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Haunting Spectres: The Ghost's Critical Gaze - *Editorial*

> 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.
> (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*)

Spectrality has always been one of the most interesting and controversial subjects in literature and in high- and lowbrow culture of any age. From antiquity to contemporary time, ghosts have haunted Western spaces of representation, giving voice to the anxieties and fears of different historical moments; a study of their nature and their meanings can therefore throw light on our understanding of changing cultural and social attitudes as partly depending on, reacting to, and coming to terms with what was perceived as disquieting and menacing at different times.

The papers presented in this issue of *Anglistica* investigate spectrality in relation to Anglophone literature and cinema from different perspectives, covering various periods in cultural history, following the development of ghost figures in literature and thus outlining a history of spectrality.

The flourishing of spectral characters can be traced back to the dawning of Modernity. The most notable ghostly characters first appear in Elizabethan plays featuring the return from the beyond of a phantom in search of revenge. In this respect, Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* (1580s) can be considered as a sort of archetypal model not only of the revenge tragedy genre but, in particular, of the presentation of the ghost figure coming on stage to ask for its revenge. Here and in other revenge tragedies, the ghost often assumes the role of the Chorus, explaining the past events which are the cause of the dramatic conflict presented in the play and underlining the uncanny and repressed nature of feelings and actions; moreover, the ghost is a spectator, observing the development of the action in expectation of its final revenge, imposing on the living characters the memory of what would otherwise tend to be repressed and awakening their conscience.

Among the many examples of ghostly figures, King Hamlet's ghost has been particularly influential, becoming the prototype of modern and post-modern spectres and the inspirer of significant critical theories. The majestic figure of Hamlet's father, in fact, comes on stage in order to determine the

revenge action of the play, while at the same time it also triggers off a chain of doubts about being and seeming, reality and falsity, truth and deception, troubling Hamlet's conscience and, above all, allowing the creation of the first and greatest modern tragic hero. Indeed, after asking his son to "revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" (I.5.25), King Hamlet's ghost takes his leave with the haunting words "Remember me" (I.5.91), to come back later to remind his son of his bloody task ("Do not forget. This visitation / Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose." III.4.110-111): the uncanny and the repressed are thus drawn to the surface and Hamlet is forced to question his conscience and "take arms" against the sea which is troubling him.

From *Hamlet* (1601) on, the conflicts created by ghostly characters are often internalised, to be later brought to the surface as a problematic expression of religious and secular uncertainties. As *Hamlet* interprets the crisis of the late 16th century and the Baroque period, torn between the irrefutable dogmas of the past and the changeable and questionable "new philosophy" which "calls all in doubt",[1] so later ghosts, such as the protagonists of the Gothic novels of the late 18th century, come to question social and sexual aspects of English society, contributing at the same time to a re-evaluation of the irrational and imaginative energies that had been suffocated by the predominance of Reason in the Age of Enlightenment. Novels such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) or Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) are widely pervaded by repressed desires, brought to the conscience of the protagonists by the action of supernatural, spectral forces. Ann Radcliff goes a step further as her ghostly supernatural forces are revealed in the end as a creation of irrational terror, a projection of internal fears which, once they have been rationally explained, force readers and characters to face their own reality and to question their own conscience so as to find reasons and meanings which had been unconsciously hidden.

[1] John Donne, *The First Anniversary. An Anatomy of the World* (1611).

In her study of Shakespearean adaptations and re-writings, Romana Zacchi discusses how late 17th and early18th centuries witness the spreading of an interest in the editing of Shakespeare's works and in the numerous adaptations and re-writings of his plays. Analysing Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), Gildon's *Measure for Measure* (1700) and Granville's *Jew of Venice* (1701), she explains how a suitable background is created for the return of the ghost of Shakespeare himself, who becomes a haunting presence on the English stage and in English literature, posing questions about the contents and style of writing. Thus the 18th century appears as a period haunted not only by the internal conflicts which in the second half will be conveyed by the Gothic genre, but also by the urge to confront, study and actualise the past, choosing as its best representative a playwright that proved (and still proves) as elusive and floating as a ghost. Maurizio Calbi also discusses the Shakespearean inheritance in spectral terms,

analysing a cinematic postmodern adaptation of *Macbeth*, Billy Morrisette's *Scotland, PA* (2001), in which the original text is present and yet absent, evoked and displaced at the same time.

In the first half of the 19th century Romantic heroes express their difficulty to adjust their own individual passion and imagination to an increasingly alienated and mechanised society through a different kind of ghostly presence:

> Without an adequate social framework to sustain a sense of identity, the wanderer encounters the new form of the Gothic ghost, the double or shadow of himself. An uncanny figure of horror, the double presents a limit that cannot be overcome, the representation of an internal and irreparable division in the individual psyche.[2]

[2] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 93.

Split identities, doubles, ghosts are indeed a major feature in the narrative and poetic production of the time, and writers such as Samuel Coleridge and Emily Brontë are particularly effective in projecting through ghostly presences the internalisation of the desires and devastating sense of loss that haunt the conscience and the mind of their protagonists. Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is an example of a fierce female character, whose proud and passionate personality renders her haunting both for the novel's readers – since she stands for whatever tumultuous and irrational energy may dwell within the human soul – and for its characters, since her presence is felt even after her death.

Coleridge's characters also present a ghostly quality in that they convey ambiguous aspects of the human mind, which allow both a psychoanalytic and a cultural reading. Both in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) and in *Christabel* (1797), for instance, Coleridge plays between the said and the unsaid, a feature which increases the sense of mystery but also makes the meaning of these works unstable, simply spectral.

Laura Sarnelli devotes the first part of her essay to the scrutiny of *Christabel* from a queer, feminist perspective. She analyses the relationship between the female protagonist and the obscure Geraldine, casting new light on the psychoanalytic implications of their encounter and later friendship, also thanks to a parallel analysis of other ambiguous female couples of modern literature and postmodern cinema, such as Sheridan LeFanu's Laura and Carmilla, protagonists of *Carmilla* (1872) and David Lynch's Diane and Camilla, protagonists of *Mulholland Drive* (2001). In particular, the analysis of *Carmilla* also proves enlightening for an understanding of the cultural specificities of the Victorian time.

Towards the end of the 19th century the spreading interest in psychoanalysis becomes evident in the literary production of the time, which is largely concerned with the investigation of the most hidden sides of the human psyche. It is significant that one of the most impressive and

memorable ghost stories, Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), closes the 19th century, partly anticipating the modernist narrative strategies of the following century with its ambiguous narrative style. Here spectrality is not presented simply through James's characters, but the narration itself is configured as a form of haunting and even the reliability of the narrator is ghostly. The end of the 19th century is also the period in which Lafcadio Hearn writes on Japanese ghosts in *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things*, published in 1903, which Stefano Manferlotti analyses in detail, offering an overview that bridges Western and Eastern cultures.

In 20th century literature, spectrality is often associated with the deconstruction of traditional narrative patterns, a process fully embodied by modernism and by the new structures of feeling that express the fragmentation of reality and human identity along with a deep sense of displacement and hopelessness in the desolated "Waste Land" of post-war time. An example of this displacement is given by Claudia Corti in her analysis of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), where Shakespeare's ghost returns, posing questions to both Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom about filial relationships, but also about the intersections of historical transformations with personal changes.

The kind of destabilisation inaugurated by Modernism is later increasingly favoured by the spreading, from the 1960s on, of deep changes in society and of cultural movements such as poststructuralism, postcolonialism and more in general postmodernism. These movements aim at dismantling the patriarchal and colonial prerogatives, which prove implicit in the textual practices of modern culture. Spectres, in this respect, are often the figures through which fiction enacts this dismantling, as their function is mainly to lead other characters and readers to achieve an awareness of the (racial, sexual, social) marginalisation enacted by the Western system. Like *Hamlet*'s ghost, they return to ask for justice, to "set right" what is "out-of-joint", placing haunting on an ethical level, which can be considered as the specificity of the "ghosts of the posts".

One of the most highly appreciated postmodern/postcolonial ghost novels, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), stages the return in flesh and blood of a black female ghost; other significant novels in Anglophone world literature – Mudrooroo's *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* (1991), Pat Barker's *The Ghost Road* (1995), Fred d'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts* (1998), Patricia Grace's *Baby No-Eyes* (1998) – present spectrality in relation to history and to the single realities of the characters and are centred on a ghost returning to take revenge or to reveal unsaid truths.

A particularly subtle form of spectrality is present in two other novels analysed in this issue: Grace Nichols' *Whole of a Morning Sky* (1986) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* (1982). Izabel Brandao studies the first novel from an ecofeminist perspective, focusing on the theme of

spectrality not simply in relation to a single ghostly figure, but considering ghostliness the result of a network of political forces affecting the characters' lives. Koray Melikoğlu analyses *A Pale View of Hills*, singling out the presence of an "implied author", a ghostly presence which shapes a sort of counter-narration from behind the scenes, forcing the reader to revise his/her position towards the characters. The reader, in other words, feels as if s/he were being "gazed" on by the implied author/spectre, and finds her/himself involved in the mechanism of the narration.

The question of the gaze, which Melikoğlu connects with the implied author, can also be seen in a Lacanian and Derridian perspective, but before getting to this point, it is worth considering briefly the theoretical frame in which spectrality has recently been analysed. The theme of haunting has found a theoretical reference in *Specters of Marx* (1994) – the main reference also for most of the present articles – in which Jacques Derrida gives philosophical and political relevance to the question of spectrality, founding a form of counter-ontology, which he defines "hauntology".[3] Analysing some of Marx's texts as well as a number of important literary works such as *Hamlet*, Derrida criticises Western ontology on the grounds that it works on the exclusion of alterity. Accordingly, whereas ontology is based on "presence", "hauntology" accounts for what has been excluded or has resisted the logic/dynamics of representation, and which returns to disturb what is present. In this view, the ghost is shown to be the best metaphor to address what is liminal between presence and absence and to embody the questions coming from an otherness that proves at the same time familiar (the ghost *returns*) and unfamiliar (it returns in a strange, supernatural shape), provoking an uncanny effect that is due to the aporia of its apparition; the consequent displacement is probably what the ontology of presence needs to avoid. To put it differently, those who did not have the chance to be visible and present, or to be represented in one way or another by Western ontology, have returned in the shape of ghosts to disturb it and reconfigure it.

In this perspective, the ghost has become a cultural key figure that needs to be scrutinized and deciphered, a scrutiny that could prove highly revealing for the times we live in. In line with this thought, Avery Gordon underlines the sociological importance of studying spectrality as something belonging to our everyday life: "Haunting is a constituent element of modern social life. It is neither premodern superstition nor individual psychosis; it is a generalizable social phenomenon of great import. To study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it".[4]

Anna Maria Cimitile also stresses how late modernity and contemporaneity in all their forms are imbued with ghostliness. In particular, she analyses the ghost's agency also in its relation to criticism, "for the spectral not only appears in our narratives in the form of ghosts, the

[3] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

[4] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1998), 7.

spirits of the dead, but also in our theory, literary criticism, cultural analysis and even sociology".[5]

The agency of the spectre does not in fact limit itself to revealing the unspeakable; it also concerns the ultimate mechanisms of representation. Indeed, in highlighting how ontology, history, culture have functioned and still continue to function on a mechanism of exclusion, the ghost enacts a revision of textual practices and of representation in general, leading to the awareness that, however unintentionally, representation keeps some obscure zones and unconscious spaces that resist an ultimate meaning.

The phantom, in other words, symbolises these zones and functions as a critic and psychoanalyst of the text in that its haunting reveals unsaid secrets but also makes the readers aware that texts are unstable. Textually speaking, the ghost may be seen as a character that is different from the other characters because of its superior critical knowledge of the facts in question. Like the anamorphic skull menacing Holbein's *The Ambassadors* (1533), analysed by Lacan in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, the ghost shows reality from a different perspective, thus reducing the field of our vision to something relative.[6] Similar, in fact, to the Lacanian Other whose "gaze" forces the subject to recognise that its look is just a viewpoint, the phantom represents an alterity that can be never fully grasped and whose effect is the relativisation of 'our' position. The recourse to the Lacanian distinction between "gaze" and "look" may acquire a particular meaning inspired by the Derridian notion of "hauntology": the "look" is indeed the symbol of the Western patriarchal/colonial power of surveillance and classification used in addressing the Other, while the "gaze" is a counter-look which obliterates this power by rendering the Western subject an object. It is interesting to note, at this point, that Derrida in *Specters of Marx* also uses a metaphor involving the eyes, which he defines the "visor effect" and which he singles out through the analyses of King Hamlet's figure covered in armour. The "visor effect" refers to King Hamlet looking at his son from within the armour so that his eyes are hidden by the visor; in other words, the phantom can stare at a spectator who cannot reciprocate the look, and if the spectator is the Western colonial and patriarchal subject, the ghost's agency is that of producing an inversion of perspective where it is the subject of the discourse that turns out to be at issue, exposed and analysed from an angle that destabilises his/her balance.

Both in Lacanian and Derridian terms, then, the ghost's gaze breaks the harmony of a linear narrative by revealing something forgotten or secret and by questioning the system and the way that narration is produced. Hence, it not only causes a reinterpretation of the past/present relationship, but also demonstrates the limits of representation, working as a critic who 'returns' to a text to cast new light on its obscure zones, providing new interpretations with the awareness that they are relative and provisional.

[5] Anna Maria Cimitile, "Of Ghosts, Women and Slaves. Spectral Thinking in Late Modernity", *Anglistica* 3.2 (1999), 91-92; see also *Emergenze. Il fantasma della schiavitù da Coleridge a d'Aguiar* (Naples: Liguori, 2005).

[6] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981).

In this optic, it is possible to give spectrality the significance of a critical practice that takes into account the relativity of any reading as well as the historical and cultural references affecting reading. Returning is thus not simply a movement from the past to the present, but it is also evocative of something to come: "a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back".[7] Haunting, in other words, is a 'textual' door left open to ever new interpretations, which ghostly characters render explicit, but which is present in any text. Margaret Atwood has written that any kind of writing is motivated by the desire to save something from forgetfulness, and so from death, which gives it somehow a spectral nature.[8] After Derrida's "hauntology", it seems to be important to underline that reading too can be associated with an ethical form of haunting, whose aim is raising questions and rethinking what was previously given for granted.

[7] Derrida, *Specters*, 99.

[8] Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead* (London: Virago, 2002), 140.

Romana Zacchi

"Enter Shakespeare's Ghost": Shakespearean Adaptations and Appropriations

In real life ghosts serve to make "visible that which has been rendered invisible".[1] They are representational devices for secrets, madness, fears, anxieties and uncertainties. In literature and drama ghosts, spectres, phantoms and spirits represent the invisible and the unsaid, past memories and present distress. They haunt readers and spectators alike both from the printed page and from the stage.

[1] Sladja Blazan, ed., *Ghosts, Stories, Histories. Ghost Stories and Alternative Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 5.

1.

Everyone knows full well that ghosts inhabit Shakespeare's plays: we need only mention the Ghost of old King Hamlet in *Hamlet*, Banquo's Ghost in *Macbeth* or the Ghosts of Queen Anne and the murdered young Princes in *Richard III*. They were those incorporeal beings that came from the past to haunt the present of the dramatis personae, to ask for revenge or to remind them of their own guilty deeds. They were, above all, powerfully effective dramatic devices for creating fully-rounded characters keeping the story running and guiding it to its end. Moreover, the stage effect of a ghost coming up from a trapdoor on the Elizabethan platform stage enhanced the impressiveness of the acted scene.

Shakespeare's ghost, or better Shakespeare's memory, began to hover over English dramatic culture soon after the playwright's death (1616) and the publication of the First Folio (1623), thanks to the editorial format chosen by his fellow actors, a Folio edition, and, above all, to the laudatory lines written by Ben Jonson and other poets appearing in that edition but his very name went unpronounced for a long time thereafter.

As Robert D. Hume maintains, during the last decade of the seventeenth century,

> Extant evidence does not suggest that ordinary playgoers would have associated Shakespeare with such titles as *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Misery of Civil War* [*1 Henry VI*], *Coriolanus*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *Merchant of Venice*, Tate's short-lived *Richard II* (suppressed in 1680), *Richard III*, *Winter's Tale*, or any of the comedies. To such a playgoer "Shakespeare" would have been strongly associated with old fashioned blood-and-thunder tragedy of various sorts: passionate, bloody, and pathetic.[2]

[2] Robert D. Hume, "Before the Bard: 'Shakespeare' in Early Eighteenth-Century London", *English Literary History* 64.1 (Spring 1997), 68.

Playgoers, then, were indifferent to authorship in general and Shakespearean authorship in particular, although they fully enjoyed the

hustle of the stage. But of course, literate people of the Restoration period such as John Dryden and Thomas Rymer were well aware of the Shakespearean corpus of plays left behind and their impact on the contemporary scene. Dryden shows mixed feelings towards them, while Rymer is harshly critical due to his devotion to the neoclassical rules imported from abroad. Nonetheless, they both pay homage to Shakespeare's achievement. Theatrical people such as pioneer theatre manager William Davenant and actor Thomas Betterton, well supported by their practical activities and abilities and understanding the way theatre functioned, were also attracted by the variety of plots and characters the Shakespearean corpus had to offer.

In the Restoration period, after the reopening of the theatres, a new generation of playwrights took up dramatic plots and promptbooks from previous times; they were perceived as common, shared 'goods' and adjusted to the new public's inclinations and to the novel introduction of women actresses onto the stage. Manipulating old plays into new ones was a long-standing practice, dating back to mediaeval and Tudor times, and it was meant to adjust the theatrical scene to contemporary tastes, to newly introduced theatrical technologies and even to contemporary events and debates.

The first authors to gain a fresh fortune and reputation on the restored stage were Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher: their plays were revived with relatively few adjustments, since they responded to the tastes of the new audiences quite easily, thanks to their intrigues and the invention of the character of the witty, gentlemanly gallant, so popular in Restoration comedy.[3] Even the revivals of Ben Jonson's plays outscored Shakespeare's during the four decades of the Restoration period.

Shakespeare's corpus was divided into various sections and a royal decree attributed these sections to William Davenant and William Killigrew, the managers of the two patented companies operating at that time.[4] They both held it to be their right to manipulate what had been assigned to them in order to produce a spectacle that could profitably attract their audiences.

Discussing Michael Dobson's study on the making of Shakespeare as the national poet, Robert D. Hume stresses the process of constructing Bardolatry through various rhetorical devices used very early in the last four decades of the seventeenth century, but claims that

> The perception of "Shakespeare" for common readers and playgoers before the 1730s was probably derived from a very small number of "authentic" plays and was seriously skewed by exposure to popular and oft-reprinted adaptations .... The factors which created The Bard came to a head fairly abruptly in the 1730s, before which time there was plenty of Bardolatrous language but hardly any of the practical respect such language ought to express.[5]

[3] See Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1989), 26-32.

[4] See William van Lennep et al., eds., *The London Stage 1660-1800*, vol.I (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), 22 , 151-152.

[5] Hume, "Before the Bard", 57. The study discussed by Hume is Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet. Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

In short, the scholar writes that since Tudor times, due to old printing practices and a disregard for authorship in such a domain as theatrical activities, the names of the playwrights had not always been acknowledged in the title pages of the printed quartos (only the Folios of Ben Jonson, Fletcher and Shakespeare bore the names of their authors), while more emphasis was given to the company of actors and the venue of the performance (explicitly printed under the title of the play).

It is not until the year 1700 that we meet with full acknowledgement of the source: in *The Tragical History of King Richard III*, by Colley Cibber (printed 1700), the typographical device of italics is introduced to distinguish Shakespeare's lines from the adaptor's. Similarly, *The Jew of Venice* by George Granville (printed 1701) uses quotation marks to distinguish his own additions from the textual excerpts drawn from the original Shakespeare, although neither the name of the original author nor that of the adaptor is mentioned in any way on the title page. The same applies to *Love Betray'd, or, The Agreeable Disappointment* by William Burnaby (an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, printed 1703): although there is no reference to Shakespeare in the prologue or the epilogue, the preface acknowledges the borrowing of "about fifty of the lines", marking it with inverted commas. These are the first lines of his Preface:

> Part of the Tale of this Play, I took from *Shakespear*, and about Fifty of the Lines; Those that are his, I have mark'd with inverted Comma's, to distinguish 'em from what are mine. I endeavour'd where I had occasion to introduce any of 'em, to make 'em look as little Strangers as possible, but am affraid (tho' a Military Critick did me the honour to say I had plunder'd all from *Shakespear*) that they would easily be known without my Note of distinction.[6]

[6] William Burnaby, *Love Betray'd, or, The Agreeable Disappointment* (London: D. Brown, 1703), 2. All quotations from Shakespeare's adaptations are drawn from *EAS, Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare*, LION Literature Online database, Chadwick-Healey, <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>, 1 July 2007.

The typographical convention of flagging words when they originated elsewhere, from another speaker or another text, is relatively recent, but in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries it meant quite a different thing: it was used to mark "a passage as authoritative and therefore noteworthy", to be distinguished from the rest of the sentence/period.[7] Therefore, the introduction of inverted commas to isolate passages originating elsewhere was used to underline the authority and validity of the source text. Thus a weird paradox is generated, that is, the ambiguity of manipulating texts while at the same time signalling validity and proper duplication of the bracketed passages taken *verbatim* from their originals. Ambivalence and paradoxically mixed feelings seem to be the leading attitude of adaptors, as we shall see later.

[7] Margreta De Grazia, "Shakespeare in Quotation Marks", in Jean I. Marsden, ed., *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), 60.

The next step in British culture was the Copyright Act issued in 1709: the law enabled authors to reproduce their own books and gain royalties from sales, whereas previously printers had had a perpetual monopoly

on the printing of works once they had bought them for a printing house.[8]

From the 1730s onwards, Shakespeare's authority became widely accepted and his authorship of the plays was no longer questioned: Shakespeare was placed at the very core of English national culture. The Shakespearean Jubilee planned by David Garrick in 1769 was a natural end to the whole process, as Dobson rightly demonstrates.[9]

[8] The importance of the Statute of 1709 with reference to Shakespeare's plays is discussed in Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 190-192.

[9] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, passim.

2.

The entrance of the Ghost of Shakespeare in the late seventeenth-century adaptations, evoked first as a name, then as a character embodied in an actor's voice and gesture, and finally invoked as an authority, traces the path for the canonization of Shakespeare's corpus.

In the late seventeenth century the name of Shakespeare is mainly to be found in para-textual apparatuses attached to Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations; that is, in title pages, epistles dedicatory, prefaces, prologues and epilogues. An analysis of these elements can reveal a lot about the attitude of playwrights towards their own source texts, although they are extremely difficult to handle today, since they are mainly addressed to the contemporary audience/readership, and therefore crowded with veiled references, allusions and topical comments. They are also to be seen as rhetorical devices in the context of the rhetorical practices that were widely common in the late seventeenth century. In this article I will be analyzing some exemplary materials as study cases, namely Dryden's Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late* (1679); Charles Gildon's Epilogue to *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700); and George Granville's Prologue to *The Jew of Venice* (1701). But let me start with another case-study: Tate's rewriting of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*.

Nahum Tate's ghost of Shakespeare is simply evoked as an immaterial name having a certain power to rule from elsewhere over both the business of the theatres and the business of the political scene.

Tate's revision of *Coriolanus* was acted in December 1681, and then published in 1682 under the title of *The Ingratitude of a Common Wealth: or, the Fall of Caius Marius Coriolanus* (1682), "a remarkable piece of Roman History, though form'd into Play" in Tate's words in the Epistle Dedicatory to Lord Herbert. He admits that his play is not "a work meerly of my own Compiling; having in this Adventure Launcht out in Shakespear's Bottom", and that his choice was inspired by parallels with the contemporary political scene. As a matter of fact, the revised play aims at unifying the audience around sentimental family issues. However, it goes beyond this, since Tate's adaptation of Shakespeare's play is filled with political motivations. His revision cannot overlook the fact that Coriolanus

is not a viable political leader. His Coriolanus cannot inspire the loyalty that the playwright advocates in his Dedication to Lord Herbert because Tate is caught between his ideological allegiance to the monarch and his creative allegiance to the Bard. The Prologue, written by Sir George Raynsford, sounds a note relevant to our topic:

> Our Author do's with modesty submit,
> To all the Loyal Criticks of the Pit;
> Not to the Wit-dissenters of the Age,
> Who in a Civil War do still Engage,
> The antient fundamental Laws o'th' Stage:
> Such who have common Places got, by stealth,
> From the Sedition of Wits Common-Wealth.
> From Kings presented, They may well detract,
> Who will not suffer Kings Themselves to Act.
>
> Yet he presumes *we may be safe to Day,*
> *Since* Shakespear *gave Foundation to the Play:*
> *'Tis Alter'd—and his sacred Ghost appeas'd;*
> I wish you All as easily were Pleas'd:
> He only ventures to make Gold from Oar,
> And turn to Money, what lay dead before.[10]

[10] Nahum Tate, *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth: Or, the Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus*, Prologue, lines 9-11 (London: Cornmarket Press, 1969). Italics mine.

Although the treatment of the play is such that Shakespeare is forcefully turned into a royalist partisan, his "sacred" ghost is "appeas'd" – we are told – since he is being revived and appropriated for such material objectives as financial gain, dramatic improvement and, last but not least, service for the royalist cause. Tate shows the very same ambivalence to his forefather Shakespeare as is shown by nearly all other adaptors of the late seventeenth century, and uses the "latent political values" of the former play to question the aesthetic and political anxieties of the age.[11]

[11] "The Restoration Coriolanus bodies forth a range of aesthetic and political anxieties that are as significant for what they express as for how they cannot be reconciled". Olsen Thomas G., "Apolitical Shakespeare; or, the Restoration Coriolanus", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 38.3 (1998), 412.

3.

Dryden's Ghost of Shakespeare turns into a material being: he walks onto the stage before the dramatic action begins, and – as Prologue – speaks directly to the audience.

Dryden's re-writing of *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late* was probably produced for the first time in April 1679, the same month its printed version was entered in the Stationers' Register. The re-writing undergoes a special treatment, which is clearly and fully stated by Dryden himself in the Epistle Dedicatory to the Earl of Sunderland, in the Preface and the annexed piece of criticism ("The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy"). According to his ambitious project of reforming and giving stricter formal rules to the English language, the main theme of the Epistle Dedicatory, Dryden meant to "remove that heap of rubbish, under which many excellent

thoughts lay wholly bury'd".[12] Thus, such "rubbish" as obsolete nouns, adjectives, verbs, grammatical and syntactical constructions that would undermine the principles of clearness and plainness of language were deleted and replaced with contemporary forms. A companion aim was also pursued within the same re-writing, that of partially adjusting the dramatic structure and the narrative fable of the original to the newly introduced principles of neoclassical dramaturgy. For example, the sequence of the scenes is turned into a symmetrical alternation, which is more respectful of the principle of verisimilitude on the stage. Furthermore, ambiguity of character is avoided thanks to the deletion of speeches or parts of speeches. On the contrary, the cardinal principle of 'poetic justice' is disregarded at the end of the narrative fable, where Troilus – on discovering the loyalty and faithfulness of his dead lover Cressida – seeks his own death in battle against the Greeks. The two lovers end tragically due to an irreconcilable conflict; they are eventually transfigured as the virtuous hero and heroine of a pathetic tragedy, according to the Aristotelian canon as revisited by the French theorists. Radical changes, therefore, characterize Dryden's manipulation.[13]

In a previous adaptation, that of *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*, worked on together with William Davenant (1670), Dryden had paid homage to his forefather, "old Shakespear's honour'd dust", and admitted that "Shakespear's Magick could not copy'd be,/ Within that Circle none durst walk but he". Shakespeare is king and his power "is sacred as a King's".[14] In the Preface both Dryden and Davenant declare a special veneration towards the playwright from Stratford. But this did not stop either of them from developing a complete manipulation of the original story and its linguistic manifestation.

In *Troilus*, Dryden's Ghost of Shakespeare appears on the stage as a character in its own right, although it expresses Dryden's ideas: clothing his words as Shakespeare's, he has the playwright say that his [Dryden's] reshaping of the play is more truthful to the original fable of the two ancient lovers than that told by Homer himself ("My faithfull Scene ... shall tell/How Trojan valour did the Greek excel").[15] Above all, that it was he – despite being illiterate and as "barbarous" as his own age – who founded the English stage thanks to the richness and originality of his invention. An ambivalent attitude is shown here by Dryden: on the one side, he makes Shakespeare's Ghost say that he has improved the whole structure of the "rough-drawn" original play, while, on the other, he makes him declare that the original "Master-strokes" are preserved untouched ("He shook; and thought it Sacrilege to touch", *TC* 16). This is a highly ambivalent way of putting things together.

In the light of his previous discussion of the political implications of Shakespearean re-writings in general, Dobson defines this a "distracting

[12] Maximillian E. Novak, George R. Guffey and Alan Roper, eds., "Preface", in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. XIII (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 226.

[13] See Marisa Sestito, *Creare imitando. Dryden e il teatro* (Udine: Campanotto, 1999), 33-36. See also Sergio Rufini, *Shakespeare via Dryden*. (*Il Troilus and Cressida attraverso il rifacimento di Dryden*) (Perugia: Editrice Guerra, 1988), 9-10 and passim. On the re-writing of the pathetic heroine and specifically Cressida see Jean I. Marsden, "Rewritten Women: Shakespearean Heroines in the Restoration", in Marsden, ed., *The Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 50-51.

[14] Maximilian E. Novak, ed., *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. X (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 6. The quoted lines taken from the Prologue of *The Tempest* are 3, 19-20, 24.

[15] John Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, truth Found too Late* (*1679*). *The Prologue Spoken by Mr. Betterton, Representing the Ghost of Shakespear*, lines 37-38. See Appendix I. Hereafter referred to as *TC*.

prologue", meaning by this that Dryden, the adaptor, shifts the attention of the audience from his own reworking of the original play (and its political implications) to very different issues, such as his own 'devout' homage to Shakespeare, the rewriting of English History (the legend of the Trojan hero Brut, Aeneas' nephew and ancestor of the ancient Britons, and consequently the founder the English Nation), then finally the relation between Shakespeare and Homer.[16]

Although Dobson insists on an improper, far too contemporary, Bloomian principle, that of the 'anxiety of influence', he does not fail to underline the importance of opening his play by introducing Shakespeare's Ghost on the stage. What is of capital importance – in my opinion – is the fact that Shakespeare's name is turned into a 'tangible' being, and is exhibited to an audience who might not have been aware of the materiality of that name. By giving flesh and voice to the dead playwright the adaptor acknowledges something more than the mere name, although this is still something less than full authority.

[16] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 74-75, and note 27.

4.

What if an adaptor had a more deferent attitude towards Shakespeare's achievements?

Such is the case of Charles Gildon, a versatile professional writer and translator who was at home in the company of Dryden, William Wycherley and Aphra Behn. He is also known as the compiler of Shakespeare's biography and criticism under the title "Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare", contained in the seventh (spurious and 'unauthorized') volume of Nicholas Rowe's edition of Shakespeare's plays (1710).[17]

Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate was first performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields in February 1700.[18] The play was closed by Shakespeare's Ghost as Epilogue, and spoken by the actor who had played the role of the Duke.

Gildon's Ghost of Shakespeare appears, then, on the stage at the very end of the play, and engages in a vigorously enraged complaint about a countless number of misdemeanours perpetrated against his own plays: his Falstaff has been rendered unrecognizable, no more no less than "one poor Coxcomb" because of poor playwrights mangling his playtexts; his Macbeth, Hamlet and Desdemona "Murder'd on the Scene" fail to raise fear, pleasure and passion because of poor acting. The Ghost's protest, therefore, goes against the persecution enacted by mediocre scribblers as well as by mediocre actors ("Let me no more endure such Mighty Wrongs,/ By Scriblers Folly, or by Actors Lungs").[19]

The fact that the Ghost vehemently objects to his adaptors and their performers right at the end of this new version of *Measure* raises the

[17] Rowe's edition of Shakespeare's corpus appeared in six volumes in 1709. The addition of a seventh volume in 1710 was a somewhat piratical operation performed by printer Edmund Curll, without the authorization of either the previous printer or of Rowe himself.

[18] An extensive comment of the play is provided by Romana Zacchi, "Una storia troppo shakespeariana: Davenant, Gildon e *Measure for Measure*", in *Measure for Measure. Dal testo alla scena,* ed. by Mariangela Tempera (Bologna: Clueb, 1992), 123-140.

[19] Charles Gildon, *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700). The Epilogue. *Shakespeares* GHOST, *Spoken by Mr. Verbruggen*, By the Same, lines 13, 6, 21-22. See Appendix II.

ambiguous question whether the play that has just been acted, before his appearance on the stage, falls into the group of 'murderous' operations or not. In the printed version of the play the Epilogue is located at the beginning, after the 'Persons Names', the Epistle, dedicated to Nicholas Battersby, and the Prologue. Such an unusual position provides an answer to the question raised, since the reader is allowed to read the Ghost's accusations immediately before reading the full playtext. By means of this editorial expedient Gildon seems to be willing to claim that his rewriting has the textual and philological qualities to stand as a truthful revisitation of the original play, while a comparative analysis of both would soon reveal the cuts and changes, due to a double intention of the author, one being a reverential admiration of Shakespeare's genius, although tempered by comments on its "irregularity" and lack of "poetic justice" (as may be read in the "Remarks" mentioned above); the other a tentative conformity to the wave of moral and didactic "reformation of the stage" promoted by Jeremy Collier a couple of years before.[20]

[20] See Jeremy Collier, *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (London, 1698).

5.

And what if two illustrious Ghosts appeared on the stage? This is exactly what happens one year later, in 1701.

George Granville, Baron Lansdowne, a writer and politician, took up his pen and adapted Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, after Dryden had been favourably impressed by his first attempts at playwriting and had encouraged him to do so. His version changed the original title into *The Jew of Venice* and was first performed at Little Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1701. In the brief "Advertisement to the Reader" Granville advances an explicit justification for his operation by referring back to the exemplary endeavours of his predecessors, such as Davenant, Dryden and Tate, the "three succeeding Laureats" of his age, and by declaring that "the judicious Reader will observe so many Manly and Moral Graces in the Characters and Sentiments, that he may excuse the Story, for the Sake of the Ornamental Parts".

The Prologue to the new play was written by Bevill Higgons, one of Granville's kinsmen, but it seems to be closely consistent with the adaptor's concepts and ideas: a reverential attitude towards Shakespeare's genius and beauties, mixed with mild critique of his treatment of dramatic plots, as the Advertisement puts forward.

Shakespeare's ghostly figure appears on the stage in the company of the recently dead Dryden; the two ghosts, both "Crown'd with Lawrel", engage in a duologue before the "radiant circle" of the theatre, denouncing to their audience the decline of the stage, the deplorable fashion of imitating French farce, the indifference to, or better, the ignorance of the true beauties

of Nature as portrayed by great poets. The relationship between the original play and its rewriting is defined well by the lines pronounced by Shakespeare's Ghost:

> These Scenes in their rough Native Dress were mine;
> But now improv'd with nobler Lustre shine;
> The first rude Sketches Shakespear's Pencil drew,
> But all the shining Master stroaks are new.[21]

[21] George Granville, *The Jew of Venice* (1701). The Prologue. *The Ghosts of Shakespear and Dryden arise Crown'd with Lawrel*. Written by *Bevill Higgons*, lines 35-38. See Appendix III.

The Ghost's words, while alternately denouncing Shakespeare's "rough" and "rude" play, praise the alterations done by the later author: thus, the ghostly appearance of the dead playwright is used as a way of approving them. The new "shining Master stroaks", those parts due to Granville's pen, are the "value added", as it were. In the printed edition of the new play Granville chooses to distinguish his own lines from Shakespeare's by putting his own between inverted commas, as he declares in the "Advertisement to the Reader":

> The Reader may please moreover to take Notice, (that nothing may be imputed to *Shakespear* which may seem unworthy of him) that such Lines as appear to be markt, are Lines added, to make good the Connexion where there was a necessity to leave out; in which all imaginable Care has been taken to imitate the same fashion of Period, and turn of Stile and Thought with the Original.

The notion of improving the "connections", that is, the structure of the original play, is well grounded in Granville as well as in all his contemporaries, although he does not mention the cuts and omissions and understates the effects of the shifting focus from the "merchant" to the "Jew".

A long comment in Dobson's study is devoted to the sexual overtones and consequent moral implications included in the words Nature and natural. The mention of French farce, of Strephon and Sapho, according to Dobson and others, leaves room for an anti-homosexual reading of the Prologue, and in favour of normal (that is, natural), heterosexual relationships.[22] This kind of reading would be justified by the popular wave against immorality and profaneness represented on the stage that has been mentioned before, but it somehow obliterates the real value of the changes in the adapted play.[23]

[22] See Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 121-124.

[23] An analysis of the play is provided by Romana Zacchi, "The Jew of Venice di George Granville", in Mariangela Tempera, ed., *The Merchant of Venice. Dal testo alla scena* (Bologna: Clueb, 1994), 197-212.

6.

Having examined the three appearances of Shakespeare's Ghost in the late seventeenth century adaptations, one may still find oneself asking the original question: Why put the Ghost of Shakespeare on the stage? The answer is quite simply a "return from [cultural] oblivion", as Ratmoko puts

it.[24] Although never completely obliterated from cultural memory after his death, the name of Shakespeare, his authority and authorship, gradually took the form of a ghostly appearance, which could give flesh and blood – through the flesh and blood of an actor on the stage – to the author himself, and allow him to re-enter the realm of the living and their cultural memory. Whether this was done for the aim of earning money, promoting political visions, gaining "posthumous approval" for the adaptations or canonizing the dead playwright into a cultural monument, is a matter for further speculation.[25]

[24] David Ratmoko writes that "specters offer a key to deciphering the cryptic legacy of the past" (5) and later speaks of "ghosts returning to settle injustice". *On Spectrality*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 5, 86.

