in both Lauren’s consciousness and the novel’s form: “sometimes she thought in these motive forms, addressing someone who wasn’t quite her, and other times in other ways” (118). Seemingly addressing the reader, the vocative subject “you” and the present tense aims to create a feeling that the addressee and Lauren share the same temporal and spatial coordinates, creating a third layer of “presentness” in the narrative. This level of “the Now,” in turn, signals the materialization of a reality of the text that erupts into the reading present of the reader repeatedly.

¹⁴ It is not coincidence that while discussing the relational nature of self, Judith Butler uses personal pronouns “I” and “you” in her essay “Violence, Mourning, Politics.” She is performing relationality in her sentences, paragraphs that address “you” in *The Body Artist* can be interpreted in the same way.

Haunting the End

Nevertheless, DeLillo makes sure that the narrative returns of *The Body Artist* do not become a cyclical movement that generates a comfort of its own. After the unsettling moment of encountering Mr. Tuttle through Lauren, the last chapter makes several other returns on various levels. Lauren is back in the lonely house on the shore; she still looks at Kotka through the internet, and her phone is still ringing. However, this is not an exact repetition. Lauren is back in the house as Mr. Tuttle said she would be, but Lauren is now capable of articulating “death” in her thoughts. She has learned to recognize her loss consciously and open herself to it: “Why shouldn’t the death of a person you love bring you into lurid ruin? You don’t know how to love the ones you love until they disappear abruptly. Then you understand how thinly distance from their suffering, how sparing of self you often were, only rarely unguarded of, working you networks of give-and-take” (118). However, this “lesson” is not final as the narrator adds, right after the above sentences, that “she held these ideas every way she was” (118), implying that these are some of the ideas that Lauren is trying on for the moment.

If there is a lesson intended by DeLillo by this return, it would be this: to be oneself “less and less” (119), to open oneself to further changes and shocks. Nor does the novel end with a satisfying closure; it ends with a gesture of opening up. In the last scene, Lauren repeats what she so often did before in the novel: she walks up the stairs, and enters her bedroom intensely hoping to see Rey back in their bedroom. Only this time, the pronoun “he” Lauren wishes to encounter implies Mr. Tuttle too. Again, however, Lauren is disappointed, and for the first time, Lauren “sees” the emptiness: “No one was there...The

bed was empty. She'd known it was empty all along but was only catching up" (126). In the last paragraph, Lauren opens up the window, wanting to "feel the sea tang on her face and the flow of time in her body, to tell her who she was" (126). After making the reader look back to discover the unexpected "death's head" so many times, the very ending of *The Body Artist* opens itself up yet again for future haunting—another unpredictable encounter with the gaze that terrorizes one by exposing the lack inside oneself.

So what is the reader expected to feel, after encountering this specter that the novel so strenuously seeks to keep as ever-returning into the present of reading? After she met Mr. Tuttle, Lauren becomes conscious of how language plays with the user's perception of time and space, and being aware of its opacity makes her realize the fact that beyond it, she "know[s] nothing":

He [Mr. Tuttle] hasn't learned the language. There has to be an imaginary point, a nonplace where language intersects with our perceptions of time and space, and he is a stranger at this crossing without words or bearings. But what did she know? Nothing. This is the rule of time. It is the thing you know nothing about. (101)

This knowledge of ignorance makes Lauren at least receptive to a more corporeal conception of time that is open to the possibility of disruption: "Past present and future are not amenities of language. Time unfolds into the seams of being. It passes through you, making and shaping." (101) As she realizes how unstable a construction her self is, Lauren also becomes more conscious of the porous boundaries, the fragile yet permanent "frame" between herself and the other. In the last chapter of the novel, Lauren does not identify with the newspaper's character's as she did in the first chapter. She recognizes that it is "another framework altogether, a slick hysteria of picture and ink the world so fleetingly easy to

love and hate, so reliable and forgettable in its recipes and wars and typographical errors. (117)”

Ironically, the encounter with a specter makes one immune to other deceptive specters. After being exposed to a specter’s power, that is, the disturbance of the unknown and indefinable, Lauren becomes conscious of the fact that death can make her more open to the other by reminding her of her own vulnerability and dependency on other people. Finally articulating the term “death” clearly in her mind, Lauren thinks:

Why not sink into it? Let death bring you down. Give death its sway. Why shouldn’t the death of a person you love bring you into lurid ruin? You don’t know how to love the ones you love until they disappear abruptly. Then you understand how thinly distanced from their suffering, how sparing of self you often were, only rarely unguarded of heart, working your networks of give and take. (118)

The novel *The Body Artist* aspires to become this kind of specter—the one that challenges and expunges one from spectral simulacra produced by real-time technologies.

The technical and material limits of a book prevent the represented time in the novel from degenerating into another “real time.” It is through emotional impacts left on the side of the reader, not ever-continuing real time, that the book exerts its power. A haunting ghost can be exorcised, but it leaves specific emotional remnants and the promise of another return behind.¹⁵ Even though the experience of being haunted is momentary, it still leaves momentous impressions behind. The face of death might turn out to be a

¹⁵ Even in Lacan’s analysis of the skull-stain, the uncanny awareness of the object’s looking back is fleeting though the stain figure itself is permanently drawn on the painting. The Gaze is even more “fleetingly” perceived when the uncanny awareness unfolds in a narrative that proceeds on temporal domain.

imagined figure in a fiction, but it still leaves “terror and pity,” just as a brief illusion of a squirrel’s carcass can: “The dead squirrel you see in the driveway, dead and decapitate, turns out to be a strip of curled burlap, but you look at it, you walk past it, even so, with a mixed tinge of terror and pity” (113). The experience of this kind of specter leaves Lauren, and hopefully, the reader, too, open to the impact the others can bring. The specter, born from the many returns of the text, haunts the reader, forcing her to face the crucial void lying in the core of her reading practice and her self.

Chapter 3

Art of Summoning Ghosts: *Anil's Ghost* and the Blind Ceremony of the Eye

As many reviewers and critics have noted, *Anil's Ghost* does not provide enough details of ethnic, economic, religious and political causes of the violent Sri Lankan Civil War that it is set in. Nor does it seem that the complex features of the war are counted as important. Because of this seeming indifference to the Sri Lankan mass scale tragedy, *Anil's Ghost* was heavily criticized for a “certain coldness” when first published in 2000 (LeClair). Yet the novel itself takes the issue of responsibility seriously in a different way. Rather than examining the reason why all the deadly strife began in the first place, Michael Ondaatje explores possibilities of individual responsibility in such chaotic situation, and expands the same issue to the reader who reads the stories of suffering from a safe cultural and psychological distance.

The unique way the author expects *Anil's Ghost* to function can be deduced from the unique role art plays in the novel. In *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje consistently juxtaposes lost or broken human bodies with lost or damaged art works. The novel starts with a segment in italics that shows Anil Tissera participating in an excavation project in Guatemala. This segment centers on the vigils of the Guatemalan people who wait for their family members' dead bodies to be excavated. A few pages later, in the second segment printed in italics, a narrator listens to Palipana, a Sri Lankan archeologist, lecture in Cave 14, where beautiful Bodhisattvas once stood. Ancient sculptures like Bodhisattvas in Cave 14 are a major form of art in the novel, and these sculptures have suffered the blows of history—both ancient and modern political violence. The narrator of the segment calls the

cave “the place of a complete crime,” as all the sculptures were violently cut away in the early 20th century when Sri Lanka was still under colonization. The language of the segment repeatedly overlaps the image of human body over the broken sculptures: “Heads separated from bodies. Hands broken off. None of the bodies remained” (12). In *Anil’s Ghost*, art is not beautiful or permanent outside its local context, and no work of art survives history in its complete form. Palipana says “Nothing lasts... It is an old dream. Art burns, dissolves. And to be loved with the irony of history—that isn’t much (12),” as if to brush the traumatic resonance away, but it is the broken art pieces’ similarity to the mutilated human bodies Anil found in Guatemala and later in Sri Lanka that is emphasized here. The narrator even purposely calls the traces of axes and saws on the wall “the wound’s incision” (12).

According to the narrator of the segment, some of the severed Bodhisattvas are carried to be displayed in Western museums. However, because of the close comparison to the human body, the severed Bodhisattva torsos displayed in “a museum in California” appear grotesque, too (12). The grotesque display of torsos that were violently removed from their original context visually echo the human heads severed from their bodies and displayed on stakes, which is a scene, according to Anil, common in Sri Lanka. The narrator mockingly calls the torso displays as “The royal Afterlife,” as if to criticize the modernist concept of universal art (12). Apparently, Ondaatje thus criticizes the way the imperial West glorified art as ahistorical and apolitical. The “ascendancy of the idea” that art works are supposed to have embodied is dwarfed by the vivid language that focuses on describing the physical harms done to the disappeared art works (12). Ondaatje is interested in art not in its perfection, but in the loss represented by it; that is, the trace left

by the cruel removal of it, which records and reminds people of the violence that the people of the past suffered. In *Anil's Ghost*, it is art's job to reveal the red "wound's incision (12)." Toward the end of the novel, despite Anil the detective/scientist's doubts, Ananda Udugama, an artist/artificer, reconstructs the face of a dead body Anil has been investigating, and Anil is shocked by the concrete individuality the face expresses as if encountering his ghost. In a similar way, fragmentary images of the disappeared people and the moments of the past haunts the narrative to train the reader to discern individual faces of the distressed people in the novel. By this narrative movement, as in *Love and The Body Artist*, the haunting site is transferred onto the reading, and this in turn makes the reader, like the viewer of Cave 14, confront and experience a historical trauma resulting from horrific violence.

Adult-child

A modern museum deliberately dislocates its exhibits out of their original historical and political context, reflecting the modern paradigm of history that produced the institution itself. The way a museum collects and displays its exhibits represents a progressive, linear conception of history. And theoretically, in order to conceive history in this manner, the subject who does the conceiving should stand outside the flow of time or on the ending point of it. Thus, modern museums implicitly reveal the fact that such a timeline ironically produces a transcendental subject position that presides over and is unaffected by the very linear flow of time. According to Elizabeth Ermarth, this subject position is "the ultimate problem" Heidegger finds in western "History." Naming such transcendental subject position as 'nobody,' she states: "To exist in historical or

‘inauthentic’ time is to exist as nobody and thence...to act like an immortal or at least to act like someone who is able to pretend that finitude is not absolute (214).” This position of “nobody” is problematic because it is presumed to be unaffected by death. Immortality disables the reflection on a subject’s own historical position. In addition, because the “nobody” exists outside time, it is impossible for the subject to conceive and form a fundamentally interactive relationship with the others who reside inside time. Consequently, the imaginary position of “nobody” produces fundamentally irresponsible and self-centered subject. A subject who positions her/himself as “nobody” can only throw a one-sided gaze at the others, thus making the others the objects of her/his observation. This transcendental position is that of a modern museum curator; and it also is the position taken by a modern scientist or a detective in turn-of –the-century detective novels. And because the reader of a detective novel usually identifies her/himself with the detective, it also is the position taken by the readers of the novels. *Anil’s Ghost* also places the reader in this position in its beginning, as the novel partly borrows the form of a detective fiction (Burton 44).

Anil, a forensic scientist who comes back to Sri Lanka as a UN investigator of human rights violations, initially occupies this position of the detective. The main narrative of the novel starts at the moment Anil, coming from North America, arrives in Sri Lanka. Educated in the UK and working in the US, Anil has “now lived abroad long enough to interpret Sri Lanka with a long-distance gaze (11).” On the day she arrives at Sri Lanka, Anil repeats “here” several times as if she is having a hard time confirming that Sri Lanka and its civil war is “here,” that is, the immediate context that she has to deal with. Indeed, Anil seems to be a character designed to guide western readers into the foreign

world of Sri Lanka. Her “long-distance gaze” is identical to the kind of gaze that modern scientists and artists hold over their objects. And because the narrative in the first chapter mostly follows Anil’s consciousness, the reader, too, is encouraged to identify with the distanced position Anil takes—until the failure of her investigation and the way it is narrated introduce them to a new way of positioning themselves in relation to other people.

Anil’s “long-distance” gaze also is an objective gaze, the mythical scientific objectivity crucial for the making of modern scientists and detectives. Working with Sarath, a local archeologist, Anil finds a recently buried skeleton excavated from a government restricted area and investigates the skeleton to identify whether this is a human rights violation case. Accordingly, in the earlier part of the novel, the main plot relies on Anil’s forensic skills and the course of her investigation. The detective’s job in a detective novel is to restore the linearity of the narrative by scientifically observing evidence to find out who the murderer is and how the murder happened. The detective, therefore, occupies the position of “nobody” as he stands outside reconstructed time, and the linearity of his narrative runs parallel with the straight objective gaze of the detective. Likewise, Anil, as a UN investigator, wants to impose a linear chronology over events to obtain a sense of control over chaotic time, and ultimately, death, which is so prevalent in the novel. In this attempt, it is crucial for the character of Anil, a scientist and detective, to remain detached from emotional turbulence, because “truth,” a transparent realist reconstruction of linearity, can be only reached by an objective observer.

The distance necessary for an objective gaze, however, discloses a certain emotional coldness or numbness. Anil emphatically thinks of a dead body as “it,” confirming that she is not interested in the original life of the body: “...she put her hand

out and held her palm a millimeter over the flesh to take in its body heat. *Its*. Not *his* or *hers* anymore (emphasis original 19).” Anil emphasizes the word “its” to highlight the fact that she does not owe the body any respect or responsibility as she would to a person. The dead body is not a person anymore—she can safely treat it as an object, and thus she inures herself to any tragic story the body might reveal, escaping from any obligation to respond to the story that the body could tell. Anil’s problem is that she maintains the same kind of disinterested gaze over all the other living people, staying outside the local context herself and treating others as objects. Anil habitually positions herself in the place of an objective observer as if she is watching a movie, and this hinders Anil from forming responsive and responsible relationships with other people. When Anil is in Arizona, she spends evenings with her friend, Leaf, watching western movies. Leaf and Anil intentionally simulate the American life in the suburbs during the conservative fifties. Their life belongs to no specified time and space, fleeing even the present of America. Free from their temporal and spatial context, Anil and Leaf discuss the wounds of the characters in the movie with a scientific precision, and the same indifferent curiosity defines the kind of relationship Anil longs to keep with the dead and the living alike when she comes back to Sri Lanka.

Another function of Anil’s long distance gaze is self-defense. The subject position of the detective that Anil assumes produces an objective, detached gaze which does not recognize the fact that the subject of the gaze itself is gazed at in turn. While Anil wants to remain ungraspable for herself, she wants to grasp other people in a fixed way and is threatened when she cannot. She refuses personal and interactive relationships. Anil cannot bear it when she is affected by others, and this desire corresponds with her attempt to hold a “scientific gaze” over all the others. Accordingly, she refuses to recognize the gaze

returned by others because the counter gaze would locate her in relation to the gazer, whereas the detective should remain outside the narrative he tries to construct. Anil wants to remain ungraspable, while wanting to grasp other people in a fixed way; and she feels threatened when she cannot. For instance, in the U. S., Anil thinks of breaking up with her lover Cullis when she feels she is “partially blindfolded” (100) about him. The reason why Anil is troubled about Sarath is not very different; she is disturbed because she does not know where he stands in terms of his political allegiance. By refusing to enter into an equal relationship in terms of seeing, Anil exempts herself from her responsibility to others. Furthermore, as the reader usually identifies herself with the detective in a detective fiction, Anil’s distant observer position is shared with the reader.

Anil’s position as a western detective/scientist, however, is not as secure as it first appears to be. By contextualizing Anil and her identity against her will, Ondaatje not only challenges a problematic Western History, but deconstructs the transcendental subject position Anil tries to occupy. The novel’s aim is to deconstruct this position because it is impossible for such a subject to conceive and form a fundamentally interactive relationship with others.

