

GHOSTED IN AMERICA: THE OTHER GHOST TOUR

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Winifred Hunton-Chan, B.A.

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GHOSTED IN AMERICA: THE OTHER GHOST TOUR

Committee Members Approved:

Susan S. Morrison, Chair

Audrey McKinney

Victoria Smith

Approved:

J. Michael Willoughby
Dean of the Graduate College

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE OTHER GHOST TOUR

Every major American city offers a ghost tour, a leisurely walk after dusk through the historic downtown led by a lantern-swinging guide who regales visitors and locals alike with stories of the city's still-present past. The older and more historically embattled the city, the better the stories. But after the guests and tour guides go home, the streets are haunted by another set of ghosts, *living* people without homes and occasionally without the mental means to tell an apparition from a hallucination. These people are ghostly because, although they are, in fact, real humans, they are only seen when they disturb the boundaries of daily life. To those who can afford the privacy of haunting their own homes and apartments, these homeless ghosts disrupt a pleasant evening by reminding one of the terrifying potential of poverty to threaten the safe boundaries of the sane and normal. What the ghost tours (geared towards middle-class tourist delight) fail to show are the *living* ghosts of America. Just as traditional ghosts disrupt the concrete boundary between dead and alive, the past and the present, these human ghosts "do not fit into the designed form nor can be fitted into it" (Bauman 30).

Ghost tours provide entertainment rather than horror because, whether or not those ghosts are real, participants do not have to live with them. The ghosts on the tour program belong in other cities or (if someone were to partake of a ghost tour in his/her own town) they belong to prior residents, to specific buildings, to the city at night. But as a culture, as a people, as a nation, America is haunted every day by living ghosts,

“because haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with” (Gordon 198).

As humans, we constantly haunt one another in complex and overlapping ways by disrupting each other’s sense of normalcy. We ghost each other by disposing “of the leftovers in the most radical and effective way: we make them invisible by not looking and unthinkable by not thinking. They [ghosts]¹ worry us only when the routine elementary defenses are broken and the precautions fail” (Bauman 27). Those who can afford the protective armor of a car, no matter how mangled and barely functioning, are haunted by the freeway underpass beggar who haunts the borders of our thoroughfares, challenging one’s relative expectations of wealth and poverty. The homeless, disabled and disenfranchised vet, with a cardboard sign and (in)visible wounds, haunts our sense of courage, health, patriotism and conscience and causes “a disruption in the visual, auditory and perceptual field” (Davis 129). As humans, we cannot escape each other, no matter how luxurious our car or how exclusive our communities.

This cultural haunting extends out in many directions and can be viewed from the opposite angle as well; those conscribed to the worst parts of town, the places abandoned by grocery stores and police, continue to be haunted by the American dream, by the celebrities who made it out and by the dream of security and joy that only money can buy. Those who can afford to distance themselves from poverty, filth and suffering often cultivate the assumption that the farther away they can get from ghostly disruptions, the more they have accomplished. The gated community may protect certain individuals

¹ Bauman’s focus is on living humans and “wasted lives” but his analysis lends itself to ghostly application.

from the inconvenience of ghostly poverty, but it cannot prevent other ghosts from entering. The poor woman cleaning the wealthy woman's home is both ghosted and haunting. Her need for a living wage and the value of her labor often go unseen while, at the same time, her battered car provides a discomfoting reminder to her affluent clients that not all live as they do.

Ghosts come in all shapes, sizes and skin tones. Racism, disability, mental illness and prejudice affect both rich and poor. Those with enough money to buy a posh home in an exclusive zip code cannot buy freedom from exclusion, taunting, and hatred. Although the rich can manage their health care and their beauty with more privacy and grace, they are still forced to face their own ghostly bodies and identities, haunting them from the inside out or haunted with the weight of cultural constructs and expectations. No matter how much an individual has or lacks, no person is safe from overstepping the boundaries of community.