[25] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 121.

APPENDIX

I John Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, truth Found too Late (1679)*
The Prologue Spoken by Mr. Betterton, Representing the Ghost of Shakespear.

See, my lov'd Britons, see your Shakespeare rise,
An awfull ghost confess'd to human eyes!
Unnam'd, methinks, distinguish'd I had been
From other shades, by this eternal green,
About whose wreaths the vulgar Poets strive,
And with a touch, their wither'd Bays revive.
Untaught, unpractis'd, in a barbarous Age,
I found not, but created first the Stage.
And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas, that my own abundance gave me more.
On foreign trade I needed not rely
Like fruitfull Britain, rich without supply.
In this my rough-drawn Play, you shall behold
Some Master-strokes, so manly and so bold
That he, who meant to alter, found 'em such
He shook; and thought it Sacrilege to touch.
Now, where are the Successours to my name?
What bring they to fill out a Poets fame?
Weak, short-liv'd issues of a feeble Age;
Scarce living to be Christen'd on the Stage!
For Humour farce, for love they rhyme dispence,
That tolls the knell, for their departed sence.
Dulness might thrive in any trade but this:
'T wou'd recommend to some fat Benefice.
Dulness, that in a Playhouse meets disgrace
Might meet with Reverence, in its proper place.
The fulsome clench that nauseats the Town
Wou'd from a Judge or Alderman go down!
Such virtue is there in a Robe and gown!
And that insipid stuff which here you hate
Might somewhere else be call'd a grave debate:
Dulness is decent in the Church and State.
But I forget that still 'tis understood
Bad Plays are best decry'd by showing good:

Sit silent then, that my pleas'd Soul may see
A Judging Audience once, and worthy me:
My faithfull Scene from true Records shall tell
How Trojan valour did the Greek excell;
Your great forefathers shall their fame regain,
And Homers angry Ghost repine in vain.

II Charles Gildon, *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700)
The Epilogue. Shakespeares GHOST, Spoken by Mr. Verbruggen, By the Same.

Enough 'your Cruelty Alive I knew;
And must I Dead be Persecuted too?
Injur'd so much of late upon the Stage,
My Ghost can bear no more; but comes to Rage.
My Plays, by Scriblers, Mangl'd I have seen;
By Lifeless Actors Murder'd on the Scene.
Fat Falstaff here, with Pleasure, I beheld,
Toss off his Bottle, and his Truncheon weild:
Such as I meant him, such the Knight appear'd;
He Bragg'd like Falstaff, and, like Falstaff, fear'd.
But when, on yonder Stage, the Knave was shewn
Ev'n by my Self, the Picture scarce was known.
Themselves, and not the Man I drew, they Play'd;
And Five Dull Sots, of One poor Coxcomb, made.
Hell! that on you such Tricks as these shou'd pass,
Or I be made the Burden of an Ass!
Oh! if Machbeth, or Hamlet ever pleas'd,
Or Desdemona e'r your Passions rais'd;
If Brutus, or the Bleeding Cæsar e'r
Inspir'd your Pity, or provok'd your Fear,
Let me no more endure such Mighty VVrongs,
By Scriblers Folly, or by Actors Lungs.
So, late may Betterton forsake the Stage,
And long may Barry Live to Charm the Age.
May a New Otway Rise, and Learn to Move
The Men with Terror, and the Fair with Love!
Again, may Congreve, try the Commic Strain;
And Wycherly Revive his Ancient Vein:
Else may your Pleasure prove your greatest Curse;
And those who now Write dully, still Write worse.

III George Granville, *The Jew of Venice (1701)*
PROLOGUE.
The Ghosts of Shakespear and Dryden arise Crown'd with Lawrel.
Written by Bevill Higgons, Esq; Prologue.

Dry.
This radiant Circle, reverend Shakespear, view;
An Audience only to thy Buskin due.

Shakes.
A Scene so noble, antient Greece ne'er saw,

Nor Pompey's Dome, when Rome the World gave Law.
I feel at once both Wonder and Delight,
By Beauty warm'd, transcendently so bright,
Well, Dryden, might'st thou sing; well may these Hero's fight.

Dryd.
With all the outward Lustre, which you find,
They want the nobler Beauties of the Mind.
Their sickly Judgments, what is just, refuse,
And French Grimace, Buffoons, and Mimicks choose;
Our Scenes desert, some wretched Farce to see;
They know not Nature, for they tast not Thee.

Shakes.
Whose stupid Souls thy Passion cannot move,
Are deaf indeed to Nature and to Love.
When thy Ægyptian weeps, what Eyes are dry!
Or who can live to see thy Roman dye.

Dryd.
Thro' Perspectives revers'd they Nature view,
Which give the Passions Images, not true.
Strephon for Strephon sighs; and Sapho dies,
Shot to the Soul by brighter Sapho's Eyes:
No Wonder then their wand'ring Passions roam,
And feel not Nature, whom th'have overcome.
For shame let genal Love prevail agen,
You Beaux Love Ladies, and you Ladies Men.

Shakes.
These Crimes unknown, in our less polisht Age,
New seem above Correction of the Stage;
Less Heinous Faults, our Justice does pursue;
To day we punish a Stock-jobbing Jew.
A piece of, Justice, terrible and strange;
Which, if pursu'd, would make a thin Exchange.
The Law's Defect, the juster Muse supplies,
Tis only we, can make you Good or Wise,
Whom Heav'n spares, the Poet will Chastise.
These Scenes in their rough Native Dress were mine;
But now improv'd with nobler Lustre shine;
The first rude Sketches Shakespear's Pencil drew,
But all the shining Master stroaks are new.
This Play, ye Criticks, shall your Fury stand,
Adorn'd and rescu'd by a faultless Hand.

Dryd.
I long endeavour'd to support thy Stage,
With the faint Copies of thy Nobler Rage,
But toyl'd in vain for an Ungenerous Age.
They starv'd me living; nay, deny'd me Fame,
And scarce now dead, do Justice to my Name.
Wou'd you repent? Be to my Ashes kind,
Indulge the Pledges I have left behind.

Claudia Corti

Joyce's Myriadminded Ghosts

1. Is 'Ulysses' a Ghost Story?

> We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves. The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly (He gave us light first and the sun two days later), the lord of things as they are whom the most Roman of catholics call dio boia, hangman god, is doubtless all in all of us, ostler and butcher, and would be bawd and cuckold too but that in the economy of heaven, foretold by Hamlet, there are no more marriages, glorified man, an androgynous angel, being a wife unto himself.[1]

This famous passage from the "Scylla and Charybdis" chapter of *Ulysses*, in which Stephen Dedalus discusses Shakespeare in "whirling words", goes immediately to the heart of the matter. The "economy of heaven" is the richness of the unconscious in which all the dimensions of the human self – both male and female, whether present, past, or future – operate independently, making it the greatest source of creative power, and giving the artist who draws on it the unique capacity of becoming the "androgynous angel". "What is a ghost? Stephen said with tingling energy. One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners" (*U*, 154). According to him, anyone living out of time is properly a ghost. That is why John Eglinton, in the library episode, can reduce both the complexities of *Hamlet* and those of Stephen's presumptuous Shakespeare theory to a banal ghost story: "He will have that *Hamlet* is a ghoststory" (Ibid.). Fundamental to this understanding of the ghost is the idea that the spectre does not need to have died before returning in spectral form. Throughout *Ulysses* the borders between life and death are undifferentiated, and the living and the dead indistinguishably haunt streets and houses. It is the sense of claustrophobia that affects all – not only Stephen's – characters, it is the incessant return of the past and its dominance over the present, it is that sort of "terror" that relies upon the inner, deepest sources of memory and history, that makes *Ulysses* – just as *Hamlet* is – a *credible* ghost story.[2] Despite some few theoretical ingenuities, Shari Benstock's seminal essay on this subject still retains its critically intuitive contemporaneity, when she maintains that:

[1] James Joyce, *Ulysses. The Corrected Text*, ed. by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (London: Penguin-The Bodley Head, 1986), 175. Hereafter cited as *U*.

[2] See Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace, eds., *Gothic Modernisms* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), *passim*.

> Whatever might interest Stephen Dedalus about *Hamlet* (e.g. Shakespeare's treatment of the fatherhood and infidelity themes or the possible biographical elements of the play), and whether or not we agree that the theory is essentially implausible and illogical, it is the multivalent nature of the ghoststory element in the play which provides for Stephen the instrument of his intellectual virtuosity.[3]

[3] Shari Benstock, "*Ulysses* as Ghoststory", *James Joyce Quarterly* 12 (1975), 396.

Stephen's ghost story, however, has a happy ending, at least for the history of literature: deprived of his virility before its actuality, nonetheless Shakespeare created a supreme dramatic art out of his own incertitude and bewilderment. Writing *Hamlet*, he felt himself "the father of all his race" (*U*, 171). Asked if he believes in his own theory, Stephen promptly says no (*U*, 175), but he belies a painful ambivalence between belief and disbelief, wavering as he is within his inner Scylla and Charybdis. Even though he does not credit the Shakespeare he has invented, Stephen needs all the same to fit Shakespeare to his own literary strategy and aesthetic ambition. And – as we shall see – his ghost story is soaked in his own fears and in his own phantasms. Like Hamlet, Stephen, desperate with imagination, almost approaches madness, the "general paralysis of the insane", as Mulligan warns him (*U*, 6); yet, his strained Shakespearean argument is meant to baffle his intellectual enemies, while he waits to decide his own destiny either in artistic creation or existential revenge.

2. Dialectical Ghosts

Before entering the underworld of Stephen's ghost theory, it may be useful to consider two modern critical approaches that both summon up Shakespeare while involving memory ghosts and apparitions from the past. I am thinking of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. Like Joyce, the German thinker sees the history of the western world as terrifying, and both utilise aesthetic and theological structures to articulate an appropriation of the past which is capable of remoulding the present. Benjamin's famous *Theses on the Philosophy of History* present us with a dialectical reformulation of history that contemplates both a *destruens* and a *construens* part: while he violently criticises the past, he endeavours to recover its oppressed elements and censured discourses: "Like every generation that precedes us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. This claim cannot be settled cheaply".[4] Benjamin defines his speculative method "dialectics at a standstill", which seems to me the most appropriate description of Stephen's mind as suspended over the whirlpool of Scylla and Charybdis. In the present of the delivering of his ambitious theory, Stephen's weak Messianism allows him to construe the past of Shakespeare's life in a process of simultaneously discarding and redeeming. The phantasmal

[4] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", in *Illuminations,* ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zorn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 254.

reincarnation of the Bard's existential events operated by Stephen in the National Library constitutes a *Jetztzeit*, or a moment of realization in which past time "is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now".[5]

[5] Ibid., 261.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida directly invokes the ghost of Hamlet's murdered father as his paradigm of a spectral subject destined to haunt future generations, by disrupting linear conceptions of history, and reminding us that time, any time, is out of joint. Derrida's call for a new *hauntology*, a "logic of haunting" that would be more powerful than an ontology of being, seems particularly apt to a perusal of Shakespeare's haunting presence in *Ulysses*. Derrida thinks that a spectre claims some sort of possession of us, making us "feel ourselves looked at by it … even before and beyond any look on our part".[6] As a representative of past time, the ghost invites us to question the reassuring argumentative schemes by which we manage to cope with history. When phantoms appear in literature, generally they reveal tales that had been elided, or give grave warnings that speak of the betrayed, the restless, the injured. As the spectral residue of mortified flesh, they bear in their formlessness the imprints of past lives: "the name of the one who disappeared must have gotten inscribed someplace else".[7]

[6] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 7.

[7] Ibid., 5.

Ulysses is full of spectres, either in a proper or a metaphorical sense. Both Stephen and Bloom are visited by spectral forms, and talk of spirits throughout the whole book. Some of these spirits are exorcised, while other shadows remain, despite the living characters' efforts to push them out. Spectral presences are often connected with apprehensiveness about textual authority, intellectual legitimacy, and the equivocal function of tradition. It is peculiarly suggestive that *Ulysses* came out under the imprimatur of the "Shakespeare and Company" bookstore run in Paris by Sylvia Beach, implicitly signalling both some sort of family connection and an act of usurpation of the father's name on the part of the son. When references to Shakespeare and to ghosts appear together, and more so when Shakespeare himself comes to the fore as a phantom-like, *revenant* presence, textual and existential anxieties manifest themselves most persistently. To be sure, the most pervasive and also the most multivalent and "'consubstantial' presence in this novel is William Shakespeare as the shadow of Hamlet's father.

3. The Ghost of the Unquiet Father

The *Hamlet* theory is mockingly announced by Buck Mulligan in the morning: "He proves by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father …. O, shade of Kinch the elder! Japhet in search of a father"! (*U*, 15). At two o'clock

Stephen is in the director's office of the National Library, together with A. E. (the poet George Russell), John Eglinton (the essayist William Magee), and "the Quaker librarian", T. W. Lister. Invited to proffer his theory, Stephen obliges, and proceeds with a question that will entirely structure his argument: "Who is the ghost from *limbo patrum*, returning to the world that has forgotten him? Who is King Hamlet?" (*U*, 154). He pictures a performance of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare's company at the Globe. In Act I enters the Ghost, embodied by Shakespeare himself, who while speaking to Hamlet (embodied by Richard Burbage) also addresses his own son, Hamnet, who died at the age of eleven:

> The play begins. A player comes on under the shadow, made up in the castoff mail of a court buck, a wellset man with a bass voice. It is the ghost, the king, a king, no king, and the player is Shakespeare who has studied *Hamlet* all the years of his life which were not vanity in order to play the part of the spectre. He speaks the words to Burbage, the young player who stands before him beyond the rack of cerecloth, calling him by name: *Hamlet, I am thy father's spirit*, bidding him list. To a son he speaks, the son of his soul, the prince, young Hamlet and to the son of his body, Hamnet Shakespeare, who has died in Stratford that his namesake may live for ever. (*U*, 155)

Shakespeare, identifying himself with the murdered father, tells Hamnet/Hamlet that he is the "dispossessed son", and that his mother Ann is the guilty queen (*U*, 155).

Russell protests against this use of literature as a means of conjectural prying into the lives of authors. Eglinton repeats the traditional critical estimate of Ann Hathaway as a figure of little significance in the life of Shakespeare the writer. Stephen replies that she was his first mistress, the mother of his children, and his death mourner. Eglinton objects that he made a great mistake in marrying her, and then got out of it by running away from Stratford to London. Conversely, Stephen's view is that "a man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery" (*U*, 156). Later on, Eglinton says that Shakespeare is an enigma, Mr. Best (another librarian) asserts that *Hamlet* is a deeply personal document, and Eglinton again maintains that Shakespeare identifies himself with prince Hamlet: it is a challenge to Stephen, who continues his argumentation. Shakespeare was seduced by Ann Hathaway; his actual experience of love was that of an eighteen-year-old boy taken by a determined woman of twenty-six. Sexually wounded and spiritually killed by an 'old' woman, Shakespeare becomes the ghost of an erotically murdered man, not knowing what it is that has destroyed him, except by a divinely prophetic insight such as he reveals in the plays. Obsessed throughout his life as an artist, from the time of Tarquin's rape of Lucrece to that of Iachimo's aborted rape of Imogen, with a dream of masterful

ravishing which he is never able to realise, he journeys through the stage-world like a ghost, a shadow, whose living self will be substantially made known only in his progeny: the poet Shakespeare to be made known only in his plays, Shakespeare the man to be made known only in the "unliving" son Hamnet (*U,* 161-2). It is precisely for this laceration that Shakespeare identifies himself with King Hamlet: "He is a ghost, a shadow now, the wind by Elsinore's rocks or what you will, the sea's voice, a voice heard only in the heart of him who is the substance of his shadow, the son consubstantial with the father" (*U*, 162). Deprived of the bodily son who might have been the recipient of his wisdom, Shakespeare sought to externalise and exorcise his obsession through art. Nevertheless, Stephen's psychoanalytic stance is not so naïve as to make him think that the imperfections of an artist's life are totally overcome in his artistic production. Stephen remarks that Shakespeare's psychological wound was never completely healed. Although there is a sense of reconciliation in the last plays, where weary and suffering old men find comfort in their daughters – Marina, Perdita, Miranda – just as Shakespeare found solace in his only and loved grandchild – the daughter of his elder daughter Susanna – Stephen's Shakespeare dies still unsatisfied (*U*, 160).

The most revealing element in Stephen's dialectics is the emergence of Joyce's 'ghost' of fatherhood, propelled by his inner image of the betrayed, assassinated king Hamlet. He (Stephen or Joyce?) argues that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* immediately after his own father's death. He claims that it is absurd to identify the author, aged twenty-five, father of two marriageable daughters, wise and mature in experience, with the young undergraduate prince, and his seventy-old mother with the passionate queen. No, Shakespeare cannot be the son in the play, because he is fatherless; old John Shakespeare is securely at rest, he is not an unquiet father:

> No. The corpse of John Shakespeare does not walk by night. From hour to hour it rots and rots. He rests, disarmed of fatherhood, having devised that mystical estate upon his son. Boccaccio's Calandrino was the first and last man who felt himself with child. (*U*, 170)

Stephen formulates his doctrine of fatherhood in simultaneously strict and passionate terms. There is no such thing as an act of conscious begetting in which a man knows himself as a father. Rather, fatherhood is a "mystical estate, an apostolic succession" handed over from "only begetter to only begotten". This is the most authentic mystery on which Christianity is founded. Mother's love is grounded in an evident physical relationship – "*amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life" – but the mystery of paternity establishes a son's allegiance on incertitude; thus "a father is a necessary evil" (*U*, 170). Not only this; father and son are separated

by a permanent sense of bodily shame, both knowing that their relationship uniquely comes from the brutal sexual act in which conception took place: "What links them in nature? An instant of blind rut" (*U,* 171). Coherently enough, the son is the father's enemy, a rival to his virility, growing to manhood by his decline (*U,* 170). The Sabellian heresy, which proclaims the absolute identity of Father and Son, is therefore particularly hostile to Stephen (as it was to Aquinas), because, applied to his own case, it predicts the failure of the son to become dissociated – that is emancipated – from the fatherly figure. Stephen's insistence that John Shakespeare cannot walk like king Hamlet's ghost is a heavy statement of liberty from the fatherly past. This apparent contradiction between the persistence of the past advocated by the ghost theory and its rejection, implied in the paternity question, is partly solved by a train of thought on identification of the self, which anticipates the conclusion of the theory itself: "Molecules all change. I am other I now … But I, entelechy, form of forms, am I by memory because under everchanging forms … I, I and I. I" (*U,* 156). This concern with a perdurable self, as opposed to a succession of transient selves, states in different terms the relation which is at the basis of the Shakespeare theory, that is the relationship between the past which persists and the past which is left behind. Such a relationship foregrounds Stephen's expectancies, expressed in the most crucial passage of the chapter:

> As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies, Stephen said, from day to day, their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image. And as the mole on my right breast is where it was when I was born, though all my body has been woven of new stuff time after time, so through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth … So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now by the reflection from that which then I shall be. (*U,* 160)

Stephen's theory also comprises Derridean spectres of textual legitimacy. Commenting on some of the alternate authorship suppositions that have identified the *real author* of the Shakespearean canon (as, variously, the earl of Rutland, Francis Bacon, or the earl of Southampton), he tries to exorcise his *angst* of paternity by proposing that a powerful son can, after all, metaphorically give birth to his own father:

> When Rutlandbaconsouthamptonshakespeare or another poet of the same name in the comedy of errors wrote *Hamlet* he was not the father of his own son merely but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson who, by the same token, never was born. (*U,* 171)

In the "Circe" chapter, in effect, Stephen momentarily becomes the ghost of his own father, that is the shadow of his literary ancestor, when

he and Leopold Bloom, another surrogate 'father', gaze together into a 'mirror up to nature and behold, instead of their respective faces, Shakespeare's lineaments: "[Stage direction] *Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis*" (*U,* 463). In the library nonetheless, Stephen poses as the knowing, usurping son not only of the Bard but also, *via* allusions, appropriations and parodies, of many real-life Shakespearean speculators. These being, in succession: Georg Brandes and Sidney Lee (*U,* 160), from whose popular biographies Joyce took a great deal of information about Shakespeare's family life. Frank Harris, author of an erotic biography entitled *The Man Shakespeare*, and G. B. Shaw, author of the play *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* (*U,* 161). Edward Vining, who proposed in *The Mystery of Hamlet* that the Danish prince was a woman; Judge D. P. Barton, writer of an essay on the links between Shakespeare and Ireland; and Oscar Wilde, who in the novella *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* advanced the hypothesis that the sonnets had been composed for a man named Willie Hughes (*U,* 163). Then Edward Dowden, a distinguished professor of Trinity, author of widely read books on Shakespeare (*U,* 168). And finally Karl Bleibtreu, a notorious proponent of the Rutland theory (*U,* 176).

But, to go back to *Stephen*'s no less farfetched Shakespeare theory: why does Shakespeare/Ghost tell Hamnet/Hamlet that his mother Ann, so as to say his own ravishing mistress, "the greyeyed goddess who bends over the boy Adonis, stooping to conquer" (*U,* 157), 'is' Queen Gertrude? Here comes another obsession, a further mental phantom that haunts Shakespeare, King Hamlet's spectre, and of course Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, Richard Rowan (the protagonist of his play *Exiles*), the whole company of Joyce's authorial masks.[8] This mental phantom is the tormenting fear of woman's betrayal. Their image of the Great Mother, like Hamlet's image of Gertrude and of all women, is a sullied one: "Eve. Naked wheatbellied sin" (*U,* 163). Stephen's case is that Ann was unfaithful to Shakespeare with his own brothers, and his plays show him to have been psychically possessed by the idea of the wife's unfaithfulness, *Hamlet* most notably, where in the fifth scene he "branded her with infamy": "Two deeds are rank in the ghost's mind: a broken vow and the dullbrained yokel on whom her favour has inclined, deceased husband's brother" (*U,* 166). According to Stephen, the names of the betraying brothers, Richard and Edmund, are inscribed as the names of the blackest villains in the Shakespearean canon: Richard III and *King Lear*'s Edmund (*U,* 172). Hamlet, in Stephen's view, is not so much haunted by the image of his dead father as he is by the image of his living mother. While Stephen himself is equally haunted by both the ghost of the father and the ghost of the mother.

[8] See my *'Esuli': dramma, psicodramma, metadramma* (Pisa: Pacini, 2006).

4. The Ghost of the Emaciated Mother

The most threatening ghost, in *Ulysses*, is undoubtedly the spectre of Stephen's mother, as innumerable critics have remarked.[9] In "Proteus", after meditating on Eve's womb, he switches to his own mother's womb, and the coitus during which he was conceived. "Made, not begotten" – he reflects (*U,* 32), lacking as he does any sense of fatherhood except as a meaningless physical coincidence – "the man with my voice and my eyes" (*U,* 32) – and because his mother has now become a "ghost-woman" inhabiting his dreams, as well as invading his thoughts even when he is intellectually speculating on Shakespeare's wife at her husband's death bed: "Mother's deathbed. Candle. The sheeted mirror. Who brought me into this world lies there, bronzelidded, under few cheap flowers. *Liliata rutilantium*" (*U,* 156). If he is persecuted by the phantom of his sense of guilt, in having refused to pray and take the Eucharist, on her demand, at her death bed, he is nonetheless actually haunted, in his thoughts and visions, dreams or hallucinations, by the phantasmagorical figure of the *revenant* genetrix, who returns to chastise him about his failures of filial devotion and transgression of religious-political imperatives. "Ravisher and ravished" (*U,* 162) – by Ann Hathaway – but also betrayer – of his mother's social and religious expectations – and betrayed – by his mother's precocious death – Stephen confronts in May Dedalus, as Hamlet does in Gertrude, a frightening female figure: a mother/mistress compounded image that agitates his mental and psychic structure.

The maternal theme is also introduced by some of the usual rebukes by Mulligan:

> The aunt thinks you killed your mother, he said. That's why she won't let me have anything to do with you.
> Someone killed her, Stephen said gloomily.
> You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you, Buck Mulligan said. I'm hyperborean as much as you. But to think of your mother begging you with her last breath to kneel down and pray for her. And you refused. There is something sinister in you. (*U,* 5)

And soon after, when Stephen refuses to borrow a pair of his friend's pants, he adds: "Etiquette is etiquette. He kills his mother but he can't wear grey trousers" (*U,* 5).

At the beginning, in "Telemachus", May's ghost comes in his visions quietly, "silently", although terribly "reproachful", desperate in still trying to win over her son's will:

> Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood,

[9] Among many others, James Maddox, *Joyce's 'Ulysses' and the Assault upon Characters* (Hassox: Harvester Press, 1978), and Jeffrey Weinstock, "The Disappointed Bridge: Textual Hauntings in Joyce's *Ulysses*", *Journal of the Phantastic in the Arts* 8 (1977), 347-369, have given remarkable views of the Stephen/Mother relationship.

> her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes. (*U,* 5)

And later on:

> Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul. On me alone. The ghostcandle to light her agony. Ghostly light on the tortured face. Her hoarse loud breath rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees. Her eyes on me to strike me now. *Liliata rutilantium te confessorum turma circumdet: iubilantium te virginum chorus excipiat.* (*U* 9)

She comes in by bodily, intensely 'physical' appearance, although she smells of ghostly candles and funeral ashes. So penetrating is her presence that, in Stephen's mind, a chain of extrinsic associations immediately starts, each related to a complete sensory dimension that goes from the visual to the auditory to the olfactory to the tactile:

> Her secrets: old featherfans, tasselled dancecards, powered with musk, a gaud of amber beads in her locked drawer. A birdcage hung in the sunny window of her house when she was a girl. She heard old Royce sing in the pantomime of *Turko the Terrible* and laughed with others when he sang: *I am the boy/ That can enjoy/ Invisibility.* Phantasmal mirth, folded away: muskperfurmed. *And no more turn aside and brood.* Folded away in the memory of nature with her toys. Memory beset his brooding brain. Her glass of water from the kitchen tap when she had approached the sacrament. A cored apple, filled with brown sugar, roasting for her at the hob on a dark autumn evening. Her shapely fingernails reddened by the blood of squashed lice from the children's shirts. (*U,* 8-9)

The mother's spectre's physicality both repels and attracts the son, her *revenant* image being a complex co-figuration of simultaneous decomposition and sexuality: "Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here. O, touch me soon, now. What is that word known to all men? I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me" (*U,* 41). Precisely this ambiguous amalgam of disgust and desire leads Stephen to transfer his mother's apparition onto a vampire, a cannibal ghost who has come to devour him: "Ghoul! Chewer of corpses! No, mother, let me be and let me live" (*U,* 9). Certainly, the phrase *chewer of corpses* could be related to Stephen himself, who derives some sort of perverse pleasure from mentally visiting and revisiting the scene of his mother's death. But in "Circe", this possible ambiguity will be completely cleared up. In Bella's brothel, in the course of his *Walpurgisnacht* – in search of both an ideal father (Bloom) and his own recondite self – Stephen undergoes a further awfully physical as well as bodily corrupt vision of his mother:

> [Stage direction] (*Stephen's mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor, in leper grey with a wreath of faded orangeblossoms and a torn bridal veil, her*

> *face worn and noseless. Green with gravemould. Her hair is scant and lank. She fixes her bluecircled hollow eyesockets on Stephen and opens her toothless mouth uttering a silent word. A choir of virgins and confessors sing voicelessly*).
> THE CHOIR: Liliata rutilantium te confessorum …
> Iubilantium te virginum … (*U,* 473)

The mother speaks to Stephen in words that evoke the Ghost's address to Hamlet: "I was once the beautiful May Goulding. I am dead" (*U,* 473). It is at this point that Stephen, "horrorstruck", clarifies who the vampire actually is – himself or his mother? – crying to the phantom: "Lemur, who are you? No. What bogeyman's trick is this?" (*U,* 473). Nevertheless, Stephen too feels like a lemur, both in his sense of guilt for having 'killed' his mother, and for having drawn life and sustenance from her body: "She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own …. With her weak blood and wheysour milk she had fed him" (*U,* 8).

The mother, in being flesh, body, sensuality is always associated with liquids; not only blood, milk, water, but also the terrible bile flowing from her mouth in the last days of her cancer illness: "A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting" (*U,* 5). In "Circe" too her ghost appears with "*a green rill of bile trickling from a side of her mouth*" (*U,* 474). As woman, love, nature, the mother is also related to the sea and its movements: "A tide westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, *oinopa ponton*, a winedark sea" (*U,* 40). And again the mother/sea is linked to May's deathly vomit: "Across the threadbare cuffedge he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid" (*U,* 5); "A cloud began to cover the sun slowly, wholly, shadowing the bay in deeper green. It lay beneath him, a bowl of bitter waters … She was crying in her wretched bed" (*U,* 8). The Irish sea is 'green' like May's bile. As Jean-Michel Rabaté has convincingly argued, by glowing in the dark, ghosts illustrate the peculiar connection between a disturbing presence and certain colours, and especially green (which is not a primary colour) metonymically functions as a signal for a lost or absent existence.[10]

The fluid/liquid metaphorical system that Joyce arranges around the dead mother's image also comprises the *moon*, the agent of both sea transformations and the cyclic natural progression – destined anyway to death – signified by menstruation:

> A tide westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, *oinopa ponton*, a winedark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled. *Omnis caro ad te veniet.* (*U,* 40).

[10] Jean-Michel Rabaté, *The Ghosts of Modernity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), passim.

But, whose *caro*, whose flesh, is Stephen thinking about? Which flesh goes to whom? Is the mother's dead body tormentingly coming to the living son, or is it the son who obsessively goes visiting the mother's body, desperately trying to absorb her dead life, lemur-like, giving way to repressed incestuous desires? Indeed, "He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails blooding the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss" (*U,* 40). The vampire's kiss, added to Stephen's desire to be touched by his mother – as we have seen before – casts him in the role of the melancholy Danish prince, as the reference to Hamlet in the same context makes clear: "A side eye at my Hamlet hat. If I were suddenly naked here as I sit?" (*U,* 40). The vampire is an image of death-in-life, which transmits the idea of Stephen giving in to his sexual attraction towards his mother, demanding of her the kiss of death.

5. The Ghost of the Changeling Son

Not only Stephen is haunted by ghosts. Leopold Bloom as well has his visits from the world of the dead. Bloom, just like Dedalus, must pass through the phantasmagorical apocalypse of the unconscious. His wild, imaginary drama extends itself along the play which occupies the most difficult chapter of *Ulysses*, namely the "Circe" section. And I find it extremely significant that when Joyce, the greatest twentieth century novelist, had to describe the unconscious, he felt he had to turn to the dramatic form, in order to represent the multifaceted, elusive, and metamorphic structure of the human psyche, whose urgency and immediateness tend to bypass the reflexive narrative order.

In Nighttown – Dublin's red-lights district – *Ulysses*' two complementary agonists confront their own repressed fears, anxieties, and wishes, but also a collective human compound of dreams and fantasies. In the climax of the chapter, Stephen finally rejects his mother's dominance over his mind, and synchronically finds in Bloom a surrogate of the father figure, during a psychodrama that breaks down any traditional boundary between fiction and reality, as well as any difference between man and woman. Bloom encounters his repressed past, coping with his deep sense of anguish for the memory of his father. Moreover, he undergoes the experience of a fundamental 'androgyny', along with a full realization of the way in which his sexual separation from his wife Molly has forced him to concur in her love affair with Boylan. He will be able to incorporate his painful phantoms within himself, thus becoming a momentarily symbolic father to Stephen.

The ghost of his son Rudy is one of the most important presences hovering over Bloom's life (and the text as well). Leopold's sexual abstinence with Molly dates back to Rudy's death, signalling his fear of having and losing another child. Although Rudy's shadow continuously

flutters in Bloom's thoughts, only in "Circe" is he granted the privilege of a vision of his son, who has aged as if naturally, being now, exactly like Hamnet Shakespeare, eleven years old. Contrasted with Stephen's vision of his dead mother in the same episode, Bloom's phantasm is, if not cheerful, at least quiet. Bloom, who has just played the role of the father with drunken, distracted Stephen, has a vision which seems to suggest that he may be eventually able to overcome the trauma of his child's death. Rudy appears smiling over, reading, and kissing a book. As the book is being read from right to left, it is a Hebrew volume, thus relating Rudy to the ghosts of Bloom's childhood and his renegade Judaism:

> [Stage direction] *Against the dark wall a figure appears slowly, a fairy boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his hand. He reads from right to left inaudibly, smiling, kissing the page.*
> BLOOM (*wonderstruck, calls inaudibly*): Rudy!
> RUDY *gazes, unseeing, into Bloom's eyes and goes on reading, kissing, smiling. He has a delicate mauve face. On his suit he has diamonds and ruby buttons. In his free left hand he holds a slim ivory cane with a violet bowknot. A white lambkin peeps out of his waistcoat pocket.* (*U*, 497).

Rudy's ghost, which appears at the very end of the episode, is linked to the ghost of Bloom's father, Rudolph, which comes to the fore at the start of the hallucinatory drama:

> [Stage direction] *A stooped bearded figure appears garbed in the long caftan of an elder in Zion and a smokingcap with magenta tassels. Horned spectacles hang down at the wings of the nose. Yellow poison streaks are on the drawn face.* (*U*, 357)

The ghost speaks in typical Jewish English, also playing the stereotypical role of the Jewish miser:

> RUDOLPH: Second halfcrown waste money today. I told you not go with drunken goy ever. So you catch no money …. What you making down this place? Have you no soul? (with feeble vulture talons he feels the silent face of Bloom) Are you not my son Leopold, the grandson of Leopold? Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers Abraham and Jacob? (*U,* 357)

It is worth noticing that Bloom's father was a suicide. This paradigm evokes the hubristic challenge to God to upset his rational schemes; in this way he appears as a ghost of particular unrest and consequently of threatening strength. Nonetheless Bloom seems not to be as troubled by his father's phantom as he will be by his son's shadow. The warning fatherly ghost is calmly dismissed in Bloom's descent into Nighttown, his own private *Walpurgisnacht*. Either for his permanent fear of coping with

anxiety-producing matters, or for his adherence to the material, physical world, he gives himself over to sensual events as a means of escaping the deep traumas of his past and present existence. He lives by psychological shortcuts, like crossing streets in order not to meet his wife's lover, or continuously forcing himself not to think of Molly's behaviour in bed with someone else: as soon as any repressed thought explodes in his mind, he energetically changes the subject, so as not to deal with the uncomfortable contents of his conscious life. It is his subconscious, as expressed in "Circe", that gives him opportunities of rescue and revenge, through a personal metamorphosis created in the deepest strata of his brain.

The first phantasmagorical change of essence concerns his hidden androgyny. A medical examination establishes that "Professor Bloom is a finished example of the new womanly man" and that "he is about to have a baby" (*U,* 403), thus contradicting Stephen's view in "Scylla and Charybdis" according to which "Calandrino was the first and last man who felt himself with child" (*U,* 170). The female, Molly, previously suppressed in his conscious mind, now reappears within Bloom himself. Soon after his gorgeous deliverance – "*Bloom … bears eight male yellow and white children*" (*U,* 403*)* – a mysterious "Voice" asks: "Bloom, are you the Messiah ben Joseph or ben David?" (*U,* 403). This complex amalgam of female and Jewish details clarifies Bloom's confused conception of himself. Indeed, the end of the hallucination presents him enthusiastically accepting his social defeat as "Messiah", that is the frustration of his idealized self-image. Rubbing his hands cheerfully (stage direction), he says: "Just like old times. Poor Bloom" (*U,* 406), at which point a further father-like phantom appears, who again summons up the idea of the son's death: "[Stage direction] *Reuben J Dodd, blackbearded Iscariot, bad shepherd, bearing on his shoulders the drowned corpse of his son, approaches the pillory*" (*U,* 406).

Apart from Rudy's death, Bloom's most painful obsession is his father's suicide – a desperate reaction to Ellen Higgins Bloom's premature departure – which causes in him the recondite desire to follow his example:

> Let me be going now, woman of the house, for by all the goats in Connemara I'm after having the father and mother of a bating. (*with a tear in his eye*) All insanity. Patriotism. Sorrow for the dead, music, future of the race. To be or not to be. Life's dream is o'er. End it peacefully. They can live on. (*he gazes far away mournfully*) I am ruined. A few pastilles of aconite. The blinds drawn. A letter. Then lie back to rest. (*he breathes softly*) No more. I have lived. Fare. Farewell. (*U,* 407)

It is only when Bloom sees Zoe, the prostitute, a still-living female, that he recovers his moral strength. Together they enter Bella's brothel, where Bloom is going to encounter the temptations of the flesh: "[Stage direction] *Bloom stands, smiling desirously, twirling his thumbs*" (*U,* 417).

Unfortunately, a new hallucination dismisses his mirth. The warning shadow of Lipoti Virag, Bloom's grandfather, enters the scene:

> [Stage direction] *Lipoti Virag, basilicogrammate, chutes rapidly down through the chimneyflue and struts two steps to the left on gawky pink stilts. He is sausaged into several overcoats and wears a brown macintosh under which he holds a roll of parchment. In his left eye flashes the monocle of Cashel Boyle O'Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell. On his head is perched an Egyptian pshent. Two quills project over his ears.* (*U,* 417).