As a child, Anil fights to get her name, “Anil,” and as Joseph Slaughter claims in his essay, this episode shows Anil’s fierce insistence on having control over her own identity. In England, Anil divorces her husband to secure her independence and freedom. However, *Anil’s Ghost* refuses to proceed as a traditional bildungsroman. Instead of developing a mature, concrete identity, Anil chooses dubious isolation and non-identity. When Chitra Abeysekera, a Sri Lankan entomologist, asks Anil what she likes “about the West,” Anil answers: “Oh—what do I like? Most of all I think I like that I can do things on

my own terms. Nothing is anonymous here, is it. I miss my privacy” (72). What Anil likes about living in the west is that she is anonymous, nameless, and unidentifiable. Moreover, when Cullis asks her what her background is, Anil answers: “I live here...in the West” (72). Just the West, not Montreal, not Arizona, not even America. The ambiguous term “the West” reveals Anil’s dichotomous mind map of the world, in addition to the fact that she does not want to belong to either side. She feels freed by the very fact that she cannot be tied to a specific place or a specific time: “In her years abroad, during her European and North American education, Anil had courted foreignness, was at ease whether on the Bakerloo line or the highways around Santa Fe” (54). Anil feels complete, free, independent, not because she is abroad, but because she is floating without any anchor. Once in Sri Lanka, she longs for “once upon a time in the West (235).” Anil feels better when she receives a postcard from Leaf, “some communication from the West” (28), not because she identifies herself as a westerner, but rather because the reinforcement of her tie to the none-specific “West” helps her keep her distance from Sri Lanka. At first glance, this floating subject seems to be a postmodern alternative to the firm modern scientist-detective subject. However, both subject positions are occupied by Anil simultaneously; it seems that Ondaatje implies that both positions are just two sides of one coin—traumatized and irresponsible self. Anil’s attempt to impersonate an unemotional scientist, therefore, can be understood as a desperate and doomed attempt to secure certainty in a chaotic world. Her belief in an absolute—not moral, not religious, but scientific— “truth” can be understood as the same device to erase her own personal context.

Consequently, while Sri Lankans want to define Anil’s identity as belonging to one party or another, Anil struggles to keep herself aloof, using her foreignness as an excuse.

Anil repeats to herself that she is not “held by the island by the past” (11), but the first thing she encounters when she comes back after 15 years is her past. Anil repeatedly refuses being identified as “the swimmer,” a public Sri Lankan identity she earned by winning a swimming contest, as if she will lose the isolated and independent identity of the present if she reclaims that older self of hers. Nevertheless, Anil’s deliberate effort to sever the previous ties ironically underscores the strong tie she once had, and the absence of her sorrow for losing what she had within the country. Anil looks for her ayah Lalitha, rather than any one of her family members, as if she wants to confirm the fact that her tie to the past is completely and permanently severed. She seems to be satisfied with the fragments of the memories from the past only when those fragments cannot affect her present in any way.

Anil stays emotionally numb even when she visits Lalitha, the only living person that ties her back to her childhood in Sri Lanka. Even as she embraces Lalitha for the first time in 17 years, Anil is more conscious of “the stern eyes that were taking in this sentimental moment” than Lalitha’s tears (22). The language that describes the scene does not get any more emotional as Anil almost immediately becomes the wordless observer, observing Lalitha and her granddaughter, the owner of the aforementioned “stern eyes,” speak Tamil, “a lost language” for Anil (24). Even though Anil says that she can understand a few words that are being said, she does not reveal what the words are, leaving the reader even more detached from the scene than she is. Anil spends as much or even more time observing the granddaughter than her dear ayah Lalitha, and as a result, fails to convey any special feeling she might have toward Lalitha. This episode reveals how cut off

Anil is from her past and from Sri Lanka, and shows, again, Anil's half-conscious refusal to reach back and connect to her past.

Interestingly, a camera, "a Nikon" (23) records the scene where Anil meets her ayah. Anil sees the whole scene as if she is looking at it through an unemotional eye of the camera. The distance and the emotional detachment that the camera presumably needs to record a moment are shared by Anil and the reader. Indeed, Anil often uses diverse technical devices to record and/or mediate the scene she is in. In addition to the camera she uses to photograph the skeletons she investigates, Anil frequently records her dialogue with Sarath with a tape recorder, and she even video tapes her lover, Cullis, when he is sleeping. Cameras, video recorders, and tape recorders are some of the devices Anil uses to "investigate" the bodies she studies scientifically, and by using the same devices on people, Anil objectifies the people she is facing and distances herself from an immediate relationship with them. When she identifies herself with the impersonal eye or ear of the devices, she escapes the immediate time, space and relationship she is in. Anil refuses to acknowledge the gaze of the others while she insists on observing them, thus attempting exempt herself from her responsibility to the others she observes.

Through the Diyasena brothers, who stand on the other side of this distanced, impersonal gaze, Ondaatje demonstrates how irresponsible Anil's position actually is. As an effect of the objective gaze Anil maintains between herself and the people of Sri Lanka, she is not very different from "a visiting journalist" (27). Most of all, Anil is not only irresponsible, but also inconsiderate and irrelevant. As Patricia Chu points out, despite her passionate speech to Sarath, Anil's human rights narrative sounds suspicious because

“Anil...will not face the local consequence of her work” (Chu 95). Gamini shrewdly criticizes Anil for taking the conventional western hero’s role:

The American or the Englishman gets on a plane and leaves. That’s it. The camera leaves with him. He looks out of the window at Mombasa or Vietnam or Jakarta, someplace now he can look at through the clouds. The tired hero. A couple of word to the girl beside him. He’s going home. So the war, to all purpose, is over. That’s enough reality for the West (285-6).

Needless to say, the above hero’s position far above the land is much similar to that of the western detective.

Ironically, echoing some of the criticism the novel received, Sarath challenges Anil to understand and take her part in the local context:

You know, I’d believe you arguments more if you lived here...You can’t just slip in, make a discovery and leave...I want you to understand the archeological surround of a fact. Or you’ll be like one of those journalists who file reports about flies and scabs while staying at the Galle Face Hotel. That false empathy and blame. (44)

This complaint should be taken seriously, as the very freedom from time turns out to be deadly: Leaf, Anil’s American companion in living outside history, is dying of loss of memory. Ironically, instead of enjoying her privileged freedom, Leaf is “dying unmoored” (255). Ondaatje reveals that the isolated, floating identity Anil and Leaf enjoy together is not an alternative to the modernist subject position. Indeed, it is just another symptom of the immortal position the western notion of history generates.

In *Anil's Ghost*, both positions are the products of an effort to ignore death, which is always too close.

Gradually, Anil's defensive objective gaze collapses because death lurks too close both temporally and spatially for her to maintain her scientific distance. On her second day in Sri Lanka, Anil faces a corpse fresh enough to be 'still somebody' (13). Despite her seeming detachment, when she first encounters the body of a political victim the next day, Anil is shaken, and thinks "here it was, in front of her already" (13) as if she was bracing herself for this encounter with death in her homeland all along. Anil's parents died in a car crash after she left Sri Lanka, and her decision not to "come back here after my parents died" (47) reveals a suture in Anil's psyche, under which an unprocessed trauma lies. Moreover, even though she does not consciously think about it, she is traumatized by the tragic loss of lives on a mass scale that she has to investigate: "Anil picked up reports and opened folders that listed disappearances and killings. The last thing she wished to return to every day was this. And every day she returned to it" (42). Anil's failure to really think about these "disappearances and killings" echoes a common inability to process them, and the author's decision not to narrate any conscious process of the experience points to an unprocessed trauma that still has its grip on Anil.

Ondaatje further complicates his criticism of the transcendental subject, the subject of western History and modern science, by overlapping it with an image of a terrified child. We have seen how Anil's desire to impersonate the western scientist herself is her way of escaping a reality that overwhelms her. On their way back to Colombo after meeting Palipana in a forest, Anil remarks to Sarath that "all you want

when you're a kid is certainty" (110). The sentence implies that the pursuit of a universal truth is actually a sign of immaturity, criticizing Anil and the western culture that she takes refuge in for being childishly inconsiderate of the local context. The Western insistence on linear historical time is also a desperate attempt to make the future manageable by eliminating unknown factors as much as possible. It finalizes the future so that no room is left for loopholes and surprises. Thus, the goal of a realist narrative Anil as a UN investigator wants to set up is to recover control over time, and ultimately, death—a "certainty" that a "kid" wants.

One major trait of immaturity, of course, is irresponsibility. A complete dependence on a certain order can be interpreted as a form of irresponsibility on the part of an individual, as the responsibility of acting in a certain way lies with the order, not with the individual who takes that action. Commenting on Anil's job, Burton points out that "bones...are objective and verifiable evidence of criminal intent which becomes, in turn, the basis for the pursuit of justice. ...forensic science provides...a rare promise of certainty" (42). However, according to Ondaatje, this fascination with forensic science itself reveals how the world is paralyzed by fear and has become like a traumatized child who desperately needs an absolute order to depend on. The very effort to hold on to an impersonal position is a symptom of unresolved trauma and immaturity—a childish self-centeredness that disables time translation and interpretation.

Traumatized by the atrocities the Sri Lankan civil war spawned, all three main characters of the novel, Anil, Gamini and Sarath, try to overcome the devastating reality by distancing themselves from their present. There have been many critiques

that contrast Sarath and Anil, reading Sarath as a representation of an Asian, alternative perspective on history and truth set against that of the west. For example, when Sarath tells Anil about an ancient Chinese tomb he once excavated, Anil insists that her scientific method could have revealed how people were killed in the Chinese tomb. But what is the use of it? There is no living person who will be influenced by the discovery. The meaning of truth lies in the way it affects the living. As Sarath argues, the discovery of the ancient tomb is important when it is used to learn how “the terrorists in our time can be made to believe they are eternal if they die for the cause of their ruler” (261).

However, Sarath’s position also has its dangers, just as Anil points out: when talking about the tomb, he seems to be dreaming, somewhat fascinated by its very antiqueness and exoticism. Despite his arguments, he clearly is not interested in how the excavation of the tomb can help him to understand the mindset of “the terrorists in our time” (261). Sarath is not so much different from Anil in that he has his own way of distancing himself from the traumatic events of the present. Sarath indulges in non-specific, dream-like histories that are as far as possible from the present, and this is yet another form of escape—a childish act to look away from a painful present in which one is helpless. When he was a young boy, Sarath was sent to a *walawwa* when his younger brother, Gamini, was expected to die with “diphtheria,” a word and situation the boy Sarath could not fully understand. Left only with an *ayah* in the lonely house and haunted by the incomprehensible shadow of death, the boy Sarath roams and studies the house and its garden alone. Eventually, he “evolved into a privacy he had perhaps never fully emerged from” (165). Sarath’s interest in history is

a way to retreat from the “patterns of death” that “has always surrounded him” (278). When they visit Palipana, both Anil and Sarath do not wish to leave “the spell of the old man [Palipana] and his forest site,” (109) because they both find comfort in the ancient forest that seems to exist outside of the present Sri Lanka. Thus, the polar opposite perspectives oddly coincide as the linear western history turns out to be not so different from the terrified numbness to time and the inability to find an ultimate meaning out of it.

Gamini, a doctor and the younger brother of Sarath, is almost the Sri Lankan double of Anil, despite the fact that he is very critical of Anil and her job. In the **fourth** chapter, “Between the Heartbeats,” Gamini and Anil, two characters who are traumatized and left child-like in certain aspects, are juxtaposed. As Anil finds her safe place in the American West, in the “nights in Leaf’s backyard, once upon a time in the West (235),” Gamini finds his haven in his memory of his childhood. Gamini, never fully matured, “loved his lack of responsibility, loved never being at the centre, while perceptive of what went on there” (221). Indeed, “he was for most of his life a boy spinning in a chair” (225). Just as Anil has run away from her family and country, he chooses to be a doctor to run away from his family (221), and in the same way Anil wants to hold on to scientific method to take control of the otherwise overwhelming situation, Gamini depends on “any kind of order—the smell of Savlon antiseptic that was used to wash floors and walls, the ‘children’s injection room with its nursery murals” (118). For Gamini, “Emergency Services had become for him, even in its mad state, a cocoon, as his parents’ house had been” (118). This order, however, is a world Gamini created as a “replica of childhood order” (215). Also, just as Anil detaches

herself from the bodies, Gamini's "duties made him come upon strangers and cut them open without ever knowing their names" (211). Since he has more ties to Sri Lanka and to its people than Anil has, he "had chosen not to deal with the dead," (212) and covers the faces of the dead to protect himself from "the danger of his recognizing the dead" (213). As Gamini knows, "all this was a sickness—but he did not dislike it, this distance and anonymity" (223). Even though Anil, Sarath, and Gamini do consciously involve themselves in the tragedy of Sri Lankan people in their own ways, their defensive subject positions make it ultimately impossible to for them to open themselves to the suffering others.

If both isolation and universalism are forms of immature irresponsibility, what, then, is a mature reaction in the face of overwhelming terror and grief? Peculiarly, Gamini harbors a secret longing for a parent figure—more specifically, a mother: "He wanted a mother's arm to hold him firm on the bed, to lie across his rib cage, to bring a cool washcloth to his face." (119) Sarath also is moved strongly by "the rock carving from another century of the woman bending over her child." (157) Anil, likewise, is most affected by "a dead child in clothes. A dead three-year-old with the clothes her parents had dressed her in" (137). It seems that Anil, Sarath, and Gamini's desire for an absolute order or antiquity is an unconsciously employed strategy to defend a helpless "child" in them, just as the wildness of the "wild women" in *Love* is a cover up for "the winsome baby girl" in the women. However, unlike the wild women in *Love*, these three long for a mother, not a father, because "there were not too many fathers around then" (119). Moreover, father figures "ended up somehow in the arms of careless power" (119). Therefore, the author, along with Gamini, Sarath and Anil,

seems to believe “only in the mothers sleeping against their children, the great sexuality of spirit in them, the sexuality of care, so the children would be confident and safe during the night” (119). Even though the mothers are in the same helpless position as the children, the mothers do take care of their children as much as they can, and they do not make themselves impervious to the grief and the pains their children feel; nor are they able to turn away from the absence of a lost child.

This compassion, the care and the identification is what the characters long for, and it seems this is what Ondaatje hopes for from his readers, too. It is art’s job to convey the feeling, the desperate and urgent need for care and memory to its audience. Thus, the three main characters’ longing for the mother parallels the novel’s belief in immediate care and compassion—the immediate and personal response to the suffering of the others. In addition, it is the job of the novel, *Anil’s Ghost*, to mark the painful absence of the murdered people, positioning the reader in the grieving mother’s position. In this sense, the novel itself is an art form that conjures up the spectral mother that calls for the ghosts of missing children.

Ghost Narrative and the Blind Ceremony of the Eye

Fear paralyzes the human ability to make narratives, and, therefore, disables the narrative’s meaning-making function. Time, for a terrified person, flows without any personal meaning. As if to simulate the experience of the traumatized characters, the narrative of *Anil’s Ghost* moves in a convoluted way. As the main plot continues to proceed chronologically, this psychological tempo of the narrative often creates temporal eddies, replicating the adult-child’s time experience of trauma. In addition, fragmentary

narrative segments that float over the main narrative further complicate the reader's experience of the novel. The clash between two temporal logics exposes the "child" in the three main characters by stripping their escapist subject positions. Eventually, the main narrative begins to rely on the logic of association between people as if to reclaim time for individuals and personal relationships between them. When linear history, as well as one directional gaze, is completely disabled in metaphorical and physical darkness, Anil faces her worst fear—the personal face of death—through the work of an artist, Ananda, which instructs how to associate with other people in a different way. Just as Ananda's reconstruction of a face taught Anil, the reader also learns to discern the invisible ghosts—specific faces of the disappeared and distant people through the artwork that is the novel *Anil's Ghost*.

At the beginning of the novel, just like Laura's experience of time in *The Body Artist*, the main events in *Anil's Ghost* become the past too fast. The reader usually encounters the events which happened during the day only when Anil reminisces about them when she is alone at night. This temporal distance intensifies the foreignness a western reader might feel, and adds to the dream-like effect of the novel. The fact that Anil experiences time too fast shows her inability to process the traumatic situation she faces in Sri Lanka. As a result, the Sri Lankan civil war is made to feel like a timeless, universal condition which does not have an outside. Ondaatje seems to focus on staging the prevailing feeling of emotional numbness as a result of incomprehensible traumatic experiences.