While the downtown ghost tour explores America's haunted townhouses, cemeteries and hotels, other ghosts stories are playing out on America's freeways and underpasses, in ghettos and suburbs, in minds and in hearts. While poverty may be the most visible place from which to begin an American ghost hunt, literature reflects America's haunted culture and gives voice to our most potent ghost stories: slavery, witch-hunts, dislocation, genocide. American cultural history is built upon the ghostly stories of lost colonies and bloody battles, first with the original inhabitants, then amongst ourselves. America is a country of immigrants haunted by cultural memories of never visited or dimly remembered homelands, a country of mixture and segregation, of tolerance and prejudice, of religion and secularism. American stories are rich with

ambiguity and confusion, with strange haunted places, invisible loves and losses, and deathly living.

Looking deep enough, into even the shallowest of contemporary popular culture, we can find the ghosts, the unmentioned, the neglected, the invisible. Haunting occurs to everyone and, at one point or another, everyone is ghosted. Even within the literary studies curriculum, an un-ghosting, or bringing-to-life, of minority stories and a focus on multicultural literature effectively ghosts the stories of the “dead white guys” and vice versa. It is from these subtle, contemporary American stories and assumptions that the following ghost tour will depart.

Ghost stories, in the traditional sense, focus on a non-human entity that either desires to be assimilated (take, for example, the classic cartoon *Casper the Friendly Ghost*) or needs to be eliminated (*Ghostbusters*). The following project will go beyond the traditional American ghost story where “the strange and sinister [is] embroidered on the very type of the normal and easy” (James xxiv) to redefine the traditional definition of the words “ghost,” “haunting” and “haunted” and present a new interpretation of the word “ghosted.” Ghosts haunt, disrupt, and disturb through their uncomfortable existence between life and death, between heaven and hell. Ghosts defy the binaries around which we structure our lives and our reality. They threaten our health, our sanity, and our posterity because they embody/disembody something which should not be but is. Both dead and alive, ghosts defy categorization.

In the following pages, I will use the word “haunting” to refer to “the disquieting experience of sensing a collision of temporalities or space—an experience that is nevertheless riddled with doubt and uncertainty” (Blanco 1). I will discuss those who

haunt (those who disquiet) and those who are haunted (those who are disquieted).

However, the boundaries between those who haunt and those who are haunted are soluble and changing. The ghosts in some of these stories are at once haunted and haunting, at once ghosted and ghosting. The haunted in one story could very well be haunting the next. And in some instances, the person doing the haunting is haunted herself. While I will use the word “ghost” to refer to both literal and figurative ghosts, I will use the words “ghosted” and “ghosting” to distinctly refer to the living ghosts who exist in a world periphery to the mainstream ideology and are often unseen and unheard by those outside of their culture, group, and social world. The word “ghostly” will refer to the quality that surrounds the ghost experience, both for the haunted and the haunting.

In the 2008 American indie film *Humboldt County*, an underexposed and uptight young man, Peter, meets a free spirited young woman, Bogart, who spontaneously invites him on a road trip home. He falls asleep on the drive and wakes up to find himself in an entirely different California than the one he left ten hours prior. After a few days, Bogart abandons Peter on her family’s off-the-grid marijuana farm and returns to Los Angeles. The rest of the film takes place on the wild, mountainous coast of Northern California where a subculture of hippie dropout pot farmers lives peacefully within a community founded on their livelihood and lifestyle. This alternative and *ghostly* world disrupts and disturbs the protagonist and forces him to reevaluate his sheltered ideas of good and bad, right and wrong, success and defeat, work and idleness.

In many ways, the pot farmers of Humboldt County are *ghosted*. They are unseen, unheard and unthought-of by those living a more conventional life, comfortable within the boundaries of the law. And yet the marijuana farmer’s lifestyle, culture, ideals and

product filter into the mainstream, disrupting parents, police, the FDA and, most recently, America's public discourse. In this film, Peter wakes up to find himself in a place *haunted* by tall trees, a magical plant and a lingering idealism. Peter finds himself amongst *ghosts*, people he never knew of, a lifestyle of which he had never conceived, and a community that he, at first, rejects. The film is tragic, as stories with ghosts usually are, and ends in the death and literal death of Peter's ghostly mentor—a man who becomes more human, hard working and desperate until a drunk driving accident takes his life.