Lipoti Virag's dramatic (as well as humorous) function is that of chastising his grandnephew's lively sexuality and helping him to resist the temptation of flesh signified by the prostitute:

> Promiscuous nakedness is much in evidence hereabouts, eh? …. Correct me but I always understood that the act so performed by skittish humans with glimpses of lingerie appealed to you in virtue of its exhibitionististicicity …. Obviously mammal in weight of bosom you remark that she has in front well to the fore two protuberances of very respectable dimensions, inclined to fall in the noonday soupplate, while on her rere lower down are two additional protuberances, suggestive of potent rectum and tumescent for palpation, which leave nothing to be desired save compactness. (*U,* 417-418)

The phantom's second function is to solicit Bloom to remember his past, his family, his race, thus avoiding the immediate problems of the present: "Stop twirling your thumbs and have a good old thunk. See, you have forgotten. Exercise your mnemotechnic. *La causa è santa.* Tara. Tara. (*aside*) He will surely remember" (*U,* 419). The counterpoint to Virag, a ghost from the past, is Henry Flower, Bloom's alter ego in the present, whose image materialises momentarily chasing Lipoti away. "There is a flower that bloometh" (*U,* 422). Henry Flower is Leopold Bloom's pseudonym in his letters to an idealised fiancée, Martha. Contrasting "Virag truculent", Henry is "gallant", as well as beautiful like a traditional picture of Christ : "*He has the romantic Saviour's face with flowing locks, thin beard and moustache*"; he is sweet, flirtatious: "(*caressing on his breast a severed female head, murmurs*) Thine heart, mine love" (*U,* 422, 426). Immediately Virag returns, and before saying goodbye, counterbalances Henry's female head by unscrewing his own and putting it under his arm. Then the two complementary Bloomean figures simultaneously disappear: "*exeunt severally*" (*U,* 426).

The Virag sequence is a sort of comic *entr'acte* before the most complex of Bloom's several hallucinations, that of the hermaphroditic owner of the brothel, Bella/Bello Cohen, the figure of a virile woman on to which he projects his hidden desire to be dominated and physically punished by the female. Bloom's first reaction to Bella's entrance is self-abasement and defeat: "Exuberant female. Enormously I desiderate your domination. I

am exhausted, abandoned" (*U,* 430). A modern Circe, she transforms Bloom into ever and ever degrading animal forms, from "sheep" to "cow", to suggest his typical sentiment of fear. Her power is overwhelming because her form summarises the deep content of all his *phantasmata*, that is his need to avoid action and retire from strife. On her command he becomes womanly again, not to give birth now, but to adopt a subjected and masochistic stance. As womanly man, Bloom at once sees only the male side of the "massive whoremistress", and Bella comes over as Bello, who exercises total power on him, and gradually transforms his female nature into a sow:

> BELLO: Down! (*he taps her on the shoulder with his fan*) Incline feet forward! Slide left foot one pace back! You will fall. You are falling. On the hands down!
> BLOOM: (*her eyes upturned in the sign of admiration, closing, yaps*) Truffles! (*With a piercing epileptic cry she sinks on all fours, grunting, snuffling, rooting at his feet: then lies, shamming dead, with eyes shut tight, trembling eyelids, bowed upon the ground in the attitude of most excellent master*). (*U,* 433)

The theme of falling, which permeates the entire chapter, is particularly relevant in this bestial context. Bloom's fall is not a *felix culpa*, is not a pattern of defeat and redemption, but only one of progressive, indisputable degradation. As the hallucination mounts to its climax, Bella/Bello provokes in Bloom the ever increasing thought of Molly's infidelity. For a moment he envisages the possibility of a reunion: "To drive me mad! Moll! I forgot! Forgive! Moll… We… Still…" (*U,* 442), but Bella/Bello implacably argues that no return to the past is possible, there is no Molly prior to Rudy's death: "No, Leopold Bloom, all is changed by woman's will since you slept horizontal in Sleepy Hollow your night of twenty yeas. Return and see" (*U,* 442). Instead of Molly he sees a young woman "breaking from the arms of her lover", whom he does not promptly recognise as his own daughter: "BELLO (*laughs mockingly*) That's your daughter, you owl, with a Mullingar student" (Ibid.). Milly, who partially resembles her mother, again frustrates Bloom's desire to go back to the past: "It's Paply! But, O Paply, how old you've grown" (*U,* 442).

Bello goes on ridiculing Bloom about his need of recovering the dead past: "Die and be damned to you if you have any sense of decency or grace about you. I can give you a rare old wine that'll send you skipping to hell and back. Sign a will and leave us any coin you have!", thus mimicking Circe's instructions to enter and re-emerge from the underworld. In point of fact, Bloom has already passed through his own unconscious, and is now starting a new ascent to actuality (*U,* 443). The sign of his tentative escape from the soul's darkness is the construction of a new figure as an antidote to Bella's dominant female power, the phantom of a kind, delicate, sympathetic nymph:

> THE NYMPH: You bore me away, framed me in oak and tinsel, set me above your marriage couch. Unseen, one summer eve, you kissed me in four places. And with loving pencil you shaded my eyes, my bosom and my shame.
> BLOOM (*humbly kisses her long hair*) Your classic curves, beautiful immortal, I was glad to look on you, to praise you, a thing of beauty, almost to pray. (*U,* 445)

To revenge himself against Bella/Bello, Bloom's mind creates an image of beauty and purity, and yet he does not succeed in governing it. As soon as he approaches this idealized simulacrum, a button bursts in the back of his trousers: "Bip!... O, Leopold lost the pin of his drawers/ He didn't know what to do,/ To keep it up,/ To keep it up" (*U,* 451). Thus reality wins over unreality; the immaculate nymph acquires a moist stain upon her dress, of which she charges Bloom's masculinity: "Sacrilege! To attempt my virtue!... Sully my innocence! You are not fit to touch the garment of a pure woman" (*U,* 451). In response "*she draws a poniard and, clad in the sheathmail of an elected knight of nine, strikes at his loins*" (Ibid.). Bloom succeeds in seizing the hand which holds the castrating knife, but the nymph, now become a statue from the museum, cracks open emitting an odour of living flesh. Nonetheless, Bloom's virility is recovered, and he emerges from this phantasmal experience with new energy and self-control; characteristically, his ability to return to the factual world allows him an escape from the spectres of his unconscious.

* * *

It is important to remember that, in his definition of ghost, Stephen equates the three terms death, absence, change ("one who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change in manners", *U,* 154). Death or absence are nothing more than change or history. This means that the ghost lives in everyone, since every creature is submitted to continuous transformations, while participating in the natural pattern whose end – in both senses of the word – is disappearance, erasure, subtraction. "We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants…" (*U,* 175). This means that we meet ourselves in acting out our lives, in wearing one mask after another, in moving from reality to phantasmagoria, according to a logic – *un*logic? – of interchangeability, confronting the subjective creations of our own consciousness. The face of Shakespeare, the image of the "myriadminded man" which materializes in the mirror where Stephen and Bloom simultaneously look at themselves, thus becomes the paradigm of the interaction between impalpability, death, absence, change (*U,* 168). Stephen's phantasms, and Bloom's hallucinations have shown the limit beyond which neither can go without perhaps the other's help. If Stephen's psychodrama ends with a phantasmagoric sequence of

attempts to escape the Mother, Bloom, motivated by his new paternal feeling for young Dedalus, seems able to reconcile his spectres, precisely like Stephen's Shakespeare, by creating the substitute image of the Son.

APPENDIX

The following images are taken from the website "JoyceImages" (<www.joyceimages.com>) "dedicated to illustrating *Ulysses* using period documents", curated by Aida Yared. They refer to aspects of the novel discussed above. All images © <www.joyceimages.com>, 6 July 2009.

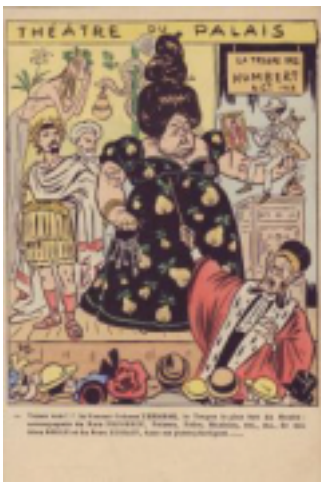
Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway

Hamlet and the Father's Ghost.

The Paternity Theme.

The Nymph

Bloom and a Prostitute



Bloom and Bella/Bello

Rudy/Bloom and Lipoti Virag

Maurizio Calbi

Ghosts, Burgers and Drive-Throughs: Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA* Adapts *Macbeth*

> A traditional scholar does not believe in ghosts – nor in all that could be called the virtual space of spectrality.
> (Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*)
>
> Adaptation … is its own palimpsestic thing.
> (Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*)

In *Specters of Marx* Jacques Derrida takes as his starting point the innumerable translations into French of Hamlet's line "The time is out of joint" to make some general remarks on the idiosyncrasy of what he calls "the signature of the Thing 'Shakespeare'", its uncanny ability "to authorise each one of the translations, to make them possible and intelligible without ever being reducible to them".[1] To Derrida, Shakespearean textuality works as 'spectro-textuality'. It "moves in the manner of a ghost". It is an ensemble of 'indeterminate' and elusive ghostly marks which "*engineers* [s'ingénie] a habitation without proper inhabiting", and is thus always in excess of itself. As a ghostly "Thing" it "inhabits" the translations – and, by extension, the adaptations and appropriations – through which it survives "without residing" (*SM,* 18). Therefore, "Shakespeare" is not the name for a self-contained corpus of works. It is, rather, a locus of spatial and temporal 'dis-location' of marks, 'out of joint' with itself. Like the Ghost/"Thing" in *Hamlet*, which provides, for Derrida, the paradigmatic example of Shakespearean textuality, the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" is never quite where one expects to find it ("'Tis here"; "'Tis here"; "'Tis gone" 1.1.145-7).[2] Moreover, its first time is repetition, its first appearance a coming back: "What, has this thing appear'd *again* tonight?" (1.1.24) (my emphasis). This "Thing" is thus the locus of 'dis-junction' in terms of space and time. As such, it cannot but articulate contradictory performative injunctions and excessive demands. This, in turn, affects what is perhaps too simply called its afterlife.

To approach the subject of this paper more closely, I want to argue that what emerges, more or less explicitly, from Derrida's argument is that adapting "Shakespeare" is a complex form of inheriting. Inheriting, in turn, involves "coming to terms with [*s'expliquer avec*] some spectre" (*SM,* 21). This is not a straightforward matter. Adapting "Shakespeare" (or inheriting from it) is, by definition, being/coming after, but in relation to a "Thing" that not only continually crosses boundaries but also works, as pointed out earlier, in terms of an uncanny spatio-temporal logic. What

[1] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 22. Hereafter cited as *SM.*

[2] All references to *Hamlet* are to the New Arden edition of the play, ed. Harold Jenkins, and are included parenthetically in the text.

does "being/coming after" mean if the present (or the presence) of the ghost are, as Derrida insists, the uncanny coincidence of "repetition *and* first time"? (*SM,* 10). In what sense can the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" be 'rigorously' distinguished from the adaptations to which it gives rise, and which it haunts? One may also want to consider that adapting is a complex form of iteration that retrospectively (re)establishes the "Thing" as what it (already) is, as some studies of Shakespearean adaptations underline, although in slightly different terms.[3]

Whatever the answer to these questions, it should be clear that "coming to terms" with ghosts cannot correspond to a true or faithful rendering of the "Thing". For Derrida, there cannot be a natural, univocal, transparent transmission 'and' reception of a legacy. As he succinctly puts it, "inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task" (*SM,* 54). Haunting is not equivalent to paralysis: "An inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the *injunction* to *reaffirm by choosing*" (*SM,* 16). It is within the theoretical framework provided by Derrida's work on ghosts that I want to situate my reading of *Scotland, PA* (2001), Billy Morrissette's film adaptation of *Macbeth*, a film which unashamedly, and in a postmodern fashion, exhibits its status as adaptation, of being *after* – in more senses than one –Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. By focusing especially on the representation of the witches as emblems of the supernatural, I want to explore how the ghost of *Macbeth* inhabits the film without 'properly' residing; without, that is, being present in the form of the proper meaning of the original. I also want to show the extent to which this adaptation lives up to the task of inheriting what it explicitly sees as the canonical, high-brow and normative legacy of "Shakespeare", by focusing on the multifarious ways in which it creatively and selectively 'counter-signs' (i.e., reaffirms, re-articulates and transforms).[4] At the beginning of *Specters of Marx*, Derrida sombrely announces that one must "learn to live with ghosts" (*SM,* xviii). For *Scotland, PA*, to learn to live with ghosts is tantamount to a parodic evocation and playful incorporation (in all its senses) and displacement of the ghost of *Macbeth*, a ghost, however, which somehow seems to reassert its uncanny power in the second half of the film.

Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA*, first shown at the 2001 Sundance festival, is set in a small town in rural Pennsylvania in the 1970s. Probably taking its cue from the scenes of banqueting and hospitality that appear at crucial turning points in Shakespeare's play, the witches' boiling "cauldron" (4.1.4) that materialises at the beginning of Act four,[5] as well as the many references to animals that prey and are preyed upon, this adaptation creatively literalises appetite, and brings centre-stage the consumption of animals and the serving of food. In Morrissette's film Pat (Maura Tierney) and Joe "Mac" McBeth (James LeGros), along with their close friend Anthony

[3] They usually refer to Derrida's earlier work on mimesis and dissemination. See, for instance, Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe, *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 26. Speaking of Baz Luhrman's *Romeo+Juliet*, the authors argue that "it is only the practice of copying that creates – and confers authority on – the original" (26).

[4] For Morrissette's relation to what they call SHAKESPEARE, see Kim Fedderson and J. Michael Richardson, "*Macbeth*: Migrations of the Cinematic Brand", in Nick Moschovakis (ed.), *Macbeth: New Critical Essays* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 300-317. They argue that Morrisette finds "the burden of tradition … too onerous", and that he thus attempts to "remake tradition in his own image" (313).

[5] All references to *Macbeth* are to the New Arden edition of the play edited by Kenneth Muir, and are included parenthetically in the text.

"Banko" Banconi (Kevin Corrigan), work for Norman "Norm" Duncan (James Rebhorn), the owner of a dowdy burger restaurant, Duncan's Café. Pat and Mac are both frustrated in their jobs, and this is exacerbated by the fact that, after the dismissal of the diner's dishonest Manager, Douglas McKenna, Duncan announces that he will promote his son Malcom (Tom Guiry) to the role of Manager, even if Malcom is more interested in being a rock musician than in his father's business. The two self-proclaimed "underachievers" conspire to murder Duncan to gain ownership of the restaurant: the dagger is replaced by a meat-cooking skillet which knocks Duncan unconscious, and it is only after a series of failed attempts that "Norm" falls, somewhat accidentally, into a fryolater.[6] In spite of Pat's promise to Malcom that they will carry on Duncan's legacy, they refurbish the diner, turn it into a "drive-thru" and rename it McBeth's, a restaurant with shiny formica surfaces and brightly lit interiors which serves burgers and fries to huge crowds of satisfied customers. The success of the carnivorous King and Queen of burgers and fries is, however, short-lived, as the vegetarian new-age police lieutenant McDuff (Christopher Walken), who despises their "greasy food" and drives an olive European car in which he listens to meditation tapes, is called in to investigate the murder. As a result of the increasing pressure the quirky Columbo-like detective McDuff puts on the Mcbeths, Mac becomes more and more paranoid, which leads him to further murders, including that of his friend Banko, who is about to reveal to the lieutenant his suspicions about the murderous couple. As to Pat, she becomes more and more obsessed with a greasy burn on her hand (the play's "damned spot" which symptomatises Lady Macbeth's guilt) caused by the hot oil that splashed upon her during the murder, a burn which has long since healed and only she sees. Banko's return from the grave during a press conference which is supposed to consecrate the McBeths' climbing of the social ladder re-marks the sense of crisis. In the end, Mac entices McDuff to the restaurant roof, tries to kill him but ends up impaled on the steer horns that decorate his car. Meanwhile Pat takes her life by cutting her grease-burned hand with a meat cleaver. The final scene of the film shows that McDuff has taken over the restaurant and turned it into the "Home of the Veggie Burger": he stands outside, with his little dog, eating a carrot and waiting for customers who have not yet arrived and perhaps, the film implies, never will.

I have deliberately left out of my synopsis of the plot what is perhaps Morrissette's most creative intervention vis-à-vis Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: the transformation of the witches into three stoned hippies (Andy Dick, Timothy Speed Levitch and Amy Smart), one of whom sets herself the task of predicting, in an inescapably indeterminate way, the advent of the "drive thru" and the Macbeths' success. They are shown for the first time in the first sequence of the film, as they sit on a Ferris wheel located in

[6] In a sense, it is "Chance" that "crown[s] [him] King" (1.3.144). While the murder is taking place, Pat and Mac's friends are playing Yahtzee, a dice game consisting of thirteen rounds and thirteen possible scoring combinations. This is one of the film's playful explorations of the relation between predetermination and free will.

what looks like a disused Carnival Fair, smoking dope and eating from a bucket of fried chicken (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: 'Dis-membering' the textual body of *Macbeth*

Or, rather, they 'appear', emerging out of the surrounding darkness as the camera shifts from a long-shot to a medium-shot, and are preceded by giggling and almost inaudible words which only later we will be able unequivocally to attribute to them. This, I want to argue, is the cinematic equivalent of Mallarmé's intuition that the witches as creatures of the threshold ("*au seuil*") do not simply enter but, rather, 'appear'; and that the whole of the first scene of *Macbeth* is not, strictly speaking, a scene ("*quelque chose d'autre, non une scène*"), and in fact does not properly take place as a scene ("*le prodige … n'eut lieu, du moins régulièrement ou quant à la pièce*").[7] In both Mallarmé's interpretation of *Macbeth* and *Scotland, PA,* the witches interrupt and exceed what has not yet properly begun. (To Mallarmé, the tragedy properly starts with Duncan's reference to the wounded "bloody man"). They uncannily appear *extra-scéniquement. Scotland, PA* re-emphasises this by introducing a caretaker who is locking up the Fair, and by showing that he is entirely oblivious to the presence of the stoned hippies as well as to the bucket of fried chicken they inadvertently drop, in spite of the fact that it loudly crashes to the ground very near his feet.

Commenting on the final section of Mallarme's short essay, and especially on the French poet's expression "*la cuisine du forfait*" (which she translates as "the kitchen where the deed is cooking"), Marjorie Garber argues as follows, and in a way which can be applied to both the play and the film: "The first encounter with the witches seems indecently to invite the spectator behind the scenes, into the kitchen, to the sources of creative energy and dramatic power before it unfolds in its proper place".[8] The beginning of *Scotland, PA* invites the audience to collude with the witches/hippies' bodily and linguistic *jouissance*; to partake, that is, once the pieces of chicken are out of sight, of the playful and ironic 'dis-membering' of the textual body of *Macbeth*: "It was foul… The fowl [i.e. the chicken] was foul… and the Fair [i.e. the Carnival Fair] was fair… foul's fair… the Fair is foul". It offers the spectator a glimpse of the "deed" which is – allegorically – "cooking" in the "kitchen", the specific ways in which *Scotland, PA* as a whole engages with the ghost of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: the process of adaptation as irreverent incorporation and remorseless recycling of the

[7] Stéphane Mallarmé, "La fausse entrée des sorcières dans Macbeth", in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 349-350.

[8] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers. Literature as Uncanny Causality* (London: Methuen, 1987), 93.

Fig. 2: McCloud dangling from an helicopter

adapted text. That the stoned hippies "drop the chicken" allegorically stands for the fact that incorporation does not fail to produce further remainders.

The opening sequence ends with the two male witches' account of the state the female witch is in: "Shhhh! She's having a spell! ... Oh God, *so* dramatic". It is followed by an extended black-and-white excerpt from the 1970s television series *McCloud*, in which a well-dressed quasi-corporate 'bad guy' (Eddie Albert) is brought to justice by detective McCloud (Denis Weaver), who pursues him by hanging beneath the helicopter in which he is trying to escape (Fig.2).

Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe argue that there is a link between the two male witches' words and this extended montage from *McCloud*. "Having a spell", they remind us, means "feeling queasy and disoriented (because you ate bad chicken)". But it also irresistibly suggests a "conjuring", especially when combined with the (ironic) emphasis of the phrase "*so* dramatic", and, specifically, the conjuring of another medium, within the medium of film. According to Cartelli and Rowe, this "conjuring" draws attention, in a quasi-Brechtian fashion, not only to the film's (fictive) process of construction of 'reality' – its editing, inclusion of extra-diegetic sound, shift from colour to black and white and then back to colour, and so on – but also to its irremediably impure and hybrid nature. In short, this conjuring is "designed to make us notice mediation taking place" (114).

Cartelli and Rowe's approach to *Scotland, PA* suggests the more general point that there is no un*media*ted – in a quite literal sense – access to "Shakespeare"; it also implies, to return to the theoretical framework I have adopted, that adapting "Shakespeare" (or inheriting from it) is not even exclusively a matter of coming to terms with the by now established rich tradition of "Shakespeare on film" – a TV detective show such as *McCloud* can hardly be said to belong to this tradition.[9] Yet Cartelli and Rowe seem to miss some significant aspects of the connection between the hippies' conjuring up of *Macbeth*'s initial scene and the emergence of the black-and-white televisual world of the 1970s. "Having a spell" stands for "feeling queasy or disoriented". But this is not just the undesirable effect of enjoying pieces of fried chicken that are "foul"; it can also be seen as the bodily reaction to the extra-*jouissance* one indulges in when mis*spelling* and chewing, as it were, bits and pieces of the Shakespearean

[9] Morrisette is not unaware of this tradition and considers the film a satire of "the recent spate of Shakespeare film adaptations." Amongst its targets are "those earnest efforts to translate Shakespeare into hip, modern urban tales of corporate corruption [and] adolescent angst". The references are clearly to Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000* and Baz Luhrman's *Romeo+Juliet* ("Study Notes" included in the DVD-ROM version).

corpus. In this sense, the shift in medium prompted by the expressions "having a spell" and "*so* dramatic" is an ironic temporary release from a textual *jouissance en plus*; it offers a condensed shortened version of *Macbeth* as a (melo)dramatic black-and-white detective show depicting a world in which "fair" is indeed "fair" and "foul" is indisputably "foul", a world where one might still be unable "to find the mind's construction in the face" (1.4.12) but where criminals are brought to justice without much of a hint of ambiguity.

Scotland, PA seems to be unable to relate to the adapted text without repeatedly conjuring the process of (re)mediation – of which it is of course part – through which "Shakespeare" is consumed, (re)processed and recycled.[10] Given the prominent place the *McCloud* sequence occupies at the opening of the film, it is worth addressing it in more detail, so as to shed more light on the film's wider process of engagement with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. As mentioned earlier, the *McCloud* montage is a reframing of the hippies' excessive "repetition without replication",[11] a recasting that allows the spectator temporarily to enter a relatively safer black-and-white territory. But it is also one of the visual translations of "the battle's lost and won" (1.1.4) and, more generally, of the tumultuous state the witches in *Macbeth* call "hurly-burly" (3). (Another, more extended translation of this is the sequence where Mac jumps over the service counter, to the tune of Beethoven's 7th symphony, to put an end to a food fight between two customers, which also literally shows his "vaulting ambition" [1.7.27]. After pushing these rebellious 'thanes' out of the overcrowded restaurant, he receives the other customers' applause but returns to the grill without being greeted with any title).[12] In addition, the *McCloud* sequence functions as a "pre-diction", some kind of visual foretelling of events which 'precedes' the actual meeting between the hippies and Mac in which the latter will be told his fortune. It uncannily connects with, and offers an interpretive framework for, subsequent scenes, maybe also by virtue of the mere fact that they all involve a series of "Mc"s: for instance, the public humiliation of Manager Douglas *Mc*Kenna, caught out embezzling money from the diner's till, which whets Mac's appetite for his post; or, more generally, detective *Mc*Duff's relentless, if quirky, pursuit of the small-town entrepreneur Joe "Mac" *Mc*Beth has become.[13]

What can be gathered from this analysis of the *McCloud* excerpt is that remediation is not a one-to-one linear process from page (or stage) to screen, not least because it bears the mark of a complex temporality. It is almost as if *Scotland, PA* responded to the uncanny temporality of the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" in its *Macbeth* version by creating a complex temporality of its own which is inextricably bound up with the world of the media. Indeed, one should also consider that the *McCloud* sequence

[10] For the concept of "remediation", see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000).

[11] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 7. I am using Hutcheon's expression because this is an adaptation of the witches' lines within the adaptation.

[12] For an extended reading of this scene, see Cartelli and Rowe, *New Wave Shakespeare*, 111-113.

[13] However, McCloud is a rustic detective with an odd accent, unlike the urban McDuff. In the DVD "Director's Commentary", Morrisette claims that the aspect of the play that mostly caught his attention when he first read it was the the presence of the patronymic "Mac".

reappears on a TV screen later on in the film as it is broadcast in the local police station. At a crucial point in the murder investigation we are shown the sleepy local police officer Eddy so immersed in watching this episode of *McCloud* that he hardly pays any attention to Banko's potential revelations about the Macbeths' involvement in the murder of Duncan.[14] It is thus a visual foretelling which repeats itself. It is shown again; and by being shown again, it makes us even more aware of its 'archaic' status,[15] of its being 'originally' part of a series which, qua series, is structured from within by the possibility of being repeated and endlessly aired. Its being repeated also makes us more alert to the fact that it has been there all along, from the very beginning, in ironic quotation marks. With its (double) iterative and ironic structure, the black-and-white excerpt can hardly be said to offer an effective remedy, in the form of re-mediation, to the witches' linguistic excess; nor, in spite of the prominent place it is given at the beginning of the film, can it be said to provide a privileged perspective from which fully to interpret the meaning of subsequent scenes, either in terms of 'content' or in terms of genre. Indeed, to believe it can, the film implies, would mean to occupy the same 'foolish' position as Eddy; it would mean to be under the spell of a TV screen as a passive consumer and ignore anything that exceeds its frame. In terms of remediation, this also simply suggests that TV as a medium is replaceable, and that the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" can and will find alternative media incarnations.

That the film allegorises its own procedures, without much 'angst', while adapting/re-mediating *Macbeth* is emphasised anew as soon as the camera moves inside Duncan's restaurant, after offering a double take of its outside, first in black and white, as if the restaurant was still part of the *McCloud* sequence, and then in colour (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Duncan's restaurant

Once we are inside, excess re-presents itself, perhaps unsurprisingly, in the form of consumption and repetition. We are faced with an extreme close-up of a half-eaten burger on a tray, and then we see a waitress who picks up the tray and, on her way to the kitchen, sneakily takes a bite of the leftover burger. This clearly recalls the witches' 'sickening' incorporation of bits and pieces of fried chicken seasoned with remainders from Shakespeare's play. Commenting on this image, Lauren Shohet argues that it "offers a ripe figure for intertextual borrowing, for what it means for a text

[14] See Lauren Shohet, "The Banquet of Scotland (PA)", *Shakespeare Survey* 57 (2004), 186-195. According to Shohet, to whose interpretation I'm heavily indebted, he is "too absorbed by the didactic *image* of effective policing to *act* as a police officer" (190). This is part of her wider argument about the fraught notion of agency in both the play and the film.

[15] Originally part of the 1972 *McCloud* episode "The Park Avenue Rustlers" (1972), this sequence was re-used in the opening titles of later episodes, which emphasises even more its iterability.

to avail itself of sources". She adds that "the snatched gulp of pre-possessed meat is unhygienic, cheap, aesthetically unpleasing – but this is how *Macbeth* can be chewed over" (*BS,* 189). As Shohet emphasises, the "pre-possessed" material the film incorporates (also in the form of allusion) extends well beyond Shakespeare's play. It includes TV programmes such as *McCloud* and *Columbo* – as we shall see, Mac explicitly refers to the latter in a dialogue with Lt. McDuff; films such as *Deer Hunter*, which emerges as an intertextual reference especially when Mac and his friends go on a hunting expedition;[16] and, more generally, a number of cultural artefacts of the 1970s, especially the pervasive music by Bad Company. I have started analysing some of this material. I now want to explore it further and suggest that it is through the incorporation of what is "pre-possessed" – an incorporation, as the witches and the waitress show, which does not quite coincide with the satisfaction of desire – that the film develops its own uncanny logic of repetition, and that this is a way of responding to the ghost of *Macbeth*.

"So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.3.38): this is Macbeth's first line, just before the meeting with the witches. It is a line, as many critics have noted, that echoes the witches' "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11) and thus irresistibly raises a question that haunts Shakespeare's text as a whole: who/what speaks when a character speaks? Nicholas Royle observes that to speak of echo in relation to this and other innumerable cases in *Macbeth* – the repetitions of the words "do" and "done" are perhaps paradigmatic in this respect – may be deceptive:

> Echo ordinarily suggests a chronological linear progression … But Shakespeare's play disturbs this sense of order … The logic of echo in the context of *Macbeth* is not simply or necessarily linear: the 'first' appearance of a word can respond to, or be haunted by, its apparently later appearance … This strange effect of the after before, of what comes later coming earlier, is fundamental to the play as a whole.[17]

As a sign of disquieting temporality, echo has thus to do with the uncanny *in* the play as well as with the uncanniness *of* the play – one does not quite know when or where this echo begins or ends. It is part of the wider logic of what Royle calls "magical thinking or telepathy" (96), and Stanley Cavell refers to as "language as magic or mind-reading", which occurs especially between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.[18] As Macbeth's first line shows, it is also inextricably bound up with the question of the supernatural, what Cavell calls "language as prophecy", "the condition of words as recurrent".[19] This raises a further question: given the uncanny migration of words from character to character and across scenes, to what extent is one not simply spoken but *possessed* by that which one supposedly possesses?

[16] Christopher Walken, who plays McDuff, was an actor in this film and won an Oscar.

[17] Nicholas Royle, *How To Read Shakespeare* (London: Granta Books, 2005), 95.

[18] Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays by Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) (updated edition), 232.

[19] Language as "magic or mind-reading" and language as "prophecy" are the two modalities of language the play dramatises and are in fact, according to the American philosopher, "the conditions … [of] possibility of language as such" (Ibid., 232).

In *Scotland, PA*, like in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the supernatural is mostly associated with the witches and their ability to "look into the seeds of time" (1.3.58). It corresponds to the stoned hippies' more (or less) than natural bodily and linguistic *jouissance*, made of repeated incorporations of food and iterations of words; it coincides with the more (or less) than natural, 'artificial' realm of media representation, a quasi-infinite archive of recycled and easily recyclable *objets trouvés* from which the hippies borrow with apparent nonchalance to enact their "solicitings" (1.3.130). We have already seen an example of such "solicitings", in the form of the evocation of the *McCloud* sequence, with its uncanny temporality. But it is perhaps in the scene of the encounter between Joe "Mac" McBeth and the hippies that the tissue of quotations from "pre-possessed" textual and media material emerges most forcefully.

The meeting takes place in the Fair's playground, where Mac happens to wander after a heavy drinking session with his friend Banko at the local "Witch's Brew". Mac does not echo the witches' line as Macbeth does in Shakespeare's play. Yet his day has similarly been "fair" – he has risen to the status of local hero by kicking out of the diner the two unruly customers who had engaged in a food-fight. His day has equally been "foul" – he has just had a fight with Pat, who has once again reproached him for being "too full o'th'milk of human kindness" (1.5.17), for being unable to talk to Duncan about promotion as he keeps on promising her: "Mac, I'm going to go home…I'm tired. … Besides, I have heard this story before. It kind of bores me". Mac's mixed feelings are compounded by Banko's revelations about Manager Douglas McKenna embezzling money. Interestingly, he stops Banko in the midst of these revelations, confidently walks across the room to reach the jukebox and kicks it so that the dull "I'm not Lisa" is suddenly replaced by what he wants to hear: the more aggressive "Bad Company" track by Bad Company. It is not just that this latter track registers Mac's shift of attitude – he has clearly decided to take his fate into his own hands, what "Bad Company" calls "destiny". Rather, what we witness here is the indistinguishability of fantasyscape and mediascape, which is typical of Morrissette's film as a whole. In other words, we are shown that Mac's 'core of being' is made of media material: paradoxically, it is only through the endlessly recyclable Bad Company music and lyrics that he can pose, at least temporarily, as a *singular* kind of 'baddie'; that he can fantasise himself as someone who is "always on the run" and "was born 6-gun in [his] hand"; as someone, in short, who is "bad company" ("They call me bad company/ And I can't deny/ Bad company/ Till the day I die").[20] Moreover, the fact that he is himself "bad company" somehow prepares him to be in the "bad company" of the witches, which is Morrissette's witty critical contribution to one of the crucial questions regarding the relationship between the witches and Macbeth in Shakespeare's play:

[20] The section of the track we don't hear re-emphasises these themes. As "bad company", and "till the day [he] dies", he is prepared to "play dirty for dirty" and "kill in cold blood".

do the witches act upon somebody who is already predisposed to act in a certain way?[21]

Mac's roaming comes to an end as soon as the two male witches start hailing him in alternating voices: "Mac!" "Beth!" "Beth!" "Mac!" "Fleetwood Mac!" "Mac" "Ramé" "I love macramé", and so on. The hippies do not only address Joe "Mac" McBeth but also conjure the title of Shakespeare's play. Their 'hailing' operates by splitting "Macbeth" into its constituent phonemes and repeating them in reverse order, in a way that recalls previous chiastic formulations in both the play ("Fair is foul, and foul is fair") and the film ("Foul's fair… the Fair is foul"). This splitting triggers a number of 'unconscious' free phonic associations whose effect is that of irresistibly drawing the 'high' ("Shakespeare") into the orbit of the 'low' (1970s popular culture) and making the distinction between them precarious: what is "fair" is indeed uncannily proximate to what is (presumably) "foul", and the other way round. This iconoclastic 'levelling' applies to "Mac" too. Not only is "Mac" inserted in a potentially endless chain of signifiers that exceeds possession by any 'subject'. After hailing him, the hippies start talking to each other to pursue the senseless logic of the signifier: "I made you some thing… some little macramé … thing". They make Mac a mere spectator of the scene of interpellation which should have been properly and exclusively his. When they address him next, they do so by referring to him as "Makki", and offer him a spliff: "Would you like some wacky tobakki, Makki?" Afterwards, they shift to a more 'personal' tone, which seems to touch upon Mac's predicament after his fight with Pat: "Next time you should go home with your wife, or any loved one". But this only occasions yet another "equivocation". The hippies select words from their previous speech and reassemble them: "lov*ed* one" becomes "love *the* one"; "with your" is reversed into "you're with". This produces a formulaic expression ("Love the one you're with"), which is repeated twice and is of course uncannily similar to the title of a song by Crosby, Still, Nash and Young. Once again, the reiteration of media material infiltrates and shapes the realm of 'experience'.

That the patronymic prefix "Mac" (or its even more colloquial version "Makki") is nothing but an 'anonymous' repeatable signifier, designating no one in particular, is stressed again when Mac asks the hippies how they knew his name: "Do you mean your name really is Mac? …. I thought we were just saying it like you say it … like 'Watch your step, Mac!', 'Up yours, Mac!', Fuck off, Mac!' I can't think of another one." As Cartelli and Rowe argue, "this reduction [of the patronymic] … brings the remote and formal titles of Scottish feudal culture down to local, colloquial scale". Referring to the 'hailing scene' as a whole, they add that "the hippies' colloquialisms seem a kind of inventory of a culture that has levelled social distinctions and lost any memory of its patronymics. 'Mac', the

[21] See, for instance, Shohet, "The Banquet", 187. For Shohet, moreover, *Scotland, PA* continually links problems of agency with problems of masculinity. Mac's pose as "bad company" is a case in point (190).

prefix that signifies 'son of', is reduced to an epithet" (117). In fact, as Shohet points out, it is reduced not just to an "epithet" but to "a branding prefix" (192).[22] Once the McBeths take over the restaurant, "Mac" reappears on the restaurant menu in the form of "McBeth", "McBeth with Cheese", "Big McBeth", "McBeth McBeth", and so on, not just as food to be consumed but as a brand-name whose reproducibility and infinite expansion are dependent upon customers' addiction to what the vegetarian McDuff calls "greasy food".[23]

The ironic displacement of the title of Shakespeare's play, and the critical interrogation of "Mac", are followed by a scene in which the female hippie tells Mac his fortune. He is invited into a mysterious room full of flashing lights whose door bears an image of the Gorgon, and is told to sit down on some kind of carousel that will go round and round throughout the scene. He finds it all "a little weird", and is about to leave when he is forced to sit down again by a male voice coming out of the female hippie's mouth, a voice which, as the scene develops, will intermittently and uncannily become his own voice, as in the following question: "You haven't been very happy, have you, Mac?" This 'superegoic' voice brings to the surface his "black and deep desires" (1.4.51) but his "desires" turn out to be essentially *Pat*'s desires: "Honey wants the money and there is no reason to stop now… Screw management. You can do better. Don't think you deserve better? Don't you think *she* deserves better? [Mac's voice]". Significantly, in a later scene, as Mac and Pat drive back home from the diner and start making plans about murdering Duncan, it is Pat who will say to Mac: "We have to aim higher… Don't you think you deserve it, Mac?" Mac's desires are Pat's, which are, in turn, Mac's, and so on and so forth. On the one hand, this suggests that one can apply to Morrissette's film the argument that critics such as Cavell and Royle have developed in relation to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, that the transmission of words and ideas from Macbeth to Lady Macbeth takes place in an 'unconscious' telepathic way. As Cavell succinctly puts it, "uttering words as mind-reading is represented in the language of this marriage, in which each of the pair says what the other already knows or has already said"(238). On the other hand, the 'unconscious' migration of words from mouth to mouth points to the intriguing fact that *Scotland, PA* adapts *Macbeth* by ironically adopting the latter's 'mad' logic of echo, a logic which re-marks, as pointed out earlier, the lack of any clear-cut temporal and spatial distinction between "identifiable source and response or repetition".[24]

The female witch, whose 'ventriloquism' is of course also an oral and visual rendering of the blurring of gender which characterises the witches in *Macbeth*, proceeds by putting together an ensemble of signifiers that vaguely predict the advent of the drive-through: she speaks of a "bank", "a Spanish bank", "a restaurant with an intercom" that "looks like a bank

[22] Given the fact that "Mac" does not seem to designate anyone in particular, Shohet also argues that "like Macbeth, Mac seems to have been all too easily interpellated by a hail he need not have embraced" ("The Banquet", 193).