Alternate examples of this psychological tempo of the narrative occur in secluded locations. For instance, ancient monastery ruins in forests, just like the one where Palipana

lives, are used as a spatial pool of time where the past and the future commingle and become indistinguishable from each other. Because the space of the forest annuls history with its sense of timelessness, the past, the present and the future become indistinguishable from each other. When Anil and Sarath visit Palipana in his forest, they take refuge in the serenity this timelessness generates, as it makes the present and its unpredictable terror less threatening. Also, as historical time differences are cancelled in these forests, the narrative itself pushes forward to summon the future to the present. For example, in Palipana's forest, the narrator abruptly narrates the death of Palipana, which would happen in an unspecified future: "The girl would slip into the forest, nocturnal, still as bark, when Palipana died" (106). Stated in the past tense, this future event in the middle of the present makes the shock of learning Palipana's death somewhat manageable, especially when compared to other deaths in the novel. Thus, by creating this temporal loophole, the narrative space of the forest makes the reader share the provisional calmness the characters feel in the forest.

However, Ondaatje never leaves the reader long enough to enjoy the timelessness, just as the characters are unable to escape from the horrific present of Sri Lanka completely. Ondaatje seems to be interested in making the reader feel like the terrified characters inside the novel—that is, he is more interested in generating the helpless feeling of the traumatized characters by simulating their experience of time. Drawing on Cathy Caruth's theory on trauma, Margaret Scanlan argues that "his[Ondaatje's] distinctive achievement in *Anil's Ghost* is to create a narrative structure that replicates the experience of terror," as the fast-paced, fragmentary narrative recreates "a sense of time experience through terror, by people living in fear that they can be blown away in an instant, to whom

historical perspective is an alien luxury” (#). The peace of the ancient forest is violently disturbed as Anil and Sarath discovers Gunesena, a truck driver, nailed on to the road on their way out of Palipana’s forest (109). Whereas the narrator gives the reader a foresight of Palipana’s future, he keeps this horrific discovery as a surprise. The scene is not “recollected” in any of the character’s minds; it is directly described, refusing to shield the reader from the shock and forcing the reader to experience it more directly. Without any warning, the soothing pool of psychological time is broken down so violently and repeatedly that the reader’s experience is made more direct and powerful.

I am not arguing, however, that a disturbing reading experience can substitute the traumatic experience the characters go through. Rather, my point is that through such narrative devices, the author undermines the reader’s distance from the story, insisting on making the reader face the inexpressible enormity of the atrocities Sri Lanka suffers. By reducing the protective distance of the reader, the novel makes the foreign Sri Lankan time intersect with the reader’s reading time. This can be disturbing to the reader as this kind of exposed position forces the reader to become conscious of her own time in juxtaposition to the time inside the novel. In the “West,” Anil “never usually translated the time of a death into personal time” (13). However, when faced with the first dead body she encountered in Sri Lanka, the ‘freshness’ of the body made Anil remember what she was doing by the time the person died. In the west, she could be safely isolated; “here,” in Sri Lanka, she begins to make connections, and “interpret” times of deaths into her personal time. Anil feels threatened by the change. The separation of the time of death and personal time represents the gap that commonly exists in the consummation of media, not to mention in common reading practice. As Anil tries to translate the time of death into the time of London and

San Diego (13), the gap also extends to the readers who live in physically and emotionally distant places. What can this fresh, unjust, unidentified death mean for people living in London and San Diego? How should one learn to respond and react to these other lives and deaths from afar? As seen in *The Body Artist*, the real time media—TV and internet—create a parallel time flow that does not meet with the time of the viewer. The screen safely blocks the other time from overflowing into the viewer’s time zone. In contrast, in the Sri Lanka of *Anil’s Ghost*, the reader, as with Anil, has to learn to deal with different temporalities. The reader’s safe surrounding is not an excuse in Ondaatje’s Sri Lanka as the reader has to learn to relate to a different temporal zone wrought with “killings and disappearances.” As Ermarth remarks about postmodern narratives, *Anil’s Ghost* hopes to make the reader realize the fact that the reader also lives in time: “reading time is not life neutralized or bracketed, but life in full exercise” (216). In other words, the reader does not reside aloof from, and is vulnerable to, the miseries and deaths that prevail in the story. The reader is reminded of the fact that she will also face death someday. Instead of negating linear historical time, the novel exposes and overlaps it with the reading time, making it impossible for the reader to detach himself/herself from the narrative as Anil at first tries to.

Through the clash between psychological time and violent reality, pockets of still time open through which vivid images of the past rise up momentarily. For example, when Anil first sees Gamini in the emergency room without knowing who he is, the narrator records “Anil was to remember all this very well” (38). Also, in “The Mouse” chapter, the narrative follows Gamini’s childhood and adolescence. As Gamini never grew out of his big brother complex and remains somewhat childish, the chapter feels somewhat timeless:

“He[Gamini] was for most of his life a boy spinning in a chair (225).” However, without any warning, the narrator tells the reader what will happen in the future rushing the reader to a later point in the chronological time line: “The awareness of it was to come later in a terrible crisis and with clarity. He would be holding his brother and be aware that as far back as childhood he had known that for him the catalyst for the freedom and secrecy he always wanted was this benign brother. Gamini, beside Sarath years later, would say all this out loud to him (223).” Later on, the scene indeed is repeated when Gamini discovers Sarath’s murdered body in his hospital, and even though the later narration of the scene stops right before Gamini starts to talk to his dead brother, this first appearance of the scene becomes a resource for the reader to imagine it fully. By repeatedly making the reader face the traumatic moments the characters experience, the narrative itself acts like a ghost, returning to highlight the absence of the disappeared people whose ghosts cannot return.

Italicized segments also generate multiple fractures in the present in which the past is continually processed again and again, marking and starting the haunting movement of the narrative. As the short segments printed in italics provide fragmentary yet concrete visions of unspoken past moments and disappeared people, they are an effective device that disrupts a linear reading, preventing the reader’s comfortable consumption of different stories of Sri Lanka. Inserted without page numbers, these segments flow over the main narrative to form different layers of temporal flow that intersect and overlap with the main narrative, creating an effect that resembles the montage sequence of a film. For example, in a segment that describes a political murder that happens in a train, the murderer bumps somebody’s elbow while moving in the darkness of a tunnel. The narrator states that “he [the murderer] might have been a tableau in somebody’s dream” (33). Later on, Anil and

Gamini ride on a train, and while the train passes a tunnel, someone bumps Anil's elbow. Ondaatje never clarifies whether the murder actually happens on the train Anil and Gamini are on, but the similarity between the two short scenes mirror the previous segment. Thus, this montage of time effect enables a moment in the narrative where different experiences of time, that is, different life stories can intersect. The reader is made to feel how close and prevalent the political murders are in Sri Lanka. Providing the reader with these eerie glimpses of the lost past, the segments reminds the reader that there are too many untold stories of unknown people that have to be counted in order to understand what is going on in the main narrative.

Whereas the italic segments fragment the narrative, the “tableaus” they create condition the reading and implement the effect of fear, confusion, and loss—much like the aftermath of an encounter with a ghost. In the first italicized narrative fragment that is placed even before the first chapter, Anil is excavating what seems to be a massacre site in Guatemala with her forensic team. Anil, even though she is the focal point of the section, feels almost numb as the narrator describes the unnamed families that linger around the excavation site waiting for the forensic team to identify their disappeared family members. Here, an unfathomable sorrow and fear set the tone for the novel; sorrow and fear seem to be the universal condition that permeates everyone. Also, by introducing a woman who lost her husband and brother, and later placing Anil between two other men, the author makes sure that the reader remembers this tableau. While most of the segment is written in the past tense, the second to last sentence suddenly uses the present tense: “There are no words Anil knows that can describe, even for just herself, the woman's face. But the grief of love in that shoulder she will not forget, still remembers” (6). It is not clear in which ‘present’

Anil “still” remembers the face, but because Anil goes to Sri Lanka later, the reader can safely assume that she has the image of the face and the shoulder with her when she is working in Sri Lanka; and not only that, but this also becomes the reader’s memory. As it is impossible to pin down the “now” the narrative refers to, and as the past and the present become “now” alternately in the course of the novel, this unknown future in the segment coincides with the reading present of the reader, making the reader become more conscious of her own time experience, the only consistent present the reader encounters.

As the uneven and turbulent narrative of the novel simulates the experience of unpredictable terror, unable to “see ahead” in terms of the narrative, the reader becomes figuratively “blind.” Instead of the one-directional objective gaze that stands for a linear narrative, images of blindness or limited eyesight occur in the novel as a figure for a relationship-based, performative narrative. Limited eyesight signifies vulnerability that needs and is willing to accept help from others. Netra Mangala, a special ceremony that consecrates a statue of Buddha by painting its eyes, can be easily interpreted as a symbol of a reading practice that *Anil’s Ghost* promotes. While performing Netra Mangala, a specially chosen artist is not allowed to look at the eyes he is painting directly. While painting eyes “gives the image life. Like a fuse” (97), the artist can only see the gaze he is creating “in the mirror” (99). When the eyes are completed, “the painter of eyes is blindfolded and led out of the temple” (101). In other words, the artist deliberately relinquishes the right to claim the gaze he creates. Voluntarily limiting his own eyesight, the artist does not claim an ownership over the gaze he has created. The artist forfeits the right to control his creation, providing an equal or better footing to it to allow a divine spirit to enter the statue and become a fully independent other. Furthermore, he halts his own

eyesight to hand over the right to see to the other, and offers himself to be seen by that other. In the same manner, reading *Anil's Ghost* is closing one's eyes to allow the novel become an other that affects oneself.

As the novel proceeds, the logic of association becomes dominant in place of the conflicting chrono-logic and psycho-logic. That is, the narrative unfolds through the weaving of personal relationships between the characters. The narrative fragments also make contact with each other more and more frequently without merging into one whole narrative, and the reading of them accordingly has to depend more on the thread of knowledge woven by the relationship between the characters. For example, when Ananda appears for the first time in an italicized segment, the reader does not know where or how to locate him in the narrative. The reader learns Ananda's full name in the segment, but this does not mean that the reader knows him. Through Sarath, the reader learns of Palipana, and through Palipana, the reader comes to know Ananda, the artist Anil and Sarath employ to reconstruct the skull they investigate. Likewise, in another italicized segment that narrates the story of Sirissa, the disappeared wife of Ananda, the name Sirissa is useless before the reader learns who she is in relation to Ananda. As individuals are irreplaceable only in the personal relationships they form with others, it is these relationships that define an individual in the novel, rather than a fixed identity represented by a name. What is important is not a name, but the responsibility that accompanies the learning of a name.

Rather than a name or a bone, what identifies a disappeared person in *Anil's Ghost* is the relationship the person has been in, because there is no fixed, universal identity. Individuals are irreplaceable only in the personal relationships they form. Consequently, as the main detective-investigation format of the narrative disintegrates toward the end of the

novel, personal relationships are woven between the characters, and the narrative proceeds increasingly through the network of relationship between people. It is an absence in closely knit relationships that enables one to “see” the invisible when the physical eyes fail in the wake of intense fear and sorrow. Trained to discern the unforeseen and the invisible, the reader becomes perceptive to the individual faces that appear in the fragmentary segments, and thereby is prepared for an encounter with the horrible vacuum left by the dead and the disappeared. Too many died in the Sri Lankan political turmoil, and according to Sarath, “there was only one thing worse. That was when a family member simply disappeared and there was no sighting or evidence of his existence or his death” (184). Without a body or a grave, a disappeared person can only be marked by the gap in the relationships the person has been in. When a family member “disappears,” the family’s life is suspended because they do not know whether they can wait for the person or they have to mourn the person. Consequently, the ghost of a disappeared person is in permanent suspension. Indeed, the whole country of Sri Lanka is said to be seized by the same fearful suspension: “If people you knew disappeared, there was a chance they might stay alive if you did not cause trouble. This was the scarring psychosis in the country. Death, loss, was ‘unfinished,’ so you could not walk through it” (54). In the italicized segment that describes Sirissa on the morning she was kidnapped, only the last paragraph is written in the present tense, narrating the last moments before she was kidnapped. The narrative of the segment stops on the unspeakable, unimaginable moment when Sirissa disappears, and the horrific gap haunts Ananda and the reader in place of Sirissa’s ghost. In this way, the narrative performs an encounter with the absence of the disappeared.

This emphasis on the relationship contrasts with Anil's passion about names. Right after the above mentioned segment about Sirissa, Anil recollects what she had learned from the masters of forensic science in the West. As Scanlan points out, "names are powerful talismans for Anil...for Anil the name is a fact, a permanent truth that separates this woman from all the 'unhistorical dead'" (307). Anil wants to nail the identity of the bone down, name the victim, thereby containing the impact, making the tragedy of Sri Lanka into one containable, manageable, and representable case for the UN. Investigating Sailor's bones, Anil believes his name would be the answer to the question "who was this skeleton?" And that "to give him a name would name the rest" (54). Nevertheless, her scientific method fails to identify Sailor; nor is his name a proper answer to the question. Naming all the victims is not what Ondaatje deems as a proper closure to countless disappearing cases. Otherwise, the list of the names of the disappeared people inside the Civil Rights Movement offices (41) would have replaced the novel. In the relationships between the characters that the narrative weaves, it becomes obvious that the mighty scientific knowledge and methods cannot do anything about a disappeared person and the bottomless grief the person leaves behind. Finding the name of a victim does not have the effect of containing the Sri Lankan civil war, either, because as Sarath and Gamini warn Anil, naming victims can produce more dead bodies. Gamini, thus, asks Anil "what would you do with a name? (252)" when Anil asks him for the name of the woman he loved. Palipana also does not "use anyone's name as if that were immaterial to the discussion or search" (94), when talking to Anil and Sarath. Instead, Palipana calls the person he is talking to "you" (94). "You" assumes a face-to-face relationship—whether physical or emotional—between the people involved. In this relationship, a subject occupies a position

in which one gives and receives the gaze at the same time; this is a radically different subject position from that of the western detective, scientist and museum curator as it is much closer to the other. This subject position is open to—and thus vulnerable to—the response coming from the other, and is responsible for reacting to the other.

And only once a personal relationship is knit, the following argument between Anil and Sarath about different definitions of the term ‘truth’ become meaningful: “Truth comes finally into the light. It’s in the bones and sediment.’ ‘It’s in character and nuance and mood. ‘That is what governs us in our lives, that’s not the truth.’ ‘For the living it is the truth. (259)” Truth of a story/history lies in one’s interpretation of and response to it—that is, in the relationship one forms with the story and the teller of the story, not in the story itself. And history, as a version of narrative, also is not free from this responsibility.

Palipana, once one of the strictest historians, has been ostracized from Sri Lankan academy because his later ‘discoveries’ could not be proven empirically. However, he fulfills his responsibility to the orphan girl Lakma through his stories. When Palipana picks up the traumatized Lakma from an orphanage, he tells her histories as if they are stories. And “Lakma watched him and listened, never speaking, a silent amanuensis for his whispered histories. He blended fragments of stories so they became a landscape. It did not matter if she could not distinguish between his versions and the truth. She was safe, finally with him, this man who was her mother’s elder brother.” (105) What matters for Lakma, an orphan girl who saw her parents murdered, is not the truth of the story that would qualify the story as history. Ondaatje is not interested in opposing the western notion of history either. What matters is the effect of a story—the extra-linguistic, as well as the linguistic, communication that occurs when listening to a story. Here, Palipna’s stories recreate the

world around Lakma to make her feel safe. The tragedy she suffered is too great to be erased or forgotten by these versions of stories, so it is not the problem of verifying which version of the story is true. The newly composed history runs parallel to the real events, and instead of cancelling them out, it gives emotional support to the traumatized girl. In this context, that is, in the relationship between Palipana and Lakma, this function of the story is what matters, and in this way, the author highlights another way to examine hi/story than its accuracy: its function that connects people in certain ways.