This film is an easy place from which to explore the delightfully varied perspectives of the metaphorical ghost because it lends itself rather easily to a ghost hunt. For example, in addition to the ghostly community of farmers, one could explore the *haunting* presence of the FDA, raiding and destroying a way of life (and a way out) for the people living in the hidden corners of Humboldt County. Or one might investigate the constant tension in a community hunted/haunted by the FDA. And technology could, of course, be viewed as a haunting/disruptive figure, with the ghostly presence of satellite imaging and espionage. Another ghostly perspective could be that of the marijuana plant itself with its ability to disrupt the consciousness. Alternately, one could take an environmentally inquisitive view and explore the last *ghostly* remnant of wilderness coastline in California, a *haunting* reminder of untamed nature. Perhaps the most prominent point the film makes is of the *haunted* nostalgia for broken hippie idealism preventing the farmers from returning to a less dangerous, albeit, more mainstream way of life. *Ghosting* is a complex phenomenon and can be viewed from a variety of perspectives. For every ghost, there is a different ghost story.

The following chapters will delve deeper into the existence of ghostliness in America's varied and eclectic culture and stories. Focusing entirely on the metaphorical/figurative ghost, the following pages will discuss ghosting using stories from three different genres (poetry, film and short story), exploring, with each genre, a specific population, concept, person, idea, or identity that has been ghosted. The selected texts cover a timespan of a thousand years, and engage not only with vastly different cultures, but also with distinctly unique aspects of ghostliness. The purpose of this eclecticism is to explore the richness of perspectives provided by figurative ghost tours and to begin to discern who has been, and who continues to be, voiceless and unseen in contemporary American discourse. As Shelly Rambo proposes, "Reading texts for gaps and fissures in meaning" can become "a way of unearthing silences, of testifying to the unnarratable" (936). If ghosts are "haunting reminders of lingering troubles" (Gordon 79), then they are worthy of our attention.

The first chapter of this project addresses Seamus Heaney's translation of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf*. *Beowulf*, long canonized in American classrooms and featuring a hero from abroad who destroys a native demon, has become deeply imbedded in the American psyche and offers an eerily familiar starting place to begin this ghostly journey. This chapter argues that Grendel could be perceived as a ghosted human, no more monster than any other dark, oversized and disenfranchised individual. This chapter builds upon the writing of Leonard Davis in *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* to posit that Grendel and his mother are not monsters, but humans pushed out to the boundaries of the civilized world, "haunting the marshes, marauding round the heath / and the desolate fens" (Heaney lines 102-3). Grendel and his mother disrupt the

Anglo-Saxon vision of human-ness and fill the men in the mead hall with horror at their own tentative hold on warrior life. Grendel and his mother are ghosted due to the Anglo-Saxon need to define outsiders as disgusting, disfigured and horrible demons. This examination of Grendel and his mother allows us to construct an understanding of ghostedness, one that will be examined in contemporary contexts through the remaining chapters.

Although this ghost tour begins with a discussion of a ghosted Grendel, the remaining two chapters address contemporary American texts. The second chapter of this project explores the ghosting of non-marital relationships in the classic 1940 Alfred Hitchcock film, *Rebecca*. This chapter builds upon the body of work on lesbian invisibility (Berenstien, Castle, Doane, Modleski, White) and heteronormativity (Butler, Wittig) to argue that, while the first Mrs. de Winter is a ghostly presence in the film, it is her unaccepted and acknowledged relationships that continue to be ghosted after her death. Rebecca's uncelebrated and unsanctioned relationships disrupt and almost destroy the marriage of Maximilian de Winter and his new unnamed bride, challenging marital privilege and heterosexual norms. This chapter investigates the ghostly relationships haunting the empty rooms and seaside cabin, jeopardizing culturally recognized and celebrated relationships in subtle yet profound ways. This chapter concludes by addressing how the various ghosted relationships portrayed in *Rebecca* continue to be ghosted in contemporary American culture.