[23]According to Cartelli and Rowe, the film's stance is only tangentially that of opposing the homogenisation of the cultural or food industry. To them, the film asks us "to see the scripting of experience as a kind of consumption, digestion, the only way in which any inheritance – including Shakespeare – continues to live" (*New Wave Shakespeare,* 111).

[24] Royle, *How to Read*, 95. Doubling belongs to the same logic, and ranges from minor details to significantly repeated scenes. For instance, the owner of the beauty saloon 'When a Tan Loves a Woman' has a tanned son who is his exact replica; Donald's lover wears the same dressing-gown as Donald; the two boys at the drive-through counter say goodbye to punters in exactly the same way.

with a drive-through teller … for food". It is no wonder that Mac looks puzzled: "What's all this?" As with the "imperfect speakers" (1.3.70) in *Macbeth*, prophecy is left indeterminate in order to function as the locus of one's projections and fantasies. The two male witches contribute to what *Macbeth* calls "equivocation" (5.5.43). They continually interrupt a speech which is already in itself a fragmentary collage of cross-gendered utterances by obsessively reiterating the name "Anthonyyy!" They echo Mac *after* he surmises that the "bank" the female witch alludes to may be his friend Anthony "Banko" Banconi. But they also echo Mac *before* he mentions "Anthony", thus abiding by the ghostly temporal logic of echo. If echo doubles, so does the source which retrospectively gives rise to this uncanny form of repetition. Halfway through the film, we realise that there is another source for the male witches' compulsive refrain, a TV commercial showing a mother at a window calling out "Anthonyyy! Anthonyyy! Anthonyyy!", and then a young lad in shorts running back home amidst a crowd of people, presumably to be fed. The voiceover informs us that Anthony "lives in Boston, in the Italian North End, home of the Prince Spaghetti Company", and this may be the reason why when they first hear the name Anthony "Banko" Banconi in the prediction scene the two male witches state that it "sounds Italian". The context in which this TV commercial appears is highly significant. It is broadcast on the television Mac is watching while sitting in a semi-darkened room in a gloomy mood, after a troubling conversation with Banko in which the latter asks him why he has always mentioned to him, his best friend, all his other ideas, regularly dimissed by Duncan, but not the idea of the drive-through. Soon after watching the commercial Mac somberly announces to Pat: "Banko is a problem", a colloquial version of Macbeth's "Our fears in Banquo/ Stick deep" (3.1.48-9). In Act 3 scene 1 of Shakespeare's play, Macbeth recalls the witches' prophecy with a mixture of anger and resentment: "Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown/ And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,/ Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,/ No son of mine succeeding" (60-3). If the prophecy were to come true, it would mean that "for Banquo's issue ha[s] [he] fil'd [his] mind/ For them the gracious Duncan [has he] murther'd" (64-5). The masque of Banquo's heirs in Act 4 scene 1 seems to confirm his suspicions that he has performed the murderous deed for nothing, acting on somebody else's behalf. It displays a "line [of kings] stretch[ing] out to th' crack of doom", with the eighth king bearing a glass "which shows [him] many more" (117, 120). *In Scotland, PA* the glass is replaced by a TV screen presenting a TV commercial which can indeed, by virtue of its endlessly reiterable 'nature', "stretch out to th' crack of doom". It is on this screen that the small-town childless magnate Joe "Mac" McBeth projects his deep-seated fears that one day his "sceptre" will be "wrench'd with an unlineal hand";

that one of Banko's heirs, some Anthony at the head of some "Prince Spaghetti Company", will appropriate his empire of burger and fries.[25] This fear cannot even be alleviated by some competing claim to TV celebrity. Unfortunately, the local TV (Channel Five) has not yet completed a documentary about the drive-through which will immortalise the two local heroes' rise to power. When one reads the male witches' "Anthonyyy!" from the vantage point of the future which they repeat in advance, it turns out to be an oblique warning to Mac that Banko is not entirely excluded from the hippies' "prophetic greeting" (1.1.78), even if he is not present as such, unlike *Macbeth*'s Banquo, in the prediction scene.

[25] Shohet also argues that this is a "quite nuanced", "fragmented and subtle" version of the masque. It bears witness, however, to the "greater tenuousness of inheritance" when compared to the masque in Shakespeare's play ("The Banquet", 192-193).

The brief conversation between Mac and Pat about Banko being "a problem" marks a turning point in the film.[26] Pat seems to be deeply affected by Mac's sombre mood. As she walks out of the room, she briefly looks at her hand, and from this moment on she will become more and more concerned with the (inexistent) grease burn that symptomatises her guilty enjoyment of her new social status. Through her facial expression she seems to be echoing Lady Macbeth's lines about a murderous deed that fails to bring about its desired effects: "Nought's had, all's spent,/ Where our desire is got without content:/ 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,/ Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy" (3.2.4-8). These are lines Macbeth typically echoes soon afterwards: "Better be with the dead,/ Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,/ Than on the torture of the mind to lie/ In restless ecstasy" (3.2.19-22). Lady Macbeth concludes her speech, after her husband's entrance, with the notorious line "what's done is done" (12). But of course her "doubtful joy" bears witness to the fact that what is done – the murderous deed – is never properly over and done with. The line "what's done is done" turns out to be a way of protecting her husband from the knowledge she knows he already possesses (or by which he is already possessed), and which emerges here as "restless ecstasy".

[26] In the DVD "Director's Commentary" Billy Morrisette remarks on the shift in terms of mood from this point on, which coincides with the beginning of the McBeths' "spiralling down", a shift which seemed to affect all members of cast and crew during the shooting.

Addressing this scene as well as speaking more generally of what he calls "the most enigmatically repeated, curiously echoey word" (98) in *Macbeth*, the word "done", which "repeats, reverberates, resounds like a knell, summoning strange kinds of communication between one speech or scene or character and another" (99), Royle argues as follows:

> What is done is … never completely and purely done. The murder … is not just something that happens … However much Lady Macbeth might want to claim that 'what's done, is done' … [t]he doing of the deed in a sense never ends … T]he crime is at once something that cannot be 'undone' and yet also (in its haunting enormity and after-effects) something that carries on happening. (98-99)

And, paradoxically, one tries to prevent if from "happening" by making it happen over and over again; one tries to escape from the deleterious

effects of the "deed" – in order to be "safe", which is, according to Royle, another "ghostly word" (i.e., secure *and* dead)[27] – by keeping on performing it over and over again ("Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill") (3.3.55), which is simultaneously the most safe *and* unsafe of acts. *Macbeth* and *Scotland, PA* share this 'mad' spiral-like logic of repetition, of "strange things … which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd" (3.4.138-9) but inexorably "return/ To plague th'inventor" (1.7.9-10). Moreover, in both the play and the film, the repetition of the deed coincides with the swapping of roles between male and female in terms of agency. (Macbeth reassures his wife, who asks him what is "to be done" about Banquo, 3.2.44, with these words: "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,/ Till thou applaud the deed", 45-6, and then launches into the "Come, seeling Night" speech, which is mostly an appropriation of Lady Macbeth's earlier "Come, thick Night" speech, 1.5.50-54, a speech which connotes *her* determination to act; similarly, after he persuades himself that Banko is a "problem", Mac becomes more and more secretive, withholding from Pat information about his murderous plans, mistakenly believing that he is doing this in order to protect her, which drives her insane: "Everything's going to be all right. I'm going to take care of *everything*, Pat. I'm going to take care of *you*"). In *Scotland, PA*, however, the repetition of the deed (which includes the murder of the non-Shakespearian character Andy, the homeless guy who is initially blamed for Duncan's murder) allows Morrissette fully to explore what was only implicit up to this point: the deadly connection between violence against the human and violence against the animal, the uncanny overlapping between Mac's murderous 'production' of dead human bodies and the production, serving and consumption of the corpse of the animal in the form of meat – and greasy meat at that.[28] Macbeth keeps on doing the deed, or having it done on his behalf, only marginally in order to prevent the royal couple from "eat[ing] [their] meal in fear" (3.2.17);[29] Mac keeps on acting murderously not in order to eat in peace (or not mainly), but in order to ensure the safety of the drive-through, a meat business fostering potentially *un*safe (i.e., unhealthy) eating practices, as the vegetarian not-of-woman-born Lt. McDuff is quick to point out in a joky way as soon as he turns up at Duncan's wake with a vegetarian dish: "I envy you; by the time I get to my customers, they are usually dead. At least you get a chance to kill them … with that greasy food".[30]

In the second half of the film, Pat increasingly confines herself to the private space of her middle-class home, or is forced to do so by Mac's "transformation … from weak, submissive, and overly romantic to suspicious, devious, violent, and uncommunicative" (*F*, 45). She starts chain-smoking and drinking to excess, and only leaves her home to go down to the local chemist's where the pharmacist and his assistant

[27] For instance, to be safe is also to be dead, like Banquo, "safe in a ditch" (3.4.25), or Duncan, who "in his grave … sleeps well" (3.2.22-3). But they are not quite "safe" because they come back to haunt, in different forms, making Macbeth and Lady Macbeth *un*safe. See Royle, *How To Read,* esp. 93-95.

[28] In the DVD "Director's Commentary", Morrisette points out that he intentionally wanted bodies of dead animals to be visible everywhere in the film, and that he only later became aware of the many references to animals in *Macbeth*.

[29] For one of the Lords in *Macbeth*, the restoration of order will be able to "give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,/ Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives" (3.6.34-5).

[30] For an excellent reading of the food references in the film, see James R. Keller, *Food, Film and Culture. A Genre Study* (Jefferson and London: McFarland, 2006), 37-48. Herafier cited as *F*.

(Morrissette's version of Shakepeare's doctor and waiting-gentlewoman of act 5 scene 1) somehow reluctantly supply her with larger and larger quantities of ointment for her grease burn. As to Mac, one finds him unceasingly "roving and ravaging the open spaces that now seem too small to contain his appetites".[31] Indeed, the whole of Scotland, PA becomes an extension of Birnam woods (the place where he regularly goes hunting with his male friends), a wilderness where he keeps on exercising his killer instincts. He is "a threat to mammals everywhere" (*F*, 41) In one scene we see the juxtaposition between the unconscious, drunken, almost lifeless body of Banko being carried into McBeth's house and the lifeless body of the deer Mac has shot during the hunting expedition being carried on the shoulder of one of his friends.[32] Once the visual connection between the dead body of the deer and Banko is established and reinforced by the fur hat Banko wears, we are prepared for the next step: Mac's murder of his best friend, which symbolically replaces the body of the non-human animal with the body of the human animal. But this symbolical substitution is itself preceded by the consumption of the corpse of the deer in the form of meat.[33] Through this and other scenes the film suggests that one cannot incorporate the flesh of the animal without turning into the animal one incorporates, an animal which is likely to lose sight of the distinction between the human and non-human animal and is thus more likely to kill. In short, we are continuously invited to associate the consumption of meat with murder. Given the fact that the film stringently develops this logic, especially in its second half, it should come as no surprise that the murder investigation becomes more and more a confrontation between the carnivorous culture of *Scotland, PA* and the vegetarian culture of the 'outsider' Lieutenant McDuff, a conflict which, to Mac's increasingly paranoid eyes, is nothing but a class-bound division between the "better half" and the lesser half of society, a division no cash flow can hope to bridge.[34] Coming home drunk after the murder of Banko and after another trip to Birnam woods to consult the witches, Mac finds McDuff there with Pat, and ironically addresses him as follows:

> What brings you here? … Don't tell me. You're gracing our humble home with a vegetable dish of some kind tonight, a little tidbit to show us how the other half lives … I meant *better* half … No, you don't think that. *That* would be mean, and you don't think mean thoughts … just us vicious carnivores can think mean thoughts [he strokes one of the hunting trophies that adorn his home].

The speech also contains an implied threat to "big daddy McDuff and all the little McDuffs", a "mean" and "vicious" thought only a predatory carnivore such as Mac seems to be able to entertain.[35] When Mac next meets the hippies in his restaurant, after they urgently call him at home

[31] Courtney Lehmann, "Out Damned Scot: Dislocating *Macbeth* in Transnational Film and Media Culture", in Richard Burt and Lynda E Boose (eds.), *Shakespeare, The Movie, II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 246.

[32] Mac points the gun at Banko in Birnam woods as if to shoot, but the witches dressed as deer stand in the way, perhaps to warn him that there are too many witnesses.

[33] Pat cooks and serves the deer. She is so annoyed at Mac and his carnivorous friends' behaviour at the table that she dubs them "you animals". The equation Banko=animal is also re-emphasized by the following joke: "I'd swear he was thinking out there today. I could see those Banko brain cells moving". They all laugh at the joke, except Pat.

[34] Many critics accentuate the fact that the film shows that the 'stain' of being 'white trash' can never be deleted. See Elizabeth A. Deitchman, "White Trash Shakespeare: Taste, Morality, and the Dark Side of the American Dream in Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA*" and Eric C. Brown, "Shakespeare, Class, and Scotland, PA", *Literature/ Film Quarterly* 34.2 (2006), 140-146 and 147-153. For the association between this 'stain' and Pat's greasy burn, see especially Lehmann, "Out Damned", 246.

[35] In *Macbeth* Lady Macduff compares Macbeth to an "owl" (4.2.11); Macduff,

because they have forgotten to tell him something important (of course only Mac can hear the phone ringing), "big daddy McDuff and all the little McDuffs" come up in the conversation, a conversation in which they are trying to decide what Mac should do next. Significantly, the discussion takes place while Mac is cooking burgers for the three hippies who are starving ("I could eat a horse"; "I could eat a cow"; "I could eat a pig"), as if to remind the viewer that plans for further murders are inextricably bound with the preparation and consumption of meat. After all, even in Shakespeare's play Macbeth is called a "butcher" (5.9.35). One of the male hippies suggests: "Mac should kill McDuff's entire family". The other one strongly disagrees: "Oh that'd work … about a thousand years ago … These are modern times. You can't go around killing everybody". The female hippie simply interjects: "Or can you?", and looks intensely into Mac's eyes. After a while she takes on a male voice and adds: "I think we have to go straight to the source of the problem." The "source of the problem" is of course McDuff, who is by now absolutely certain of the Macbeths' guilt and has asked them to report to the police station in the morning. But it is also the "problem", as pointed out earlier, that *Scotland, PA* shares with its Shakespearean "source": the performance of the deed produces uncanny after-effects one can (attempt to) magic away only by performing the deed over and over again. Can one "go around killing everybody", then?" Did it work "about a thousand years ago", for instance in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*? Would it work in these "modern times", for instance in *Scotland, PA*? As is often the case with the hippies in *Scotland, PA* (and the witches in *Macbeth*), they pose questions that draw attention to the process of construction of the cultural artefact they – supposedly – inhabit. In this specific context, these are also pressing meta-dramatic questions about how to bring the performance *as such* (not just the repeated performance of the deed) to a satisfactory ending. The hippies crave for this just as much as for the burgers Mac is about to serve. And so does the viewer.

The "source of the problem" – Lieutenant Ernie McDuff – seems to be aware of the "problem" of the *ad infinituum* reiteration of the murderous deed. During the final confrontation on the roof of the restaurant, he warns a self-assured Mac, who is pointing a gun at him: "So I'm next but after that it looks like you have to kill Malcom …. and then Donald, because Donald is coming after you". Mac recognises the genre from within which the Lieutenant speaks, a genre which forcefully pre-scribes his demise as a small-town criminal: "This is not an episode of Columbo. … I'm not gonna break down, hand you the gun, get waltzed out of here between a couple of good- looking cops with my head bowed down". Unfortunately for Mac, there are no bullets in the gun he has seized from the local policeman Ed. At this point, he seems to resign himself to being,

after the news of the massacre of his family, implicitly refers to him as "hell-kite" (4.3.217). See also Keller, *Food,* 41.

after all, a character in an episode of a detective serial: he raises his hands, and his gesture of surrender makes him look like an exact reproduction of the 'bad guy' brought to justice in the McCloud episode we have seen more than once. Yet unlike this 'bad buy' Mac decides to react (or 're-act'), odd as his reaction may seem. He yawns (perhaps to signify the tiredness of the detective serial's conventional solution) to distract McDuff's attention and keeps on fighting with the only weapon left, a weapon which seems appropriate for his role as a purveyor of unhealthy potentially murderous eating practices: a meat burger, which he tries to feed into McDuff's mouth. After McDuff bites his hand, which shows that vegetarians, too, can stick their teeth into the flesh of the human animal, Mac runs downstairs in pain, and seems uncertain about what to do next. He looks up and is himself distracted by the apparition of the witches who are sitting on the restaurant's neon sign bearing his name. This gives McDuff the opportunity to jump onto him from the roof, causing Mac to meet a gruesome death as he ends up impaled on the steer horns that adorn his car. The final shot of Mac irresistibly invites the viewer to consider how much he resembles all the dead stuffed animals that embellish his house (Fig.4).

It suggests that one cannot incorporate (in all its possible senses) the animal and keep it safe inside one's self, one's home (as grisly décor) or restaurant (in the form of mass-produced meat to be cooked and served) without it eventually coming back to haunt one and perhaps reassert its rights. What also emerges is that Mac and Pat – who is shown chopping off her hand with a meat cleaver as the fight between the two men goes on [36] – seem to be aware, as the film draws to a close, that they are acting within a field of powerful constraints; but they decide to act nonetheless, even if the act can only lead them to their death. It is one thing to die. It is quite another to die by 'counter-signing' one's death. Mac, for example, doggedly tries to exceed the detective serial's 'pre-scripted' outcome, ludicrous as his (re)actions may seem. By doing so, he approaches a more 'Shakespearean' ending. Like Macbeth, he is "tied" to the "stake" of generic constraints but, even more "bear-like" than his Shakespearean counterpart, he resolves that he "must fight the course", a "course" that ends with death. ("They have tied me to a stake: I cannot fly,/ But, bear-like, I must fight the course") (5.7.1-2). One may go as far as to argue that Mac's sense of

[36] According to Lehmann's Lacanian reading, Pat "dies with a grin on her face", which suggests her "identification with the *sinthome*" (i.e. the impossible junction of enjoyment and the signifier), "her liberating realization, having traversed the fantasy of her impossible class ambition, that there is nothing left for her but to identify with lack itself" ("Out Damned", 246).

Fig. 4: McBeth's gruesome death

agency is simultaneously 'sedentary' and 'mobile', as hybrid and impure as the technology of the drive-through or the process of TV viewing as represented in the film.

In the course of this article, I have often emphasised that *Scotland, PA* lays bare its devices while relating to the adapted text. I want to conclude with another significant instance of this. After the death of Duncan, the Macbeths pay a visit to Malcom and Donald to negotiate the price of the restaurant. As neither Malcom nor Donald are interested in the business, they get an excellent deal. On her way out, Pat reassures them that they will "carry on [Duncan's] legacy … keep his name alive". No sooner does she end this speech than we are shown a montage of the extensive refurbishment of Duncan's diner. Needless to add, the sign bearing Duncan's name is the very first item to be dismantled. Pat and Mac's iconoclasm is clearly allegorical of *Scotland PA*'s relation to its Shakespearean 'source'. The murder of Duncan and the refurbishment of his diner also allegorically stand for the 'deconstruction' of the soporific normative legacy of a class-bound "Shakespeare". Duncan qua emblem of "Shakespeare" regularly falls asleep in his office. (Of course, another reason for this is that he must embody "Sleep" for Macbeth to be able to "murther Sleep", 2.2.35). He is called "Norm" and keeps on vilifying what he calls Scotland's "white trash". Iconoclasm undoubtedly provides its moment(s) of bliss. Towards the end of the montage we are shown Mac and Pat in the garden of their new middle-class home, with Mac drinking a beer and Pat floating in a newly-built above-ground pool. One can hardly envision Macbeth and Lady Macbeth sunbathing in the garden. Significantly, the soundtrack being played is "Beach Baby" by Gill *Shakespeare*, and Gill clearly replaces William. At the opposite end of iconoclasm, if we take McDuff's "Home of the Veggie Burger", which is the film's last shot (Fig.5), to be also an allegory of the 'reconstruction' of "Shakespeare" after the destruction of its legacy by the Macbeths, we have an urban, properly middle-class, edulcorated version of "Shakespeare".

Fig. 5: McDuff's Veggie Burger Restaurant

This is a "Shakespeare" made of self-help meditation tapes like the ones McDuff listens to in his olive green car, and which flattens out the rough 'carnivorous' edges of the playwright's language : "Do not toil in your troubles"; "Tomorrow is tomorrow. Tomorrow is not today". Yet iconoclasm or edulcoration are just

two marginal modes of the films' relation to its adapted text. We mainly witness a number of selective incorporations whose bodily content is often emphasised. They are sometimes playful (as in the witches' "The fowl was foul"), sometimes satirical (as in the dismembering of the title of Shakespeare's play), sometimes governed by savage black humour (as in the image of Mac impaled on the "stake" Macbeth is only tied to). These are incorporations, often driven by a *jouissance* which frustrates the viewer's desire for the 'proper' meaning of the 'original', which retrospectively 'produce' *Macbeth* as an ensemble of fragments and remainders which are then forced to cohabit and interact with 1970s popular culture, from TV to music to fashion items. Indeed, each incorporation seems to conjure up 'pre-possessed' media material as well as the *processes* of 're-mediation' in which the film itself of course participates.[37] In fact, the film seems to suggest, to "carry on [Shakespeare's] legacy", or "keep his name alive", is tantamount to coming to terms with the ghost of the media through which "Shakespeare" is endlessly processed, refracted and recycled. *Scotland, PA* takes it for granted that these "modern times" – the 1970s – are saturated with media images just as much as with burgers (and as a film it is haunted by the memory of its future, which speaks of an increase of saturation). But it is also intrigued by the relationship between past and present, as testified by the female witch's invitation to ponder the relevance of the past, the pertinence of *Macbeth* to the present: Can one go around killing everybody like a thousand years ago? This is not just *any* question about the relationship between the past and the present. It is a question about an aspect of the past and the present – seriality as a structure of iteration – which by its very nature blurs the distinction between them. There is no definite answer to the female hippie's question in *Scotland, PA*. But I want to argue, by way of conclusion, that this question is not unrelated to the fact that one of the film's most creative responses to *Macbeth* is its implementation of a spiral-like logic of iteration, doubling and echo (involving media as well as textual material); one that uncannily corresponds to – and perhaps even, in a spectral way, *with* – the logic of *Macbeth* itself, without necessarily coinciding with it.

[37] Each incorporation also produces further remainders; this is allegorized by the waitress who takes a bite of the leftover burger and then puts it back on the tray.

Stefano Manferlotti

Japanese Ghosts: Lafcadio Hearn's *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things*

Sunt aliquid Manes: letum non omnia finit.
(Propertius)

Nineteenth century Britain was haunted by ghosts, literally and literarily. While ordinary people still held beliefs deeply rooted in local and national folklore, writers drew from an equally ancient tradition that interwove classical and Christian literature and gave birth to new narrative models. In *The Iliad* Patroclus' ghost ("like what he had been in stature, voice, and the light of his beaming eyes, clad, too, as he had been clad in life") appears in dream to Achilles, complaining that his body has not yet been cremated, thus preventing his spirit from entering Hades (Book XXIII, trans. by Samuel Butler). *Te lucis ante terminum*, the hymn sung by Catholic clergy and monks at the Compline, namely after sunset, also clearly admits the existence of beings that neither live nor die:

> Te lucis ante terminum
> Rerum Creator poscimus
> Ut pro tua clementia
> Sis praesul et custodia.
> Procul recedant somnia,
> Et noctium phantasmata …
>
> To Thee, before the close of day
> Creator of the world, we pray
> that with Thy wonted favour, Thou
> wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now.
> From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
> from nightly fears and fantasies.
> (trans. by J. M. Neale)

Though they differ in several ways, Patroclus' ghost and the Christian *noctium phantasmata* both contradict the idea (and the hope, sometimes accompanied by agony, as the well-known words pronounced by Macbeth in the third act of his tragedy, "… The time has been/That, when the brains were out, the man would die,/And there an end", demonstrate) that there is no life after death. Life may continue after death, instead. *Qui ante nos fuerant* continue to co-exist with us, either in our thoughts during the daytime or in our dreams, at night, when body and mind are defenceless and open to unexpected visits. Sometimes *Manes* may even reproach the living for the wrongs they have done to them, as happens in Propertius's

Elegies (IV, 7), when Cynthia appears in dream to her poet lover, complaining that he has already forgotten her:

> Sunt aliquid Manes: letum non omnia finit,
> Luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos.
> Cynthia namque meo visa est incumbere fulcro,
> Murmur ad extremae nuper humata viae.
> …
> At mihi non oculos quisquam inclamavit euntis:
> Unum impetrassem te revocante diem:
> Non crepuit fissa me propter harundine custos,
> Laesit et obiectum tegola curta caput.
> Denique quis nostro curvum te funere vidit,
> Atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam?(1-4; 23-28)
>
> The Shades are no fable: death is not the end of
> all, and the pale ghost escapes the vanquished pyre.
> For Cynthia seemed to bend o' er my couch's head,
> Cynthia so lately buried beside the roaring road.
> …
> Yet no man called upon my name as I passed and mine
> eyelids closed: surely hadst thou recalled me, I had
> been granted one more day. No watchman rattled
> his cleft reed for my sake, and a broken tile wounded
> my defenceless brow. Aye, and who saw thee bowed
> with grief at my graveside? Who saw thy robe of
> mourning grow hot with thy tears?
> (trans. by Harold E. Butler)

These three examples, all rooted in antiquity and all taken from the so called high canon of western literature, are paradigmatic in that they show some characteristics bound to remain more or less unchanged to our day and to the nineteenth century in particular: the possibility that the dead and the living may 'speak' and 'look' to each other (hence "visa est", "oculos", "vidit" in Propertius's elegy; but the whole poem is scattered with words referring to sight), that the dead continue to be – as they are able to demand changes in the real world or even put them into effect – juridical persons; in some cases (Patroclus, Cynthia), that a duty has been forgotten, a law broken and that order must be restored.

This last distinguishing trait allows us to take Lafcadio Hearn's ghost tales into account and link them both to classical antiquity and, to a greater extent, to the years when they were written. It is widely known, in fact, that in the nineteenth century the triumph of genres like the gothic and detective novel gives literary shape to – contemporarily trying to solve it – a fundamental contradiction: while the macabre, fantastic, demoniac, criminal, supernatural, and whatever goes along with them (sex repression, for instance: M.G. Lewis and Stoker's novels are exemplary) mark the existence of impulses that reason cannot control, reason is appealed to

whenever subversive pressures go too far. This explains why in writers like Radcliffe, Walpole, Bulwer-Lytton, Le Fanu, Dickens, and the above quoted Lewis and Stoker, the irrational and sinful is given free rein throughout (say, for three quarters of the novel or the story), but is defeated in the end. Order (and law) must be restored; right and wrong, good and evil, must be given a clear-cut division again. This is even true of Poe (whom Hearn knew and admired, as he read and also admired Bulwer-Lytton, whose novel *The Haunted and the Haunters*, published in 1859, was among his favourites) as were some of Poe's most famous tales. In the preface to his *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* he maintains that "terror is not German, but of the soul", and there is no doubt that in "The Pit and the Pendulum" or in "The Black Cat" terror stems from this root, finding in itself its own justification, but it is also true that in "The Murders in Rue Morgue" or "The Gold Bug", whatever in the opening paragraphs appears absurd and demoniac is given a rational explanation in the last pages.

There is only one case in which the suspension of disbelief must be almost complete, namely when a ghost comes back from the unknown boundaries of the unknown space where he or she keeps wandering. I say almost because, in order to be convincing, any ghost tale relies on a more or less perfect balance between rational and irrational: the irrational presence of a ghost (ghosts may exist in folklore or in the reader's imagination but are nonsensical from a scientific point of view) must be rationally justified by being placed in a plausible framework. Or rather, the more plausible (realistic) the framework is, the more accurate the details are, and the more the ghost acquires conceptual depth and emotional strength.

All these characteristics are easily found in the tales collected by Hearn in a volume published in 1904, *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things*, with one substantial difference.[1] With the possible and partial exception of Algernon Bertram Mitford, who also spent long periods in Japan and is the author of *Tales of Old Japan* (1871), one of the books that better introduced the Japanese culture into Britain, Hearn is the only British writer who died a Japanese citizen. The fourteen years spent in Japan (from 1890 to his death in 1904), the help he received from his Japanese wife and friends, allowed him to attain an outstanding knowledge of the Japanese culture, in particular of Buddhism and national folklore.

We might even maintain that today his works are read more in Japan than in the western world. Yoko Makino is ironic: "In Japan, Hearn is widely read and appraised as a writer who could understand the inner life of the Japanese people. In the West, on the contrary, he has been neglected, or criticized for dreaming an idealistic Japan".[2] Roger Pulvers (born in New York City and now an Australian citizen), a writer and a theatre

[1] His love for Japan found its literary expression in several essays and works of fiction: *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 1894; *Out of the East*, 1895; *Kokoro*, 1896; *In Ghostly Japan*, 1890; *A Japanese Miscellany*, 1901; *Kottō*, 1902; *Kwaidan*, 1904; *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, published posthumously in 1905.

[2] Yuko Makino, "From Folklore to Literature. Hearn and Japanese Legends of Tree Spirits", in *An Ape of Gods: The Art and Thought of Lafcadio Hearn*, ed. by Beongcheon Yu (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1964), 112-119.

director, though the author of a novel, *The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn*, where he draws an appreciative portrait of him, claims instead that Hearn "created an illusion and lived his days and nights within its confines. That illusion was his Japan. He found in Japan the ideal coupling of the cerebral and the sensual, mingled and undistinguishable, the one constantly recharging the other and affording him the inspiration to write".[3]

However that may be, it must also be underlined that most ghost tales by Hearn betray a Chinese origin, which gives him the opportunity to shed light on both traditions (sometimes making wise use of footnotes in his books). In 1887, that is before his journey to Japan, he had published *Some Chinese Ghosts and Other Stories*, which clearly demonstrated how deep his studies had been. Allusions to China can also be found in the already quoted collection *Tales of Old Japan* by A.B. Mitford, who before 1871 served in the Diplomatic Corps in Peking. It may not be by chance, however, that Hearn's ghost stories all belong to the last five years of his life, when he knew more about Japanese and Eastern culture. It might be useful to bear in mind that Hearn arrived in Japan on 4 April 1890. In January 1891 he married Koizumi Setsuko, who gave him two sons and one daughter. In 1895 he took Japanese citizenship and chose the name Koizumi ("little spring", "little source") Yakumo ("eight clouds"), by which he is nowadays known in Japan.[4]

As for *Japonisme*, as the French critic Philippe Burty named it, the influence of Japan on European and American literature is a complex and important phenomenon, whose origin goes back to the second half of the nineteenth century in France, when the de Goncourt brothers extolled the beauty and richness of Japanese poems and drawings. Among the writers, Stéphane Mallarmé, Pierre Loti and Émile Zola (joined in the following decades, in the English speaking world, by Ezra Pound) were the first to acknowledge their debt to Japanese tradition and to *haiku* in particular (*haiku* poems can be found in Hearn's books, too: in the final section of *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things*, for instance). In the United States *Japonisme* was studied in depth by the great scholar Ernest Fenollosa, who also favoured the development of Japanese studies in his country. Perhaps this explains why – apart from the fact that for a period he lived and published in the States – Hearn has always been granted a particular attention by American critics.[5]

The prominence of the Buddhist tradition, however, is outstanding in Hearn and is demonstrated by the presence, in the fifteen tales of *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things* of five priest figures who are either the protagonists of the stories or play an important role in them (the last three sections: "Butterflies", "Mosquitoes", "Ants", collected under the title "Insect Studies", while justifying the second part of the subtitle, *Studies of Strange Things*, are in fact little more than brilliant digressions). Such a

[3] R. Pulvers, "Lafcadio Hearn: interpreter of two disparate worlds", *The Japan Times* (19 January 2000), 18.

[4] See the biographical studies: Nina H. Kennard, *Lafcadio Hearn* (New York: Appleton, 1912); Sean G. Ronan and Koizumi Toki, *Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo). His Life, Work and Irish Background* (Dublin: Ireland Japan Association, 1991); Jonathan Cott, *Wandering Ghost: The Odyssey of Lafcadio Hearn* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Paul Murray, *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn* (Folkestone: Japanese Library, 1993. English and Japanese text).

[5] A well thought-out approach to *Japonisme* is in Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958). See also Siegfried Wichmann, *Japonisme. The Japanese Influence on Western Art since 1858* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

relevant presence in "The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōïchi", "Oshidori", "Jikininki", "Rokuro-Kubi" and "The Story of Aoyagi" cannot be simply a coincidence: priests are not only those who preserve tradition, both written and oral (like Christian preachers, Buddhist priests and monks make large use of anecdotes and parables), but it is they who are, so to speak, qualified to mediate between the visible and invisible world, between the living and the dead. Sometimes, for instance when they act as exorcists, this is given an official sanction: in the already quoted "The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōïchi", a priest and his acolyte try to free the protagonist, a singer and a player of *biwa* (a kind of four stringed lute), from the ghosts ready to kill him; an exorcist is at work in "A Dead Secret", too, where a Zen head-priest succeeds in placating the ghost (a perturbed spirit, Hamlet would call it) of a dead woman.

"The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōïchi", however, is important for other reasons. Together with some other tales in the volume which I shall refer to later, it shows Hearn's ability to shape a perfectly structured story, where the formerly quoted opposites (rational and irrational, true and false, plausible and implausible) converge to form a well-balanced whole, strengthened by a style both direct and (perhaps for this very reason) emotionally powerful. The story begins in the most traditional way, by referring, as happens in fables and fairy tales, to a remote past:

> More than seven hundred years ago, at Dan-no-ura, in the Straits of Shimonoséki, was fought the last battle of the long contest between the Heiké, or Taira clan, and the Genji, or Minamoto clan. There the Heiké perished utterly, with her women and children, and their infant emperor likewise – now remembered as Antoku Tennō. And the sea and the shore have been haunted for seven hundred years. … But there are many strange things to be seen and heard along that coast. On dark nights thousand of ghostly fires hover about the beach, or flit above the waves – pale lights which the fishermen call *Oni-bi*, or demon fires; and, whenever the winds are up, a sound of great shouting comes from that sea, like a clamor of battle.[6]

Then the reader learns that in a Buddhist temple nearby lives "a blind man named Hōïchi, who was famed for his skill in recitation and in playing upon the *biwa*". At night, when he his alone, someone who appears to be a samurai[7] comes and invites – or rather, orders him to play and sing the story of the battle in front of "a person of exceedingly high rank" and his court. Hōïchi obeys. Soon he is in the presence of a crowd he does not see but hears: "There he thought that many great people were assembled: the sound of leaves in a forest. He heard also a great humming of voices, – talking in undertones; and the speech was the speech of courts"(*K*, 9). Hōïchi, in fact, is more than the humble guest of a Buddhist temple, he is an artist. All the courtiers praise his bravura:

[6] Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (Tuttle: Boston, 1971), 3-4. Hereafter indicated as *K*.

[7] Together with Buddhist priests, samurais are the characters the reader most often meets in *Kwaidan*: "The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōïchi"; "The Story of Aoyagi"; "Jiu-Roku-Zakura", "Diplomacy". Sometimes the two typologies intertwine, as in "The Story of Aoyagi", where a samurai ends by taking the Buddhist vows and becoming an itinerant priest, thus emphasizing the homiletic aims of most tales in the collection.

> But when at last he came to tell the fate of the fair and the helpless, – the piteous perishing of the women and children, – and the death-leap of Nii-no-Ama, with the imperial infant in her arms, – then all the listeners uttered together one long, long shuddering cry of anguish; and thereafter they wept and wailed so loudly and so wildly that the blind man was frightened by the violence of the grief he had made.(*K*, 10)

As a matter of fact, the blind singer is singing for no one. Or rather, he is singing to the ghosts of those who died in the battle of Dan-no-ura and now haunt the beach where it was fought. When some servants are sent to look for him, they find Hōïchi sitting alone in a sort of black nothingness:

> But the men at once hastened to the cemetery; and there, by the help of their lanterns, they discovered Hōïchi, – sitting alone in the rain before the memorial tomb of Antoku Tennō, making his *biwa* resound, and loudly chanting the chant of the battle of Dan-no-ura. And behind him, and about him, and everywhere above the tombs, the fires of the dead were burning, like candles. Never before had so great a host of *Oni-bi* appeared in the sight of a mortal man.(*K*, 14)

All the elements of a typical tale of terror are present: darkness, tombs, ghosts. What makes them new and intriguing, however, and effective from a literary viewpoint, is the way Hearn employs them. The most wisely used device is the contrast between sight and hearing; or, to put it another way, between blindness and sound. In the passages quoted above the insistence on hearing is impressive (the acoustic range goes from humming to wailing to shouting and vice versa), but this happens throughout the tale, thus forcing the reader to share with the protagonist an attention to all the nightly sounds (for at night, to paraphrase a saying by Sophocles, everything rustles), and a blindness which in the end will fling them both into a state of terror. It must not be forgotten, as I underlined before, that Hōïchi is an artist, a dangerous quality that in the opinion of many European writers (see Hoffman, Poe, Baudelaire) was often associated with the sinful and the diabolic. We might go so far as to state that what originated as Apollonian has now (that is to say in all these authors, Hearn included) become Dionysian, to an extent that paves the way to some trends in modern and post-modern poetics. It is an ambiguous feature. Devilish as it is, art has a power to console both the living and the dead: those fallen in the battle of Dan-no-ura may be dreadful ghosts, but they are also capable of weeping for grief when art succeeds in performing such a miracle. Hōïchi is to them what the musician Orpheus was to both the souls of the dead and the Maenads. This interpretation might seem audacious, but a close reading of the text confirms it. The dismemberment theme, for instance, clearly emerges in the second half of the tale, when the priest of the temple where Hōïchi lives tells the *biwa* player what had really happened to him:

> All that you have been imagining was illusion – except the calling of the dead. By once obeying them, you have put yourself in their power. If you obey them again, after what has already occurred, they will tear you in pieces. But they would have destroyed you, sooner or later, in any event… Now I shall not be able to remain with you tonight: I am called away to perform another service. But before I go, it will be necessary to protect your body by writing holy texts upon it.(*K*, 15-16)[8]

[8] The dangerous quality of art is underlined by the first words the priest tells Hōïchi when he comes back from his ghostly recital: "Hōïchi, my poor friend, you are now in great danger! How unfortunate that you did not tell me all this before! Your wonderful skill in music has indeed brought you into strange trouble"(*Kwaidan*, 15).