This closely knit relationship between people is crucial in other sense, too. In *Anil's Ghost*, ghosts can return only when they are remembered by people. It is the only way one can be 'responsible' to the dead; to remember and to let their memory affect the present lives of the living ones. Referring to how he has kept the anniversary of Narada's death, Sarath tells Anil that "it made him eternal-'persistent' might be a better word—you felt he was there with the boys in the commune" (47). Remembering a dead person enables its ghost to return and this soothes the pain of the living. Lakma memorializes Palipana with the letters cut into the dark stone, and by carrying Palipana's "old, weathered spectacles" with her, she carries Palipana's ghost. In Bandarawela, where the skeleton Anil investigates is excavated, the older bones were buried with proper ceremony, but the relatively new skeletons of disappeared people were dumped unceremoniously. Anil's scientific research, however, cannot do anything for the skeleton she has named as "Sailor." It is Ananda's reconstruction of the face that identifies the person to whom the skeleton belonged. Moreover, by sculpting his wish for peace for his disappeared wife into the face, Ananda not only makes the face personal but also moving—almost alive.

In a dark room in Walawwa, one of many significant instances of darkness described in the novel, the detective's eyes are blinded, along with the reader's. Instead, Anil, Sarath, and Ananda's relationship is complicated by touch, blocked or returned gazes, and the inability to see clearly. Ironically, this leads to more interactive relationships between them. The dependency and vulnerability is not necessarily negative because they open a subject to its others, thereby facilitating an interactive relationship. And it is in this dark room that the face of Sailor is revealed. Anil thought she knew all that there is to know about Sailor, but the information she gathered about him does not amount to encountering his face. The unique face full of individual personality can be only conjured up by Ananda, the artist who suffers the same loss and heartache Sailor's family must have endured. For Ananda, Sailor is not "it"; he is a unique individual with his own untold story:

The firelight set the face in movement. But what affected her—who felt she knew every physical aspect about Sailor, who had been alongside him now in his posthumous life as they travelled across the country, who had slept in a chair all night while he lay on the table in the Bandarawlea rest house, who knew every mark of trauma from his childhood—was that this head was not just how someone possibly looked, it was a specific person. It revealed a distinct personality, as real as the head of Sarath. As it she was finally meeting a person who had been described to her in letters, or someone she had once lifted up as a child who was now an adult.

(184)

Anil compares looking into Sailor's face to meeting him in person for the first time. In other words, encountering the reconstructed face has similar, if not the same, effect as facing his ghost. To Anil, Sailor cannot be an "it" anymore.

This is a significant blow on Anil's scientific ego. Before, Anil was contemptuous of Ananda and his skills, but after seeing the face he has reconstructed, she becomes interested enough to learn about his story. According to Sarath, the peaceful expression on the face reflect Ananda's wish for the disappeared. When Sarath tells Anil the story of Ananda's disappeared wife, Anil weeps for Ananda as she did for herself (185). A moment of compassion occurs as Ananda wipes her tears briefly, yet softly: "It was the softest touch on her face... This was a tenderness she was receiving. Then his other hand on her other shoulder, the other thumb under her right eye. Her sobbing had stopped" (187). Anil both gives and receives care from the other she has despised so far; she has now formed a reciprocal relationship with Ananda. After this moment, Anil saves Ananda's life when he attempts suicide (196), and she even imagines herself with Ananda and Sarath as they head for a hospital and she remains back at the walawwa. Even though Anil does not trust Sarath enough to wait until he comes back, she finally learns to see herself in a responsible relationship with the suffering people of Sri Lanka.

In this way, hurt, traumatized, and isolated individuals discover each other in an extreme situation, and the narrative shows how they learn to be responsible to each other, if not form an ideal community. The main characters' jobs begin to connect and to affect each other, so that Sarath wants to continue with the investigation while Anil hesitates (186). When Anil finally reports to the Sri Lankan government, her argument is "a lawyer's argument and, more important, a citizen's evidence: she was no longer just a foreign authority. Then he heard her say, 'I think you murdered hundreds of us.' *Hundreds of us*. Sarath thought to himself. Fifteen years away and she is finally *us*." What made Anil a "citizen" is the emotional tie she formed with the Sri Lankan people, not an official

document. Ondaatje must have hoped the reader also has become one of “us” at this point, since instead of departing with Anil as Gamini complained of a foreign journalist (285), the narrative itself remains in Sri Lanka.

When Anil thinks of the body buried in the earth, she is “still haunted” (20). The earth makes an empty space by processing the dead flesh and thus marks the death:

Years after a body was buried there would be a small shift on the surface of the earth. Then a falling of that stone into the space left by decayed flesh, as if signaling the departure of a spirit. This was a ceremony of nature that always affected her. As a child in Kuttapitiya Anil had once stepped on the shallow grave of a recently buried chicken, her weight driving the air in the dead body out through its beak—there was a muffled squawk, and she’d leapt back with fear, her soul jostled, then clawed earth away, terrified she would see the creature blink. (20)

Interestingly, it is not dead bodies that remind Anil of death; rather, it is the certain emptiness created by them. *Anil’s Ghost* attempts to do the same—if not giving a proper ceremony to the disappeared, it aims to mark an emptiness, an absence noticeable by making the weight of the living squawk the air out of the empty space. By letting the living feel the stone falling into the empty space the novel strives to make the living remember the dead and conjure up the ghost of the dead. When reading the novel, the living would know that they are stepping on a grave, so that they cannot conveniently forget the dead. At the same time, it makes the here and now of the living count, as it makes the reader conscious of the reading present as a time related to the time inside the novel.

Anil’s and Ananda’s Ghost

If the reading of *Anil's Ghost* is an experience of forming a responsible relationship with others and ghosts, then the novel cannot end in a conventional sense because such a relationship is by definition an on-going process. After listening to Anil's final report in Colombo, Sarath returns from his escapist ancient history to the unforgiving public space of Sri Lanka, to save Anil and the recovered memory of Ruwan Kumara—the person whose skeleton is the Sailor. For him, fulfilling his responsibility for Anil and Ruwan Kumara is to protect Anil and her evidence. And Sarath sacrifices his own life to do it. A few days later, Gamini finds Sarath's body among the unidentified corpses of political victims that have been brought into his hospital. Again, the novel registers the ghost of Sarath, "Anil's ghost," through the relationship between people that Sarath leaves behind. And after Sarath takes his responsibility, it is now the responsibility of the living to make his ghost return.

Like the other disappeared people in the novel, Sarath also is marked by the empty space he leaves behind in the relationships he has formed, and is remembered by the art of Ananda and the novel *Anil's Ghost*, as he is the one link that connects all the characters in the novel. Gamini first starts an open dialogue with his brother while caring for his dead body in the darkening hospital room: "And all Gamini knew in his slowed, scrambled state was that this would be the end or it could be the beginning of a permanent conversation with Sarath. If he did not talk to him in this moment, admit himself, his brother would disappear from his life (288)." Ananda wears Sarath's shirt on the day he performs Netra Mangala for a new Buddah statue: "He could feel its partial warmth on his arms, saw it light the brocade costume he wore over Sarath's cotton shirt—the one he had promised himself he would wear for this morning's ceremony. He and the woman Anil

would always carry the ghost of Sarath Diyasena. (305)” This is Ananda’s way of taking responsibility without retaliating with violence. And because Anil, who has been the focal point of the narrative, vanishes from the narrative at the end, the reader, who has identified with Anil so far, has to take the place of Anil in taking responsibility of keeping Sarath’s ghost alive.

As Anil has left Sri Lanka and the narrative, the reader is now left with the artist, not the scientist. Actually, Ananda considers himself an “artificer” rather than an “artist”: “It was a long time since he had believed in the originality of artists...He himself did not create or invent faces anymore. Invention was a sliver...As an artificer now he did not celebrate the greatness of a faith (303-4).” By claiming the name of artificer, Ananda denies modern aesthetics that created museums. It is his job to re-create art that commemorates loss and pain of people, not to create eternal beauty that transcends individual lives. In this sense, Ananda’s work with two Buddha statues symbolizes the responsible reaction of a mother to her child, which Anil, Sarath and Gamini have longed for.

Before constructing the new Buddha statue, Ananda reassembles an older Buddha statue. The original Buddha statue, “the 120-foot-high statue,” stood “in a field of Buduruvagala for several generations” brining “a permanence to brief lives (299)” along with the Bodhisattvas that stood half a mile away. However, even this eternal statue of Buddha could not escape from “the harsh political events of the twentieth century (300)” and was broken into two by explosives. As an artificer, Ananda’s job is to rebuild the statue without erasing the scars it received, just as it was his job to reconstitute the face of Sailor with specific personality. On the field where “dead bodies are being found daily” (301),

Ananda focuses on reconstructing the Buddha's face. And just as he puts his hopes for Sirissa into Ruwan's face, Ananda carries Sarath's ghost as he works on the Buddha's scarred face by "wearing one of the Indian cotton shirts Sarath had given him some years back...all the work he had done in organizing the rebuilding of the statue was for this. The face" (303). As many critics have noticed, Ananda refuses to smooth out the scars of the reconstructed Buddha, marking and memorializing the violence and the terror the country suffers: "Up close the face looked quilted. They had planned to homogenize the stone, blend the face into a unit, but when he saw it this way Ananda decided to leave it as it was. He worked instead on the composure and the qualities of the face (302)." The two Buddha statues that stand facing each other is a metaphor for the novel *Anil's Ghost* itself as the old Buddha reconstructed with scars left on it and a new Buddha which is a reproduction of the old one reflects the complex way the narrative of the novel makes the past and the present coexist.

On the other hand, Ondaatje wants the reader to avoid the danger of feeling that "blood was everywhere (283)," because feeling helpless and overwhelmed with guilt and fear like the Sri Lankan characters, makes one lose the sight of individuals who suffered and died. Moreover, the problem is that holding everyone responsible is equivalent to holding nobody responsible. For Ananda, working on the reconstruction of a face that commemorates victimized people is the only way he can avoid becoming a demon that would reproduce the same violence he has suffered: "But he [Ananda] knew if he did not remain an artificer he would become a demon. The war around him was to do with demons, specters of retaliation (304)." This work of "remembering," instead of "forgetting" is what helps the survivors to live on, as working on the reconstruction prevents Ananda from

becoming a “demon” himself (304). Ananda, by working on the reconstruction, avoid being left as a helpless victim, and become an active subject as he can do something about the loss he has suffered. Ondaatje strives to make the reader experience his novel in the same way—as a way to take responsibility in small ways; the fragmentary and montage-like narrative style makes the reader learn to listen to unspoken stories, similar to what Lakma did with Palipana’s hi/stories (105). Reading the novel *Anil’s Ghost*, therefore, is a reconstruction process like that of Ananda’s. As Scanlan argues, “Written in even more tightly condensed fragments than his earlier books, the novel asks the reader to engage in an act of reconstruction, piecing together stories and psychologies as the Sri Lankan artist, Ananda, will piece together the ruined Buddha. Like Ananda’s reconstruction, the reader’s will be imperfect, a human artifact with visible sutures” (302).

Nor does Ananda presume to achieve a completion of an ultimate artistic form, which, on the other hand, can be also another form of irresponsible universality. Indeed, the end of the novel is more of an opening of a dialogue than a closure. On the last pages of the novel, Ananda works on finishing a new statue of Buddha by sculpting the eyes on the statue. Before he makes the final touches on the eyes, Ananda pauses briefly and looks at the view that the Buddha’s eyes will see. Imagining what the Buddha’s eyes would see, he thinks of Sirissa and sees her ghost flying over a forest like a small bird. It reflects his wish that his work would commemorate the disappeared “small brave hearts” like Sirrissa’s.

If Ondaatje’s symbolic use of Buddha’s statues justifies a Buddhist reading of this moment, it can be read as a literary representation of a brief moment of Nirvana, a state where the dualism of life and death is deconstructed and undone. In *Loss and Transcendence*, David Loy argues that “Buddhism resolves the problem of life and death

by deconstructing it” (22). Nirvana is a name for the state that is only revealed when the dualistic of thinking life and death is evaporated. It is a state of liberation, where “neither this world nor the other, nor coming, going or standing, neither death nor birth, nor sense-objects are found” (22). Death and life are indistinguishable as the ghost of Sirissa lives and Ananda lives with her ghost.

However, neither Ananda nor the reader is allowed to stay aloof, high above the field, identifying their gaze with the divine gaze that sees the past and the future of everything. The novel stops right before Ananda finishes his job, summoning Ananda from his reverie with “this sweet touch from the world (307).” With this last phrase, the completion of the divine eyes is permanently deferred, and the reader stays in the muddy “reality of life (95),” waiting.

Anil’s Ghost, invoking a ghost in its title, tackles an impossible task in trying to narrate ghosts, that is, to give shape to what is only marked by absence. The novel experiments with ways to stage the Sri Lankan political terrors and their aftermath without finalizing, limiting and consuming the mass-scale tragedy and unfathomable sorrow Sri Lankan people have experienced. Instead of attempting an impossible full representation, the novel performs the terror of encountering a ghost of a person and gestures toward the unspeakable absence left by those who are murdered. As the work of Ananda opens up a fissure through which the ghost can come back, the last moment of the novel is a beginning of haunting—an opening that invites the ghosts to return, as it is the job of art, including the novel itself, to mark the loss and the grief of the people commemorate in a concrete, specific way. Anil’s ghost is also the reader’s ghost, and the reader has to learn to live with the ghost.

Chapter 4

The Body of the Ghost Author: *Slow Man*

Discussing the authorial self-consciousness of postcolonial writers, Sarah Brouillette points out that ever since the international success of his first novel, J.M. Coetzee has faced two distinct audiences and dealt with the tension wrought between South African local politics and the expectations of the international book market¹⁶. Because Coetzee was a South African writer who witnessed the notorious apartheid period, his readers have asked and expected him to express explicit political commitments in his works. Coetzee, however, has resolutely refused to write an overtly political novel, and while his works were widely acclaimed overseas, many, including his fellow South African writer Nadine Gordimer¹⁷ criticized him for not actively representing and speaking for the oppressed in his native country. In 2002, Coetzee moved to Australia, and in 2006, the famous Nobel laureate became a citizen of Australia. This recent change in his residency and citizenship further complicates his relationship to his readers as well as his role as a writer. Coetzee no longer has to feel the pressure to meet or defy the expectations of his local reader, but he has to reconfigure his readers as well as his authorial self. Because Coetzee can no longer consult the knowledge or culture shared between him and his readers, the redefinition of both positions has to happen only in their relationship with each other. In the previous chapters, I have analyzed how haunting as a novelistic form helps the authors imagine and facilitate an unmediated encounter between the reader and

¹⁶ See *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*.

¹⁷ See, for instance, Nadine Gordimer's review of *Life and Times of Michael K* in the *New York Review of Books*. She criticizes Coetzee's depiction of Michael K as passive, apolitical man.

their works. In this chapter, I argue that Coetzee accomplishes the same maneuver by bringing back Elizabeth Costello, a puzzling figure he has previously employed in his public lectures. In Coetzee's several lectures and in *Elizabeth Costello*, Costello is a ghost double of the author that enables the text to function on multiple contradictory levels at the same time. In these previous works, the conspicuous absence is that of the author, and the absence is strangely empowered by the prominent presence of his double's unreal body, helping Coetzee to convert the problem of his responsibility to that of his audience and reader. Conjuring up Costello once again in *Slow Man*, Coetzee invokes similar effects to transform the novel into a performative work that confronts and challenges the reader.

Elizabeth Costello

In 1996, Coetzee delivered the Ben Belitt Lecture at Bennington College under the title "What is Realism." Instead of a conventional lecture, however, the author read a fictional piece in which an elderly Australian lady writer, Elizabeth Costello, makes a speech at an American college with the same title. Since this first occasion, Costello frequently reappeared in Coetzee's public lectures. Derek Attridge, who attended both of the Tanner lectures Coetzee delivered at Princeton University in 1997, describes the experience of listening to Coetzee's reading of the Costello pieces as "disquieting": "What made the event in which we were participating all the more disquieting was our gradual realization that it was being mirrored, in a distorted representation, in the fiction itself" (Attridge, 193). In other words, the fiction was realized—or, rather, the reality was fictionalized—and the audiences were made to witness distorted faces of themselves.