The third chapter turns to Thomas King's short story, "Borders," to discuss the lived experience of ghostliness, the experience of existing in a space unacknowledged by dominant forces patrolling the borders of identity. The narrator's Blackfoot mother, in

refusing to declare her nationality as either American or Canadian, finds herself stuck, for a time, in the haunted parking lot between two countries. This chapter, which focuses on the ghost's perspective, will investigate the discomfort of the ghosted moment. Sleeping in a cramped car, hungering for sandwiches and listening to the mother's stories, the young narrator observes the ways in which his/her (the child's gender and name are never mentioned) mother is simultaneously ghosted by, and resistant to, outsider attempts to define her. After discussing how it feels to be ghosted, caught between boundaries of nationality and identity, this chapter will conclude by exploring how, in learning to identify the discomfort of the ghosted moment, one might also realize the powerful potential of the ghost experience to trouble and call into question the reliability of distinct categories and constructs. The presence of ghostly entities disrupts, disturbs and confounds the seemingly concrete boundaries that shape (and constrict) our lives.

This ghost tour will end by turning the haunted lens inward to propose new directions towards which we might direct our ghost-finding instruments. In the conclusion, I will take a step away from literary criticism to discuss my own inspiration for exploring ghosted life and my perspective on, and experiences with, ghosting. In this chapter, I will break the fourth wall between the writer and the reader, writing from my own ghostly experience as an "ethnically ambiguous," mixed race performer; as a sister, niece, cousin and nurturer to people related by neither law nor blood; and as an able-bodied worker amongst the Grendel-kin, the disabled and disenfranchised, of American life. I hope to use my own life as a case study for how we might begin to see, not only ghosts, but also the complex and delightful "blank spots"(Anzaldua xxiii), the ghostly elements within each other.

My lantern is lit; shall we begin?

II. GRENDEL AND HIS MOTHER: AMERICA'S HAUNTED GHOSTS

The first stop on our ghost tour begins with “one of the foundation works of poetry in English” (Heaney, “Translator’s Introduction” xxiii)—*Beowulf*, a story so old that it was told many years before it was ever written down. When *Beowulf* was first sung, poetry wasn’t a published work collected on an aristocratic shelf (as perhaps one might argue it is now). Instead poetry was primary to everyday life (Davis 16) and poets were the keepers of history and cultural ideas. Stories were alive with alliteration, cadence and musicality and acted as a cultural unifier (much like performed poetry, rap music and music or film festivals do today). The storyteller, or *scop*, might be comparable to what the radio was before television, a source of aural storytelling forming and binding the reality of a nation, a powerful creator of cultural identity and purpose. Although (or perhaps because) poetry has fallen out of fashion as the primary method of building a communal history, *Beowulf* continues to haunt our cultural history.

Beowulf was first sung during a time when cultural and individual survival depended on men’s ability to kill with swords and spears and these weapons took on powerful magical properties. The seaside setting for the story is cold, gray, wet and foggy. The “misty moors” (line 162) provide the kind of scene Hollywood recreates with dry ice and giant fans to suggest an atmosphere of foreboding, anxiety, mystery. On this land, the Spear-Danes built their “great mead-hall / meant to be a wonder of the world forever” (69-70). This glorious building was built to keep in the warmth and the mead

and the treasure, and to keep out the cold, and the unfamiliar. Outside of the mead-hall were those denied the poetry of civilization, unaccustomed to and unwelcome at the feasts. These people were denied the protection, furs and food, access to the swords and spears and shields that kept the Shieldings safe. Without access to weapons, or to the collective story relayed by the poet, these outsiders would remain outsiders, mostly forgotten, always misunderstood. Grendel and his mother were two of these outsiders, two ghosts “haunting the marches, marauding round the heath / and the desolate fens . . .” (103-4).

Now, you might be wondering what Grendel and his mother, monsters of Anglo-Saxon legend, have to do with American ghostliness. While *Beowulf* may not be American in origin, America’s origins and contemporary culture are saturated with the conflicts, ideals and assumptions portrayed in the epic poem. Heroes from across the sea come to rescue a new land from barbarians and go home in ships laden with treasure. The story sounds a little too recent, a little too familiar, a little too American. *Beowulf* is an American text, not only because it is a text about colonization, but also because it is a text about mixing, about blending of languages, about the survival of stories of a demonized minority. No wonder it is a staple of American literary and popular culture.

Americans have a historical obsession with the boundaries of civilization. American celebrated heroes are explorers of the American frontier, the folks who planted the seeds of manifest destiny. And yet, the folks who *dwell* on the boundaries (instead of pushing through them) are often portrayed as slightly horrible and definitely eerie (consider, for example, initial European perceptions of Native Americans or contemporary mainstream oblivion towards the continued existence of native peoples).