Which is precisely what he and his acolyte do. The acolyte, unfortunately, forgets to write the text of the holy sutra on Hōïchi's ears, which are torn off by the ghostly samurai that every night comes to fetch him, turning him into a modern Orpheus, who is not so heroic, alive although maimed.

After this, the blind *biwa* player is given a nickname evoking both his story and its cruel conclusion: "But from the time of his adventure, he was known only by the appellation of *Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi*: Hōïchi-the-Earless". As for proper and family names, nicknames are obviously intended to endow the story with a surplus of authenticity. This is not the case of the genealogy (a nomenklatura, in some ways) of demons and ghosts that Hearn scatters about in his twice-told tales, which pursues a different goal. To cite them, to conjure them up as Hearn does using their Japanese names is to strengthen the fascination of the story, because while introducing the reader to such a different national folklore, they serve to stress the remoteness and otherness of what is told, making it – if we want to use the German definition so cherished by the experts of fantastic literature – all the more *Unheimlich*.

Fig. 1: Masaki Kobayashi, still from *Kwaidan*, 1965.

In "The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōïchi", for instance, besides common 'evil spirits', *Oni-bi*, or demon fires, and *Kijin*, goblins, are at work; the very title of "Jikininki" is the name, taken from Japanese Buddhism, of the spirits of impious individuals who seek out and eat human corpses (literally, *Jikininki* means 'human-eating ghosts'); "Mujina", which gives the eighth tale of *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things* its title, is a synonym of *Noppera-bō*, a faceless ghost; in "Rokuro-Kubi", though making a mistake (he describes, in fact, a *Nukebuki*, namely a ghost whose head takes off from the body and flies about in search of human prey), Hearn is describing one of the innumerable ghosts in Japanese folklore; in "A Dead Secret" the soul of a dead mother appears at night to her relatives, invisible from the waist downwards ("Her head and shoulders could be very distinctly seen; but from the waist downwards the figure thinned to invisibility"(*K*, 104),

a characteristic common to every kind of *Yūrei* (a comprehensive term for ghost).

Ghosts may appear at night or in the daytime (this is perhaps the most striking difference with European ghosts), in most cases when someone is particularly fatigued.[9] As may easily be expected, a common nightly situation is represented by dreams, as in "Oshidori", where a hunter shoots a female mandarin duck with his arrow and that very night is visited in his dream by a beautiful woman who claims to be the soul of the dead mandarin-duck (or a human being reborn as a duck), but in most cases – which are by far the most interesting – the nightly theme is linked to the theme of tiredness and (one more feature shared with fairy tales) to the situation of being lost in an unknown place. In "Jikininki", for instance:

> Once, when Musō Kokushi, a priest of the Zen sect, was journeying alone through the province of Mino, he lost his way in a mountain-district where there was nobody to direct him. For a long time he wandered about helplessly; and he was beginning to despair of finding shelter for the night, when he perceived, on the top of a hill lighted by the last rays of the sun, one of those little hermitages, called *anjitsu*, which are built for solitary priests. (*K*, 65)[10]

Something similar happens in "Rokuro-Kubi" and "The Story of Aoyagi":

> In the course of his first long journey, Kwairyō had occasion to visit the province of Kai. One evening, as he was travelling through the mountains of that province, darkness overtook him in a very lonesome district, leagues away from any village. So he resigned himself to pass the night under the stars; and having found a suitable grassy spot, by the roadside, he lay down there, and prepared to sleep.(*K*, 84-85)

> It was the coldest period of the year when he started; the country was covered with snow; and, though mounted upon a powerful horse, he found himself obliged to proceed slowly. The road which he followed passed through a mountain district where the settlements were few and far between; and on the second day of his journey, after a weary ride of hours, he was dismayed to find that he could not reach his intended halting-place until late in the night. He has reason to be anxious; – for a heavy snowstorm came on, with an intensely cold wind; and the horse showed signs of exhaustion.(*K*, 122)

Fig. 2: Yasumasa Fujita, colour woodblock frontispiece, in Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan. Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (Tokyo: The Shimbi Shoin, 1932).

[9] In Japan ghosts are divided into two main categories, the *shiryō*, the ghosts of the dead, coming at night only, and the *ikiryō*, the ghosts of the living, that may come either by night or day (in *Kottō* Hearn deals with them in two separate stories, "Ikiryō" and "Shiryō"). See Stephen Addiss, *Japanese Ghosts and Demons: Art of the Supernatural* (New York: Braziller, 2001).

[10] "Mujina", together with "Jikininki", "Rokuro-Kubi" and "Yuki-Onna", also engages with the theme of the shelter/trap, emphasizing (the topic is common to fairy tales) the difference between things and persons as they appear and as they are.

Loneliness, tiredness, night: all of them, taken together or separately, create in Hearn's tales a sort of suspended space – suspended between the real and unreal, the discernable and blurred, good and evil, true and false – where anything may happen, and indeed, does. In "The Dream of Akinosuké" the protagonist all of a sudden feels very drowsy (it is a hot afternoon) and has a dream, a long dream, which is in fact the story, lasting twenty-three years, of a happy regal couple that comes to an end when the princess dies. When he wakes up and tells his friends about his dream, they in their turn tell him that while he was sleeping a little yellow butterfly was fluttering over his face. Then it had alighted on the ground, and soon "a big, big ant came out of a hole, and seized it and pulled it down into the hole"(*K*, 154). Then one of his friends observes that "Ants are queer beings – possibly goblins", and Akinosuké starts to unearth a nearby ants' nest:

> The ants had furthermore built inside their excavations; and their tiny constructions of straw, clay, and stems bore an odd resemblance to miniature towns. … In the wreck of the nest he searched and searched, and at last discovered a tiny mound, on the top of which was fixed a water-worn pebble, in shape resembling a Buddhist monument. Underneath it he found – embedded in clay – the dead body of a female. (*K*, 155).

It is the princess's dead body of course. In "Jiu-Roku-Zakura" (that is, "the Cherry-tree of the Sixteenth Day"), a samurai dies instead of his withered cherry tree. In "Ubazakura", O-Sodé, a wet nurse, dies in the place of her young mistress, only asking for a cherry-tree to be planted in the garden of the local temple. Her wish is fulfilled:

> The tree grew and flourished; and on the sixteenth day of the second month of the following year – the anniversary of O-Sodé's death – it blossomed in a wonderful way. So it continued to blossom for two hundred and fifty-four years, – always upon the sixteenth day of the second month; – and its flowers, pink and white, were like the nipples of a woman's breast, bedewed with milk. And the people called it Ubazakura, the Cherry-tree of the Milk-Nurse». (*K*, 41).

In European folklore as we find it preserved in the oral or written tradition, reshaped by both ballad-singers and professional writers, the animal, vegetable and human kingdoms meet continuously. But it is only in the Japanese tales, and the ghostly tales in particular, where love for nature, the cult of the dead and the theories or rebirth and reincarnation converge into a complex and comprehensive view of the world, literally overwhelming the page. A tree may hide the spirit of a man ("Jiu-Roku-Zakura"), a woman may turn into a tree ("Ubazakura"), a dead ant may once have been a royal princess ("The Dream of Akinosuké"). This means

that man, far from being at the centre of the universe, is merely a part of it; but this also underlines the metamorphic quality of literature as such and of Japanese culture in particular, whose stress on the metamorphic energy of reality finds an equal only in Greek mythology and in Ovid's verse.

Koray Melikoğlu

"The Phantom of the Opus": The Implied Author in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*

It is not difficult to identify in Kazuo Ishiguro's first novel, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982),[1] a concern with spectrality and with the kind of obligation that Derrida advocates in *Specters of Marx* when he writes of "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."[2] *PV* deals with how a mother in a painful process belatedly develops such respect when in the course of her first-person narrative she comes to own up to her co-responsibility for her first daughter's suicide. Like a ghost, the dead girl accompanies the conversations this mother has with her younger daughter: "although we never dwelt long on the subject … it was never far away, hovering over us whenever we talked" (*PV,* 10). The ghost shapes a narrative which tries to ignore it, claiming the mother's attention that was denied the child earlier.

A toned-down version of the classic kind of ghostliness, then, is easily found in *PV*, as most critical treatments of the novel have demonstrated.[3] At one point, for instance, the mother and her second daughter are for a moment tempted to attribute noises heard from the dead girl's room to its former inhabitant (*PV,* 95). Cases of ghostliness where an event which should by this-worldly rights inhabit one time level of the novel seems to intrude on another level – spectrality, that is, as the "non-contemporaneity of present time with itself"(*SM,* 25) – have also been discussed in Ishiguro criticism and related to the novel's theme of unacknowledged guilt.[4]

We can use Fredric Jameson's comment on the broader sense of ghostliness introduced by Derrida to describe the experience of the narrator-protagonist Etsuko: spectrality holds "that we would do well not to count on (the living present's) density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstances betray us".[5] The novel tells how Etsuko's self-image loses its solidity, when it is measured against the events of her past.

This article is, however, especially interested in an aspect of the novel which is less markedly associated with conventional ghostliness. It is captured in the last clause in Jameson's statement, which speaks of betrayal. There is a personalised presence in the novel that is capable of such betrayal and spectral in a manner which the instances of ghostliness mentioned thus far do not exhibit. This presence is for the most part less obtrusive than that of the novel's characters. In fact, it is often so impalpable that many critics even deny its existence: it is the implied author.

[1] Kazuo Ishiguro, *A Pale View of Hills* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991). Hereafter cited as *PV.*

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), xix. Hereafter cited as *SM.*

[3] See, for instance, Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 28-36.

[4] Erhard Reckwitz, "Der Roman als Metaroman: Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*; Kazuo Ishiguro, *A Pale View of Hills*; John Fowles, *Mantissa*", *Poetica* 18 (1986), 154-157.

[5] Fredric Jameson, "Marx's Purloined Letter", in Michael Sprinker, ed., *Ghostly Demarcations. A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx* (London and New York: Verso Books, 1999), 39.

It has been suggested the implied author should be banned from narratological theory, notably by Ansgar Nünning, who called it an "anthropomorphized phantom", and by a whole movement supporting him.[6] Similarly, Heinz Antor, quite rightly, denies the implied author an ontological status.[7] But as Derrida's jocularly derived term "hauntological" suggests (*SM,* 161), this is no proof that the notion lacks consequence. I shall argue that the concept is a useful one, at least for examinations of the reading experience, and that it can be related to categories established in the psychological and philosophical study of the self-conscious emotions. I propose that in a crucial scene in *PV*, which to my knowledge has to date received no critical attention, the implied author's unobtrusive inhabiting of the text suddenly attains a palpability which causes a new awareness and re-orientation in the reader. The reader's reaction to this sudden apparition can be seen in terms of Jean-Paul Sartre's description of the effect of the Other's intrusion into the awareness of the self: "The appearance of the Other in the world corresponds ... to a fixed sliding of the whole universe ... ".[8] This sliding – the betrayal of assumed solidity noted by Jameson – goes along with what in the scene under discussion seems for a moment to be a *moral* betrayal, because the implied author's allegiance to the reader is given up.

In what follows, first an overview will be given of what has emerged to be a critical consensus on the novel's theme of the first-person narrator's unacknowledged guilt, which she treats indirectly by talking about a double of herself. This overview will be enriched by a discussion of hitherto neglected passages. The second part of the article provides a phenomenological analysis of a central passage in the novel which triggers off the main reversal in the reader's identification with the fictional characters, upon which, in turn, the insight that the novel holds ready for its audience is hinged.

1.

In her home in the English countryside, the Japanese narrator Etsuko tells of the recent visit of her British-born daughter Niki by her marriage with her deceased English husband. Niki wants to support her mother during the mourning over her older sister Keiko, born in Japan in Etsuko's first marriage with a Japanese. It transpires that Keiko hanged herself, because she had failed to master life in England, where her mother took her as a child. These recent events lead Etsuko to reminisce over yet another, much more distant, layer of the past, her life in Nagasaki after World War II, when she was pregnant with Keiko.

The Nagasaki narrative concerns a few weeks at the time of the Korean War, when Etsuko made friends with a widowed mother from Tokyo who

[6] Ansgar Nünning, "'But why *will* you say that I am mad?' On the Theory, History, and Signals of Unreliable Narration in British Fiction", *Arbeiten zu Anglistik and Amerikanistik* 22 (1997), 86. See also Ansgar Nünning, ed., *Unreliable Narration. Studien zur Theorie und Praxis unglaubwürdigen Erzählens in der englischsprachigen Erzählliteratur* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1998).

[7] Heinz Antor, "Unreliable Narration and (Dis-)Orientation in the Postmodern Neo-Gothic Novel: Reflections on Patrick Mcgrath's *The Grotesque* (1989)", *Miscélanea* 24 (2001), 11-38.

[8] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness. An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, transl. by Hazel E. Barnes (London: Routledge, 1969), 255.

lived in the neighbourhood with her little daughter. The narrator does not make any evaluative comments on the relationship between this mother, Sachiko, and her daughter, Mariko, but still the following picture emerges: under the strain of financial and other difficulties following the dropping of the atomic bomb the once wealthy Sachiko neglects and perhaps abuses her child, who is also suffering from the traumatic experiences of the war. Sachiko hopes to solve her problems with the help of her American lover Frank. For this reason, it is often Etsuko who looks after Mariko, so that her concern for the neglected child enlists the sympathies of the reader, while Sachiko, despite the absence of overt criticism directed against her, appears as reproachable. The general feeling conveyed by Etsuko's narrative is that Mariko would be better off with her as mother.

Etsuko's memory is admittedly fallible (*PV,* 41, 156), and caution about her reliability is also suggested by the remark that she harbours a "selfish desire not to be reminded of the past" (*PV,* 9). Her reported attitude towards motherhood, for instance, is contradictory (*PV,* 24, 112). Etsuko thus shows an unreliability which is similar to Sachiko's, whose interpretations of her relations with Frank self-servingly waver in accordance with the varying circumstances. When the chances that he will keep his promise to take Sachiko and her daughter to the United States seem bad, she finds it would be "unsettling" for Mariko "finding herself in a land full of foreigners" (*PV,* 86). When Sachiko is more confident about her lover, she thinks "America … a far better place for a young girl to grow up" than Japan (*PV,* 170).

Various other parallels between the two mother/daughter pairs will impress themselves on the reader at some point or other, notably that Sachiko's hope to marry a Westerner and leave Japan with an unwilling child echoes Etsuko's marriage to a foreigner and her moving to England despite her apprehensions concerning Keiko. As Etsuko remarks, an "eerie spell" seems to bind her and Sachiko together (*PV,* 41).

A prominent motif that is recurrent in both the English and the Japanese levels of the story and thus suggests an analogy between the two is death through asphyxiation, i.e. hanging or drowning. Etsuko is haunted not only by the image of Keiko hanging in her room but also by a dream of a girl whom she at first takes to be on a swing, but then recognises to be hanging from a tree, probably one of the victims of a series of child murders in Nagasaki (*PV,* 95-100). The killing of children also plays a part in what Sachiko tells about the origin of her daughter's disturbing traits and the child's obsession with a mysterious woman: one day in Tokyo Mariko ran away, and her mother followed her to a canal where they saw a woman immersing something in the water: "she turned round and smiled at Mariko …. Well, she brought her arms out of the canal and showed us what she'd been holding under the water. It was a baby" (*PV,* 74).

Mariko frequently mentions "the other woman" to Etsuko, and early on there are hints at an identification between Etsuko and this woman. It is striking that Mariko is mysteriously suspicious of Etsuko from the start despite the benevolence that the woman displays (*PV,* 17). This suggests that Etsuko is omitting something from her relation that would explain the child's wariness. The passage just quoted makes it understandable that Mariko mistrusts persons who show an outwardly friendly behaviour like the mother who smiles while drowning her child. In an account of a search for Mariko with a lantern associated with the mysterious woman Etsuko remarks on the shadow it casts. The shadow conjures up the suggestion of a double presence which through the lantern is connected with the other, child-killing woman (*PV,* 19, 171).

Mariko is particularly worried about her mother's intention to drown her kittens when they leave for America. The girl identifies herself with her kittens in a scene in which she contemplates eating a spider, saying that her old cat used to do the same (*PV,* 78-82). Etsuko significantly declines to take one of the pets to save it from being killed. The pregnant woman's refusal of a kitten identified with a human child casts a shadow on her future behaviour as a parent when read along with her "misgiving about motherhood" (*PV,* 17).

When Etsuko, in care of Mariko, follows her to the bank of a river – an echo of how Sachiko had followed the girl to the canal where the deranged mother killed her child – the following dialogue occurs. It combines several crucial motifs and shows Ishiguro's typical dialogue structure of repetitious utterances seemingly exchanged at cross-purposes which appear to refer to issues left implicit. In the scene an indirect explanation for Mariko's unaccountable misgivings about Etsuko is given:

> "What's that?" she [Mariko] asked.
> "Nothing. It just tangled on to my foot when I was walking."
> "What is it though?"
> "Nothing, just a piece of old rope. Why are you out here?"
> ….
> "Why have you got the rope?"
> I watched her for a moment. Signs of fear were appearing on her face.
> "Don't you want a kitten then?" she asked.
> "No, I don't think so. What's the matter with you?"
> Mariko got to her feet. I came forward until I reached the willow tree. … I could hear Mariko's footsteps running off into the darkness. (*PV,* 84)

The reference to the willow tree with its uncanny folkloric associations reinforces the danger that the child perceives in the rope.[9] The subliminal suggestion is that Etsuko's refusal of a kitten identified with Mariko amounts to the threat to hang her. At the same time the rope connects this threat with Keiko's suicide. The ghostly agency that Mariko fears from Etsuko

[9] Isabelle Joyeau, "Le discours du leurre dans les romans de Kazuo Ishiguro", *Études anglaises* 50.2 (April-June 1997), 241.

here is thus transferred to the mother's role in the context of Keiko's death.

The water/death motif comes to a climax with Sachiko's drowning of the kittens (*PV,* 165-168). This killing is pointedly merged with Mariko's fear of Etsuko in the following exchange about Sachiko's lover and the prospect of leaving Japan:

> "I don't want to go away. And I don't like him. He's like a pig."
> "You're not to speak like that," I said, angrily. …. "He's very fond of you, and he'll be just like a new father. Everything will turn out well, I promise. …. If you don't like it over there, we can always come back. …. But we have to try it and see if we like it there. I'm sure we will." (*PV,* 172-173)

As most commentators on the novel have observed, at this point there is a conflation between the two women expressed in Etsuko's use of "we" instead of "you", when she talks about her friend's, not her own, leaving for America. Recalling the earlier remark that the subject of Keiko's death is omnipresent, we recognise in this passage the veiled version of an exchange that may have occurred between Etsuko and Keiko before their departure to England. Etsuko's threatening role is underscored when in the following conversation Mariko asks about an unnamed item in Etsuko's hand. In view of the scene discussed above we assume that what upsets the child is again a rope. The ghostliness that lies in the transference of the threat from the pet-killing Sachiko to Etsuko is enhanced by the fact that on this occasion there is no explicit mention of a rope, so that it is left to the reader to imagine the precise nature of the danger connected with Etsuko.

The drowning of the kittens hearkens back to a slightly earlier occurrence of the water-death motif. Here Etsuko meets the absent Sachiko's cousin. When the old woman repeatedly asks after Mariko's mother, the child looks at Etsuko "intently" (*PV,* 158), which again points to an unspoken connection between the absent mother and the narrator. The cousin has come to invite Sachiko to live with her and her father and does not omit to say that there is also enough room for Mariko's kittens (*PV,* 162). In effect, then, the relative offers an alternative to leaving Japan, to drowning the kittens, and to uprooting Mariko which remains unrealised and hence enforces the culpability of the person rejecting this offer.

A further slip underscores the equation of the two mother-daughter pairs Sachiko/Mariko and Etsuko/Keiko: in the English narrative, Etsuko gives Niki a picture of Nagasaki, which she had once visited. She justifies her choice with the remark "Keiko was happy that day" (*PV,* 182). But she had made that trip with Sachiko and Mariko, not with her own child, who was not even born at the time. At this point in the novel Keiko, rather than being "already dead or not yet born" (*SM,* xix), is both: already dead for

the narrator and not yet born for the experiencing Etsuko in the Nagasaki episode.

At the end of the novel, Niki departs "with an oddly self-conscious air, as if she were leaving without [Etsuko's] approval" (*PV,* 183). The impression is that her mother cannot connect to her any more than she could to Keiko, the difference between the daughters being that Niki feels at home in England. Etsuko, like her first child, has remained a stranger. This is evidenced by the fact that the mother thinks of the place where she lives as "so truly like England" (*PV,* 182), whereas English-born Niki calls it "not the real countryside, just a residential version to cater for the wealthy people" (*PV,* 47). There is a hint of retaliation in the fact that Etsuko experiences the same estrangement that Keiko suffered on account of her mother's choice.

The narrator's examination of her past starts as an apologia for her life and ends as a confession of her neglect of her first daughter. The different stages of her growing insight into Keiko's suicide are mirrored in her comparisons of her two spouses. We witness that her first husband Jiro treats her rudely, and she mentions an unspecified crisis in their relationship which resulted in their separation (*PV,* 126). Half-way through the novel, Etsuko still defends her decision to leave Japan, but begins to mention drawbacks and, compared to her earlier grudging acknowledgement of Jiro's good sides – "in his own terms, he was a dutiful husband" (*PV,* 90) – is now more generous in her assessment of his character:

> I do not claim to recall Jiro with affection, but then he was never the oafish man my [second] husband considered him to be … And indeed, for the seven years he knew his daughter, he was a good father to her. Whatever else I convinced myself of during those final days, I never pretended Keiko would not miss him. (*PV,* 90)

At this stage Etsuko, after this partial reconsideration of her past, still proceeds to reiterate that her leaving Japan was "justifiable" and that she "always kept Keiko's interests very much at heart" (*PV,* 91), which echoes Sachiko's assurance, "I'm a mother, and my daughter comes first" (*PV,* 87). Only at the end of the novel does Etsuko give up all qualifications when she evaluates her departure from Japan: "I knew all along she [Keiko] wouldn't be happy over here. But I decided to bring her just the same" (*PV,* 176). The telling of her own story in disguise has helped her to re-evaluate her past. As mentioned above, Etsuko turns to her own shadow just before talking with Mariko about leaving Japan (*PV,* 172). This is an indication that it is she who brings this fate upon the child. The passage recalls the point in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* where Jonas, after murdering a blackmailer, "became in a manner his own ghost and phantom, and was at once the haunting spirit and the haunted man".[10] This sheds

[10] Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890), ch. 47.

some light on Etsuko's case: being divided like Jonas, in retrospect she is only aware of herself as a haunter because she splits off her haunted self in the form of Sachiko. In this way Etsuko's conscious better self can try to contravene her dissociated alter ego Sachiko's mistreatment of her daughter.

Etsuko herself is ghostly in that she tries to do in narrative what the phantoms of the deceased are unable to in Dickens's *Christmas Carol*: "The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever".[11] For Scrooge, who comes to regret missed opportunities of doing good, and for Dickens's reader it is not too late to heed the warning against becoming like these phantoms; but for Etsuko it is, and therefore she can only interfere imaginatively by casting herself in the role of benefactor when recapitulating the events. However, the aspect the narrating Etsuko edits out of her self and ascribes to someone else still manages to convey its association with the real Etsuko, which is why Sachiko and Mariko react to her hidden self with suspicion and amusement, respectively.

A look at a Japanese representation of psychological duality – which I suspect was an inspiration for *PV* – may be helpful in summing up a few points about the Etsuko/Sachiko pair. The following text accompanying the image of a woman and a demon on a mid-nineteenth century votive plate exhibited at a Japanese temple condemns the practice of infanticide, which once was widespread in Japan as a means of family planning:

> This woman's face is kind, but she thinks nothing of killing her own child or, even more so, someone else's. She is a cruel woman whose face doesn't fit her demon-like heart .... People who 'give back [i.e. kill] their children' should look at this picture if they want to see their own face. What is reflected in a mirror is their surface face, not the real one. This picture shows their real form.[12]

Indeed, as Jonathan Swift famously remarked for the context of satire, we tend to perceive in unfavourable images returned by literary mirrors everybody's face but our own.[13] Mindful of this, Ishiguro starts out in *PV* with separate representations of his character's real face and her perceived, more flattering, face; only later does he blend them together in a gradual process. Etsuko's story is a mirror in which she initially sees herself with her 'surface face', whereas for the reader her narrative soon becomes like a dual picture in which he/she recognises Sachiko to be Etsuko's real form.

Before dealing with the question in what way the reader too sees him/herself reflected in *PV*, I shall draw attention to further ghostly elements in the novel that are of specifically Japanese origin. Etsuko's association with a rope and the death by asphyxiation motif could be inspired by details of the Japanese history of infanticide: strangling and drowning were among the methods employed. The other side of the novel's good mother/bad

[11] Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Penguin, 1984), 38. The text is mentioned explicitly in *PV*, 110.

[12] Cit. in Elizabeth G. Harrison, "Strands of Complexity: The Emergence of 'Mizuko Kuyō' in Postwar Japan", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67.4 (1999), 782-783. The image can be viewed in Muriel Jolivet, "Derrière les représentations de l'infanticide ou mabiki ema", *Bulletin of the Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University* 37 (2002), 87, Fig. 5, <http://www.info.sophia.ac.jp/fs/staff/kiyo/kiyo37/kiyo37.pdf>, 1 March 2008.

[13] Jonathan Swift, "The Battle of the Books", in Kathleen Williams, ed., *A Tale of a Tub and Other Satires* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton), 140.

mother duality appears to be represented in the rope's connection with one of the manifestations of the bodhisattva Kannon, a popular protector of children. The Fukūkenjaku ('never-empty lasso') Kannon has a noose to catch souls and lead them to salvation (see Fig. 1).[14]

There exist religious memorial rites for *mizuko* ("water children"), i.e. victims of miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, and infanticide. *Mizuko* services are advertised by clergy and spiritualists; often they appeal to women's feelings of guilt by threatening that non-performance will be punished with a curse from the *mizuko*.[15] The above-mentioned fear of the appearance of the dead Keiko as a revenant has a clear affinity with this notion.

Mizuko are believed to reside in the limbo of *Sai-no-kawara*; it has been proposed that the riverside in *PV* (11) alludes to this "Riverbank in the land of Sai".[16] Sachiko's slapping of a kitten which tries to hold on to her sleeve (*PV,* 47) and the references to her wet sleeves in the drowning scene (*PV,* 167-168) might be intended as ironic inversions of the protecting nature of a being which frequently plays a part in *mizuko* rites: the bodhisattva Jizō hiding the children in his long sleeves to protect them from demons. Those who cannot walk he (originally female) supports with his staff (see Fig. 2), which may be alluded to in *PV* when Niki

[14] Kenneth Dauber, "Object, Genre, and Buddhist Sculpture", *Theory and Society* 21.4 (August 1992), 580.

[15] See the contributions by Ronald M. Green, Elizabeth G. Harrison, William R. LaFleur, and Meredith Underwood in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67.4 (1999).

[16] Esther Santel, "Cross-cultural Fiction? Die Bedeutung der 'Japaneseness' in Kazuo Ishiguro's frühen Roman und Erzählungen", MA thesis (Berlin, Free University, 2003), 38-39.

Fig. 1: Fukūkenjaku Kannon with noose, Kanzeon-ji, Kyushu, Japan, *Monuments of Art History*, <http://www.art-and-archaeology.com/japan/kanzeonji5.html>, 1 July 2009, photo. Courtesy of Michael D. Gunther.

Fig. 2: Jizō with staff and child at Hase Dera in Kamakura, Japan, *Onmark Productions*, <http://www.onmarkproductions.com/jizo-and-child-hase-dera-kamakura.jpg>, 1 July 2009, photo. Courtesy of Mark Schumacher.

straightens the canes supporting the neglected "young tomato plants" in Etsuko's garden (*PV,* 91).

Like the kittens, these plants obviously stand for Keiko/Mariko. Moreover, Etsuko in this scene notices "something unmistakably childlike" about Niki (*PV,* 92): Jizū is often depicted as a child himself (see Fig. 3).[17]

It is on her way back from feeding the goldfish that Niki looks after the tomatoes, which might allude to the food offerings made during *mizuko* rites.[18]

2.

In this section, a discussion of reader identification will lead into a consideration of the implied author as a ghostly presence in the reading process which on occasion forces itself into the reader's awareness and in this way can trigger a re-orientation in the latter's attitude towards the fictional characters.

What is important about the subplot of the novel for the issue at the centre of this article is that it mirrors the main action's reversal in the control of sympathy. This line of the action comprises a visit from Etsuko's father-in-law Ogata to Nagasaki at the time of the Sachiko episode and adds a political strain to the main plot's theme of guilt. Ogata tries to get his son's support for a complaint against an article criticising the old man.[19] That Ogata is kind and Jiro harsh to Etsuko (*PV,* 131) leads the reader to transfer his/her sympathy for the narrator to the father and to dislike the son. In the course of the narrative, however, another facet to the character of Etsuko's sympathetic benefactor emerges. It is heralded in a passage where Ogata and Etsuko visit a peace memorial. Significantly, when Ogata is about to write on a postcard, he "glance(s) up towards the statue as if for inspiration", and Etsuko jokingly remarks to him, "Father's looking very guilty" (*PV,* 138). In the following passage it is revealed that before the war Ogata denounced a number of teachers who were then imprisoned. This sheds a new light on Jiro's non-compliance with his father's request to support him in his issue with the critical article. Jiro's delaying tactics, which Etsuko condemns, now seem understandable, and it is he who defends Japan's new course against Ogata's nationalist criticism. With Etsuko and Ogata, then, *PV* gives the reader characters to identify with; their unpleasant sides are only revealed later, with the result that the readers find themselves on the side of a child neglector and a nationalistic war supporter.

[17] William R. LaFleur, "Memorializing One's Mizuko", in Frank E. Reynolds and Jason A. Carbine, eds., *Life of Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 200-201.

[18] Bardwell Smith, "Buddhism and Abortion in Contemporary Japan: *Mizuko Kuyō* and the Confrontation with Death", *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 15.1 (1988), 10-11.

[19] A version of this subplot forms the main action of Ishiguro's second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1986).

Fig. 3: Jizō with childlike features in graveyard at Raikoji Temple in Kamakura, Japan, *Onmark Productions*, <http://www.onmarkproductions.com/jizo-mizuko-raikoji1.jpg>, 1 July 2009, photo. Courtesy of Mark Schumacher.

I shall now dwell further on the reader's response to such reversals, analysing with the help of Wayne C. Booth's concept of the implied author a passage in *PV* which condenses the re-orienting effect that changes in identification can have on the reader's self-awareness. What I have in mind when I speak of a presence which at times intrudes into the reader's consciousness, is the same as the entity referred to in a passage by Bruce Robbins on Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day*, though the term 'implied author' is not used here.[20] Having proposed evidence for the butler protagonist Stevens's obsessive professionalism and neglect of his private life, Robbins continues: "In case we miss the point, the 1923 conference is also the moment when the butler's father … has a stroke and dies while Stevens himself … refuses to interrupt his professional attentions to the diplomats downstairs".[21] Robbins's wry remark, "In case we miss the point", clearly points to a designing force behind the novel which sees to it that this design is noticed by the reader.

Etsuko's account of how Sachiko neglects her daughter implies unvoiced accusations. Before the identity between the two women is fully revealed, we gain a singular insight into the overstrained Sachiko's reaction to these oblique reproaches through a rhetorical question she asks when once again Etsuko warns that things in the USA may not turn out well for Mariko and her friend: "Do you think I imagine for one moment that I'm a good mother…?" (*PV,* 171). In a long succession of indirections, this outburst of straightforwardness brings it home that Etsuko's cautious but insistent criticism of Sachiko's child-rearing falls rather short of the accused person's self-awareness. Thus, it is not the case that Etsuko is blessed with an insight into the moral nature of Sachiko's treatment of the girl that the criticised mother herself lacks; rather, both women share the same negative view of this treatment.

Along with earlier occasions on which Sachiko embarrasses her friend by letting it on that she knows what is going on in Etsuko's mind, this scene paves the way for the 'we'-for-'you' and the 'Keiko'-for-'Mariko' substitutions, which unambiguously establish that Sachiko is the narrator's unacknowledged second self. However, these misnomers are only a crystallisation of the general drift of the novel, which gestures towards the sameness of the two. The outburst, by contrast, introduces something new. For this reason, Sheng-mei Ma's view, representative of many others, of the last slip as "the final 'punch line'" seems to shift too much emphasis away from the revelatory outburst scene.[22] The slips also appear as less significant in view of the fact that in a recent interview Ishiguro expressed regret over his "gimmicky" handling of the blurring of different time levels in the novel as indicated by the misnomers.[23]

Sachiko, who has so far been under scrutiny, reciprocates this look openly in her outburst, which causes Etsuko to realise that somebody's

[20] Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1989).

[21] Bruce Robbins, "Very busy just now: Globalization and Harriedness in Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*", *Comparative Literature* 53.4 (Fall 2001), 426.

[22] Sheng-Mei Ma, "Immigrant Schizophrenic in Asian Diaspora Literature", *Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 18.

[23] "Kazuo Ishiguro: The Art of Fiction No. 196" (interview), *Paris Review* 184 (Spring 2008), 39.

gaze rests on her too. Because of his/her identification with the narrator, the reader is likely to feel the same. Wolfgang Iser describes such processes as "an essential quality of aesthetic experience": through "discrepancies" such as the suddenly enabled new view on Sachiko, the reader "may detach himself from his own participation in the text and see himself being guided from without".[24] Such awareness, doubling Etsuko's experience of being watched and caught by Sachiko, requires someone who acts as observer and guide. This suddenly obtrusive presence can be captured, I propose, with the notion of the implied author.

Iser points to the self-awareness involved in the act of reading: "the observer finds himself in a strange, halfway position: he is involved, and he watches himself being involved" (134). We can relate this to the psychological study of self-conscious emotions, especially shame and guilt. The potential of shame to "motivate productive soul-searching" which may result in "self-repair" has frequently been pointed out by psychologists.[25] Philosopher Bernard Williams's view that "shame … embodies conceptions of what one is and of how one is related to others" entails the same idea.[26] Related to this is Sartre's famous account of the emergence of shame, which involves a peeping Tom who suddenly feels caught. This phenomenological scenario can usefully be examined with a view to the outburst scene in *PV*, not only because Sachiko's gaze is repeatedly described as resting on Etsuko. Sartre's peeping Tom is torn out of his absorption with what he sees through a keyhole by the creaking of a floorboard, which causes him to experience shame before the potential gaze of another: "Shame is ... the acknowledgment that I am that object which another self looks at and judges."[27] Not dissimilarly, Williams presents a model of the mechanism of shame which is based on an internalised watcher (219-223).

My contention is that the implied author, if taken as a construction by the reader, can derive emotional investment from such an internalised watcher and thus cause the reader's sense of being caught. Just as according to Williams one is aware in the experience of shame of the censure of an internalised authority, the implied author's suddenly felt presence in the outburst scene is that of a judging Other. Characteristically, Booth named his study of ethical criticism, in which his notion of implied author is reiterated, *The Company We Keep*.[28] The title expresses the idea that we are not alone when we are reading but accompanied by another who at times may look at us as Sachiko looks back at Etsuko.

The relation between shame and self-awareness is also apparent in the foreshadowings of the outburst scene, but there the self-consciousness is limited to Etsuko; only in the later scene is it extended to the reader: Sachiko knows more about her than Etsuko cares to admit, and this knowledge has the power to cause embarrassment or shame in the person thus seen through.

[24] Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 133.

[25] June Price Tangney and Peter Salovey, "Problematic Social Emotions: Shame, Guilt, Jealousy, and Envy", ed. by Robin M. Kowalski et al., *The Social Psychology of Emotional and Behavioral Problems. Interfaces of Social and Clinical Psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1999), 179.

[26] Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 92.

[27] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 261.

[28] Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep. An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988).

When Sachiko appears in a scenic presentation for the first time, she is, unaccountably, "gazing" at her friend "with a slightly amused expression", which makes Etsuko "laugh self-consciously" (*PV,* 15). This self-consciousness forebodes that the self-awareness Etsuko is to gain in the course of the narrative will comprise something unpleasant. Another instance occurs, when Sachiko makes her friend blush by referring to the questions about her lover that she knows Etsuko is burning to ask (*PV,* 71-72).