Because Coetzee refrained from using the conventional first person in his lectures, a few critics have accused Coetzee of neglecting personal responsibility in advancing his arguments. Yet other critics have argued that Coetzee's readings bring something other than his philosophical considerations under scrutiny. Because his lectures feature fictional characters and settings, listening to his lectures resembles reading a novella. As Attridge so aptly notices in the above quote, by replicating himself and his audiences in a fictional piece, and by reading the piece as his lecture, Coetzee attempts to convert the public event in which he is participating into a private event of reading fiction. At the same time, the linguistic absence of the lecturer can ironically highlight his physical presence, which would have been harder to ignore for the audience who were facing Coetzee in the lecture room at the moment. In other words, Coetzee simulates private reading in public speech, and thus transforms his lectures into performances. These performances in turn reveal certain fictional laws that govern the paradigmatic philosophical discourse, "which implicitly lays claim to a timeless, spaceless, subjectless condition as it pursues its logic" (Attridge 198). However, by substituting his body with that of Costello, Coetzee does hand over his responsibility of responding to the topics of his lectures to the reader. As David Attwell remarks, through the figure of Costello, "Coetzee is suggesting that the conditions informing the need for a revitalized ethics may well include the radical discontinuities of experience and culture...but the actual articulation of such an ethics need not be political in the first instance" (38).

As if to stress the irony he creates, Coetzee focuses on the specific location and situation of Costello's body as well as her words in the lectures. For instance, the first of the Costello lecture pieces, "What is realism," concludes with Costello's aged body. After

Costello makes an acceptance speech under the same title on receiving a literary award at an American university, Costello's son John observes his mother sleeping in his car on their way back to the airport. Realistic language that focuses on the physical aspect of Costello's body makes John and the reader become aware of the original point where the elaborate ideas constructed of words issue from: the unglamorous physicality of the body that makes sounds.

She lies slumped deep in her seat. Her head in sideways, her mouth open. She is snoring faintly. Light flashes from the windows as they bank, the sun setting brilliantly over southern California. He can see up her nostrils, into her mouth, down the back of her throat. And what he cannot see he can imagine: the gullet, pink and ugly, contracting as it swallows, like a python, drawing things down to the pear-shaped belly-sac. He draws away, tightens his own belt, sits up, facing forward. No, he tells himself, that is not where I come from, that is not it. (34)

Despite John's denial, he does come from that body, and so do the words Costello voices. By concluding with Costello's body, Coetzee makes it a focal point of the whole lecture, tying all the abstract, intricate philosophical ideas back to the image of a humble, physical body. And through the same body, he points to the matrix of individual interests where the bodies of individual speakers are inescapably situated. For instance, in "The Lives of Animals," Costello insults a Jewish professor and annoys her daughter-in-law with her two emotional and radical lectures on animal rights. As elaborate as her language is when describing her sympathy toward suffering animals, the interpersonal conflicts she causes reveal a certain self-centeredness at the core of her reasoning. Yet the very

self-centeredness is tied to Costello's body, a point where the reader also can place her sympathy. The lecture series on animal rights ends with another focus on Costello's flesh through her son John: "They are not yet on the expressway. He pulls the car over, switches off the engine, takes his mother in his arms. He inhales the smell of cold cream, of old flesh" (Costello 115).

In this way, Costello's mundane body channels language into the specificities of her being. As a result, her language is presented not only as philosophical discourse, but more as particular "utterances" in Bakhtinian sense. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, utterances always issue from a specific person and from a specific relationship that the person has with his/her interlocutor (91). Coetzee makes sure that all his opinions and the abstract philosophical ideas he is contemplating are firmly grounded in Costello's frail body and her feelings that are not unconnected to her bodily condition and the interpersonal dynamics that surround her. The elaborate descriptions of Costello's aged and often fatigued body remind the reader that even the most sophisticated philosophical discourses are utterances. In other words, Costello's body is what grounds the language of his lecture in individuals in concrete situations. Consequently, it is also her body that makes the pieces resistant to totalizing allegorical readings¹⁸.

Ironically, the emphasis on Costello's body creates a sense of realism in the lectures, whereas the same emphasis certifies the fictionality of the same lectures. Costello, hovering between a real audience and a fictional world, does a double job of representing the body and underscoring its absence. Costello speaks to her own audience, but through Coetzee's mouth, she also speaks to the real audience Coetzee faces. Coetzee talks of

¹⁸ For information on debates surrounding allegorical interpretation of Coetzee's works, see Dominic Head, *J.M. Coetzee*, Sue Kossew, *Critical Essays on J.M. Coetzee*, and Teresa

Costello's body, yet it is Coetzee's own body that is present. In this convoluted way, the Costello lectures invite the audience's participation as a fiction invites the reader's. That is, by replacing his presence with the fictional body of Costello in the lectures, Coetzee reminds his audience of what the conventions of philosophical discourse habitually disregard: the body and the specific circumstances of an individual from which the philosophical arguments are enunciated. In other words, Coetzee challenges the whole setting of academic discourse through his position as a novelist, and his use of a fictional authorial double emphasizes the personal responsibilities that occur with the use of language, i.e., not only reading and writing, but also speaking and listening. Paradoxically, by evading his own responsibility as a speaker, Coetzee highlights the responsibility of his audience and readers to contemplate and to respond to the issues he was invited to comment on.

In 2003, the lectures that feature Costello were collected and published under the title "Elizabeth Costello."¹⁹ In the book, the previous lectures are finally presented as fictional works to be read. In the second to last piece in the book, i.e., the last chapter that features Costello, she seems to pass into an afterlife that resembles a pastiche of Kafka's works. The piece is titled "At the Gate," and Costello finds herself helplessly held down in a small town. The place certainly reads like a posthumous space, especially when the reader remembers all the implications of Costello's age and declining health in the previous lecture pieces. In this chapter, there is less emphasis on Costello's body because it is eclipsed by the profusion of literary clichés, which makes the town a purgatory for Costello. Her frustrated language is designed to make the reader share her feeling of being

stuck. At one point, Costello cries out: “*God save me!* She [Costello] whispers to herself. *Too literary, too literary! I must get out of here before I die!*” (215)

In order to “get out of” the town and enter “the gate,” Costello has to write a statement of belief. However, as a writer, Costello claims that it is not her “profession to believe” (Costello 194). At the last hearing before the judges, who have the authority to grant the permission to enter the “gate,” Costello strives to earn their approval by imagining frogs in the Dulgannon mudflats as realistically and sympathetically as possible. Again, Coetzee uses Costello to substitute the problem of truth and sincerity with that of realism and artisanship; and as if to punish himself and Costello, the judges deny her entry for the last time. While Costello’s imagination can push her into the body of these frogs in a remote place, her body solidly remains on this side of the gate. Along with the fictional letter by Lady Chandos that follows it, “At the Gate” seems to express a fiction writer’s frustration in using language in a realistic way. The intentional lack of the emphasis on the body traps these works in worn out metaphors and exhausted literary settings; it seems that the power of fiction can survive only by depending on language’s capability to point to something outside itself, if not to signify it completely. It is not surprising, then, that Coetzee highlights Costello’s body once again in his next work.

Language vs. Body: Paul

Because a novel cannot but lack the directness and immediacy of a lecture, in *Slow Man*, Coetzee’s next work, Coetzee cultivates another aspect of Costello’s character to produce similar effects. In the lectures, it is the realness of Costello’s body that mediates

¹⁹ The collection was subtitled as “Eight Lessons” in Great Britain, and simply “a fiction” in the U.S. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to the work as “fiction.”

the audience's experience of the lectures; in the novel, it is the ghostliness of her being that does the job. Returning from the allegorical purgatory of "At the Gate" to the mundane everyday reality in "*Slow Man*," Costello's two incompatible yet intertwined existences as a realistic body and a ghostly author activate the textual haunting of the novel.

The materialistic aspect of a body still plays an important role in *Slow Man*. In *Slow Man*, Coetzee presents language as primarily "utterances," inextricably tied to the body and the consciousness that enunciates them. As a result, the body in the novel is integrated in and marked by individual voices, while language originates from and points to individual bodies. A voice always already implies an individual body which enunciates it; nonetheless, the body is not attainable, nor containable by the voice. By definition, the body cannot be subsumed in the talk of voices; language can only point to it because once fully represented, the word "the body" becomes yet another abstract concept. In other words, the physical reality of each body exceeds the abstract concept of the body represented in language. Yet even though the body forever escapes language, it is a crucial part of everyday reality of every living person, and therefore, it can serve as a point of empathy from which dialogues can start. In this sense, the body marks both the possibility and the limit of language.

While discussing literary tradition of the confessional genre, Coetzee once expressed the frustration authors feel when devising a proper ending to an autobiographical work. Because consciousness cannot perceive its own boundary, it is trapped in never-ending self doubts, which in terms of narrative composition, is synonymous with a never-ending monologue. For Coetzee, therefore, the body and the pain it feels is the anchor of his works, something that is untranslatable into language and thus can withstand the

permanent doubt the self suffers when it tries to define itself. Therefore, when asked to comment on the importance of the body in his novels, Coetzee answered that the body is the “simple standard” of his fictional works: “Whatever else, the body is not ‘that which is not,’ and the proof that it *is* is the pain it feels. The body with its pain becomes a counter to the endless trials of doubt...the suffering body *takes* this authority: it is its power” (Doubling 248). The body, in other words, interrupts the endless circulation of words. For instance, it was Friday’s silent body that enabled Coetzee to give a proper ending to *Foe*. Read in this context, Costello appears to be a character devised to embody the endless authorial self-consciousness that writes itself into being and its tie to a very specific body with very specific non-verbal claims.

The same principle applies when Coetzee configures a character from the inside, as he does in *Slow Man*. In the novel, the unending self-doubt, originating from the self constructed with and through language, is interrupted by and anchored in the body, especially when the protagonist’s body makes an inescapable claim through pain. In the very first page of *Slow Man*, Paul Rayment, a photographer in his seventies, is hit by a car and is at the moment flying through the air. The reader first encounters Paul from the inside, listening to his thoughts: “The blow catches him from the right, sharp and surprising and painful, like a bolt of electricity, lifting him up off the bicycle. *Relax!* He tells himself as he tumbles through the air” (1). Later in the hospital, Paul loses his right leg, and fighting extreme pain, he tries to persuade himself that

Pain is nothing... just a warning signal from the body to the brain. Pain is no more the real thing than an X-ray is the real thing. But of course he is wrong. Pain is the real thing, it does not have to press hard to persuade him of that, it does not have to

press at all, merely to send a flash or two; after which he quickly settles for the confusion, the bad dreams. (12, italics original)

These sentences play with the meaning of the word “real.” Pain is real, even though it is without a material substance, because it affects the body, and through the body, the mind and language, too.

Paul’s body is also “real” on a different level, that is, in its effect on the reader, because it shapes the course of the narrative. For example, as Paul understands it, it is his age that cost him his leg: “In a younger person they might perhaps have gone for a reconstruction, but a reconstruction of the required order would entail a whole series of operations, one after another, extending over a year, even two years, with a success rate of less than fifty per cent, so all in all, considering his age, it was thought best to take the leg off cleanly above the knee” (7). The narrative of the novel moves slowly, but it steadily follows linear chronology. And while the tense of the narrative hardly changes from the present, time in the novel is primarily manifested through Paul’s age and the progress of Paul’s recovery from amputation. In the beginning part of the novel, Paul’s body thus registers time and mediates the reader’s experience of the narrative.

Just as with Costello’s body in Coetzee’s lectures, Paul’s body functions as a center around which all his languages revolve. As words are always shared by other consciousnesses, they can serve as a catalyst in imagining the connection between people as ethical, or at least as relational. However, left to a single individual, language tends to diverge from material specificity and fails to denote the individual consciousness’s own limits and the need for and dependence on other people. Paul demonstrates a good example of this failure when he conceives his body in a subjective and abstract way. Even though it

is his body and its pain that start the novel, Paul cuts himself off by the very specificities of his body. In the hospital, Paul's fierce resentment of his aged body causes his mental isolation:

It is as though at some unconscious level these young people who have been assigned to care for them know they have nothing left to give to the tribe and therefore do not count. *So young and yet so heartless!* he cries to himself. *How did I come to fall into their hands? Better for the old to tend the old, the dying the dying! And what folly to be so alone in the world!* (12)

He resents that the young are not considerate enough—they do not listen, they do not care. He thinks that is the reason why the young doctor decided to amputate his leg. He also blames the young Wayne Blight for not being careful enough to heed the old man on the bicycle. In other words, Paul believes what ultimately made him a “lesser man (113)” is his age.

Thus, despite the anchor the novel places in his body, the Paul that the reader first encounters is an abstract thinker who passively observes his own life and people involved with it. Paul tends to immerse himself in his thoughts, mentally isolating himself from others. Paul's age is one of his main excuses for his aloof attitude, and his aloofness is his way of defending himself. The focus on Paul's disabled body guarantees the realism of the novel, yet for Paul, the pain and discomfort he suffers only aggravate his tendency to detach himself. However, the narrative moves to counteract Paul's isolation, and through Paul's body and the way it registers time, the reader is able to see Paul and his pain in a different way. For Paul, time is meaningful mostly as the decline of his bodily functions: “The clock stands still, yet time does not. Even as he lies here he can feel time at work on

him like a wasting disease, like the quicklime they pour on corpses. Time is gnawing away at him, devouring one by one the cells that make him up” (11). Feeling neglected by the seeming lack of concern on the part of other people, Paul is trying to conceptualize death through “time” in the above quote. In contrast, the narrative proceeds swiftly when describing this period in the hospital, and the reader feels that Paul’s wound healed in a timely manner and he was soon ready to be released from the hospital. Through this contrast, Paul’s self-pity becomes evident. His ailing body is an excuse to push others away, and this self containment leads to unfair judgment of others.

When he is lying in the hospital, Paul thinks to himself: “at a level far below the play and flicker of the intellect (*Why not this? Why not that?*) he, *he*, the *he* he calls sometimes *you*, sometimes *I*, is all too ready to embrace darkness, stillness, extinction. *He*: not the one whose mind used to dart this way and that but the one who aches all night” (26). Paul’s monologues assume a version of himself as a cynical listener as he calls himself *he*, *you*, and *I* alternately. This fragmentation of the self in turn denotes Paul’s tendency to avoid direct involvement, even with his own self. Lauren in *The Body Artist* also distances herself from her immediate reality; nonetheless, whereas Lauren’s distancing is a reaction to a traumatic event, Paul’s distancing owes more to a life-long habit that is generated from being an immigrant at an early age.

Paul appears to be an ordinary Australian man—rather a rich one to the Jokic family—but later on, he reveals to Costello that he had learned French before English as a child. English is not his mother tongue, because even though he became more fluent in English as he grew up in Australia, his first language survived as a wedge that cleaves a

chasm between himself and English. The effect is that Paul is “homeless” both linguistically and emotionally. He confesses to Costello:

I can pass among Australians, I cannot pass among the French. That as far as I am concerned, is all there is to it, to the national identity business: where one passes and where one does not, where on the contrary one stands out. ... As for language, English has never been mine in the way it is yours. Nothing to do with fluency. I am perfectly fluent, as you can hear. But English came to me too late. It did not come with my mother’s milk. In fact it did not come at all. Privately I have always felt myself to be a kind of ventriloquist’s dummy. It is not I who speak the language, it is the language that is spoken through me. (198)

The distance Paul feels from his own self and other people is reflected in the distance he feels toward language. Peculiarly, Paul’s alienation from language is not presented as a variation of the modernist fundamental arbitrariness of language, but expressed through his familiarity with another national language, French. Paul’s use of French terms is a sign of Paul’s alienation from English, the very language that constitutes his consciousness. Paul consciously uses French when he wants to distance himself from his newly disabled body, replacing a physical and emotional alienation with a linguistic one: “To himself he does not call it a stump. He would like not to call it anything; he would like not to think about it, but that is not possible. If he has a name for it, it is *le jambon*. *Le jambon* keeps it at a nice, contemptuous distance” (29). The detachment Paul creates in this passage is semantic as well as national, as he employs the term “le jambon” instead of “ham” for the very reason that it is French.

However, he confesses that he did not feel at home in France, either.