Ghost stories and ghostly history, from the lost colony of Roanoke to the *Blair Witch Project*, are almost always set on some kind of boundary, natural and otherwise. “Part of Grendel’s allure is the fact that he remains a mystery. His past is only alluded to, his species of origin is circumvented, and the original poet goes to great lengths to make him as alien as possible” (Farrell 935). Those who live on the perimeter, the edges of civilization, where the lines between land and water, human and ghost and monster become confused and conflated, are often seen as something otherworldly, ghostly.

Today, *Beowulf* is a required high school text and a keystone of the college and university literary canon. “For decades it has been a set book on English syllabuses at university level all over the world” (Heaney, “Translator Intro” xxiv). For every generation of, at least, the past eighty years, there has been an American retelling of *Beowulf*. Between the time when J.R.R. Tolkien published his seminal essay “*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*” (1936) and the publication of Michael Livingston and John William Sutton’s study of the story’s presence in American popular culture in 2006, there were “two plays, six musical or symphonic productions, more than a dozen novel-length retellings, at least fifteen children’s books, five comic books or series, numerous poems, parodies, short stories, computer games, films, an episode of *Star Trek: Voyager*, and even Mardi Gras tokens that have direct connections to the poem” (Livingston and Sutton 1-2). In 1971, American novelist John Gardner wrote *Grendel*, a novel told from Grendel’s point of view and uncannily reminiscent of the original poem (the reader might feel that the novel haunts the poem as much as the poem haunts the novel, especially since this text is often studied by American high school students alongside *Beowulf*).

Contemporary American retellings of *Beowulf* are prolific and diverse. “In the

years following the publication of *Grendel* there was an explosion of Beowulfiana, in all kinds of different media” (Livingston and Sutton 4). Between 1998 and 2010, no fewer than eight film adaptations of *Beowulf* were made (Marshall 156). In 2007, Hollywood contributed the animated film, *Beowulf*, to the growing body of Beowulfiana. The film stars Angelina Jolie as Grendel’s mother, a sexy shape shifter and mother of monsters fathered by a long line of heroes. Perhaps the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* film series (2001-2003), a modern day epic retelling of Tolkien’s 1950’s reconfiguration of *Beowulf*, is a sign that *Beowulf* lives on, not only in the words of the poet or the scribe or in the afterlife of a work created by the greatest *Beowulf* scholar of the 20th century, but also in the text itself, which continues to haunt popular culture and the American imagination.

This chapter will explore not only how Grendel and his mother are simultaneously ghostly and ghosted, haunting and haunted, but also how their ghostly existence can create a framework for reconsidering contemporary American life. In addition to seeking out the ghostliness of Grendel and his mother, we’ll also seek to understand our horror and discomfort when confronted with the living Grendels of today. So follow me as we begin our journey into the ghostly lives of those living on the heaths and fens and in underground lairs, haunting the very edges of cities, civilization, and poetry itself.

Grendel and his mother are certainly “unfashionable creatures” (Tolkien, “Monsters” 112). Grendel is alternately described as something inhuman (“fiend” (100, 440, 536, 707, 1000, 1617), “demon” (86, 102, 133, 730, 802, 845, 938), “monster” (433, 667, 737, 760, 814, 840, 938, 960, 1269, 1585)) and as a “god-cursed” (121, 711) human “warped / in the shape of a man . . . / bigger than any man” (1351-3), one of the

“fatherless creatures / . . . hidden in a past / of demons and ghosts” (1355-7). But, according to Tolkien, while Grendel “eats the flesh and blood of men; he enters the houses by their doors” (119). Or, as David Marshall puts it, “the Grendel-kin are a small collection of genetically malformed individuals whose physical traits and actions ostensibly locate them beyond the boundary of human” (150). In other words, Grendel’s identity is complex; containing both human and inhuman aspects, he confuses and threatens the boundaries of Anglo-Saxon life.