Because of its merits in the description of readers' responses, I share Booth's unwillingness to dispense with the notion of the implied author. He responded to Gérard Genette's rejection of the concept by questioning the appropriateness of such dismissal for the context of ethical issues, pointing out that we need to go beyond formalism to explore "our reading experience when we *listen* to stories and think not simply about how they are put together but rather about what they *do* to us".[29] The implied author, a 'mental construct', "the image of the real author as it could be constructed – by the reader, of course – on the basis of the text",[30] is one cause of the emotions which accompany the reading and enable the reader's entanglement in what he/she reads. Of the admittedly multi-facetted term, which now is applied to the author's image of him/herself and now to the reader's image of the author, at least the latter use is helpful when ethical concerns are investigated. Thus, if we take Genette's mockingly scientific abbreviation, IA, to stand only for the implied author of formalism, we need not object to his verdict, "Exit IA" (143-144), provided we add that the implied author of reader-oriented criticism remains on stage.

When adopting the concept, we should, however, take into account modifications suggested by more recent research. In his original definition of unreliable narration Booth postulated "a secret communion of the author and reader behind the narrator's back",[31] with the former two seeing through the weaknesses in the latter's account and behaviour. But for most of Ishiguro's narrators with their self-admitted unreliability Kathleen Wall's observation that the implied author and reader do *not* "silently nudge(e) one another in the ribs at the folly and delusion of the narrator" is more accurate.[32] Thus, in the outburst scene in *PV* the reader should become aware that something has been going on behind his/her back as well. Whereas the misnomers are betrayals, to take up Jameson's term again, which upset ontology in that they hint at a fusion of different narrative levels, the outburst adds to this a betrayal of allegiance: it seemingly disappoints the reader's expectation of loyalty from the implied author. The latter, by granting Sachiko a point over Etsuko, takes on a quality that is not accounted for by Booth's definition. The reader is dispelled from a high moral ground he/she has shared with Etsuko in what the following misnomers will confirm to be a downward movement ending at a level as low as Sachiko's.

[29] Ibid., 125-126; emphasis in the original. Booth is responding to Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), ch. 19.

[30] Genette, *Narrative*, 139. For the implied author as a "mental construct", see Shlomith Rimmon, "A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative: Genette's *Figures III* and the Structuralist's Study of Fiction", *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976), 58.

[31] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 300.

[32] Kathleen Wall, "*The Remains of the Day* and Its Challenges to Theories of Unreliable Narration", *Journal of Narrative Technique* 24.11 (1994), 21.

The outburst's revelation that Sachiko shares Etsuko's view of her treatment of Mariko, taken together with the fact that this does not stop her from mistreating the girl, suggests that Etsuko too, were she in her friend's place, could not help neglecting the child. Accordingly, the reader concludes in a first step that in Etsuko he/she has identified with a potential child neglector. The misnomers then add the information that Etsuko did in fact abuse her daughter, and the reader now becomes aware that he/she has identified with someone who actually abused a child.

The outburst scene is immediately followed by the 'we'-for-'you' substitution, which we now should cease to refer to as a misnomer or slip and read as Etsuko showing that she now acknowledges her guilt towards her first child. The outburst has caused her to realise that she is narrating her own story, not someone else's. Etsuko now threatens to part company with the reader in that she identifies with her alter ego Sachiko, i.e. reintegrates her split-off guilty self. The reader's world is shaken, ultimately through a process initiated by the apparition of the implied author in the outburst scene. To catch up with Etsuko's new level of self-awareness, the reader has to emulate her identification with Sachiko. With transitional states such as this in mind, psychologists Don Kuiken and Shelley Sikora and literary scholar David S. Miall suggest, with reference to Iser, that the fluctuating identification with an author, narrator, or character during the reading process offers within "that 'blank' moment between one identification and another the possibility of changing the reader's sense of self".[33]

The relationship between Etsuko and Sachiko is mimetic of the relationship between the reader and Etsuko. The reader is to realise that ethically he/she is in the same position with respect to the narrator as she is with respect to Sachiko. What the guilty mother is to Etsuko, namely a means to recognise her own guilt, Etsuko is meant to be to the audience. Now it is up to them to learn from the narrator's mistake in which they have participated and to refrain from condemning her as she has condemned Sachiko. It is exactly self-righteousness of the kind displayed by Etsuko that the reader is intended to avoid directing against her in turn.

The insight effected by Sachiko's outburst on the part of Etsuko and of the reader is not one into moral principles. On the contrary, the scene shows that these are shared by all three. The difference up to this point is merely that Sachiko is in a situation which demands that her existing moral principles be put to practice, and Etsuko is not – their principles themselves do not differ. Likewise, it is demonstrated to the reader that up to the outburst he/she has only observed someone else's predicament. As, according to Iser, "meaning is not to be illustrated by the characters, but is to take place within the reader"[34] the identification with the judgmental Etsuko is intended to entangle him/her in the moral dilemma dealt with in the novel. As a result, the reader "is suddenly being subjected

[33] Don Kuiken, David S. Miall, Shelley Sikora, "Forms of Self-Implication in Literary Reading", *Poetics Today* 25.2 (Summer 2004), 179. The article is based on an experimental study.

[34] Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader. Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 43.

to the standards of his own criticism" and "realizes that he is similar to those who are supposed to be the objects of his criticism" (116-117).

In *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, which deals with more radical forms of otherness than that represented by Sachiko in *PV*, Richard Kearney asks: "is it not this sense of the other as, in part, a stranger in myself, keeping me a stranger to myself, which serves the crucial function of moral 'conscience' (*Gewissen*)?"[35] We have indeed seen that in the outburst scene Sachiko, whom we took for someone morally estranged from us, serves as a vehicle for Etsuko's and our voice of conscience that makes us confront someone in ourselves whom we would prefer to regard as a stranger. If the implied author, to whom we attribute this voice, is a phantom, someone we ourselves construct in the reading process on the basis of a figure internalised during our socialisation, we at times feel this phantom's gaze resting on us all the same, a gaze that can haunt us with the phantom pain of being caught in a shameful act of which we thought only strangers capable.

[35] Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters. Interpreting Otherness* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 80.

Laura Sarnelli

Ghostly Femininities: *Christabel*, *Carmilla*, and *Mulholland Drive*

> What does she want? To sleep, perchance to dream, to be loved in a dream, to be approached, touched, almost, to almost come (*jouir*). But not to come: or else she would wake up. But she came in a dream, once upon a time.
> (Hélène Cixous, *Sorties*)

The concept of ghostly femininities is clearly expressed in these lyrical words which condense at once the idea of a female subjectivity suspended between life and death, waking and dreaming; the feeling of a desire to be desired, fulfilled as in a dreamlike future to come; and the sensation of a spectral return from the past, an endless, phantasmatic repetition implied in the fabulous "once upon a time".[1]

Between the ghostly and the dreamy, the female body stages itself, as if women, like ghosts, hovered within the interstitial spaces between the visible and invisible, the symbolic and the imaginary, the real and unreal, the material and metaphorical.[2] Feminist studies on the representation of womanhood in literature have pointed out that the creative and productive force of femininity lies exactly in its posing a fundamental contradiction: woman is both uncanny for her unspeakable alterity and seductive by virtue of her enigmatic quality; she is both repulsive because threatening and attractive because unfathomable.[3] She shares with the ghostly this uncanny double: the ghost wavers in a liminal zone between the living and the dead, human and non-human, presence and absence, "staging a duplicitous presence, at once sign of an absence and of an inaccessible other scene, of a beyond".[4]

This inbetweenness assumes a sublime connotation – what cannot be spoken, what exceeds any representation – and a specifically feminine figuration in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's unfinished long poem *Christabel* (1797-1800), Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's ghost story *Carmilla* (1872), and David Lynch's postmodern movie *Mulholland Drive* (2001). The 'beyond' as ghostly and the ghostly as a gendered space will be examined in this study, together with the way in which the representation of ghostly femininities becomes a powerful site of contestation, offering the spectre of a powerful, different womanhood. Here the phantasmatic becomes the site in which femininity reveals its alternative agency.

The texts under scrutiny share striking similarities in both content and form. They seem uncannily to stage almost the same narrative plot which evolves around a couple of young women (each one the physical opposite

[1] Hélène Cixous, "Sorties", *The Newly Born Woman*, ed. by Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément (London: I.B.Tauris, 1996), 63-129, 67.

[2] The figuration of femininity-as-absence has well known theoretical antecedents, via Freud and Lacan. The relation between spectrality and femininity, between death and what has been called "the uncanny woman" has also been scrutinized, as in Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 3-58.

[3] See Barbara C. Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 128.

[4] Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*, 116.

of the other) who come together apparently by accident after a carriage/car crash in the middle of the night. A sudden fatal bond develops between the dark-haired women who suffer the consequence of an unaccountable traumatic event and the blond women who help the amnesic girls by giving them hospitality. Not only does the female ghost appear as female guest, but the spectral also becomes specular, thereby highlighting the halo of mystery and ambiguity that surrounds the women's relationship and their identities as well. Indeed, their powerful attraction becomes the core of the narratives of the danger and deceit that whirl around them. The "dim, obscure, visionary" quality of these texts feeds off other recurring themes, such as nocturnal/dark atmospheres, blurring thresholds between dreaming and waking, reverie and reality, feminine love tinged with lesbian tones, absent/spectral mothers, doubles, figurations of femininity as ghost, *revenant*, *lamia*, vampire, *femme fatale*.

From the structural and formal point of view, the texts appear like enigmas deconstructing and unsettling the linear logic of narrative in different ways. First of all, they stage a temporality that differs sharply from the modern concept of a linear, progressive, universal time; theirs is a temporality of haunting, through which events and people return from the limits of time and mortality, thereby troubling the boundaries of past, present, and future. Moreover, their failure as linear narratives is connected with their phantasmatic mode of writing: the ghostly feminine produces a breach in discourse, breaking the sequence of teleological narrative and defying the transparency of language and univocality of interpretation.

The following analysis tends to demonstrate that even though these texts are written and produced by male authors, it is the female phantasm that starts up narration, introducing a disturbance in meaning, as unsettling as it is unsettled.

1. *Christabel*: Spectral (M)others

Christabel is a fragment of a longer poem that Coleridge never completed. It is compounded of two parts, written respectively in 1797 and 1800.[5] This haunting fragment is a marvellous seduction poem which tells the story of Christabel, a "lovely lady" who goes out alone into the woods near her castle in the middle of the night hovering between dream and reverie, sleeping and waking (*C*, 23). There, "beneath the huge oak tree", she finds a "damsel bright" named Geraldine, "beautiful exceedingly!", who relates how she had been abducted by some warriors and left in the forest (*C*, 58, 68). Christabel pities the stranger and takes her home with her. During the night Christabel and her guest lie together in bed, and Geraldine seems to cast some sort of spell over the girl. The second part of the poem revolves around the reactions of Christabel's father, Sir Leoline,

[5] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Christabel* (1797-1800), <http://theotherpages.org/poems/coler02.html>, 15 November 2008. The conclusion to *Christabel* was written in 1838 by James Gillman who cared for Coleridge during the latter years. Hereafter indicated as *C*.

with whom she lives as a motherless daughter, and a premonitory dream made by the Bard, Bracy. Sir Leoline becomes more and more charmed by Geraldine, but he is warned against her menacing nature by the faithful Bracy who interprets his dream of a dove threatened by a snake to be a presage of evil and danger. Angry about such inhospitality, Sir Leoline orders Bard Bracy to abandon the castle and departs with Geraldine. It is there that the poem ends, offering neither a resolution about the aftermath of the story nor a clear view of who or what Geraldine is.

The fragmentary nature of the text is strengthened by the inability of the narrative voice to say clearly what happens. The opening stanzas introduce ambiguity about time and random temporal shifts: "'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock/ And the owls have awakened the crowing cock", "And hark, again! the crowing cock,/ How drowsily it crew", to which Sir Leoline's mastiff bitch "maketh answer" (*C*, 1-2, 4-5, 9). The initial description suggests a liminal state between past and present, between the realm of owls and that of cocks, thus between night and dawn; the events take place "a month before the month of May", therefore between spring and summer (*C*, 21). Moreover, the poem shows uncertainty about the relation between cause and effect through the narrator's mode of questioning – asking, stating, and then doubting ("Is the night chilly and dark?/ The night is chilly, but not dark", *C* 14-15; "What makes her in the wood so late,/ A furlong from the castle gate?", *C* 25-26) – a mode that only raises more questions and casts the narration in a state of mystery and abnormity. The opening stanza introduces the first feminine figure, who sounds very uncanny though familiar: "Some say, she sees my lady's shroud" (*C*, 13). The narrator, whose narrative function cannot be clearly gendered (is it male or female?), speaks of a bodiless female figure, a spectre that proves to be disorienting as he/she is once again unable to tell who she is and what kind of relation there is between them.

The mysterious, eerie atmosphere is evoked especially in the fatal encounter between Christabel and Geraldine which takes place in proximity of an oak tree where Christabel is praying (again, a very strange pagan setting for a Christian rite); a sudden sensation of danger is felt when Christabel hears a moan "seemingly" coming from the other side of "the broad-breasted old oak tree" that is typically feminised and, maybe not by chance, figured as maternal. Caught between fright and curiosity, Christabel with "beating heart" steals to the other side and "What sees she there?" (*C*, 57):

> There she sees a damsel bright,
> Dressed in a silken robe of white,
> That shadowy in the moonlight shown:
> The neck that made that white robe wan,
> Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
> Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were,

And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair. (*C*, 58-65)

There is a certain ghostly nature about Geraldine, highlighted, from the very moment of her appearance, by a language that is both ethereal and somehow frightening. Words like "shadowy", "blue-veined", and the strong descriptions of how "white" she is, all add to the strange and scary ghostliness of this encounter. Geraldine appears to Christabel as a forlorn lady who has "lain entranced" after an unaccountable abduction and therefore cannot offer any answer to Christabel's anxiety to know about her misadventure. Geraldine soon becomes an enigmatic figure inasmuch as her presence in the forest is unexpected, and as an ambiguous figure she is unintended. Christabel cannot interpret this figure because it does not belong where it is, and it thus becomes unintelligible. Therefore, the feminine in the guise of Geraldine appears as both uncanny and alluring, tainted with fear and desire. Christabel is indeed so charmed by this stranger as to invite her into her father's castle where, in a significant way, the two women repeatedly cross thresholds: "they crossed the moat", "over the threshold of the gate", "they crossed the court", "they passed the hall". Once over the final threshold and inside Christabel's chamber, the strange lady with altered voice engages in a muttered quarrel with the spirit of Christabel's dead mother: "'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!/ I have power to bid thee flee" (*C*, 205-206). The ghost of the "wandering mother" is another ambiguous female figure haunting the text. She represents the protective good mother Christabel longs for: "'Woe is me!/ She died the hour that I was born./ I have heard …/ How on her death-bed she did say,/ That she should hear the castle-bell/ Strike twelve upon my wedding-day./ O mother dear! that thou wert here!" (*C*, 196-202).

The return of the "spectral mother" stands for the desire for what has been irreducibly lost and that triggers Christabel's fragmented identity. According to Madelon Sprengnether, "the loss that precipitates the organization of a self is always implicitly the loss of a mother ... The mother's body becomes that which is longed for yet cannot be appropriated, a representative of both home and not home, and hence, in Freud's terms, the site of the uncanny".[6] In an ambivalent way this feminine (m)other as "womb-tomb-home" is the site of death. It is the site from which life emerges, but it is also the site where mortality is inscribed on the body at birth. This figuration of the uncanny maternal body resembles the description of the ghost given by Cixous in her comments on Freud's essay in which she says that the Ghost is "the direct figure of the uncanny" inasmuch as it is "the fiction of our relationship to death".[7] Mortality is an "impossible representation", as only the dead know its secret. Cixous goes further in her reflections explaining that what renders the return of

[6] Madelon Sprengnether, *The Spectral Mother: Freud, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 9. "The preoedipal mother, in Freud's unsystematic treatments of her, emerges as a figure of subversion … [with] a ghostlike function creating a presence out of absence … Her effect is what I call 'spectral' in the full etymological sense … related to 'spectacle', 'speculation' and 'suspicion' … she is an object of fear and dread" (5).

[7] Hélène Cixous, "Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche*", *New Literary History*, 7.3 (Spring 1976), 525-548, 619-645. Hereafter indicated as *FP*.

the dead so intolerable is not so much that it announces death per se, as the fact that the ghost obliterates the limit which exists between two states, neither alive nor dead: "passing through, the dead man returns in the manner of the repressed" (*FP*, 543). In *Christabel* the dead who return seem to be female ghosts in the form of the bodiless mother and the excessively embodied Geraldine who claim something repressed about Christabel's identity.

The reference to the uncanny is once again helpful for the exploration of the ghost/return of the repressed/sexuality relation. It is common knowledge that Freud takes on Schelling's definition of the uncanny as "all that which should have remained hidden and secret and has become visible". In her rereading of Freud's essay, Cixous offers a new perspective by linking "the *Unheimliche* to a lack of modesty" where at the end "the sexual threat emerges"; in this way, she relates the uncanny to an offence against decency that foreshadows the menace of sexuality which, in turn, is necessarily linked to an unconscious and ambiguous erotic desire where the self is questioned in its integrity, being forced to see what should have remained concealed and has come to light (*FP*, 530). In *Christabel* this uncanny eroticism is explored in one of the most disturbing scenes of the poem, set in Christabel's chamber after the departure of the ghost of her mother. The description of the two women undressing as they prepare for bed reveals a latent sexual intercourse which remains unsaid except for Christabel's active participation in following Geraldine's deeds and gestures: "as the lady bade, did she./ Her gentle limbs did she undress/And lay down in her loveliness." (*C*, 236-38). From her bed Christabel observes Geraldine who disrobes, though "through her brain, of weal and woe,/So many thoughts moved to and fro,/That vain it were her lids to close" (*C*, 239-41), as if she were both troubled and excited by the sight:

Fig. 1: "Christabel's bed".
Lancelot Speed, "So half-way from the bed she rose"…, illustration to Coleridge, "Christabel", in Andrew Lang, ed., *The Blue Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891), 323.

> Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
> And slowly rolled her eyes around;
> Then drawing in her breath aloud,
> Like one that shuddered, she unbound
> The cincture from beneath her breast:
> Her silken robe, and inner vest,
> Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
> Behold! her bosom and half her side –
> A sight to dream of, not to tell! (*C*, 245-253)

The naked body is at once adored and condemned because sexually charged, it is unspeakable, yet intelligible only in dream, as if the narrator voiced Freud's insight that dreams

are phantasms of suppressed sexual desire. In psychoanalytic terms, phantasms have very much in common with dreams as they both stand for the expression of a wish-fulfilment, or even a compensation or correction of an unsatisfactory reality.[8] The lines above show the impossibility of representation, inasmuch as the narrator is unable to describe what happens. That which must remain hidden because unthinkable and unnameable has become uncannily visible and is therefore threatening: what has been revealed is Geraldine's bosom, and with it metaphorically a feminine queer desire.

> Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs:
> Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
> Deep from within she seems half-way
> To lift some weight with sick assay,
> And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
> Then suddenly, as one defied,
> Collects herself in scorn and pride,
> And lay down by the maiden's side! –
> And in her arms the maid she took. (255-263)

The sensual and contagious embrace becomes fatal insofar as Geraldine's arms prove to be "the lovely lady's prison" from which there is no release (*C*, 304). What is more striking is that this scene loses its same-sex erotic connotation to assume a clearly maternal nurturing implication: "And lo! the worker of these harms,/ That holds the maiden in her arms,/ Seems to slumber still and mild,/ As a mother with her child" (*C*, 298-301). These lines condense sexuality and death in the figure of the ghostly mother who becomes at the same time the abject source of desire and loss, life and death. Studies in psychoanalysis have shown the connection between the "desire for the mother" and lesbian sexuality as unfolded in the mother-daughter relationship of an unresolved Oedipus complex. As Kristeva points out, "lesbian loves" have been equated to "the embrace of the baby and its nourishing mother".[9] Actually, the maternal phantasm has been envisaged as a memory of the mother/daughter unity projected into the place of desire. Unlike psychoanalytic views in which femininity is conceived in relation to the maternal "only as it effects social or gender reproduction, and not as it affects sexuality and desire", thereby reconfirming a patriarchal heterosexual paradigm, Teresa de Lauretis highlights the centrality of the spectral presence of the maternal metaphor in the display of an exclusively feminine desire, maintaining that "the fantasmatic relation to the mother and the maternal/female body is central to lesbian subjectivity and desire".[10] Geraldine, therefore, may be seen as the embodiment of the return of Christabel's mother conceived of as the phantasmatic projection of Christabel's repressed queer desire.

[8] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Edition, 1997), 68.

[9] Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1989), 81.

[10] Teresa de Lauretis, *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 166, 171.

Yet, Geraldine is more than a 'surrogate mother' since, after all, she is a witch, a sorceress who casts a spell upon Christabel: "'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,/ Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!'" (*C,* 267-268). Under this spell, which bears again a maternal connotation in the figure of Geraldine offering her breast, the helpless Christabel will remain speechless, unable to tell her father the unmentionable secret of her sexual transgression. In the second part of the poem another figuration of ghostly femininity becomes visible in the representation of Geraldine as *lamia*. Defined as a sort of female vampire ante-litteram, lamiae were mythological figures embodying haunting ghosts in the guise of half-woman and half-serpent which employed illusion in the seduction of young men from whom they sucked blood.[11] In *Christabel* the dream of the Baron's servant Bracey about a "bright green snake" coiled around a dove's wings and neck foreshadows the depiction of Geraldine as a vampiric serpent-woman: "A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,/And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,/Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,/ And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,/At Christabel she looked askance!" (*C,* 585-589). Like more conventional vampires, Geraldine is capable of hypnotically enthralling her chosen victim. Christabel's resulting weakness, which becomes more and more pronounced the more time she spends with her not-quite-human guest, suggests that Geraldine is some sort of psychic vampire who is somehow absorbing the other woman's vital energies.[12] Indeed, it could be guessed that the erotic embrace between Christabel and Geraldine unfolds, though concealed, a vampiric kiss which means for Christabel a contagious seduction and a 'little death' at the same time.

2. *Carmilla*: Feminine Hauntologies

Christabel and Geraldine embody the literary ancestors of Laura and Carmilla, the two female protagonists of the ghost story *Carmilla* by the Victorian writer Le Fanu.[13] Some critics have pointed out that *Carmilla* is a conscious attempt to render *Christabel* into prose.[14] The present analysis, however, tries to go beyond the mere plot similarities in order to show how both texts, through the representation of spectral female figures haunting the narrative, uncover unspoken desires and unknown or unsolved traumas.

Carmilla is presented in the form of an autobiographical narrative written by Laura after her traumatic relationship with Carmilla and delivered to us by an editor after Laura's death years later.[15] Like Christabel, Laura is a lonely motherless girl in her late teens who lives with her aged father and two governesses in an isolated castle in the Austrian province of Styria. Her solitary life is saddened by the news that Bertha, the niece of her

[11] *Lamia* is also a narrative poem written by John Keats (1819).

[12] Some critics have pointed out how Christabel is gradually transformed into a phantom as she is deprived of her will and her speech; drained of agency and selfhood she becomes "a phantom soul". See A. Taylor, "Coleridge's Christabel and the Phantom Soul", *Studies in English Literature 1500-100*, 42.4 (Autumn 2002), 707-730.

[13] Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *Carmilla* (1872), ed. by Sandro Melani (Venezia: Marsilio, 2004).

[14] James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Dunham: Duke University Press, 1987), 129.

[15] *Carmilla* was first published in the magazine *The Dark Blue* in 1872, and then in the author's collection of short stories, *In a Glass Darkly*, the same year. It includes five short stories presented as a selection from the posthumous papers of the occult detective and psychic doctor Martin Hesselius. Hereafter indicated as *Ca.*

father's friend General Spielsdorf who should have come to visit her, has suddenly died under mysterious circumstances. Laura's domestic peace is definitely shattered by the unexpected arrival of a beautiful but enigmatic young girl named Carmilla. Like Geraldine, she is brought by a carriage accident not far from her *schloss* by moonlight. Carmilla's mysterious mother arranges to leave her injured daughter with Laura and her father until her return three months later; Laura persuades her father and, again, as in *Christabel*, the female stranger is welcomed as a charming and unfathomable guest. This event proves to be uncanny from the very beginning as it reveals something familiar to the narrator. It is worth pointing out that the narrative begins with a terrifying dream recounted by Laura when, as a six year old child, she lives a traumatic experience from which she never entirely recovers. In her dream she is alone in the nursery room and feels neglected and anxious; then she is visited by a female figure who at first comforts and caresses her until the dreamer feels a terrible pain in her breast and the female ghost disappears:

> I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed. (*Ca*, 48)

Like *Christabel*, in *Carmilla* it is the female ghost that starts up the narration since her appearance represents the only event in Laura's life to be worth telling up to that moment, as she says: "The first occurrence in my existence, which produced a terrible impression upon my mind, which, in fact, never has been effaced, was one of the very earliest incidents of my life which I can recollect" (*Ca*, 46). Yet she is unable either to decipher her dream or to decode the message received by the ghostly feminine figure, since the scenes she describes "stand out vivid as the isolated pictures of the phantasmagoria surrounded by darkness" (*Ca*, 50). Thirteen years later a young lady breaks into Laura's life, but soon she discovers that Carmilla is the same beautiful dark-haired and melancholic girl she saw in her childhood reverie. What is even more striking is that Carmilla also had a similar dream when she was a child. She tells Laura how she was visited by "a beautiful young lady with golden hair and large blue eyes, and lips—your lips—you, as you are here" (*Ca*, 78). During Carmilla's tale Laura, like Christabel, becomes speechless as if she were under a spell: "There was a silence of fully a minute, and then at length *she* spoke; *I* could not" (*Ca*, 76). This uncanny moment of recognition starts up an

ongoing ambivalent play in which it is difficult to discern between vision and reality, dream and illusion, and between specular and spectral figures.

The childhood dream-reverie, which in Laplanche's words is "not a fantasmagoria, but a text to be deciphered", signals the beginning of a breakdown of boundaries between Laura and Carmilla who feel strangely drawn to each other with an ambiguous alternation of attraction and repulsion, pleasure and fear on behalf of Laura.[16]

As in Coleridge's poem, the spectral mother hovers over the two protagonists. In Laura's childhood reverie, Carmilla looks like a spectral maternal figure who appears when the child feels neglected and forsaken as if needing a mother to soothe her to sleep. This figuration recurs throughout the tale, staging an ambivalent play between maternal tenderness and erotic passion: "From these foolish embraces … I used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms" (*Ca*, 86). This image vividly recalls Geraldine's maternal embrace "that holds the maiden in her arms … As a mother with her child", making Christabel gather "from out her trance;/ Her limbs relax, her countenance/ grows sad and soft …", while "she seems to smile/ As infants at a sudden light" (*Ca*, 300-301, 312-314, 317-318). But, like Geraldine, Carmilla is simultaneously the embodiment of Laura's mother and the dead mother's antagonist; in one of her dream-reveries Laura actually hears a voice, sweet and terrible at the same time, which says: "Your mother warns you to beware of the assassin" (*Ca*, 128). A voice which very uncannily recalls Geraldine's altered voice saying: "Off, wandering mother! …/ this hour is mine/ Though thou her guardian spirit be,/ Off, woman, off!" (*Ca*, 205, 211-213). Thus the mothers in both narratives are not simply reincarnated mother figures: from beyond the grave they try to warn their daughters about the dangers of their guests, who might lure their hosts by providing a different kind of intimacy they offer as a substitute for the one they have lost.

From a different perspective, the maternal ghost resurfaces upon discovering that Laura and Carmilla are related through their mothers. Much of the story deals with the sensual and queerly erotic relationship which develops between the young women, and with the attempt of various males (Laura's father, General Spielsdorf, and Baron Vordenburg) to free Laura from the vampire's spell. Carmilla is, in fact, a vampire who reappears through the centuries with the anagrammatic names Carmilla, Millarca, Mircalla, and who haunted Laura in her childhood. Carmilla is a descendant of Mircalla, Countess of Karnstein whose portrait dated 1698 is found by Laura in her castle. It resembles Carmilla in a striking way. Surprisingly, Laura reveals her mother's mysterious origins by stating that

[16] Jean Laplanche and Jean Bertrand Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality", in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. by Victor Burgin (London: Methuen, 1986), 5-34, 8.

she is maternally descendant from the Karnsteins too. Later on she understands that her story repeats that of Bertha (the dead girl she was waiting for as a guest) and Millarca, a beautiful lady who betrayed general Spieldorf's hospitality by killing his niece. In Le Fanu's novel, time and histories are, thus, blurred and interrelated in a *haunt*ological paradigm with the past casting a shadow over the present. The figure of the spectre is ubiquitous in the anagrammatic profusion of its names, materialising in the form of an incorporated and externalised feminine otherness and repeating its return as if it were the first time.[17] The mysterious woman is a female vampire, but she is also called "spectre": "She was at first visited by appalling dreams; then, as she fancied, by a spectre, sometimes resembling Millarca" (*Ca*, 174). Not only is Carmilla/Millarca/Mircalla a ghost in flesh and blood, an embodied undead who returns from the past to share the domestic present, lost mothers and dreams, but Laura also represents a figuration of ghostly femininity.

In this connection I draw on Nancy Holland's feminist reading of Derrida's *hauntology*, for she poses questions about ghosts and inheritance, and the ghostly as a gendered space.[18] Derrida discusses the corporeality of ghosts and defines the spectre as "a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other". While "flesh and phenomenality … give to the spirit its spectral apparition, [they] disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the *revenant*, or the return of the *spectre*" (*SM*, 6). Discussing the place of the daughter in Derrida's patriarchal hauntology, Holland observes that "at the very moment when Derrida attempts to say something, however partial and attenuated, about the ghost, he must at the same time recreate a tradition in which the Father/Ghost, and all that they represent, speak only to the Son" (*DO*, 70). I would argue that unlike the patrilinear inheritance in which the "Father/Ghost" speaks only to the son, *Carmilla* shows a matrilineage in which the Mother/Ghost addresses the daughter and, thence, claims an exclusively female kinship system; even Laura's father emphasizes that his daughter's Karnstein connection is purely matrilinear and that his family is free of vampiric pollution, thereby asserting a matriarchal eros as opposed to the patriarchal logos.

Moreover, Holland suggests that women are haunted "not by the ghost of the father, but by the father's ghost," with the consequence that exorcism is not possible, nor is parricide a solution (*DO*, 68). In contrast to the ghost of the father, who appears as a spectral Other, the father's ghost is the daughter's internalized spectral Other who "is not my father, or not only my father, but also my father's vision of the eternal, idealized Woman he would have loved—as he never could love my mother or my/self" (*DO*, 67). It

[17] For Derrida, hauntology is "repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time* makes of it also a *last time*". Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 10. Hereafter indicated as *SM*.

[18] Nancy J. Holland, "The Death of the Other/Father: A Feminist Reading of Derrida's Hauntology", *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 16.1 (Winter 2001), 64-71. Hereafter indicated as *DO*.

could be guessed that Laura is "the ghost of a woman who never lived", the spectral figure of what patriarchy wants to see and must see when it looks at a female form (*DO*, 67). In other words, Laura embodies the ghost of the perfect image reflected in her father's vision of the idealized woman displayed in the feminine stereotype of the 'angel-in-the-house'.[19] Yet, as opposed to the image of Laura as male costruction, the narrative proposes the phantasmatic projection of Laura as the fatal-other woman. Carmilla may be interpreted, indeed, as the specular image of Laura, her double, the cruel, sensual, bold *femme fatale,* with a *lamia*-like look, seductive and hypnotic, that lurks beneath the image of the remissive woman deprived of any sexual desire and agency, and submitted to male authority. The *lamia* figure is metaphorically evoked by the tapestry in Carmilla's room, representing Cleopatra with the asp to her bosom. Whereas Carmilla is associated with the serpent sucking blood from the woman's breast as a vampiric act, the figurative identification of Laura with Cleopatra hints at Laura's *femme fatale* alter ego, and also at her ambiguous sexuality torn between the pleasure and repulsion Carmilla's lesbian vampirism arouses in her.

The narrative questions another assumption according to which, in Holland's words, "a father cannot teach a daughter how to live; he can only teach her limits within which she must live" (*DO*, 63). Both Christabel and Laura defy those limits from the vey beginning by usurping the role of the father in the house. They challenge Derrida's assumptions about the laws of hospitality since it is a female in the first instance who offers hospitality, defying her father's laws; Geraldine and Carmilla enter their victim's home, depriving the fathers of their patriarchal power and dominance, and thus, along with the lack of a 'master', they create a powerful female 'daughterly' plot; moreover, both narratives perform a queer hospitality since if the invitation of Geraldine assumes the ritual tones of a bride waiting for her 'disguised' groom in the bedroom, Laura fancies that her guest is a "boyish lover in masquerade" (*Ca*, 88). This kind of hospitality is linked to the folkloric belief that it is necessary to invite a vampire into one's house before it can enter. The house is a metaphor for the subconscious mind. When a vampire is invited into one's house, it is symbolically invoked into one's personal subconscious, where it is then free to feed upon one's spiritual vitality. This is why the vampire's visitations occur overnight, when one is asleep and dreaming, and most vulnerable to entities in the subconscious mind. The coming of the female ghost-vampire unfolds a tale of forbidden, exclusive female desire. Carmilla, in fact, represents the subconscious sexual instinct Laura has had to repress. What was implicit in *Christabel* becomes clear in *Carmilla* as it explicitly reveals its queerness in the depiction of lesbian love between the two girls. As Laura comments:

[19] The Victorian ideal of the "Angel in the House" finds its reverse in the fin-de-siecle *femme fatale* model, a 'deadly woman', seen as a sort of enchantress, vampire, female monster or demon. The figure of the *femme fatale* is another male construction closely tied to misogyny and fears of feminine alterity; nevertheless it remains an example of female independence, threatening traditional female gender roles.

> It was like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet over-powering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, "You are mine, you *shall* be mine, you and I are one for ever." Then she has thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling. (*Ca*, 88)

By letting the vampire enter her dream-reveries/psyche, Laura is invoking a phantasm that can satisfy her secret repressed desire and destroy her at the same time in order to expiate her sense of guilt. But the descriptions of her vampiric visitations in terms of an unspeakable *jouissance* hint at the troubling fact that she might not want to be cured from her 'evil'.

The plot apparently ends with the ritual killing of Carmilla but the conclusion to Laura's tale remains ambiguous. During the spring that follows Carmilla's expulsion, Laura's father takes her on a tour through Italy in order to cure the melancholic state she has fallen into after her traumatic experience with Carmilla, but his attempt fails. She writes that, despite the passing of time, "the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations – sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend …; and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door" (*Ca*, 206). Laura ends her account fancying that Carmilla is on the brink of entering her bedchamber, thereby dejectedly longing for her return. This uncanny conclusion suggests the figuration of a femininity caught in a melancholic eros that reflects its endless, unlimited longing for a love it has never possessed and is only fulfilled in the embodied ghost of Carmilla.[20]

Furthermore, the conclusion displays *Carmilla*'s open-endedness as well as its circular narrative structure, since the female ghost opens the narration with her apparition in Laura's child dream and also closes it as she continues to haunt Laura's memory. Indeed, the entire narrative structure is incompletely framed, even though in a different way from the unfinished *Christabel*. The novel opens with a brief prologue in which the editor comments: "upon a paper attached to the Narrative which follows, Doctor Hesselius has written a rather elaborate note, which he accompanies with a reference to his Essay on the strange subject which the MS. (manuscript) Illuminates" (*Ca*, 40). Yet the narrative ends without

[20] On the topic of vampirism, eros and melancholy, see Vito Teti, "Il vampiro, o del moderno sentimento della melanconia", in *Il Vampiro, don Giovanni e altri seduttori*, ed. by Ada Neiger (Bari: Dedalo, 1998), 165-190.

[21] For images, information and a detailed discussion of illustrations to "Carmilla", see Simon Cooke, "Haunted Images: The Illustrating of Le Fanu", *Le Fanu Studies*, 2.2 (November 2007), <http://www.jslefanu.com/cooke.html, 1 May 2009>.

Fig. 2: "Laura's bed".
David Henry Friston, illustration to Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla", *The Dark Blue* (March 1872).[21]

presenting either Dr. Hesselius's note or the editor's concluding remarks. Instead, *Carmilla* ends with Laura's reverie. The cryptic prologue hints at the story as "unveiling … some of the profoundest arcane of our dual existence" thereby stressing an ontological ambiguity which further blurs psychic, spatial and temporal boundaries. Linked to the enigmatic ending, this hint may suggest the final figuration of ghostly femininity embodied by Laura as hovering on the edge of a radical splitting till she confuses herself with Carmilla.[22]

[22] The text hides other ghostly figures. Laura pointedly addresses her story to "a town lady like you", thereby eliminating the male link between the narrator and her reader and providing a direct route from one woman to another (*Ca*, 91). Like the men's failed attempts to contain women in the patriarchal order, the editor similarly fails to frame them in his narrative. It could be guessed that the woman to whom the narrative is addressed is a ghost narratee, an absent presence who never appears but haunts the text.

3. *Mulholland Drive*: Phantasms of Desire

Though not immediately evident, Lynch's postmodern film *Mulholland Drive* (2001) appears as a palimpsest of multiple textual layers uncovering phantasmatic traces of both *Christabel* and *Carmilla* which, indeed, prove to be haunting intertexts of his movie. Like *Christabel*'s ending in medias res and *Carmilla*'s enigmatic conclusion, *Mulholland Drive* disappoints its spectators' and critics' desire for narrative closure. Through its visionary and imagistic power which opens the text to an endless number of interpretations, *Mulholland Drive* frustrates narrative logic, unfolding unresolved mysteries. The open-endedness of its plot reflects the indeterminacy and doubleness of its characters as well as the enigmatic and puzzling nature of the events displayed throughout the film. Its fragmentary narrative structure is shown especially in the representation of two plots, with the first part of the film being a specular/spectral projection of the second.