I have always found it a very English concept, home. ... To them, home is the place where the fire burns in the hearth, where you come to warm yourself....No, I am not warm here. ...Among the French, as you know, there is no *home*. Among the French to be at home is to be among ourselves, among our kind. ... I am not the *we* of anyone. (193)

Extricating himself from the network of relationship, Paul also eludes responsibility for other people. His alienation also hinders him from taking full responsibility for his own life. According to his own words, Paul has been ‘missing’ all his life. Paul hides behind his linguistic and emotional “homelessness,” and it serves as his excuse to remain emotionally detached and physically uninvolved.

Paul’s distant and cynical self can be easily related to the philosophical subject of thought, a position that analyzes and imposes order on the world as if it stands beyond that order. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, regardless of the cause, this attitude generates problems in the relationship between the one’s self and others. The desperate attempts Paul makes to forget his vulnerability and mortality after the accident reveals the fact that he shares the same problem as the immortal subject of philosophy. And Paul does commit all the mistakes that the supposedly immortal subject of western philosophy is prone to make. The fact that Paul’s homelessness has been a façade to hide his vulnerability is disclosed through the desire he feels after the accident. Lying in the hospital, Paul longs for a son, a family member who can comfort his loneliness and give his life a meaning. It is also a longing for a certain form of immortality after he has been so shockingly reminded of his mortality. In the hospital he regrets, in his cynicism and gloom,

the fact that he does not have a family, more specifically, children, as he is reminded of his mortality and the fragility of his body: “What could be more selfish, more miserly—this in specific is what gnaws at him—than dying childless, terminating the line, subtracting oneself from the great work of generation? Worse than miserly, in fact: unnatural (20).”

When released from the hospital, Paul despairs to find out that he will need to employ a caretaker for the rest of his life. Physically, it is now impossible for him to stay away from other people. Full of resentment and self-pity, Paul has a hard time finding a caretaker he can tolerate. Marijana Jokic, an immigrant from Croatia, is the caretaker Paul is finally satisfied with. Soon, drawn to Marijana’s vibrant health and motherhood, Paul falls in love with her. Sometime after his release, Paul writes to Marijana:

Ever since the day of my accident, ever since I could have died but seem to have been spared, I have been haunted by the idea of doing good. Before it is too late I would like to perform some act that will be – excuse the word – a blessing, however modest, on the lives of others. Why, you ask?

Ultimately, because I have no child of my own to bless as a father does.

Having no child was the biggest mistake of my life, I will tell you that.

(155)

Paul’s love for Marijana stems from the very fact that she is a real mother of three children including the handsome eldest son, Drago. While he contently has led a somewhat isolated, yet dignified life in his eyes, Paul is now desperate to fashion a “we” he can belong to and depend on—an extension of his self that will help him transcend his age and pain.

Yet as Paul imagines himself as a father, he still plays the role of a ghostly observer in his own mind. In his letter to Miroslov, Marijana’s husband, Paul excuses himself by

stating that he wants to be a godfather, a position, in Paul mind, that is much like a benevolent ghost:

I don't know whether in Catholic Croatia you have the institution of the godfather...As the priest in the ritual of baptism is the personification of the Son and intercessor, and the father is of course Father, so the god father is the personification of the Holy ghost. At least that is how I conceive of it. A figure without substance, ghostly, beyond anger and desire. (224)

Paul, even as he resents the fact that he is an old man and treated as such, ironically conceives of himself as a passive observer, a harmless ghost who is there yet not involved in anything. Paul is attracted to Marijana and craves her, but at the same time he is resigned about his physical desire. He wants to own her motherhood and family, but what he really wants is to enjoy his extended self by playing a passive guardian role. This is just a harmless, benevolent suggestion in Paul's mind, but from Miroslav's point of view, it is an unfair interference. Moreover, Paul shows resentful resignation about himself when he meets Miroslav, and this causes even more problems because always imagining himself as a victim blinds Paul to what others, whom he usually considers as the stronger party, might feel and think. Paul does not acknowledge what social power he has, and no matter how humble he appears, he treats others unfairly, evades his ethical responsibility, and does not realize what he has done because he is always the weaker party in his mind. Because he is passive, everything is done to him, and therefore, he is always the victim and others are to be blamed for what happened. It is Paul's way of ignoring his responsibility to his own life and the others. In other words, his passiveness generates his self-centeredness.

Of course, Marijana does not need Paul in the same desperate way that he needs her. Paul makes an abortive effort to fabricate a common history, a collective identity the Jokic family and he can share so that they both can be referred to by a common inclusive pronoun “we.” One day, showing Marijana some rare 19th century Australian pictures he has collected, Paul attempts to fabricate a common history that would provide Marijana and himself one shared identity. The project, however, is fraught with historical and conceptual dangers. In the end, he is rightfully doubtful that he will ever be successful in connecting himself and Marijana’s family through one history. When Marijana shows mild surprise at finding out that Australia indeed has a past that goes back to the 19th century, he thinks to himself:

Not just bush, he would like to tell Marijana. Not just black fellows either. Not zero history. Look, that is where we come from: from the cold and damp and smoke of that wretched cabin, from those women with their black helpless eyes, from that poverty and that grinding labour on hollow stomachs. A people with a story of their own, a past. *Our* story, *our* past. But is that the truth? Would the woman in the picture accept him as one of her tribe –the boy from Laourdes in the French Pyrenees with the mother who played Faure on the piano? Is the history that he wants to claim as his not finally just an affair for the English and the Irish, foreigners keep out? (52).

Here, Paul touches on the danger of fabricating a collective history: it is impossible to recognize, not to mention to subsume, all the individuals’ disparate voices in one narrative in an ethically responsible way, regardless of their mores. Indeed, it almost reads like a playful parody of a theme Coetzee has explored in *Foe* with the silent figure of

Friday. As Kim Worthington points out, Coetzee seems to remind the reader how “readily the narrative of another, particularly a silent Other, can be conscripted to meet the requirements of one’s own story, one’s own interpretation” (140).

Through Paul’s doubts above, Coetzee shows that individuals cannot hide behind an all encompassing “we”; they have to assume their own independent positions however uncomfortable and destabilizing they are. As Coetzee declared in an interview: “I take it as given that people must be treated as fully responsible beings: psychology is no excuse. Politics, in its wise stupidity, is at one with religion here: one man, one soul: no half-measures” (Doubling 249). When an all-inclusive “we” is proven to be impossible, the words have to belong to specific individuals. And because there are no “half-measures” between individuals, there is no way one can share his/her responsibility over his own voice with another. Paul, despite his fragmented self, is one man with the full responsibilities and full rights of a man. It is also crucial to remember that the others always remain alien despite any communication they might have between them. Paul has to learn that a subject should not incorporate the other by imagination or sympathy, not to mention representation. Whether it be Marijana’s or a deceased Irish immigrant woman in the old pictures, the other’s voice never converges with the self’s.

Elizabeth Costello Returns

Elizabeth Costello enters *Slow Man* a few days after Paul abruptly confesses his love to his caretaker. If the name “Elizabeth Costello,” familiar from Coetzee’s previous eponymous fiction, fails to shock the reader, her words to Paul certainly would, as she literally “quotes” the opening sentences of the novel. The first thing Costello does when

she enters Paul's apartment is to shake hands with Paul, as if to assert her physical presence. After shaking hands with Paul, Costello says: "I am rather a doubting Thomas, as you see.' And when he looks puzzled: 'I mean, wanting to explore for myself what kind of being you are. Wanting to be sure,' she proceeds, and now he [Paul] is really losing her, 'that our two bodies would not just pass through each other'" (81). By showing that Costello's hand can touch Paul's hand, Coetzee makes it clear that Costello exists on the same level as Paul; i.e., Costello is undoubtedly one of the characters in the novel. Nonetheless, the fact that Costello has to clarify this apparent truth implies that there is more to this strange character. Indeed, right after the above quote, Costello "seats herself again, squares her shoulder and begins to recite. *'The blow catches him from the right, sharp and surprising and painful, like a bolt of electricity, lifting him up off the bicycle. Relax! He tells himself as he tumbles through the air, and so forth'*" (81, italics original). The two italicized sentences above are the very first two sentences that begin the novel. The only difference is the italicized letters, which indicates that this is a direct quote. The italics, however, can be perceived only by the reader. Costello claims that she "heard" these words, but Paul does not show any sign of recognizing the words that he supposedly thought to himself at the moment of his bicycle accident. After saying the above quotations, Costello continues to repeat the exact same expressions Paul used earlier, but all the effect is aimed at the reader, as Paul only thinks of Costello as a "madwoman" (81). It seems that Elizabeth Costello, who is so firmly grounded in the reality of the novel, is sending a signal to the reader without letting Paul know about it. This means that the reader is a second interlocutor of Costello's utterances.

Just as in the lectures, Costello maintains two incompatible levels of existence in *Slow Man*. Paul notes that Costello is “a woman in her sixties, he would say, the later rather than the earlier sixties, wearing a floral silk dress cut low behind to reveal unattractively freckled, somewhat fleshy shoulders” (80). Costello’s bodily conditions also exert some power over the narrative: “‘Bad heart,’ she says, fanning herself. ‘Nearly as much of an impediment as’ (she pauses to catch her breath) ‘a bad leg’” (80). It almost seems that Coetzee is experimenting on two different ways to “realize” the effect of language—that is, to produce effects on the reader: one by describing the physicality of a body—i.e., through the literary convention of “realism,” and another by addressing the reader directly. It is important that ghostly Costello has a body, or Costello with a concrete body haunts the novel—the fact that the two incompatible modes of being are combined in her character. One with a body cannot haunt, because it is spatially and temporally limited. A ghost cannot have a solid body for the same reason. But Costello haunts despite her body when she quotes the novel she stars in. Her ghostly body (all the more eerie because it is realistic) is the key of the performativity of *Slow Man*.

To Paul’s extreme frustration, Costello stays in Paul’s apartment and refuses to go away. Her constant physical presence annoys Paul and disrupts his secluded life. As Paul gets more and more involved with Marijana’s family, Costello nags him to take an initiative in his relationship with Marijana. Irritated, Paul once throws her out of his apartment, but he changes his mind when he sees how she is weakened by living outside. When Paul offers Marijana to pay for her son Drago’s tuition at an exclusive private school, Drago and his father have a big fight, and Drago comes to stay with Paul. Faced with the teenage boy’s indifference to older people, Paul finds Costello’s age comfortable

and opens his mind to her more. By conversing with Paul, Costello affects his private thoughts and makes them audible to the reader's ears. In the meantime, Costello constantly is writing something—possibly a novel about Paul—and often pleads with Paul to take action, but he does not easily change his passive attitude.

In the face of the isolating way Paul's consciousness perceives his body, Costello functions both as a transducer that communicates Paul's inner thoughts and as his Other who defines and illuminates the limit of his consciousness. Costello's presence thus prevents the reader from identifying with Paul. Because Costello is a ghost author, she can intrude into Paul's defensive layers. The physical alienation Paul feels is presented through the linguistic and national identity crisis that Paul discloses only to Costello, and through her, to the reader. Yet at the same time, Costello's paradoxically real body forces Paul to realize his responsibility to and need for other people around him.

Coetzee makes every effort to keep the ambiguity of Costello's identity alive. Even though Paul suspects Costello's reality sometimes, the solid materiality of Costello's body prevents either one of the possible readings of her identity from canceling the other. Surprised by Costello's knowledge about himself, Paul asks her: "Now let me [Paul] ask you straight out, Mrs Costello: "Are you real?" "Am I real? I eat, I sleep, I suffer, I go to the bathroom. I catch cold. Of course I am real. As real as you" (233). According to the way Costello uses the term, what is "real" is defined by effects on and by the body. In this way, Coetzee confirms that Costello and Paul exist on the same physical plane, and the amplified ambiguity of Costello's status makes the novel perform in an unusual way.

It is the contact with ghostly Costello and her aging body that gradually forces Paul out of his isolation. In other words, Costello's authorial knowledge of himself and her

unattractive body compels Paul to become perceptive to something more than what meets the eye. At first, however, Paul refuses to recognize any similarity between their bodies. While he begrudges the loss of his leg and the fragility of his aging body, he is repulsed by Costello's old body and its sickly symptoms of aging. Paul shows no tolerance for any imperfection in anyone's body. When Costello brings the blind Marianna, whom Costello recommends to Paul as a better partner for his love affair than Marijana, to his apartment, Paul is still strongly prejudiced against any shortcomings in the body. Considering Marianna's and his own disabled bodies, he thinks: "Blindness is a handicap pure and simple. A man without sight is a lesser man, as a man with one leg is a lesser man, not a new man. This poor woman she has sent him is a lesser woman too, less than she must have been before. Two lesser beings, handicapped, diminished" (113). Paul's self-contempt leads to disrespect for others; he is not healthy in his mind, and it is revealed in his condescending, cynical sympathy toward Marianna.

Part of the reason why Paul repeats the same mistreatment that he thinks he receives from young people is that he is too much dependent on sight. Paul, as a photographer, is sensitive to visual beauty. Left alone after Marianna leaves, Paul thinks: "Beauty without the sight of beauty is not yet, to him, imaginable...Eros. Why does the beautiful call eros into life? Why does the spectacle of the hideous strangle desire?" (107-8) Though Paul uses aesthetic and emotional terms here, it is clear that beauty depends on his subjective judgment. Because Paul does not question his own perspective, this one-directional sight renders other people as mere objects, just as it did in *The Body Artist* and *Anil's Ghost*. Paul assumes that his control over his own sight is stable and permanent. "He tends to trust pictures more than he trusts words. Not because pictures

cannot lie but because once they leave the darkroom, they are fixed, immutable. Whereas stories – the story of the needle in the bloodstream, for instance, or the story of how he and Wayne Blight met on Magill Road – seem to change all the time” (64). Looking at the pictures and trusting them as inalterable, what Paul really believes in is the stability of his own perspective. He believes that his eyes, which recognize and receive information from the photographs, are trustworthy, and in doing so, he assumes and hopes for his self’s immutability, i.e., immortality.

On the other hand, the scene with the blind Marianna harbors a potential for empathy and communication that Paul has failed to notice. Groping for each other, Paul and Marianna have to rely on each other’s body and voice to recognize their own existence, not to mention to fulfill their desires. As Paul puts it, “they are in this together” (105), keenly listening to the other’s voice for guidance and fumbling for each other’s body in darkness. This is not a fully interactive relationship where one understands the other fully; nevertheless, it is an interdependent relationship. Sight suspended, they touch each other, conscious of the fact that each is getting only a fraction of information about the other, and is therefore being forced to wait for more. She remains totally alien and impenetrable to him as symbolized by the blindfold she made him put on. In such a situation, every aspect of their utterances that are not visual becomes crucial: “He says *Marianna*, she says *Marianna*, but it is not the same name. His *Marianna* is still colored by *Marijana*: it is heavier than hers, more solid. Of her *Marianna* he can only say that it is liquid, silver” (105). Paul’s articulation of Marianna’s name is colored with his memory and desire in a non-linguistic way. What make Paul’s *Marianna* different from Marianna’s *Marianna* are extra-linguistic elements, the elements that make each voicing of the name a different

utterance. As Paul puts it, “there are the words themselves, and then, behind or around or beneath the words, there is the intention” (70). And through these extra-linguistic significations, Coetzee dexterously ties Paul’s floating soliloquy back to his body. It is the body that demarcates the boundary between individuals, registering and channeling language into so many voices. The bodies’ specificities are registered through the expression of extra linguistic elements, which are only effective in face- to-face, context specific situations where language and bodies can interact directly. Extralinguistic elements can only function when the speakers are facing each other and thus mark both the potential and the limit of language’s capability to imply the body; it is a way to make corporal reality leak back to language.

However, this kind of close communication is transferred only to the reader because Marianna does not understand the extra meaning Paul inserts in his utterance of her name. Even after Costello leaves, Paul suspects that Costello is secretly observing their meeting, so his words are mindful of Costello as listener, if not a direct address to her . Thus, the reader, who stands in the position of Costello, becomes the interlocutor who faces Paul and listens to the delicate differences in his voicing of each utterance.