Grendel’s mother’s identity is similarly complex; she is both amphibian and human. She “looks like a woman” (1351) but she is also referred to as a “wolfish swimmer” (1506) and a “swamp thing from hell” (1518), living beneath waters “infested / with all kinds of reptiles. There were writhing sea-dragons / and monsters slouching on slopes by the cliff, / serpents and wild things . . .” (1425-8). But “Grendel’s mother is also described in human and social terms. She is specifically called a *wīf unhȳ re* ‘a monstrous woman’ (2120) and an *ides āglæcwīf* ‘a lady monster-woman’ (1259)” (Chance 155). Grendel’s mother is monstrous, different, and horrifying, but she is also a mother, a lady.

Heaney, in his “Translator’s Introduction” to the Critical Edition of *Beowulf*, describes Grendel in possession of a “hard-boned and immensely strong android frame, a mixture of Caliban and hoplite. And while his mother too has a definite brute-bearing about her, a creature of slouch and lunge on land if seal-swift in the water, she nevertheless retains a certain non-strangeness” (xxx). This ambiguity is not native to Heaney’s translation. In fact, as Livingston and Sutton point out, an even more interesting ambiguity is present in the Old English. “Interestingly, the poet refers to both Beowulf and Grendel with the term *aeglæca* (or *aglaeca*), an Anglo-Saxon word with a range of

meaning,” which, according to *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* includes:

Miserable being, wretch, miscreant, monster, fierce combatant. The term is also used in reference to creatures as varied as the legendary hero Sigemund, the dragon, various sea-monsters that Beowulf slays, and a feminine form is used to describe Grendel’s mother. The word seems to be a catch-all term for supernatural beings on the margins of the human world. (Livingston and Sutton 10)

Grendel is both monster and man and his mother is both swamp creature and human. Their identity is textually complex, treacherous, mercurial, and transitory. From one page to the next they shift shapes and the listener/reader can never quite discover their true identity or their human kinship. Although Heaney uses the word “ghost” (1357) only once in the poem to refer to Grendel and his mother, their transitory state and indefinability, coupled with the poet’s rhetorical shape-shifting language, hint at a ghostly presence, a way of being that threatens the listener/reader with an ability to be, at the same time, like and unlike their human kin.

In the Heaney translation of the one existing manuscript of *Beowulf*, the most interesting descriptions of Grendel result, not from his status as a monster, but as a human outcast, descended from “Cain’s clan” (106). In the Bible the “Lord set a mark upon Cain” (*Genesis* 4:15) as protection after Cain protests that, as a result of his exile, “every one who findeth me shall slay me” (*Genesis* 4:14). Although the Bible does not specify the look or location of this mark, it has been culturally interpreted and portrayed as ugliness, disfigurement, and deformity. Cain and his offspring are so ugly that no one will dare touch them. Cain’s God-given protection results in his own horrifying

disfigurement and consequent isolation, loneliness, friendlessness. Grendel, like Cain, seems to be marked by his size and deformity: “warped / in the shape of a man, [he] moves beyond the pale / bigger than any man, an unnatural birth” (1351-3). He “has dwelt for a time / in misery, among the banished monsters” (104-5). The monsters are Grendel’s cousins, also descended from Cain and described as “ogres, elves and evil phantoms / and the giants too” (112-3). Ogres, elves, and giants (oh my!) are typically depicted as human-looking creatures, marked mostly by their irregular size and appearance, either too small or too ugly or too large to be considered normal. And phantoms, well, we know what they are: ghosts! According to the OED, a phantom is “[a] thing (usually with human form) that appears to the sight or other sense, but has no material substance; an apparition, a spectre, a ghost.” Grendel is akin to these unusually-sized, ghostly humans, but all of them, as decedents of Cain, are also descended from Adam and Eve. They are human, as human as Beowulf himself. And yet, their disfigurement makes them disturbing, different, monstrous and ghostly.