The opening of the first part proposes what seems almost a 'familiar' narrative plot staged in a different setting; the dark wood surrounding Christabel's medieval castle and the misty road near Laura's Victorian *schloss* become a contemporary gloomy and dusky highway crossing Hollywood hills which is shown to be Mulholland Drive. A beautiful dark-haired woman (played by Laura Elena Harring), is driving up it in the back of a black limousine (like Carmilla in a stagecoach) where she escapes imminent murder by the drivers because of a car accident (like Geraldine's abduction). Injured and shocked, she walks down Mulholland Drive and onto Sunset Boulevard and hides in the bushes outside an apartment complex where she falls asleep. The next day she wakes up and sneaks (like a *lamia*?) into an apartment which an older woman has recently vacated. At the same time, a blond girl named Betty Elms (played by Naomi Watts) arrives from Canada to Los Angeles as an aspiring actress and takes a taxi to the same apartment she has borrowed from her aunt. There she finds the dark-haired woman confused and amnesic who assumes the name "Rita" when she sees a poster for the film *Gilda* (1946) starring Rita Hayworth. Betty befriends Rita, anyway, and decides to assist her in assembling the fragments of her memory in

order to discover her 'true' identity. Indeed, she has no cues to her identity, just a lot of cash and an odd blue key found in her purse.

From the very beginning the two female protagonists seem to embody the ghosts of Christabel/Laura and Geraldine/Carmilla, the naïve and unselfish blond woman and the helpless and mysterious dark-haired woman who come together by pure chance and eventually enter into an intensely emotional and close relationship. In their attempt to figure out the mystery behind Rita's identity, the girls embark on a series of adventures which lead them to the apartment of one Diane Selwyn, the only name Rita can remember out of her amnesia. There, they are horrified to discover a woman's rotting corpse lying on a bed. Frightened by an impending danger, back home they create a disguise for Rita that makes her look like Betty, and that night Betty invites Rita into her bed, echoing Laura soliciting Geraldine to share the couch with her ("And I beseech your courtesy,/ This night, to share your couch with me", *C* 122). Another striking similarity is clear in the following scene where the ensuing sexual encounter between the women is initially figured as maternal, invoking once again the "mother-daughter plot of lesbian romance".[23] Indeed, with her voluptuous body that looms up out of the bedclothes while approaching Betty, Rita appears for a moment as a 'noir mother' who tucks in her daughter. Then, after some moments of intense eroticism and surprise, this image dissolves into very titillating sexual intercourse as Betty confesses to Rita that she has fallen in love with her. The sequence clearly echoes Carmilla and Laura's "warm kisses" and passionate embraces, as well as their open avowals "I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so" (*Ca*, 109).

[23] H. K. Love, "Spectacular failure: the figure of the lesbian in *Mulholland Drive*", *New Literary History* 35.1 (Winter 2004), 117–132, 126.

The next filmic sequence shows Rita waking up in the middle of the night and asking Betty to take her to Club Silencio, an eerie theatre where they watch a series of simulated performances and where an M.C./magician explains in several languages that everything is an illusion ("No hay banda! And yet we hear a band", "It is all recorded"). A woman introduced as "la Llorona de Los Angeles Rebeka del Rio" performs a Spanish version of Roy Orbison's "Crying" but suddenly falls dead on the floor while the song goes on. At that point Betty finds a blue box in her purse that matches Rita's key. Upon returning to the apartment, Rita unlocks the box and the camera goes inside; then, both women mysteriously disappear from the frame.

This uncanny scene is the narrative hinge separating the two parts of the film; the second part shows in fact an unaccountable reversal of characters, role plays and situations which fractures narrative linearity and logic coherence. From this point onwards, it is not easy to figure out any causal connections as the boundaries between real and unreal, sleeping and waking, dreaming and vision, life and death become blurred. Significantly, this second section begins with the haunting presence of the dead female body in Diane Selwyn's apartment, when a weirdie

called Cowboy suddenly shows up and tells her to get up ("Hey, pretty girl. Time to wake up"). The awakening girl named Diane is indeed Betty, but she is now unrecognisable as the perky, radiant blonde from the first part of the film. Diane is portrayed as a depressed, run down, failed actress who came to Hollywood when her aunt died after winning a jitterbug contest. Moreover, she is in love with Camilla Rhodes who, unlike the helpless and insecure Rita, appears as a beaming and successful actress seducing and then shattering her. Camilla is in fact engaged to a talented director for whom she decides to break her relationship with Diane, thus making her sink in "a very strange agony" (*Ca*, 110). One of the most suggestive sequences of the second part of the film shows Diane in a limousine driving up Mulholland Drive, just like Rita/Camilla at the beginning of the movie.[24] She arrives in a wooden area at nightfall where she finds Camilla who appears from the trees and says: "It's a short-cut. Come on, Sweetheart. It's beautiful … a secret path". Then she takes Diane's hand and leads her through the grove. The magic surrounding this female intimacy strikingly evokes, once again, Geraldine and Christabel as well as Carmilla and Laura as they wander across the forest during the night.

[24] Not only do characters change names and identities, but events and situations are also repeated 'with a difference'.

Fig. 3: "Laura and Carmilla".
Michael Fitzgerald, illustration to Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla", *The Dark Blue* (January 1872).

Fig. 4: "Camilla and Diane".
Still from David Lynch, *Mullholland Drive*, 2001. Universal Picture (Italy) s.r.l.

Camilla actually embodies several figurations of ghostly femininity similar to those displayed by Carmilla and Geraldine. She appears as the tempting and devouring *lamia* with her seductive and hypnotic gaze bewitching both men and women; she also embodies the ravishing and cruel *femme fatale* under the guise of a vamp/vampire sucking blood and life out of Diane who, not by chance, becomes a melancholic 'phantom soul' deprived of her vitality and soundness.[25] As a victim, Diane kills the vampire, just like Laura does with Carmilla, but like her, she fantasizes about her return in a hallucinatory spectral projection of 'another life'. Indeed, Diane hires a hit man to have Camilla murdered and eventually, driven mad by remorse, shoots herself in her bedroom, thus setting the scene for the discovery of her rotten body by Betty and Rita earlier in the film.

This female dead body plays an important role in the text as a figurative hinge appearing at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the film. Its ambiguous and uncanny presence is evocative of a femininity hovering between sleep and death, dreaminess and ghostliness. The film has in fact been interpreted in various ways as a dream, the first part being Diane's long reverie of an idealised perfect world as opposed to her frustated 'real life' staged in the second part; yet, the clear-cut filmic divide may allude to the projection of a ghostly dimension unfolded by a distorted specular image in which embodied female phantasms return from the world of the dead.[26] Betty and Rita may be the ghosts of Diane and Camilla respectively, as the latter is murdered, while the former commits suicide. Significantly, in the Club Silencio sequence which signals the gap/caesura between the two worlds, Betty/Diane identifies herself with *la llorona* ("the crying woman"), a figure that proves to be a haunting female spirit in the film. Derived from Hispanic-American folklore, *la llorona* is a spectre, the ghost of a mother who murdered her children to be with the man she loved, but was subsequently rejected by him. After killing herself because of her overwhelming remorse, she is doomed to wander in search of her lost children, always weeping. On the stage of the Club Silencio a performer called "la Llorona des Los Angeles Rebekah Del Rio" sings a sad love song, "Llorando", and suddenly dies falling on the floor while her voice, split from the body, continues to be heard. The song moves Betty to tears because it communicates a sense of loss; the singer is 'crying' over a lost love object, over a lost sexual relationship ("llorando por mi amor") and this touches Betty as if it were a repressed reminder of the murder of her lover. Like *la llorona*, Betty is a weeping ghost doomed to an irredeemable sense of guilt. Moreover, the recorded song playing beyond the death of the body is an apt metaphor for the survival of the spectral memory of the dead Rita-Camilla.

The female ghosts in *Mulholland Drive* appear as *revenants* who double lost love-objects: Camilla stands for the impossible object-cause

[25] The *femme fatale* is closely tied to the vampire myth. In the 1920s, the role was played in silent movies by actresses such as Theda Bara, also known as "The Vampire": dark and sensuous, her vampirism consisted in using men's bodies and souls for her own sexual and emotional needs. In the 1940s and 1950s, the *femme fatale* appeared in noir films as a *vamp*, short for *vampiress*, and applied to any sexually assertive woman who sought pleasure on her own terms.

[26] See Bianca Del Villano, "Cinema and Identity in David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*", *Anglistica* 11. 1-2 (2007), 145-157; Luca Malavasi, *David Lynch. Mulholland Drive* (Torino: Lindau, 2008), 83-113.

of Diane's desire which becomes attainable only in the phantasmatic scenario played by Rita and Betty. In a psychoanalytic view, the phantasm is the very stage or setting for desire, that is, an imaginary scene which stages the unconscious desires of a subject who is present both as protagonist and spectator. The phantasm inaugurates a scene which is more real than reality, since it structures the very appearance of reality.[27] *Mulholland Drive* actually shows the unreality of reality itself, as the two dimensions of dreaminess/ghostliness and sleep/death continually overlap, while Betty/Diane as a desiring subject is both protagonist and spectator, appearing indeed as the first female ghost that acts as starter for the narration.

In *Mulholland Drive* this phantasmatic mise-en-scène is closely linked to melancholia and loss. In this respect, it is useful to draw on Giorgio Agamben's reworking of Freud's theories on melancholia. Freud distinguishes melancholia from mourning by considering the latter as the 'normal' form of grieving that results from the withdrawal of the libido from its attachments to the lost loved object and its transference to a new one. In contrast, melancholia is 'pathological,' since rather than investing the libido onto another object, the melancholic narcisistically identifies with the abandoned object by 'incorporating' that other into the very structure of ego. Yet, this theory hides a paradox in relation to melancholia. Unlike mourning, melancholia is difficult to explain since it is not clear what has been lost.[28] In contrast to this theoretical aporia and 'pathological scenario', Agamben's investigations highlight the erotic constellation and the role of the phantasm eluded in Freud's account of the dynamic of melancholic incorporation.[29] Agamben emphasizes melancholia's relationship with the erotic impulse, which engages melancholia in an "ambiguous commerce with phantasms" (*S*, 24). He rejects identification of melancholia with paralysis or the impoverishment of the ego, perceiving rather incorporation as an imaginative capacity that confers upon the lost object a "phantasmagorical reality" that opens "a space for the existence of the unreal" and marks off "a scene in which the ego may enter into relation with it and attempt an appropriation such as no other possession could rival and no loss possibly threaten" (*S*, 20). From this perspective, Diane is a melancholic subject/ghost who holds an ambivalent relation with her love object, Camilla, who assumes a phantomatic status as she is at once real and unreal, incorporated and lost, affirmed/possessed and denied/killed. The first part of the film is, thus, the phantasmatic resolution of Diane's desire which transforms Camilla, the impossible object, into Rita, the enjoyable and accessible lover, thereby providing Diane with an escape from a loss which reality affirms but the subject must deny because it is too unbearable. Rita and Betty appear, therefore, as "phantasms of desire", considered not so much in the Freudian sense of "hallucinatory

[27] According to Laplance and Pontalis, the phantasm is located at the interface between need and desire. It is a kind of 'scene' or 'scenario' in which we find ourselves when in a kind of hypnagogic trance or second state as in a dream or reverie: "Phantasms are produced by an unconscious combination of things experienced and things heard." (Laplanche and Pontalis, "Fantasy", 32).

[28] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. by James Strachey, Vol. 14 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 239-258, 245.

[29] Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. by Ronald L. Martinez (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 3-30. Herafter indicated as *S*.

wishful psychoses" conjured by the desire to avoid the reality test,[30] as rather in Agamben's eroticized reformulation:

> The imaginary loss that so obsessively occupies the melancholic tendency has no real object, because its funereal strategy is directed to the impossible capture of the phantasm. The lost object is but the appearance that desire creates for its own courting of the phantasm, and the introjection of the libido is only one of the facets of a process in which what is real loses its reality so that what is unreal may become real. (*S*, 25)

This intense turn away from reality by withdrawing the libido inward unfolds another epiphanic realm of experience in which the lost object "can be possessed only with the provision that it be lost forever" (*S*, 26). Rita/Camilla and Betty/Diane, then, emerge from their "interior mute crypt in order to enter into a new and fundamental dimension" (*S*, 25) which allows them to escape the deadlock of desire and share a full feminine *jouissance*.

Actually, it is this phantasmatic realm of experience that marks the point of origin for narrative. The film begins with a few blurry shapes of human bodies dancing a jitterbug; out of this field, the triumphant face of Betty emerges as a ghost in a halo of white light. Her ghostly appearance as the protagonist of this scene signals a wish-fulfillment dream that sets the film's narrative in motion. Significantly, *Mulholland Drive* shows a circular frame, as the last scene of the movie shows the fading and overlapping phantasmatic faces of Betty/Diane, Rita/Camilla with a blond wig (like Laura and Carmilla, Betty/Diane identifies with Rita/Camilla till she becomes her) and a scary monster/bum figuring, maybe, Diane's 'diabolical' unconscious desires.

The disturbing feminized tramp is in fact the metaphor of the leftover of all discourses, "the epiphany of the unattainable" (*S*, 26), that which cannot be taken in charge by language and yet remains. It may allude to the unrepresentability of death itself shown in the guise of a monstrous ghostly femininity. The word uttered in the last scene by a blue-haired woman sitting in an empty theatre – once again a ghostly femininity – whispering "Silencio" may be understood as the expression of this ineffability, while it also signifies the silence of the dead who metaphorically return to repose in the mysterious blue box.

[30] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia", 244.

Izabel F. O. Brandão

Decolonizing Ghosts: Gender, the Body and Violence in *Whole of a Morning Sky* by Grace Nichols

> One must see at first what does not let itself be seen …
> [T]hus to think the body without the body of this invisible visibility
> [means that] the ghost is already taking shape …
> (Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*)

The first novel by the Caribbean poet and writer Grace Nichols, *Whole of a Morning Sky* (1986), explores the experience of the Walcott family, in the colony of British Guiana, in the late fifties and early sixties, back in the twentieth century.[1] The family moves from Highdam, a rural community, "a bit clannish and unruly", to Georgetown, an urban community "both unpleasant and disturbing ... [a] blending of contrast of the old and dilapidated beside the new and elegant", with all the conflicts that this entails: gender, racial, political, social and cultural relations arising from myth and legends, sexual, social and political violence in a period that preceded the country's independence from British domination, in 1966, when it became Guyana (*WMS,* 5, 41).

For this essay my intention is to present a reading of the novel in which I examine the theme of the ghost in relation to the main characters' approach to the body, which can be understood as a *locus* where its invisible presence is mostly felt. Such a disturbing presence appears in association with the attempt to obtain control over the political, social and sexual bodies of the novel.

In *Whole of a Morning Sky*, the writer builds separate but interrelated stories which are demarcated physically by the formatting of the text. This technique displays subtle differences between the various narratives that compose the story, especially the adolescent Gem's, and that of her parents, Clara and Archie Walcott. The novel has 36 chapters with parallel narratives, 19 of which are numbered and this distinguishes them from the other unnumbered narratives. The numbered episodes are intercalated by the girl's narrative that retell the Walcott's story. Graphically the right hand margin of Gem's narrative is totally irregular and it is as if Gem's story were a ribbon that one interlaces in a dress so as to show its finish. Unlike the other narratives, Gem's lack of borders may imply that their demarcation belongs to the future. In her narrative it can be said that the author illustrates the individual body, the unique identity of a country beginning to fend for herself. The other narratives lead to the collective body of the country.

It is possible to see a certain similarity between *Whole of a Morning Sky* and the novel *As doze cores do vermelho* by Brazilian writer Helena Parente

[1] Grace Nichols, *Whole of a Morning Sky* (London: Virago 1995). Hereafter indicated as *WMS*. I would like to thank Simonetta de Filippis, from "L'Orientale" Naples University, Italy, and Terry Gifford, from Chichester University, U.K., for being second readers to this essay. Their suggestions have been invaluable.

Cunha.[2] In her "Preface" to the second edition of the Brazilian novel, published in 1998, Rita Schmidt explains the three angles that demarcate the building of the narrative, and talks about its three columns: the first one, in the left margin of the page, refers to the past of the protagonist; the second one, in the centre of the page, narrates the present, and the third column, in the margin on the right hand side of the page, deals with the projections for the character's future. What interests us is a possible parallel between the second column, in the centre of the page, of Cunha's novel, and Gem's narrative, in Nichol's novel. According to Schmidt, in this centre angle, that "is concentrated in the present life",

> there is an omniscient narrator, in the third person, who maintains, at the same time, a complicity and a distancing in relation to the narrated subject, for she refers to the protagonist in terms of a "you", a pronoun that invokes the presence of an interlocutor, which evokes the epistolary genre, situated within the text but also outside it, in the sense that such a form of reference presupposes an interaction between text/non text, emissary/reader. (9-10) (My translation)

Schmidt's explanation may be transposed to Gem's irregular narrative. Everything is narrated in relation to a "you", as though the narrator, the girl herself, were facing an interlocutor, for whom she retells her individual story, within the main narrative, through her child's eyes.

The numbered narrative is composed of a central story, that of the Walcott family, and from this story, many others are told. It is here that the lives of other characters are introduced by means of the intercalated stories and of intermixing voices, as the language borders dilute the distance between the many stories and at the same time demarcate the construction of the linguistic identity of the people of Guyana.[3] These narratives adopt the point of view of an adult narrator who is omniscient and capable of embracing the female characters defending them against any male offense, as occurs to Clara Walcott on several occasions. The various pictures presented are photographs of the reality of those who get along with the Walcott family. One of the crucial themes for the weaving of the novel is the body and its gender differences revealed through the literary representation of the problem of violence involving men and women, also including children.

The body is to be understood here also as a *locus* both of power and of coercive practices, all of them associated with patriarchy. The theme of the body will be analysed from the perspective of feminism associated with ecofeminism. Elizabeth Grosz, for instance, in her *Volatile Bodies* (1994), discusses the body as a cultural product and as a signifying medium; it is also a vehicle for expression, for it may codify the meanings projected onto it in sexually determined ways.[4] There is a gender clash between the way the body is seen by male and female characters and the social, cultural

[2] Helena Parente Cunha, *As doze cores do vermelho* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Espaco e Tempo, Editora Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1988).

[3] Nichols mixes the use of standard English (associated with the coloniser) with Creole English, marking a political use of the language (Brathwaite's 'nation language'), which is enriched with words belonging to Guyana. See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, eds., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)

[4] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

and political context plays a relevant part in their perceptions in Nichols' novel.

Ecofeminist Stacy Alaimo, in turn, defends the redefinition of women and nature as crucial in order to contemplate their "social construction". Thus, concepts such as 'the body', 'nature', 'culture', among others, may be viewed as a space for resistance, and as a place for many a struggle for power and meaning.[5] Alaimo's study of three North American women writers, Fielding Burke, Octavia Butler and Linda Hogan, invokes the body as "a place of vibrant connection, historical memory, and knowledge", and not as "a mute, passive space that signifies the inferior parts of our natures" (126). Such a re-signifying of the body implies a resistance against the conservative and Manichean binarism which separates men and women by associating them with culture and nature respectively, as well as perpetuating the notion of the body as separated from the mind, whose order of importance in the history of society has always been superior.[6] Such a division also reveals a question of power connected with the use of women's bodies in the struggle for domination over a social, sexual and political body. It is here, as we shall see, that the ghost manifests its power against women.

In Nichols's novel, it is the body of women that presents the re-signified connection referred to by Alaimo. Men attempt to exert a relation of power, control (or lack of control) and domination over women's bodies, as well as over the political body in the context of the Guyanese society. My intention is to explore this re-signified connection especially by considering the notion of the ghost as associated with men's attitudes towards the body of women in the narrative, as well as the other forms of control exercised by men in the novel.

1. The Adult Body and Gender Confrontation

> A woman need[s] time alone to regain
> her equilibrium
> (Grace Nichols)

Clara Walcott, one of the protagonists of *Whole of a Morning Sky,* is a black woman, of a fair complexion and "neat features and compact small body", whose family origin is middle class (10). She has abandoned her musical career because of her marriage, "a big and formal event", with Archie Walcott (*WMS,* 19). The piano has accompanied her in her new life as a married woman, signifying by its presence another possible future. However, Clara is a happy woman and her family experience is of the joy of living, for she was brought up in an environment where "nothing but love" (*WMS,* 18) mediated everything. According to Archie, her husband, she had an "easy life" as a child and this has turned her into a "lousy"

[5] For discussions of the theme of resistance and its relation with the body, women and nature see Stacy Alaimo, "'Skin Dreaming': the Bodily Transgression of Fielding Burke, Octavia Butler, and Linda Hogan", in *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism*, ed. by Greta Gaard and Patrick D. Murphy (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 123-138, and Izabel Brandão, "Grace Nichols and the Body as a Poetics of Resistance", *Englishes* 30 (Roma: Pagine, 2006), 71-94.

[6] See Roy Porter, "História do corpo", in *A escrita da história*, ed. by Peter Burke (São Paulo: Ed. UNESP, 1992), and Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*; see also Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vols. 1-3 (New York: Vintage Books, 1985, 1986), for a history of the body according to new historicism, feminism and philosophy.

housewife, a "spendthrift" "lady of leisure", and an "almost irresponsible" mother, due to the freedom allowed to their three children, Dinah, 19 years old, Gem, 12, and Anthony, the youngest. Clara fights Archie back with the support of the omniscient narrator who stresses Clara's care for everything related to the family.

Clara is an intense woman, with strong attitudes, happy and anarchic, capable of playing with her children, who "didn't take after [the father] ... Like their mother, they had no order about them" (*WMS,* 24). Her most important characteristic is her loyalty to those she loves and cares for, and this transforms her into a friendly woman who can give everything she has in order to help. Her best friend, Rose, from Highdam, is a sensitive and is always helping Clara to rid herself of bad spirits.[7] The joy that marks their friendship is a recurring trace in Nichols's works.[8] Archie's perception of Clara shows that "even in times of trouble [Clara and Rose] had preserved a place for laughter" (*WMS,* 154). Her feeling of intimacy with Rose is so strong that between them there is not even any kind of body taboo. This can be seen through Rose's anointing Clara's body under the husband's suspicious, embarrassed and envious eyes. He cannot understand how Clara can be so shameless. And this he justifies by attacking the way she was educated:

> Archie didn't like Clara becoming so familiar with the Highdam people ... Once he walked into the bedroom and found Rose anointing Clara's belly. Rose looked uneasy but went on massaging the soft, purple, creamy flesh which she was treating for narah, her soft expert fingers moving with slow circular motions around the uneven dome, an open bottle of coconut oil beside the bed, and a piece of string which she had used for measuring between Clara's navel and nipples.
> Archie glanced at his wife's face and was surprised to see that it was free from embarrassment. He pursed his lips and left the room, feeling on the edge of all this womanness.
> They would do anything for her, men and women alike. She always had this effect on people … (*WMS,* 10).

The picture shows that men and women have a completely different behavior when the body is concerned. From the male part, expressed through Archie's envy and resentfulness, there is a clear manifestation of his feeling of loss of power in relation to his wife's body. His exclusion from this place, where only a true friendship (such as is Clara and Rose's) may lead to complicity, reveals his impotence both as a man and as a husband. The scene also offers an illustration of Alaimo's notion of women's bodies operating in the sense of knowledge and historical memory. Archie's attitude also suggests a manifestation of the ghost: since its function is to haunt, it always reappears in moments when one is not ready to refuse its influence. Archie is one of the characters who is most prone to be haunted

[7] The supernatural is another relevant theme in the novel, but this essay will only deal with the notion of ghosts in a symbolic sense.

[8] For a detailed analysis of the joy of living of Nichols' women, especially in her poetry, see Brandão, "Grace Nichols and the Body".

by this invisible ghost, and if it were not for Clara's rebuffs, he would be a prey to possession by the ghost, which would turn her life into some kind of hell.

It is also possible to say that since Archie is one of the representatives of the colonial government, due to his post as head-teacher of Highdam Methodist School, his attitude towards Clara (alongside his authoritarian behavior towards the women teachers at the school) suggests the attempt of the coloniser to control the body of the colonial subjects. Such an attitude can be understood as an imperialistic attempt to decide even on the subjects' private lives. Archie's role as the representative of the "British colonial educational system", who "provided for the people", determines his conservative perception of politics and indicates his attachment to the values of the coloniser: "Like Ferreira, [Archie] didn't think that Guiana was at all ready for independence. To cut itself off from the apron strings of the British was to leave the way open for the Russians to walk in" (*WMS,* 4, 34-35). Such conservative values are also oppressive values which go beyond the notion of politics. They become ingrained in one's mind and everything which does not comply with "law and order" has to be punished, in one way or another. Considering the scene under analysis, this leads to the presence of the ghost within the novel, for it is this presence that constitutes the main threat to male integrity; indeed, the control of women is something that patriarchal society has always tried to achieve. And yet, by the same token, if the ghost is given voice through a man, the disruption or disconnection of its power is provided by the women.

In addition to this, a reference to the odour of coconut oil establishes a connection between what Archie sees and his mother. In one of the intercalated narratives of the story, Archie, at the age of 12 (the same age as his daughter Gem), remembers the day that his dead mother saved his life in the fraction of a second:

> One dark rainy night he was doing his housework ... when he heard footsteps coming up the stairs … [A] few moments later he became uneasily aware of another presence in the room. He … sat very still but he could feel the presence behind him ...
> [He] picked up the familiar body odour of his mother, the odour she had after bathing and rubbing her body with coconut oil … After that he knew nothing else …
> A beam in the roof of the house had caved in, falling across the chair where Archie had been sitting. His father …found him lying in a dead faint on the floor, only inches away from the fallen beam which might have killed him if he had remained in his chair. Somebody had been protecting him … (*WMS,* 16-17).

The coconut oil used by Rose to massage his wife's body brings back to Archie the memory of his mother perhaps in some association that he would rather not like to have with his wife.

From the woman's perspective, it is possible to say that in this territory of intimacy built between the two women, the place of feelings of affection and trust becomes clear. Even considering that there is no explicit insinuation of sensuality or eroticism between the women, the inference is that, in a situation in which the female body is massaged, the place of eroticism may be seen as "an affirmation of the vital force of women.[9] The erotic, in this case, is revealed through the reference to a harmonious intimacy between the two women and their bodies. The oblique eye that wants to deny the right to such an intimacy belongs to the male character, for even though Archie feels he 'owns' Clara, he cannot prevent her from relating to whoever she wants to, nor even control any of her impulses towards happiness, laughter and the joy of being.

Archie Walcott's childhood, on the other hand, had been a hard one, as he lost his mother when he was only 12, but "big enough to feel the weight of his loss" (*WMS,* 16). Moreover, his parents were poor, and came from different racial groups: his mother "had a little East Indian blood in her, maybe a little Amerindian too" (*WMS,* 15), and his father was an African. He was a child devoted to his mother and because of this he was considered a 'sissy' at school, a designation he fought hard to dissociate himself from.

When he married Clara, Archie was fifteen years her senior and already a teacher with a clearly defined life of his own. However, the contrast between them is not restricted to age or social differences: Clara's joy of living is opposed by his mean, bitter, conservative personality. His face had a "familiar expression of martyrdom", and the eyes that conquered Clara had an "indescribable quality that had something to do with pain", which always led her to wish to caress him, as though to compensate for the difficulties he had gone through in the past (*WMS,*117, 6). But the lack of physical intimacy outside the bedroom prevented her from acting spontaneously. In such moments she always looked for some kind of subterfuge as for instance when, pretending to dust the wings of a moth from his shoulders, she would touch his face affectionately. For their children he was an honest man, someone they had to call 'Sir' at school; who 'never lied', but who was also a 'very lonely and sober' man, from whom they escaped when he tried to control their childish naughty deeds.

The distance of his relation to the body is so great that it reveals his difficulty with demonstrations of love and affection. He feels bad when faced with any reaction of physical well being, which is what happens during the first years of marriage to Clara: "He felt a bit ashamed of the glow on his own face. That she should see it. His body reached for hers with silent intensity" (*WMS,* 20). As for her, whose relation to the body is a good and harmonious one, she accepts the man with whom she has sex as "the savouring of some strange exotic fruit, its flavour eluding her"

[9] See Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power", <http://www.womenstemple.com/EroticAsPower-article.html>, 9 May 2008.

(*WMS,* 20). When Dinah is born, she experiences her first orgasms: "It was as if her little daughter had touched some tiny hidden secret spring as she made her way down, saying 'Here, mother, a little gift to compensate for all the pain. A gift, a gift, the unfolding of your own fount of pleasure'" (*WMS,* 20). And once more the narrative shows Clara as someone who accepts her being as a woman with all its multiple features: she is the mother, but she is also the woman who has no need to separate her body pleasure from her maternal function, something that Christian society usually does, and which is to a certain extent present in Archie's reluctance to let Clara see the expression of pleasure on his face, while at the same time feeling ashamed when he senses the positive relation Clara has with her own body. This also reinforces Archie's attempt to separate body pleasure from Clara's maternity, which he associates with the character of protection connected with his mother. The odour of Clara's body, which recalls the odour of his mother's body, imposes Oedipal barriers, reinforced by the powerful presence of the ghost controlling women's bodies and sexuality.

This might explain (but not justify) why Archie has immense difficulties in showing joy and pleasure in what he does. This would show an undignified feature of his condition as head of the family, whose hard childhood could serve as an alibi for any socially inadequate behaviour. Thus, Clara's pleasure leads to an unacceptable lack of control which might block this vital force stemming from the body and from the harmonious involvement brought by the erotic force that moves both of them as a couple. The way he finds to sort this out is by verbalizing the violence he would like to commit against Clara: "'What would you do if I was to hit you, eh?' For he badly wanted to hit her. To slap her cheeks hard. To slap her for her own lovely childhood and his hard empty one. To slap her for the pain and jealousy she was arousing in him" (*WMS,* 20). Such a difficult moment is reversed vehemently by Clara whose answer is equally harsh and violent:

> 'Make sure that whenever you hit me you do a very good job of it ... Make sure that you don't leave an ounce of strength in my body. Make sure that I can't get up again, you hear?'
> Archie knew she meant it. (*WMS,* 20)

Clara's strong answer means her blocking the ghost's attempt to vilify her life. Her vehement defense shows that she is not afraid of what patriarchy wants women to be, i.e. subservient and submissive as well as accepting physical and moral violence committed against them. Her resistance is the defiance of convention and thus she demands respect from her husband.

There are many other examples of adult violence, physical *and* symbolical, in the narrative, which help show the parallel route that such

an evil presents. It is as if the author wanted to show that such a recurrence supports the quasi omnipresence of violence against women, and that this is a problem which is not restricted to a given social group; it is instead present in all social, racial and ethnic groups like a pernicious disease that needs to be combated. The women's resistance in the novel can be thought as a form of concrete answer to the problem, which means a way of expelling the ghost from their lives.

In the suburb of Charlestown, where the Walcott family moves when Archie retires from Highdam School, the neighboring families live in some kind of tenement houses. Archie finds this out after he moves into his new house, which has a pretty façade, but hides its less attractive rear behind its back garden, offering a subtle picture of the social complexity of a country strongly demarcated by racial diversity: a true "mélange of people of different races and different shades and mixture of races. Africans, East Indians, Portuguese, Chinese, a few Amerindians and ... the growing number of Mixed" (*WMS,* 52). In this suburb there are people from honest families, workers and shopkeepers, but there is also a number of criminals and exploiters, prostitutes, and widowers with grown up children. A true melting pot full of the lives led by people of different cultures, scented sometimes with incense, Indian gods and citharas, or by the deafening sound of the *calypso* music. Some families live precariously, having hardly if any privacy, as is the case of Yvy Payne, a hardworking woman who provides for all her children, daughter-in-law and grandchild, who live together under her roof.

Besides the fact that she is a hardworking woman, what interests us is her connection with the representation of the patriarchal ghost. Vibert, Yvy's son, in his jealousy, shows that he cannot stand the fact that his father died and that his mother has found another man. Yvy Payne "couldn't depend on her eldest son for anything, now that he had his own family. But she did get some extra help from her manfriend, Cyril" (*WMS,* 93).

Cyril is the trigger of one of the most violent scenes in the novel, for it is headed by a son against his own mother. Vibert Payne is 19 and not very keen on working; he depends on his mother but he cannot accept the fact that Yvy has a boyfriend: "He remembered the way she carried on at his father's funeral, throwing herself across the coffin" (*WMS,* 93). Four years after his father's death is how long it took Yvy to find someone, to find Cyril. Vibert, however, cannot accept such a replacement. The burden of his jealousy is immense and carries a strong Oedipal dimension:

> He could hear the shaking of the bed in his brother's room. He could endure that. What he couldn't stand was the sight of his mother's locked door and the knowledge that Cyril was inside there with [his mother]. The thought of Cyril's smooth body and slick hair next to his mother's healthy darkness aroused such a fury in him. He felt she had no shame … Now he had to restrain himself

> from kicking the shaky door in and dragging the man out of the house … Also the way his mother had of putting aside Cyril's food first in the glass bowl made him sour inside (93).

Vibert's attitude of ownership, his jealousy and desire to control his mother's body leads to the worrying idea of the woman as a male possession, with the man unable to conceive the idea of the woman as a free being with a right to dispose of her life and her body as she pleases. Vibert's attitude repeats Archie's in relation to Clara, but it is worse because he is younger and because he expresses physically the violence that Archie could only put into words. Hence, the author seems to be saying that violence appears to have an archetypal dimension to it and that no matter how one fights it off, it will always recur.

Yvy feels she has a right to continue her life. The fact that she has a man does not imply dependence: "It wasn't good to depend on any man and, even though she appreciated Cyril's help, she intended to make her life her own way" (*WMS,* 95). Yet Vibert sees things differently and hence finds a way to "punish" her by tearing her night dress, provoking a rupture of the link between mother and son: "That was the last time she had tried beating him" (*WMS,* 93):

> [Vibert] didn't know what had possessed him that night. It had nothing to do with her shouting that he had no ambition or the blows she rained about his head and neck. In the act of deliberately ripping her nightdress, he thought he was showing her the complete disrespect which he felt he now had for her (*WMS,* 94).

Perplexity, a feeling of outrageousness, tears and the disruption of the maternal link, in Yvy's mind; on the other hand, in the son's mind a confusing mixture of a life lacking perspective and the demand for the control of the mother's body (and sexuality). The idea of 'disrespect' in his mind leads straight to the fact that the mother is more than just a mother, that her life includes an active sexual life, which the son cannot and will not admit. The Oedipal nature of this kind of violence reveals a harsh feature of patriarchal society in that, by fragmenting women into different roles – the virgin, the wife, the lover, the prostitute, the working woman – it is unable to understand and cope with the presence of multiple identities produced within itself.[10] What happens to Yvy Payne and her son illustrates one of the ways in which the ghost makes its presence felt in Nichols' novel. And Yvy, like Clara, rebuffs such a presence, for she never stops praising her independence, nor does she leave her man. Furthermore, her son is later on killed during the riots that culminate in the independence of the Guyana. It is even possible to consider Vibert's killing as some sort of punishment inflicted on the character by the author who, through her narrator, sides shamelessly with the women.

[10] For a discussion of the nature of such a fragmentation, see Grosz, *Volatile Bodies.*

The control of the body starts disintegrating as the narrative progresses. The loss of political control comes parallel to the loss of body control. Vibert Payne's 'punishment' seems to be part of this process.

2. The Child's Body and the Hard Route towards Growing Up

> Nothing can stop the kites singing in the skies …
> Grace Nichols

The adolescent Gem may symbolically represent Guyana herself, in her struggle for a free identity, an identity which is still insecure, and in progress, without any concrete notion of its 'power' as a nation full of conflicts of all sorts, especially marked by the multiracial political question. In the historical time of the novel, the late fifties and early sixties in the 20th century, the country is undergoing a time of turmoil in the struggle for independence. "Guiana is part of the British Empire" (*WMS,* 48), as Gem hears from her schoolteachers, in preparation for the Duke of Edinburgh's visit, immediately before the riots that lead the country towards the chaos of social, racial and political violence which preceded independence.

Gem's narrative shows her perception as a child of her own body and how such a perception is altered by the constructed experiences she undergoes. Her path is delineated by the writer as an educative route which reveals how the mother's way of educating her is crucial for her learning how to deal with the body from a positive perspective. When Clara is seen through her husband's eyes, all that he sees is her anarchic way of life as well as her lack of control over her family; yet, despite this, she is capable of educating her children with love and joy, especially her daughters Dinah and Gem, teaching them how to fend for themselves in life.

The scenes selected here for the examination of Gem's educative path have to do, first and foremost, with the constitution of relations of feelings of affectivity and the body between the novel's central male reference, i.e. Archie Walcott, and his daughter. The paternal distancing stems from his difficulty in relating emotionally since he was a child. This ghost pursues him throughout his life and returns in his marriage with Clara, in the school he runs with a tough, sometimes authoritarian, hand, and obviously extends itself through the education of his three children.