While Paul prefers to forget about the body in general, Costello repeatedly reminds him the corporeality—the imperfect bodies, their desires and needs—of other people. When Paul sentimentally thinks that he loves Drago as his dream son, Costello warns him:

In the abstract I am sure you would like to love young Drago, but the facts of life keep getting in the way. We cannot love by an act of the will, Paul. We have to learn. . . .I have raised two children, real-life, unmystical children; you have raised

none... We have children in order that we may learn to love and serve. Through our children we become the servants of time. (182)

And this is a lesson Paul has to learn: that messy and as it might be, one needs to respect and take care of the other's body as it is. However, as a result of his conceptual and sentimental love, Paul does not accept Drago as he is and misunderstands him when the kid does not remain angelic and remote but becomes real and close.

Paul apprehends how his love is self-absorbed and unreal when Drago playfully modifies two of Paul's 19th century pictures by the end of the novel. After Drago returns to his home, Costello tells Paul to check his precious photo collection. Finding out that two originals have been replaced by fake pictures, Paul feels betrayed. With Costello, Paul visits the Jokic family's house to inquire after his missing picture, and gets chided by Marijana for suspecting Drago of theft. Drago uses computer graphics to alter these precious "original" pictures, literally inserting his family members' faces into the pictures. In the age of computers and the internet, pictures are not immutable, nor are they original. After all, pictures, which Paul trusts more than words as being less changeable, have become so easily alterable. Marijana scoffs at Paul's naïve and self-centered assumptions about photos:

"Original?" she says. 'what is this thing, original photograph? You point camera, click, you make copy. That is how camera works. Camera is like photocopier. So what is original? Original is copy already. ... A photograph is not the thing itself. Nor is a painting. But that does not make either of them a copy. Each becomes a new thing, a new real, new in the world, a new original. (245)²⁰

²⁰ Rebecca Walkowitz, discussing the effect of "the global translation and circulation of literature" on "the production of transnational fiction (3)", presents a similar point about

Drago inserts his grandfather's image in one picture and adds his little sister's image in the other, visually fabricating the "history" Paul once tried to fashion. Consequently, pictures and stories look much alike, in the sense that both "seem to change all the time" (64). Pictures cannot be trusted not only because they can be physically altered but because they exist in a social matrix where interpretive perspectives constantly shift. What is crucial is the way they are used between people, not whether they are "true" or "permanent." Discovering Drago's relatives in the pictures, Paul is enraged at first, but later he feels ashamed when he learns that Drago has been making a recumbent bicycle for him. His cheeks burning with embarrassment, Paul finally admits his mistake out loud. It is the first time he recognizes his error in judgment: "He can feel a blush creeping over him, a blush of shame, starting at his ears and creeping forward over his face. He has no wish to stop it. It is what he deserves" (254). A few moments later, he even thanks Drago: "Thank you most of all to the absent Drago.' *Whom I have misjudged and wronged*, he would like to say. 'Whom I have misjudged and wronged,' he says" (257). This is the lesson that Paul has to absorb: what counts is the present relationship with the living other whom one is facing now, not an absolute, lone self nor an expansion of it, a self-centered, all-inclusive common history.

After coming back to his apartment, on the very last page of the book, Paul is mature enough to gently kiss Costello before sending her away: "Nevertheless./ Nevertheless, ever so gently, he lifts her and slips a cushion in under her head. In a fairy story, this would be the moment when the foul hag turns into a fair princess. But this is not a fairy story, evidently" (237). Paul finally takes an initiative in his life by driving Costello

uniqueness and difference. According to her, for transnational authors like Coetzee and Ishiguro, "uniqueness can persist in the world but only in comparative forms—in the shape

out of his life. Now, it is Costello who is lost without Paul. At the very last moment, Costello asks Paul: “But what am I going to do without you?” Costello seems to be smiling but her lips are trembling. Paul answers: ‘That is up to you, Elizabeth. There are plenty of fish in the ocean, so I hear. But as for me, as for now: goodbye” (263). This ending reads like Coetzee’s joke on himself; the protagonist recovers his agency by kicking the author out of the story.

The Ethics of (Reading) Ghostly Bodies

There is a reason why Costello needs to lead Paul out of his irresponsible isolation; Paul’s problem of irresponsibility parallels an irresponsible reading of the novel. Costello and her ghostly body serves as a point where language—both the language that each character uses and the language of the novel— and the body—both the bodies of the characters and the actual book— intersect. As I have discussed in the first part of this chapter, Coetzee’s insistence on presenting Costello’s body as physical and specific ironically makes it ghostly in the sense that her body trafficks in two incompatible realms as ghosts do, thus making the boundary between the imagined and the real leak. Just as L’s voice did in *Love*, Costello’s ghostly body negotiates the space between the fictional world and the reader’s experience of reading.

The timing of Costello’s first appearance also deserves consideration: the first third of *Slow Man* reads like a conventional third-person novel. Hence, by the time Costello enters the novel, the reader has already read one third of the novel, and most likely has developed her own position in interpreting the story of the man named Paul. Nevertheless, at the beginning of a possibly interesting love affair, the plot is interrupted and the reader is

of the echo, the copy, the clone, the list, the series, and the translation” (33).

shaken out of her initial position. Because the reader extracts meanings by aligning her perspective with parts of what she has read, when Costello pushes the reader away to remind the reader of her position as “the reader” outside the novel, the reader gets confused. As a result, the reader is challenged to examine what happens when one reads a fiction. Just as Worthington comments on *Disgrace*, through Costello, Coetzee “seeks to encourage the reader to self-critique in the performative process of the act of imagination that is reading and from this basis to suggest the political possibilities of and ethical respect for alterity” (147).

To understand how Costello induces such a reading, it is important to examine Coetzee’s concept of a dialogic novel. In an interview with Eleanor Wachtel, Coetzee defines the term “dialogism” as follows:

What dialogism means is, at a technical level, that you don’t write from the position of one who knows the answer. That would be, so to speak, to write in a monologue or monologically. In other words, writing dialogically means writing in a manner which respects the knowledge of all who participated in the fiction. (44)

In Coetzee’s formulation, the key to composing a dialogic novel is to discard an all-knowing position in the work, as the author’s limited control encourages the reader’s participation. Costello in *Slow Man* is a literal dramatization of an author who does not have the ultimate knowledge or power over her characters and events. As previously seen in the episode where Costello quotes Paul’s internal monologue, Costello does display some knowledge of the particulars of a characters’ life that no one else could have found out. However, Costello often claims that the characters “came to her,” suggesting that she

does not have an authorial control over them: “You [Paul] came to me,” she says. “In certain respects I am not in command of what comes to me” (82).

This renouncement of control intensifies the impression that the stories are still in the process of being made as the reader reads them, and that there is no final ending toward which the plot is progressing. Costello often urges Paul, who cannot decide what to do about his burgeoning love, to act—not in one particular way, but just to stop waiting and act in any way—because, otherwise, the narrative cannot proceed: “this is your story, not mine. The moment you decide to take charge, I will fade away. You will hear no more from me; it will be as if I had never existed” (100). When Costello asks Paul what to do with his life, it generates an illusion that the conception of the novel is taking place in the reading present. The novel itself becomes a one-time event, situated in the present in the sense that the “future” is still undecided. As Laura Wright notices, such destabilization “opens up a space for the audience to examine the constructed nature of Coetzee’s fiction as texts that allow for interplay between character, audience, and author; the text performs various positions rather than presents one controlling subjectivity, and the audience is alternately invited to participate in the performance” (11). Neither the author nor the reader is privileged in terms of knowledge, and it is the author’s job to open a future-driven dialogue, as Coetzee puts it: “writing fiction is one [act] of freedom, of irresponsibility, or better, of responsibility toward something that has not yet emerged, that lies somewhere at the end of the road” (Doubling 246).

In this sense, the haunting body of Costello is crucial in posing *Slow Man* as an open dialogue with the reader because the body’s physicality effectively indicates the limit Costello has as an author of the novel. Costello is the author, and at the same time, she

cannot be the author of the novel; this paradox is central in the reader's experience of the novel because the ambiguity of Costello's status opens up the narrative to various interpretations. The novel *Slow Man* is either Costello's story of writing Paul, or Paul's story where an elderly lady author intrudes into his life to observe him for her new novel. Both versions are confirmed and negated alternately in the novel. Costello often reveals some facts that only the characters themselves can know, acting like an omniscient author of the novel; yet, as a character inside the novel, Paul is independent from her. Costello cannot proceed with the story without Paul acting on his own account: "You occurred to me – a man with a bad leg and no future and an unsuitable passion. That was where it started. Where we go from there I have no idea. Have you any proposal?" (85)

Because the narrative is not yet fully formed, it is impossible to discriminate between threads of stories or to privilege one storyline over the others. As Costello does not presume to know everything and invites the other to answer her, the reader is invited to participate, give and expect another future answer. By laying bare the production of the novel, Coetzee not only compels his readers to constantly evaluate the conventions of the fiction they are participating in, but puts diverse plausible readings of the novel into dialogue with each other. The two incompatible readings of the novel depend on each other to make sense, and through Paul and Costello's dialogue where they make their versions of stories clash, the possible readings are also put into a dialogue. In such a narrative, the reader is forced to become responsible for responding. As Costello haunts the communication between the novel and the reader, the responsibility of either party lies in answering the other and expecting answers from the other, as words, especially the ones in the novel, are dialogic—they are always uttered toward an interlocutor, and in the

anticipation of a not yet spoken answer from the interlocutor, whose ultimate form is the reader. In this way, Coetzee transforms the novel into an on-going living dialogue between the author, the characters, and the reader.

Due to this layered structure generated by Costello, *Slow Man* can simultaneously sustain multiple incompatible interpretations. It is possibly a new novel by Costello about writing a novel, and at the same time, it is a collection of the stories of all the characters Costello claims that “came to her”; it is a story about Paul, a story about Marijana, a story about her husband Miroslav, a story about their son Drago, and/or a story about the blind Marianna. Costello explicitly says that Paul is only one of the many characters that occurred to her: “You came to me,’ ... Also along with Miroslav Jokic the Croatian refugee – yes, that is his name, Miroslav, his friends call him Mel – and your inchoate attachment to his wife” (82). The Jokic family and the blind Marianna also “came” to Costello and thus are potential protagonists of the novel. This raises multiple possible stories generating from dispersed other focal points in the narrative. The novel can be Paul’s story of rehabilitation and learning to care for the others, and/or it can be one of Marijana’s husband’s where his family gets entangled with an old wealthy disabled man who has developed inappropriate desire for his wife, and/or it can be Costello’s, where the female author undergoes what she was not prepared to undergo to write a novel. Although only hinted at, these potential other stories persist throughout the novel as Coetzee constantly reminds the reader of their presence by frequently marking the intersections of different focal points.

Moreover, in *Slow Man*, the author becomes the reader, the reader becomes the author, and the character, the reader, rendering the boundary between each role of those “who participate in the novel” as extremely porous. For example, Costello, the author,

often “reads” Paul: “Paul, I can read you like a book” (101). On the other hand, Paul reads Costello’s works and writings (119-122). The reader watches the scenes where “the author is asleep and her character is scurrying around” (135), catching a glimpse of what only an omniscient author can oversee. These shifts in roles expose what happens when a novel is being composed, inviting the reader to witness and participate in a composition of a novel.

The oscillating status of Costello reminds the reader that relationship with the other in Coetzee’s works is an on-going experience, rather than one-time history, and thus it is open-ended and future-oriented as a dialogue is. At the start of the novel, Paul is quick to judge other people by categorizing them into a limited number of stereotypes. For him, Costello is an old, therefore unattractive, woman; Marijana, a Balkan, therefore nostalgically traditional, mother; Drago, a handsome, therefore angelic and ideal, son, etc. In the course of *Slow Man*, Paul learns to open his mind to the others’ future answers—that is, to allow others to offer him something other than what he has expected.

Physically limited, Paul’s imagination flies, but it does not merge into the other. Nor is he allowed to subsume others in his imagination. Even though utterances are formed toward an interlocutor and his/her answer, the answer remains unknown until it is heard. Consequently, the boundary of each person remains quite distinct. Just as one person has one body, each person is fully, and inalienably responsible for each other person. As ambiguous and enigmatic as the relationship is, Coetzee forces his character’s language to point to their specific bodies to remind the reader of the consciousnesses that control vocal organs that pronounce each word. The individuality, independence and singularity of a consciousness are best underscored by each individual’s body with its unique needs and imperfections. By making language thus channeled through individual bodies, Coetzee

makes the responsibility of anticipating the other's word parallel to the care of others' bodies. Thus, there is no abstract "language" in *Slow Man*, and languages are conditioned and limited by the person who uses them. Moreover, people are securely delineated by their body, no matter how complicated their psyches are.

Strictly speaking, of course, all literary characters' bodies are ghostly in the sense that they only exist in the realm of the fictional world. They are mere effects of words, illusions that language creates, and thus they are real only on the level of their effect on the reader. However, Coetzee reminds his readers of the ghostly nature of his characters' bodies as a way to remind the reader what happens when reading a novel. The ghostly bodies function as medium for communicating with different readers in the world with the hope of sharing a certain empathy. What Coetzee intends to achieve through these bodies is well exemplified by Paul's lost leg: "Limbs have memories, Madeleine tells the class, and she is right. When he takes a step on his crutches his right side still swings through the arc that the old leg would have swung through; at night his cold foot still seeks its cold ghostly brother" (60). In this passage, Paul's leg is not there, but its ghostly impact is affecting him in a real way. Coetzee seems to be experimenting to see whether it is possible to affect the reader with the ghostly bodies of the characters in the same way Paul's lost leg affects him. In other words, their bodies help the reader imagine the novel as a concrete other, while reminding the reader constantly that the novel is not real and therefore cannot replace the real.

Yet, of course, the body is not everything a person is, and Paul's desires are not confined to bodily needs. After the brief meeting with Marianna, Costello coaxes Paul:

How much love does someone like you need, after all, Paul, objectively speaking? Or someone like me? None. None at all. We do not need love, old people like us. What we need is care. Someone to hold our hand now and then when we get trembly, to make a cup of tea for us, help us down the stairs. Someone to close our eyes for us when the time comes. Care is not love. Care is a service that any nurse worth her salt can provide, as long as we don't ask her for more. (154)

Paul, however, does not agree with Costello that they only need care, not love. On the last page of the novel, even though he shows signs of learning some important lessons, Paul resolutely turns down Costello's invitation. Even Costello herself seems to be wanting something more than simple care when she implores Paul to come and live with her. This excess desire disrupts the narrative of *Slow Man*, as it is featured as inexplicable and inappropriate. Apparently, Coetzee takes the risk of pointing to where language fails, which results in the uneven narrative of the novel. As a result, language and the body not only corroborate, but check each other from degenerating into another abstract concept written on the book, still pointing to what cannot be captured in a book by language. It is this ironically elusive yet concrete body, the crossroad of where concrete physicality crosses language, that one owes respect to in *Slow Man*. Reading *Slow Man* is both an exercise in conversing with an other and an experience of encountering and learning to respect the ultimate alterity in the other.

The second time Costello cites Paul's inner monologue, Costello projects a possible outcome that reading *Slow Man*, that is, the encounter with these ghostly others, would produce:

My memory is going. I become vaguer with each passing day. A pity. Hence this little lesson I am trying to teach you. *He finds her by the riverside, sitting on a bench, clustered around by ducks that she seems to be feeding* – it may be simple as an account, its simplicity may even beguile one, but it is not good enough. It does not bring me to life. Bringing me to life may not be important to you, but it has the drawback of not bringing you to life either. Or the ducks, for that matter, if you prefer not to have me at the centre of the picture. Bring these humble ducks to life and they will bring you to life, I promise. Bring Marijana to life, if it must be Marijana, and she will bring you to life. It is as elementary as that. But please, as a favour to me, please stop dithering. (159)

Once again, Costello quotes the exact words that open the chapter as if to signal to the reader that she is something more than a character in this scene. Costello is trying to give a lesson to Paul—and most likely, to the reader too; the italics make it clear that the intended interlocutor of her speech includes someone who visually sees the printed text. In this passage, Costello comments on the dialogic relationship, or dialogic principle of the novel. She claims that writing the sentence “He finds her by the riverside, sitting on a bench, clustered around by ducks that she seems to be feeding” does not bring her to life. She seems to be arguing that in order to bring her to life, imaginative reading has to happen. What is more, Costello asserts that the process happens in both ways; only when Paul imagines and respects the independent yet related consciousness of the ducks in their fullness, can his self be fully realized too.

To put it differently, the slippery and paradoxical relationship between language and the body can be extended to the relationship between the physical book form of the

novel and the world the novel creates. As language and the body point to each other, yet stop where the other begins, the novel as the author conceived it is not identical to the novel the reader reads, and vice versa. In the same way, the author Costello and the character Paul's paradoxical yet inextricable relationship can be extended to the relationship of the reader and the novel. Just as *Slow Man* explores the point where languages and bodies join and/or miss each other, the novel happens where the author's intention and the reader's interpretation meet and/or miss each other. Of course, Coetzee as an author does not and cannot command or control what the reader will experience; but in *Slow Man*, Coetzee does offer an experience and experiment with a form that would be less restricted by global distribution and international readers.²¹ In other words, the various characters in the novel perform a reading model that suggests how a reader, regardless of her background and language, (and even regardless of the language in which she reads the novel), would make the most of the encounter—that is, appreciate the physical and linguistic differences that the book presents, and respond actively to them with the reader's own uniqueness as she would do in a face to face conversation with another living person.

²¹See *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace* for a discussion of the pressure the development of the international book market exerts on postcolonial authors.

Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.
- Appadurai, A. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1996.
- Attridge, Derek. "Against Allegory: *Waiting for the Barbarians, Life & Times of Michael K*, and the Question of Literary Reading." *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*. Ed. Jane Poyner. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- . *The Singularity of Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- . *J.M. Coetzee and Ethics of Reading: Literature in the Event*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Atwell, David. *J.M. Coetzee: South Africa and the politics of writing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- . "The Life and Times of Elizabeth Costello: J.M. Coetzee and the Public Sphere." *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*. Ed. Jane Poyner. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- Bakhtin, M.M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Begley, Adam. "Ghostbuster." *New York Times Book Review*. 4 Feb. 2001: 12.
- Banerjee, Mita. *The Chutneyfication of History: Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Bharati Mukherjee and the Postcolonial Debate*. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2002.

- Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."
Illuminations. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1986.
- Boxall, Peter. *Don DeLillo: the Possibility of Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Britzolakis, Christina. "Phantasmagoria: Walter Benjamin and the Poetics of Urban Modernism." *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*. Ed. Peter Buse and Andrew Stott. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Brogan, Kathleen. *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998.
- Brouillette, Sarah. *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Burton, Antoinette. "Archive of Bones: Anil's Ghost and the Ends of History." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 38. 1, (2003): 39-56.
- Buse, Peter, and Andrew Stott. eds. *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Butler, Judith. "Violence, Mourning, Politics." *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 4.1 (2003): 9-37.
- Caruth, Cathy. "Recapturing the Past: Introduction." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. 151-154
- Castle, Terry. *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Castricano, Carla J. *Cryptomimesis: the Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing*. Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.

- Chu, Patricia P. "‘A Flame against a Sleeping Lake of Petrol’: Form and the Sympathetic Witness in Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*." *University of Toronto Quarterly*. 76. 3 (2007): 962-976.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Viking, 1999.
- . *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. Davie Attwell. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- . *Elizabeth Costello*. New York: Viking, 2003.
- . *Elizabeth Costello: Eight Lessons*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2003.
- . *Foe*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1986.
- . *Inner Workings: Literary Essays 2000-2005*. London: Harvill Secker, 2007.
- . *The Lives of Animals*. Ed. Amy Gutmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- . *Slow Man*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2005.
- . *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays*. New York: Viking, 2001.
- Collins, Jo and John Jervis. *Uncanny Modernity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Connor, Steven. "The Machine in the Ghost: Spiritualism, Technology, and the 'Direct Voice!'" *Ghost : Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*. Ed. Peter Buse and Andrew Stott. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Cornell, Drucilla. *Beyond Accommodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction, and the Law*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Cowart, David. *Don DeLillo: The Physics of Language*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002.

Cixous, Helene. "Fiction and Its Fantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche."

Translated by Robert Denomé. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 7. 3 (1976): 525-48, 619-45.

Davis, Colin. "État Présent, Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms." *French Studies* 59.3 (2005): 373-379.

---. *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Davis, Todd F. and Kenneth Womak. eds. *Mapping the Ethical Turn: a Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001.

DeKoven, Marianne. *Utopia Limited: the Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

DeLillo, Don. *Conversations with Don DeLillo*. Ed. Thomas DePietro. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2005.

---. *Cosmopolis*. New York: Scribner, 2003.

---. *Falling Man*. New York: Scribner, 2007.

---. *The Body Artist*. New York; Scribner, 2001.

---. *Underworld*. New York, NY: Scribner, 1997.

---. *White Noise*. New York, NY: Viking, 1985.

Derrickson, Teresa. "Will the 'Un-truth Set You Free? A Critical Look at Global Human Rights Discourse in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*." *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 15.2 (2004): 131 – 152.

Derrida, Jacques. *Jacques Derrida: Acts of Literature*. Ed. Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992.

- . *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- . *The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances*. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- . "'This Strange Institution Called Literature: ' an Interview with Jacques Derrida.'" *Acts of Literature*. Ed. Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992. 33-75.
- Derrida, Jacques and Bernard Stiegler. *Echographies of Television*. Ed. Jennifer Bajorek. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2002.
- Devlin, Rachel. *Relative Intimacy: Fathers, Adolescent Daughters, and Postwar American Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Dewey, Joseph. *Beyond Grief and Nothing: a Reading of Don DeLillo*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006.
- Di Prete, Laura. "Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*: Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma." *Contemporary Literature* 46.3 (2005): 483-510.
- Dovey, Teresa. *The Novels of J.M. Coetzee: Lacanian Allegories*. Cape Town: Donker, 1988.
- Durant, Sam. "J.M. Coetzee, Elizabeth Costello, and the Limits of the Sympathetic Imagination." *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*. Ed. Jane Poyner. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006. 118-134.
- Elliott, Emory et. al., eds. *Global Migration, Social Change, and Cultural Transformation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Eng, David and David Kazanjian. Ed. *Loss: the politics of Mourning*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2002.

- Erickson, Daniel. *Ghosts, Metaphor, and History in Toni Morrison's Beloved and Gabriel García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Ermarth, Elizabeth. "The Crisis of Realism in Postmodern Time." *Realism and Representation*. Ed. George Levine. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993. 214-24.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Strachey. Vol. 17. London: Hogarth Press, 1959. 218-52.
- Fruhauff, Brad. "Dickens's Haunted Christmas: The Ethics of the Spectral Text." *Forum 7* (Autumn 2008): 45 par. 3 May 2009
<<http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/issue7/fruhauff.html>>.
- Fultz, Lucille P. *Toni Morrison: Playing with Difference*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- Garber, Marjorie et.al., eds. *The Turn to Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Goldman, Marlene. "Representations of Buddhism in Ondaatje's Anil's Ghost." *Comparative Cultural Studies and Michael Ondaatje's Writing*. Ed. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005. 27-37.
- Gordimer, Nadine. "The Idea of Gardening." *New York Review of Books*. 2 Feb. 1984.
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Gunew, Sneja. *Haunted Nations: the Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

- Gurr, Jens Martin. "Functions of Intertextuality and Metafiction in J. M. Coetzee's *Slow Man*." *Anglistik* 18.1 (2007): 95-112.
- Haslem, Wendy, "Traces of Gothic Spectrality in New Media Art." *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* 5 (2000): 24 pars. 4 May 2009
<<http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/gothicspec.html>>.
- Head, Dominic. *J.M. Coetzee*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Heise, Ursula. *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Hillger, Annick. *Not Needing All the Words: Michael Ondaatje's Literature of Silence*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.
- Holland, D. et.al. *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*. London: Harvard University press, 1998.
- Holland, Nancy. "The Death of the Other/Father: A Feminist Reading of Derrida's Hauntology." *Hypatia* 16.1 (2001): 64-71.
- James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1966.
- Jameson, Fredric. "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
- . "World Literature in an Age of Multinational Capitalism." *The Current in Criticism: Essays on the Present and Future of Literary Theory*. Ed. Clayton Koelb and Virgil Lokke. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press. 139-158.
- Jones, Malcolm. "Dark Tale." *Newsweek* 15 Jan. 2002: 61.
- Joseph, Clara and Janet Wilson. *Global Fissures: Postcolonial Fusions*. New York: Rodopi, 2006.

- Kanaganayakam, Chelva. 'The Anxiety of Being Postcolonial: Ideology and the Contemporary Postcolonial Novel.' *Miscelánea*. 28 (2003): 43–54.
- Keskinen, Mikko. "Posthumous Voice and Residual Presence in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*." *Novels of the Contemporary Extreme*. Ed. Alain-Philippe Durand. London: Continuum, 2006. 31-40.
- Kossew, Sue. ed. *Critical Essays on J.M. Coetzee*. New York: G.K. Hall, 1998.
- Krumholz, Linda J. "Reading and insight in Toni Morrison's Paradise." *African American Review* 36.1 (Spring 2002): 21-34.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1981.
- LeClair, Tom. "The Sri Lankan Patients." *The Nation* 19 June 2000: 31-33.
- Levine, George. *Realism and Representation*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
- Longmuir, Anne. "Performing *the Body* in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 53.3 (Fall 2007): 528-43.
- Loy, David. *Loss and Transcendence*. Amherst: Humanity Books, 1996.
- Luckhurst, Roger. "(Touching on) Tele-Technology." *Applying: to Derrida*. London: McMillan, 1996.
- Matus, Jill. "Trauma, Memory, and Railway Disaster: The Dickensian Connection." *Victorian Studies* 43. 3 (Spring 2001): 413-436.
- McClure, John. *Partial Faiths: Post secular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and Morrison*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007.
- McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1987.

- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Knopf, 1987.
- . "Home." *The House that Race Built*. Ed. Wahneema Lubiano. New York: Random House, 1998. 3-12.
- . *Jazz*. New York: Knopf, 1992.
- . *Love*. New York: Vintage, 2005.
- . *Paradise*. New York: Plume, 1999.
- . *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.
- . "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation." *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation*. Ed. Mari Evans. New York: Doubleday, 1984. 339-45.
- . *Toni Morrison: Conversations*. Ed. Carolyn C. Denard. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008.
- . "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 38.1 (winter 1989): 1-34.
- . "The Dead of September 11." *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction*. Ed. Carolyn C. Denard. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008.
- Naas, Michael. "House Organs: The Strange Case of the Body Artist and Mr. Tuttle." *Oxford Literary Review* 30. 1 (June 2008): 87-108.
- Nicho, Israel. "Globalization and Contemporary Literature." *Literature Compass* 1 (2004): 1-5.
- Nel, Phillip. "Don DeLillo's Return to Form: The Modernist Poetics of *The Body Artist*." *Contemporary Literature* 43 (2002): 736-59.

- O'Connor, Anne-Marie. "Love and the outlaw women: Toni Morrison's latest explores the relationship between the sexes and segregation's end." *Los Angeles Times* 15 Oct. 2003: E1.
- Ondaatje, Michael. *The English Patient*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- . *Anil's Ghost*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- Osteen, Mark. "Echo Chamber: Undertaking *The Body Artist*." *Studies in the Novel* 37.1 (2005): 64-81.
- Quayson, Ato. *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Poyner, Jane. ed. *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- Pynchon, Thomas. *Gravity's Rainbow*. New York: Viking Press, 1973.
- . *Mason & Dixon*. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.
- . *Vineland*. New York: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Roberts, Gillian. "Ethics and Healing: Hospital/ity and *Anil's Ghost*." *University of Toronto Quarterly*. 76.3 (Summer 2007): 962-76.
- Royon, Tessa. "A new 'Romen' Empire: Toni Morrisons' *Love and the Classics*." *Journal of American Studies* 41.1 (2007): 31-47.
- Royle, Nicholas. "Clippings." *Forum* 7 (Autumn 2008): 18 par. 3 May 2009
<<http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/issue7/fruhauff.html>>.
- Rushdie, Salman. *The Satanic Verses*. Dover: Consortium, 1992.
- Saghafi, Kas. "Apparitions." *Forum*. Issue 7, (Autumn 2008). 34 par. 3 May 2009
<<http://forum.llc.ed.ac.uk/issue7/fruhauff.html>>.

- Scanlan, Margaret. "Anil's Ghost and Terrorism's Time." *Studies in the Novel* 36 (2004): 302-17.
- Sconce, Jeffrey. *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*. Durham: Duke UP, 2000.
- Schuster, Marc. *Don DeLillo, Jean Baudrillard, and the Consumer Conundrum*. Youngstown: Cambria Press, 2008.
- Slaughter, Joseph R. "Enabling Fictions and Novel Subjects: The Bildungsroman and International Human Rights Law." *PMLA* 121.5 (October 2006): 1405-23.
- Smith, Rachel. "Grief Time: *The Crisis of Narrative in Don DeLillo's The Body Artist*." *Polygraph: An International Journal of Culture and Politics* 18 (2006): 99-110.
- Spillers, H. 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: an American Grammar Book.' *Diacritics* 17.2 (Summer 1987): 65-81.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- . "Theory in the Margin: Coetzee's Foe Reading Defoe's Crusoe/Roxana." *The Consequences of Theory*. Ed. Jonathan Arac and Barbara Johnson. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991. 154-80.
- Staels, Hilde. "A Poetic Encounter with Otherness: the Ethics of Affect in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*." *University of Toronto Quarterly: A Canadian Journal of the Humanities* 76.3 (Summer 2007): 977-89.
- Stanton, Katherine. *Cosmopolitan Fictions: Ethics, Politics, and Global Change in the Works of Kazuo Ishiguro, Michael Ondaatje, Jamaica Kincaid, and J.M. Coetzee*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

- Sweeney, Megan. "‘Something Rogue’: Commensurability, Commodification, Crime, and Justice in Toni Morrison’s Latest Fiction." *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (2006): 440-69.
- Wachtel, Eleanor. "The sympathetic Imagination: A Conversation with J.M. Coetzee." *Brick: A Literary Journal* 67 (Spring 2001): 37-47.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca. "The Location of Literature: the Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer." *Contemporary Literature* 47. 4 (Winter 2006): 527-45.
- Wardi, Anissa. "A Laying on of Hands: Toni Morrison and the Materiality of *Love*." *MELUS* 30.3 (2005): 201-18.
- Warner, Marina, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Weinstock, Andrew. ed. *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination*. Madison: Wisconsin UP, 2004.
- Wilson, R. and W. Disenayake, eds. *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Wolfreys, Julian. *Victorian Haunting: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny, and Literature*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Worthington, Kim and James Meffan. "Ethics before Politics: J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*." *Mapping the Ethical Turn: a Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*. Ed. Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womak. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001. 131-150.
- Wright, Laura. *Writing 'Out of All the Camps': J.M. Coetzee's Narratives of Displacement*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Wyatt, Jean. "Love's Time and the Reader: Ethical Effects of Nachträglichkeit in Toni Morrison's *Love*." *Narrative* 16.2 (May 2008): 192-221.

Zizek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

The Ring [Ringu]. Screenplay by Hiroshi Takahashi. Dir. Hideo Nakata. Omega Project (Japan), 1998.

---. Screenplay by Haewon Shim. Dir. Dongbin Kim. Han-Mack Movie Production (Korea), 1999.

---. Screenplay by Ehren Kruger. Dir. Gore Verbinski. Dreamworks (U.S.A.), 2002.

Curriculum Vita

JaeEun Yoo

- May 2004 M.A., English, Rutgers University,
- May 2000 M.A., Seoul National University, English and American Literature,
- January 1998 B.A., Seoul National University, English and American Literature and
Language, *magna cum laude*,

Publications

- 2008 "The Site of Murder: Textual Space and Ghost Narrator in Toni Morrison's *Love*."
Space, Haunting, Discourse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2007 "A Ghost Book Haunting Itself: Performing Return in The Body Artist."
Perforations. Issue 29.
- 2005 "'Talking to You and Hearing to You Answer—That's the Kick': History and
Dialogue in *Jazz*." *Exit 9*. Vol. 7.