In Gem's case, Archie's feelings lead to a distant, cold and authoritarian contact. The girl's memory understands the father's behavior and attitude in this way:

> Your father. You remember him in his faded blue pyjamas, giving you a ride on his back, but it all seemed so long ago. In school you call him "Sir" like all the other children … And when he come back from his evening walks with his feet stretched out before him, you're always the first to loose out his lacings

> and take off his shoes. But he'd hardly ever touch you. Not like your mother tickling you till you had to beg her to stop … (*WMS,* 21)

Thus, the girl dislocates her attention and positive reference towards another man, a friend of Archie's, Conrad, a former policeman and crime photographer. This man, like his friend Archie, is very close to his own mother; his care for her is so extreme that it surpasses filial love and it can be said that he acts like a 'father' to this mother, a woman who symbolically might represent the old Guyana, in preparation for independence. Conrad is a strange man, who takes his gun wherever he goes, making everyone next to him feel safe. Gem is fascinated by him:

> There's nobody else like him. Who else could make white mice disappear down his shirt collar and reappear … at the cuff of his sleeve?
> Who could boil milo, your favorite treat, like him? …
> He said you were a clever child … Sitting across his shoulders, hands locked under his chin, skirt bunched around your thighs, brown legs wrapped around his sides, he is like a new father …
> And because you love him, you let him nibble your ears and press you against him, smelling his special scent of liquorice and photographs … (75-76)

Hence, Gem's best experience of the masculine, considering her adolescence, comes from a stranger, to whom she extends her need for paternal feelings.

The girl, however, grows up and Nichols shows that the child also goes through moments in which her bodily changes are perceived differently by the male eye and by her own eye that is already able to understand malice in someone else's behavior. Adults in the novel seem to have a tendency to punish children through their bodies because of their mischievous behaviour. One example of this is when Gem and a friend go into a Chinese grocery shop, and the boy pretends to buy things and starts ordering them. The Chinese man does not understand that the child is just being playful, and when he realizes the trick he squeezes the boy's hand violently in his anger. Some other time, when Gem goes into the shop on her own, he leans against the counter and sexually harasses her, by pinching her growing breast. In the girl's eyes, this is horrendous: "Chin lean across the counter to pinch one of the small brown nipples just showing under your cotton dress. 'Eeeeh! You getting beeg,' he say. The pinch hurt you and you hurry out of the shop, feeling Chin is a dirty old lizard …" (*WMS,* 50).

As she gains knowledge about her own body, she learns about what gives her pleasure and, at the same time, she learns how to deal with her own sexuality. This experience is seen through the girl's eyes when she looks at Miss Sheila, a woman who supposedly threw acid in her lover Mr Percy's face, a criminal who keeps her imprisoned in her own home. Gem has found out that she can spy this African Queen (as Miss Sheila is described

in the novel), from a hole in the bathroom's door: "Sometimes you peep at her and she don't even know. Sometimes … you see her nice big heavy breasts, just a shade lighter than the rest of her skin. You stare, wondering about she and Mr Percy, touching, touching your own tiny little breasts…" (*WMS,* 101). Besides, Gem also exercises the knowledge of her body with her best friend, Lurleena, playing "husband and wife ... Lying quietly together in a tangle of legs" (*WMS,* 91). This is perceived and observed by the mother, who, unlike the father, shows her understanding of people's needs to grow up and acquire knowledge about themselves. Clara sees Gem's adolescent voyeurism in touching herself in front of a mirror, as part of the natural evolution of a child walking towards maturity:

> Lurleena tells you that rubbing your breasts with the inside of yellow plantain skin would make them get bigger. You have to warm up the skin first though. Both of you try it … no improvement. Still, your mother would say, "Aye, you fulling eye, you fulling eye" in an amused kind of way, when she come into the room and catch you looking at yourself in the mirror … (*WMS,* 155)

Clara's easy-going way of bringing her children up is what makes Gem know precisely when to impose limits to her relationship with Conrad, for, when she acknowledges herself as an adolescent, with a body which is different from that of the child who used to sit in this man's lap, or who was sexually harassed by the Chinese guy, she retreats, aware of the change: "Conrad still comes often but you hardly sit in his lap anymore. Not because your mother would say, 'You're too big for that now', but because you feel like being for yourself" (*WMS,* 155-156).

Nichols' story ends with Gem's adolescent experience. The tip of the thread of this interlaced narrative leaves only one certainty: that no one can impose a disruption on the course of life. Not even the father who despite having planted the whole house backyard in Georgetown, decides to move on and puts the house up for sale. This is the lesson one can take from Gem's speech:

> Your house is up for sale ... your father look at it … from the back garden where everything is blooming. The gooseberry tree laden with fat gooseberries, the pumpkins swelling big and heavy on the ground, the tomatoes ripe and plenty, and the bora climbing fresh and green as if it didn't care that the person who had planted it would be leaving. (*WMS,* 156)

Like the kite that she has learned to fly with Conrad, Gem shows that things just need a little help so that they can move on. For this child, the mother's teaching results in maturity and learning. This leads the ghost to recede to the deep waters of the unconscious.

* * *

The intense social convulsion – strikes, violence, protests, looting, fires, dead people and casualties – that takes hold of the country shows the recurrence of violence in different instances, but it also reinforces and retells the same story of the attempt towards controlling women's bodies.

Nichols's novel shows certain features that reveal the immense complexity of breaking through gender differences. Guyanese society, which is still tied to old values, makes men and women react differently as regards their roles, but attempts to control the female body seem to reinforce the social conservatism that seeks to imprison women in a single role – the woman is either the mother, the wife, or the daughter – and as such, she cannot evade obedience to the father figure, to the man. And yet, Nichols shows that if, on the one hand, men want to be in their places as though nothing could ever change, on the other, she shows the women's power of resistance against the fragmentation of the many different roles associated with their identities. Nichols' rich narrative has many more examples one could draw to illustrate what I have been discussing throughout this essay, but for the time being I shall briefly point out some of them as other paths the narrative opens for an in depth-study.

The maintenance of the traditional order of things which involves the political and symbolic colonization of people in Guyana, on which the ghost image persistently seeks to impose its invisible presence, can also be seen in two different situations as regards Archie's role models, both public and private. Let us consider, for example, the women teachers at Highdam School, who are also housewives. Before Archie starts in his post as Highdam School headmaster, these women used to mix their public role – their classrooms – with their private lives – their kitchen: "[They] divided their attention equally between teaching and cooking pot at home. They saw nothing wrong in putting some sums on the board and slipping home, then slipping back again" (*WMS,* 6). Their attitude simply shows that communities such as Highdam's do not consider that women have to play many roles. Their slipping in and out of work can be seen as an anarchic way of adapting their lives to British colonial rule, but it can also be associated with resistance. When Archie Walcott becomes headmaster in the school, the women have to adapt themselves to his control, a hard task for them. Thus if not all of them disobeyed the new rules, a few of them kept the double role of mother 'and' teacher as a way to symbolically disrupt a rule which might be seen as an extension of a colonial government rule.

The second example comes from Dinah Walcott, who started teaching at the age of 14, following her father's footsteps, but when she was 19 gave up her teaching career and looked for a new job. This way she dismisses her father's role model as a teacher and as a provider for the family, for she starts providing as well where her father fails to do so, like

for instance when she buys Clara the fridge she so much desired and needed at home but that Archie's meanness prevented him from buying. When Dinah becomes independent to the point of dispensing with Archie's control over her salary, there begins a breach of silence resulting from her resistance and occupation of a new space for a woman: "Ever since she had given up her teacher job he had developed this silence about her activity, a silence that acknowledged that she had slipped beyond his control" (*WMS,* 58).

This indicates that Archie's power over his daughter has terminated and he will not have any kind of control over her any more, including her sexual life, for she starts dating Hartley, a man educated in England with fascinating socialist ideas. Archie does not approve of her dating but she cannot care less. As for the mother, she sees in her daughter a perspective of a different future. For her, Dinah "will be somebody" (*WMS,* 58). This reinforces the idea that the invisible ghost is, like in Gem's case, being sent to the deep waters of the unconscious, from which it had better not return.

Violence takes on different forms in the novel and involves the body in different ways. It recurs as regards the women from different racial groups. Apart from Yvy Payne's case, another example that reinforces both the violence 'and' the resistance on the part of the women refers to Zabeeda Ramsammy, of an Indian family background, who also lives in Charlestown, with her shopkeepers' parents-in law, in a house behind Archie and Clara's. Zabeeda is another woman who is subject to both her mother-in-law's abuses as well as her husband's physical violence. Yet, following the same pattern already established, like Clara and Yvy, she defends herself: "Whenever her husband tried to beat her, Zabeeda would fight back, her wiry body clawing and scratching" (*WMS,* 124). Here the archetypical force of the ghost transcends the idea of nation. Since Guyana is made of a 'mélange of people' from different racial groups, Nichols weaves her story from the idea that the invisible ghost does not have a single face. It takes on 'any' face anywhere in the world.

The other example comes from Clara's own family and refers to Cousin Wilma, who works as a dressmaker, and at 45 gets married to an older man. She is, however, forced to flee from her own home to avoid being beaten by her husband. Wilma also reacts and resists: "I had a mind to take the same plate and hit he cross he head, but just pun on me clothes and go out of de house. And to think that before he was married de man was acting so nice …" (*WMS,* 135).

The final example of the recurring violence has to do with the social turmoil in the country which generates attempts at sexual violence. Clara is a witness of the "hunting" of a young woman, "a collie bitch", by a "pack of hounds ... a gang of twelve, fourteen, young men", running "as

if all the devils in hell pursued her" and managing to escape (*WMS,* 139). The fact that Clara witnesses such an episode can be associated with all the other forms of violence committed during the intense conflicts that brought the British troops, American aid, deaths and the curfew to Georgetown.

> [She] couldn't accept or comprehend [the violence]. The fires and the looting, yes. But not the killing and battering. … she told Archie that she couldn't see or understand how one person could kill another, merely on the grounds of race, how they could work up enough hatred. (*WMS,* 139)

For Archie, Clara's perception is naïve for she does not seem to understand the reasons for all she has pointed out. Yet, for her, the answer is in the very fact that men do not give birth: "I bet you if men used to bring children into this world, they would have more respect for human life'" (*WMS,* 139). Even if one considers her essentialist tone, she cannot be said to be entirely wrong.

This same talk about racial violence is held with Rose, who, by the end of the story, comes for a visit. She says to Clara: "'It's the wicked ones of both sides that doing the mischief... some of them using the chance to settle old scores, as they say… We only have to hope and pray" (*WMS,* 153-54). In her voice Nichols seems to be saying that the 'wicked ones' come from everywhere and elliptically one could add that the 'good' ones do too. So hope and prayer on every one's part might be a help towards exorcising the ghost…

Nichols builds a concept for the body in her novel that has a different weight for men as compared with women, as already pointed out. The women have a more pleasurable perception of the body than the men whose experience at all levels leads them to search for a way of controlling political and sexual bodies. The women, in their turn, have within their bodies a history of more positive paths, and even if they seek to build an experience which includes joy and pleasure within an oppressive society, this means that the basic word Nichols wants to pass on is 'hope'. The learning that comes from all this is immense, and Gem, the adolescent girl whose story revises the that of the adults, clearly shows her learning; she has acquired knowledge enough to discern what is 'good' or 'bad' with her adolescent eyes. Perhaps, this poignant novel by Grace Nichols finally suggests, the country's political body will also be able to learn.

Matt Haig, *The Dead Fathers Club* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2006; London: Vintage, 2007), 314 pp.

Reviewed by **Daniela Guardamagna**

The Dead Fathers Club by Matt Haig (the 34 year-old author of two children's books, *Shadow Forest* and *The Runaway Troll* and two novels for adults, *The Last Family in England* and *The Possession of Mr Cave*), is an interesting rewriting of *Hamlet*. Its eleven-year-old protagonist, Philip, suffers the same doubts and dislocations as his famous ancestor.

Philip is the son of a pub-owner in Newark, Nottinghamshire, who has recently died and whose ghost appears to him, stating that he has been killed by his brother Alan, a mechanic, to gain the love of his sister-in-law, and asking his son to avenge his death. The plot and range of characters follow the Shakespearean precedent with surprising symmetry, though not all the characters have a counterpart. The mother remarries with unwonted speed; the boy listens to the ghost with hardly a doubt; there is a girlfriend, Leah, who, though much less passive and obedient than the Prince of Denmark's fiancée, tries to commit suicide by throwing herself into a river; Leah has a brother, and a father who, like his Shakespearean predecessor Polonius, dies in place of the intended victim (here, in a fire caused by Philip aiming to kill his uncle). There are no proper Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, though Philip is surrounded by his school friends; no proper Horatio, as Philip does not confide his visions and his plans to anybody. The boy's life is duly perturbed by his assigned task, and though he does not decide to play any antics, the people surrounding him are worried about his mental well-being, and suggest he needs the help of a psychologist.

The fairly straightforward plot describes Uncle Alan's marriage, which Philip hates; the changes in his mother; the attempts on the boy's part to kill his uncle; the accident in which Uncle Alan is hurt, and his subsequent death in hospital.

The main differences between this plot and Shakespeare's lie in the fact that, though Philip does not for a moment suspect his father's ghost of being a "goblin damned", the author seems to want the reader to suppose this, and to read malevolence and bad faith into his behaviour. The uncle's character is certainly unpleasant, but there is a final twist near the end: the son repents of the part he has taken in the accident which is endangering Uncle Alan's life, realizes that his uncle saved his, and tries to help him, but is in no condition to do so; the reader is even led to assume that the ghost, having learnt to act in the physical world, manages to manipulate the hospital instruments which keep his enemy alive, thus being able to kill him personally.

Though Haig knows his Shakespeare, as will soon be seen, the overall texture of Philip's language is anything but Shakespearean: we are presented with the stream of consciousness of an eleven-year-old boy: his sentences are paratactic and there is virtually no punctuation, no apostrophes (I cant, I dont, as in Shaw, but obviously without the Shavian polemical edge) and no subjunctives. There are a few unexpected images given in a matter-of-fact way, without emphasis. This is the opening of the novel:

> I walked down the hall and pushed the door and went into the smoke and all the voices went quiet like I was the ghost.
> Carla the Barmaid was wearing her hoop earrings and her tired eyes. She was pouring a pint and she smiled at me and she was going to say something but the beer spilt over the top.
> Uncle Alan who is Dads brother was there wearing his suit that was tight with his neck pouring over like the beer over the glass. His big hands … were over Mums hands and Mums head was low like it was sad and Uncle Alans head kept going down and he lifted Mums head up with his eyes. (1)

We are hardly surprised that the list of the favourite opening lines in Haig's website (<http://www.matthaig.com>, 12 May 2009) is:

> Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo.

And, again from the site, the heading of the section "lists" is "List, list, O, list!", unacknowledged but of course taken from *Hamlet,* I.v.22.

The text, though generally simple in texture, presents some graphic devices: from a few empty lines to evoke a silence (51), to the sudden breaking of a prose sentence, interrupted, completed or repeated by words in the form of a poem (though the lines often consist of single words or parts of words: see, in quotations below, "this/harsh/world", or "fish/mon/ger"), to calligrammes (the letters of the words "downwards" and "upwards" disposed in a smile-like figure to represent the Nottinghamshire lilt, 54. Or the word "die" repeated in ten lines, diminishing from ten times to one, creating a regular geometrical image, 233).

But Shakespeare is there: the text is a curious pastiche where verbal Shakespearean references occasionally surface in the basic flow of the normal English, ranging from the apparently haphazard, like the mention of Hamlet cigars or a thriller called *Murder Most Foul* or a fish called Gertrude ("a funny name", 59) to actual though dislocated quotations.

At the beginning, the quotations are not apparent. For instance, as regards his school subjects, Philip takes some kind of interest in the ancient Romans and, like the good boy he is, he worries about their well-being:

> There were villages nearby and places where the soldiers could eat and drink but it still must have been very hard for them coming to this harsh world away from their families to start again.
> this
> harsh
> world. (30)

This quotation is lost in the Italian translation (*Il Club dei padri estinti*, trans. by Paola Novarese, Torino: Einaudi, 2008, 32) where Hamlet's "harsh world" becomes the modern and somewhat over-rational "un mondo così inospitale" (32), nor is it particularly obtrusive in the English text, so it may remain unnoticed by a fast reader.

A few pages later, Philip reflects on whether it is right to kill people ("Its like how in War soldiers are told to kill other men and then they are Heroes but if they killed the same men when they were not in War they are Murderers"). And he proceeds: "So it is not the thing that is bad or good it is what the thing is called" (108); again a rather subtle and not easily recognizable echo of " … for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (see *Hamlet* II.ii. 252-253).

Interspersed with these almost secret quotations, some occur which are much more recognizable, and they become more and more frequent. For instance: "Uncle Alan folded his arms still nose whistling and he said Stale flat unprofitable" (72). He is not speaking of existential anguish, he is speaking about beer, which may commonly be said to be stale or flat, and, though the word "unprofitable" is rather unusual for a mechanic, he is discussing the small profits to be derived from the sale of high quality beer, so again the echo may go unnoticed by the inattentive reader. Or, when Leah's father Mr Fairview appears for the first time, he brings a fish as a present to the family, adding with no incongruity that one "Couldn't get one that size from any fishmonger in town". Looking at the dead fish, Philip feels ill, and the stream of consciousness proceeds:

> I thought I saw the mouth of the fish move and say Fishmonger but I closed my eyes hard shut and opened them and I knew it was my imagination.
> fish
> mon
> ger. (74)

The quotation is apposite, as it obviously recalls the exchange in II.ii.173-176 between Hamlet and Polonius.

On pp. 66-67, three quotations occur in a row, including two very obvious ones:

> … Uncle Alan was talking non stop words words words. (66)
> See theres method in my madness. (66)
> Smiling damned villain. (67)

On p. 122, there is a list of the "Ways I can kill Uncle Alan", and the sixth item, with no introductory explanation as to how Philip has got hold of this quaint piece of information, is: "You can pour poison into someones ear when they sleep and it kills them".

The progression towards explicitness continues: the title of chapter 30 is "The Murder of Gonzago". Philip, dutifully though unconsciously, uses his predecessor's device of showing a performance to the culprit to examine his reaction, and the chosen performance is an improbable movie, advertised on the cover of the DVD, in screaming block capitals, as "A BROTHER'S MURDER. A SON'S REVENGE". The choice of the cast is a similar pastiche of the obvious and the ludicrous: Joaquin Phoenix (the obvious villain Emperor Commodus in Ridley Scott's *The Gladiator*) is Duke Fortimus, the evil brother; Queen Livia is the unlikely "ACADEMY AWARD WINNER" Charlize Thuron – Philip's spelling strikes again –, and an equally unlikely Tobey McGuire ("*SPIDERMAN, SEABISCUIT*") plays the orphan son; but when "ACADEMY AWARD WINNER MEL GIBSON" suddenly appears in the role of the King-victim, we are forcibly reminded of him in the title role of Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*.

After this, on the whole the plot faithfully follows the main events of the play: Uncle Alan reacts strongly to the performance; Mr Fairfax dies by accident in an awkward attempt by Philip to burn Alan alive in his garage (Mr Fairfax, suddenly "intruding rashly" and unwontedly on Alan's business, dies in his stead); the Father reproaches Philip for taking too long to revenge him and rather selfishly asks his son to ditch his girl-friend, who is proving an unwelcome distraction from The Task. She – in despair over her father's death, and certainly saddened by Philip's desertion – attempts suicide by throwing herself into a river.

Here there is a significant modification. Philip finds her hovering on the bridge ("nearly singing Dead and gone dead and gone", 274), then she plunges into the river, he plunges in after her, manages to save her with uncle Alan's help, and is in his turn saved by Alan. The deceptive appearance of a head surfacing and then disappearing underwater draws Alan back into the river: we could almost say with Macbeth "there's no such thing", because Haig's Ghost has become active and deceives his brother into risking his life again (causing him to end up in hospital, where he dies). Philip decides not to kill Uncle Alan after all, but his decision is thwarted.

This, I think, is the point of Haig's rewriting. Sympathy for the rather ineffectual ghost he created in the first chapters is slowly undermined in the second part of the novel, and finally destroyed. Selfish, opinionated, sometimes obviously lying, the Ghost uses his son's life for his own ends. In the last few pages, Philip analyses the known facts: Alan has saved Leah's life, and his own. But he cannot stop the stream of events.

As often happens, this rewriting also posits a stance critical of the source. We know of many re-interpretations of classics where rights and wrongs are reversed and the point of view of the antagonist becomes the key to the text: we read Jane Eyre's story through the eyes of Bertha Mason in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, those of the monster Grendal in John Gardner's rereading of *Beowulf*, those of the modern equivalents of Goneril and Regan in Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*. Here the uncle is not given the status of a protagonist: the figure with which the reader identifies is still the orphaned, would-be avenger. But we are led to suspect the Ghost's motives, his morals and insufficient, self-serving love for the living.

Haig does not directly imply that we take facts too much at face value when, in our reading of *Hamlet*, we interpret King Claudius straightforwardly as a villain and the Ghost as a positive figure; what he does show is the destruction of the lives of the living through the manoeuvres of a dead man who refuses to die his own death. "Trust the living" (304), says kind Mrs Fell to Philip; we are presented with a conspiracy of the dead against the living, in order to trap the living in the past, to make a future impossible without the dead. Though this is certainly a free interpretation, it is not a wholly absurd reading of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Katharine Hodgkin, Michelle O'Callaghan, and S. J. Wiseman, eds., *Reading the Early Modern Dream. The Terrors of the Night* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 176 pp.

Reviewed by **Lucia Nigri**

This collection of essays examines the meanings attached to dreams in Elizabethan and Jacobean culture. This is not a new topic, but it acquires originality here through the desire of the contributors to treat accounts of dreams as expressive of various crises, personal, political and religious, which typify the age.

Two essays look at the connections between descriptions of dreams and attitudes to ghosts in fictional and non-fictional works. In "Dreaming, Motion, Meaning: Oneiric Transport in Seventeenth-Century Europe", Mary Baine Campbell is particularly interested in exploring the cultural alterations which occurred in the hermeneutic of the dream and, to some extent, of ghosts. Alluding to the etymological history of the term 'dream', which is strongly correlated to the idea of the ghost, she notes a gradual decrease in the epistemological significance of these two phenomena since the Renaissance. Specific illustrations of this claim help her case, and she adds information about the ways dreams and ghosts were interpreted without which it would be hard to judge the seriousness with which they were taken.

In "Dreaming the Dead. Ghosts and History in the Early Seventeenth Century" Michelle O'Callaghan explores the association of dreams and ghosts in early-modern literature. This is a cogent study which is grounded not only on the premise that "ghosts and dreams frequently coalesce within the dream-vision poem, and share figurative and political vocabularies", but also on the claim that "the early modern political dream and the historical ghost [must be read] alongside one another as intimately related, if not identical tropes in early modern figurations of memory and history" (81). Some concepts are reiterated here, as when the author discusses aspects concerning both ghosts and dreams. Disturbing linear temporality, they are repositories of an enigmatic message that reflects the contradictoriness of contemporary ideas concerning both subjects. Opinions differed, for example, as to whether these phenomena were the result of supernatural agency (and if they were, whether they were divine or demonic) or of disordered states of mind. However, O'Callaghan provides a useful overview of the development of the figure of the ghost, in poetry, prose and drama, in the first twenty or so years of the reign of James I, making an important distinction between "the ghosts of the Elizabethan

dead [who] returned to lament the demise of a political ethos", and "the political ghost [who] returns to mobilise the nation in the name of an embattled Protestant cause" (82). The persuasiveness of the speeches of these ghosts varies according to the historical moment in which they are uttered. The appearance of both types is always a response to political changes, but the first type triggers a lament for the present situation, while the second launches a real incitement to action. The latter type of ghost is much more aware of his political and social duties; unlike the Ghost in *Hamlet*, he does not represent "an object for nostalgia and meditation rather than a spur to present action" (85). Since these Jacobean 'second generation ghosts' urge people to act in the political sphere, they tend to focus less on the individuals to whom they appear than on the communication of their message, however obscure, to the whole community:

> … the dead had now found a political body to talk to. Just as the ghost found a receptive audience in the House of Commons, Parliament gained Protestant champions in these saintly ghosts that, in turn, functioned to represent its interests within the national arena. …. Unlike the earlier Jacobean ghosts, who spoke to an isolated author standing in for a dispossessed and disempowered community of honour, the 1620's ghosts assume a collective voice, and speak to and for a community that is not primarily aristocratic but popular. (91)

The final part of O'Callaghan's essay, once again and quite consistently, links the idea of the ghost to that of the dream, bringing the topic back to the main subject of the book. O'Callaghan argues that the disturbing appearance of the ghost is always meaningful, performative and, as P. E. Dutton says of the political dream in his *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), "politically purposeful" (94). Slightly redundant is the contributor's remark on the fact that "These ghost narratives write their times as moments of crisis and fracture that require corrective histories. … The ghost and the dream have an uncanny ability to make the past speak to the present in a way that is both intelligible and enigmatic" (94). Perhaps it would have been worth considering these last statements as assumptions, rather than as logical results of her thesis.

The discussion concerning the ghost is not relevant in the other essays, but one of the merits of this book is its original approach to considering the many ways in which early modern people used to participate, sometimes unconsciously, in contemporary social life. All the papers bring out the extent to which Elizabethan and Jacobean writers used ghosts and dreams to express views of authority which might otherwise have been censored. In "Dream-Visions of Elizabeth I" Helen Hackett notes the frequency with which such visions provide a means for authors to discuss some sensitive questions to do with the monarchy, such as the Queen's

advancing age. Far from being merely a cue for sentimentality or whimsy, they quite regularly "deliver political admonition and critique" (58). The dream was, indeed, symptomatic of a more general and more exasperated condition experienced by the Elizabethans. Aristocratic dreamers, for example, tend to dwell on what they perceived as an unjust lack of advancement. Dreaming of Elizabeth was "a means of expressing the political aspirations and frustrations of Elizabeth's courtiers" (45).

Stephen Clucas's essay further clarifies Hackett's assertions. His essay "Dreams, Prophecies and Politics: John Dee and the Elizabethan Court 1575-1585" perfectly fits in the general structure of the book, since he studies Dee's dreams as prophetic messages – so interpreted by the dreamer – which suggested how to act in a society built on the fragile balance between favouritism and disfavour in the Court of the Queen. Similarly, in "'Imaginarie in Manner: Reall in Matter': Rachel Speght's Dreame and the Female Scholar-Poet", Kate Lilley reads a variety of Renaissance texts as indicative of their author's desire to express the unspoken. In particular, she analyses Speght's *Mortalities Memorandum with a Dreame Prefixed* (1621) and women's use of the poetic dream vision: here the function of the dream is to show women the way to greater social power through intellectual and cultural achievement.

The above essays are mainly concerned with the study of a range of early-modern texts whose accounts of dreams are rarely without a subtext in which the dreamer (and the reader) is covertly advised on forms of political and social action. In three other essays the focus shifts to the subjectivity of the dreamer. In "'Onely Proper unto Man': Dreaming and Being Human", the second essay of the book, Erica Fudge investigates how early modern people defined themselves through their own dreams, which seemed to concern more general questions about human existence. Far more convincing, however, is Katharine Hodgkin's essay "Dreaming Meanings: Some Modern Dream Thoughts". She insists that we should read accounts of dreams in "relation to the dreamers who record them", since it is then possible "to see more than a purely conventional and depersonalised mobilisation of familiar elements" (124). In "'I Saw No Angel': Civil War Dreams and the History of Dreaming", S. J. Wiseman investigates typical dreams of the Civil War period, and notes how they continued to influence day-time behaviour and late Restoration thought in a multifaceted way.

This book demonstrates that an awareness of early-modern attitudes to, and uses of, dreams and ghosts is indispensable to the understanding of a cultural system in which, as one of the editors remarks with reference to the dream, both were objects of "fascination, but also anxiety" (13). "Fascination", because they could be interpreted in different ways; "anxiety", because they needed to be interpreted in the right way in order to be

effective. The volume also proves that, far from testifying to the persistence of superstition and regressive modes of thought in the age of Shakespeare, Bacon and Locke, the treatment of these topics by early-modern writers consistently exhibits an ingenuity and independence of mind which we too often assume only became possible a century or more later.

Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Penguin Book of Ghosts: The spectres, apparitions and phantoms that haunt 'The Lore of the Land*, ed. by Sophia Kingshill (London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, Hardbound, 2008), xx, 456 pp.

Reviewed by **Ephraim Nissan**

The Penguin Book of Ghosts is a much abbreviated version of Westwood and Simpson's previous, 918 page anthology, *The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends, from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys*, which first appeared in 2005 and was reissued in paperback a year later. Rather than limiting my review to the more recent publication, I have preferred to take the opportunity to reconsider its predecessor, relocating it in the wider context of other 'guides' to English folklore.

The Lore of the Land is among the finest books of its kind to have appeared during the last two decades. Among these, I would include *A Dictionary of English Folklore,* by Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Reid (Oxford University Press, 2000) which, as its name suggests, is a lexicon. But although there are other English folklore books in this category, none are as rigorous, precise, and, for the scholar, satisfactory. In these respects, the same can be said of Iona Opie and Moira Tatem's admirable *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford University Press, 1989), which lists individual superstitions alphabetically, and within each entry, through a selection of quotations sorted chronologically (as in historical dictionaries) and extending up to the 1980s. Finally, *Lore*, which I would expect to stand out as a classic reference book at least for the next fifty years.

The hardbound edition of *Lore* only differs from the paperback because the page and type are slightly larger, yet otherwise identical, and because whereas the dust cover of the hardbound edition is based on a tapestry map of England (Sheldon Workshop, *c*. 1588), a knight is shown in the painting on the cover of the paperback. *Ghosts* is in a smaller format, and is a selection of ghost stories from *Lore*. Westwood and Simpson have added an introduction (replacing the one from *Lore*), followed by greyscale maps (whereas in *Lore* colour maps of each county label places by kind of tale). As in *Lore,* chapters in *Ghosts* are also divided by county, and in each county, entries for given places are listed alphabetically. Again as in *Lore,* there is a bibliography sorted by county, and a detailed subject index. The dust cover (also the price: £14.99, rather than £15) suggests that *Ghosts* is a selection catering to a lowbrow public not buying *Lore*, enticed by the blurb on the back cover inviting readers to: "Shiver at the story of the apparition of 50 Berkeley Square that no one has survived

seeing" and to "Listen for the tapping cane, when Jeremy Bentham's mummified body walks through the corridors of University College London". The appeal of *Lore*, on the other hand, probably includes both highbrow and average readers. *Ghosts* has no illustrations; many grace *Lore,* often in colour. Moreover, interleaved inside *Lore* there are many green facing pages, two of which host a thematic article, ("Sunken Churches", for example). *Lore* also has an "Index of Legend and Tale Types".

Comparatists will treasure *Lore.* Rabelais' giant Gargantua parallels Gurgunt, the legendary founder of Norwich Castle (683, 509-510). The mountainous east of Latium has Leonessa, but the fabled Lyonnesse (submerged off Cornwall) flares the imagination (114-115). The medieval legend about "a chamber lit by a carbuncle" (286) has a parallel in the Jewish tale about Noah's Ark being lit inside by a pearl. Recalling the biblical bed of Og is the extravagantly large size of the haunted Great Bed of Ware (351-352): an author "in 1736 spoke of the twenty-six butchers and their wives who had slept in it on the night that King William III was crowned" (352). To a Milanese aware of the architect of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele falling to his death at its very centre, it is instructive to read about the extent to which myth altered fact, concerning the fate of the architect of the Norfolk Pillar surmounted by a statue of Britannia in Great Yarmouth (503). The Saxons led by "an 'African' named Gormund" in Cirencester (Gloucestershire), aka *Urbs Passerum* (284), are geographically as delightfully off course as the peculiar incident of the "Indians" found on the coast of Gaul in the 60s BC who had gone rather far off course while on a trading voyage (Pomponius Mela 2.45; Pliny, *Natural History* 2.170). There are obvious difficulties with this tale, and the "Indians" may have been natives of a remote part of Scandinavia, but at least it shows a sense of the Ocean as connecting the extremities of the earth.

Apparitions of demonic dogs feature fairly prominently throughout *Lore,* which reminded this reviewer of how according to Taku who was based in Germany, the acclaimed Hebrew poet, exegete, philosopher, and wanderer Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) died in England, having fallen ill after a short fall he had when, riding, he escaped a pack of black dogs while en route northwards from London (to Taku, this was retribution for Ibn Ezra's disbelief in demons, and those dogs must have been of similar ilk). But the broader theme is bogey beasts known as "Shuck" and the like, that get a thematic article (500-501; cf. 497, 687). Only to some "to meet Shuck means death within the year" (501). A 1988 report ascribed a lucky escape to a Shuck-like "huge hound with eyes 'like coals of fire'; by standing in the way at night, the beast was responsible for the man's not "being run down by a car with no lights", "so Shuck may act as a guardian" (501).

Local papers in South East London sometimes report sightings of big cats, possibly panthers, released in the wild. Whereas this may be more or less cogent, it is sobering to refer to the cases presented by Veronique Campion-Vincent, *Des fauves dans nos campagnes: légendes, rumeurs et apparitions* (Paris: Imago, 1992) and especially to her opening essay "Apparitions de fauves et de félins-mystères en France", followed by "Observations de félins d'ailleurs en Grande-Bretagne" by Michael Goss, and by 2Apparitions de félins dans l'Occident médiéval: essais de typologie" by Michel Pastoureau. Sightings of big cats also occur in *Lore* (717-718): one wonders if a case from *c.* 1770 was "a genuine British wildcat", "or a particularly large feral cat" (717).

Remembrance Day is marked in Britain by people wearing the Flanders poppy, and at present they are advertised by a charity through a Poppyman made of red flowers – which recalls the figure of Jack in the Green, but with no man inside. *Lore* reports about flowers born from blood, and called "Daneweed" or "Daneblood" (451, 530-531), a name I suggest could be compared to the Modern Hebrew plant name 'blood of the Maccabees' (*dam ha-Makkabím*) for *Helichrysum*.

Lore includes an account of the rape and murder of Edward II (278), reminding the reviewer of Jewish myths about defeated or incapacitated biblical kings who were raped. The *caudatus Anglicus* is another figure mentioned in *Lore* (387), with relevant bibliography (870). Although the figure originates in medieval slander that started as a consequence of war against France, the English were not alone. The Christian myth about Jews having a tail even found its way into Iraqi lore from 1948, about a child asking his father to bring him "a little Zionist with a tail" once he defeats the Jews in Palestine. And (in retribution for incest) a tailed baby is born just before a storm destroys Macondo, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by García Márquez. (But then think of inferiorising myths about Africans, as discussed in Jean-Dominique Pénel's *Homo Caudatus: Les hommes à queue d'Afrique Centrale: un avatar de l'imaginaire occidental* (Leuven: Peeters, 1982).

Racist hate material is mostly avoided by Westwood and Simpson. Lore about Jews is exemplified, but the book does not include the most heinous lore that historically saw the light in England. We do find a hostile tale on an evil Jew who prays at Worcester Cathedral somewhat contradictorily (817), and tales about the Wandering Jew (81, 435, 672-673), but little else. In my opinion, *Lore* is right to avoid hate material in this general work, lest it nourish prejudice, something unlikely to occur from other tales on 'ethnic' identity expressing beliefs such as that according to which Fins are magicians and endager a ship (367). Scholarship usually has the medieval blood libel originate in England (but Robert Chazan claimed a precedent in Germany); however, in *Lore* there is an amused contemporary

quotation on Napoleon supposedly eating babies at breakfast (213).

Similarly libellous tales emerged against other ethnicities. The entry for Tilehurst, Berkshire (24-25) displays a photograph of a monument in black alabaster, presenting a golden crown (standing for the aristocratic status of a family) encircling a black naked torso (black, because it is made of alabaster), whose face is surmounted by curly hair, with a greenish object (a large leaf?) held in the man's right hand, behind his head and projecting beyond it to the other side. The caption states: "According to a local tradition, this figure of Sir Peter Vanlore's monument in Tilehurst church represents a Native American servant who poisoned Sir Peter's children". The entry relates:

> The parish church here contains an elaborate alabaster monument to Sir Peter Vanlore (d. 1627), together with his family, including representations of a dead infant and eight other children holding skulls – a convention indicating that they had died before the monument to their father was erected. Above the cornice of the monument are three heraldic shields, the middle one described in the *Victoria County History* as 'argent, a chevron between horseshoes sable, surmounted by a crest of a Negro head'.

It would be too much to expect *Lore*'s coverage to be exhaustive. A 'real-life' ghost story that could perhaps have been included is reported in the 1994 Jewish New Year's Eve edition of London's *Jewish Chronicle*, reporting the appearance of the ghost of an early modern Jew standing in prayer on that date of the calendar at a private home, on the site of a synagogue that is no more (according to a non-Jewish woman living there).

Lore is remarkably free of typos. We find "Cosenza in Sicily" (645), instead of in Calabria, but this is an error made by Herbert of Bosham, not Westwood and Simpson who are to be congratulated for their masterpiece and for its more light-weight but less fascinating sequel.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Lucia Fiorella, *Figure del Male nella narrativa di J.M. Coetzee* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2006), 250 pp.

Maria Paola Guarducci, *Dopo l'interregno. Il romanzo sudafricano e la transizione* (Roma: Aracne, 2008), 220 pp.

Kathleen Gyssels and Bénédicte Ledent, eds., *The Caribbean Writer as Warrior of the Imaginary - L'Ecrivain caribéen, guerrier de l'imaginaire* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008), 487+xviii pp.

Marie-Hélène Laforest, *La magia delle parole. "Omeros" di Derek Walcott* (Napoli: Guida, 2007), 190 pp.

Mpalive-Hangson Msiska, *Postcolonial Identity in Wole Soyinka* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007) 176+xxxvii pp.

Neelam Srivastava, *Secularism in the Postcolonial Indian Novel: National and Cosmopolitan Narratives in English* (London: Routledge, 2007), 224 pp.