Not only would Grendel’s relationship to Cain indicate humanity and a shared bloodline with all humans, but also an inheritance of exile, living as a “fugitive and a vagabond” (*Genesis* 4:12). In the Old Testament, after killing his brother, Cain “went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden” (*Genesis* 4:16). Cain’s descendants are described in *Beowulf* as having been “outlawed and condemned as outcasts” (106-7). They must somehow survive on the boundary, just outside of Eden, the central place of community, kindness, protection, and spiritual redemption. In *Beowulf*, Eden is the mead-hall and the moors and marshes are the land of Nod. Like the haunted graveyard, positioned between the church and the woods, Grendel

“lurked and swooped in the long nights / on the misty moors” (161-2). Grendel’s exiled existence disenfranchises him from the protections of the mead-hall and denies him access to potential personal and spiritual growth as well as learned use of weapon technology. “[T]he monster scorns / in this reckless way to use weapons” (433-4). Grendel’s exile forces him to wander alone, companionless. Without someone to witness his stories and his experiences, without community, learning, technology, Grendel’s life becomes known only to himself and his mother. Their existence is tentative and fragile, ghostly.

The word “exile” is further illuminated by a quick look in the OED. The definition with which we are most familiar is as follows: “Enforced removal from one’s native land according to an edict or sentence; penal expatriation or banishment; the state or condition of being penally banished; enforced residence in some foreign land.” But there is another meaning, in which the land itself or the person is destroyed or laid to waste: “Waste or devastation of property; ruin, utter impoverishment.” In many ways the situation of Grendel and his mother resonate more with the latter definition. Both meanings indicate an individual who is homeless and stateless, deprived of citizenship or means to protect oneself. In either case the person becomes something outside, something unwanted. Grendel and his mother are ghosts who must be exorcised from the mead hall.

Grendel and his mother, despite living in exile on untamed land, are not able to get far enough away from the dominant culture to start anew, creating their own culture in which they are no longer outsiders but become the central players. Instead Grendel is harrowed “to hear the din of the loud banquet / every day in the hall, the harp being struck / and the clear song of a skilled poet / telling with mastery of man’s beginnings . .

.” (88-91). John Gardner drives this point home in *Grendel*. Grendel is hiding, listening to the poet’s stories within the mead-hall: “. . . and the words stitched together out of ancient songs, the scenes interwoven out of dreary tales, made a vision without seams . . .” (49). There is no place for Grendel and his mother within this seamless vision. Grendel “envies the men of Heorot their joy of community” (Chance 154); the only way he can infiltrate it is through murder and destruction.

Paul Acker, in his discussion of “Horror and the Maternal in *Beowulf*”, builds on this idea when he asks us to “recall how the murderous Grendel and his mother reside at the edges of the area of socialization centered in the hall (Heorot), beyond the marshes and in a mere at the margin of which even a hunted stag (heorot) must recoil in horror (1345-76)” (703). Grendel and his mother live in the shadow of the Heorot and are painfully aware of their exclusion from the friendship, food and fireside stories. Nor do Grendel and his mother have the means to simply leave. The nightly “bacchanalia of Heorot” (Marshall 144) is a haunting reminder to Grendel that he does not and cannot belong and will never receive comfort, or have his name recorded in his own song.

At the same time, by remaining on the outskirts, Grendel and his mother provide a constant reminder of guilt and shame to the Spear-Danes, reminding those who remain in the mead-hall of their own relatedness and their own proximity to that which they do not want to claim as their own. “The process of history creates waste by disposing of inconvenient moments from the past. In *Beowulf*, for example, political victors discard their victims: the monster Grendel and his mother are aggressively defeated by mercenary Beowulf” (Morrison 152). While Grendel’s point of view is lost in the poem, his presence is not lost on the Spear-Danes; Grendel’s haunting presence serves as a constant reminder

of what could easily befall Heorot's occupants were they to fall out of favor, lose their ability to fight, or, for the women, fail to provide a "balm in bed to the battle-scarred . . ." (62).

Grendel and his mother eke out an existence somewhere between Heorot and nowhere. And they seem to embody the very perimeter on which they live. They are both amphibian and landlubber, surviving on the uncertain space between civilization and wilderness, between land and water. By their very existence, Grendel and his mother threaten the concrete boundaries defining and demarcating the world of the center from the world of the outside. They dwell in both riparian and rocky places but their presence in the center of Anglo-Saxon life is problematic, horrifying, troublesome. Morrison reminds us that, "Only by destroying Grendel's bodily integrity can the humans reassure themselves of their own. The hanging of Grendel's arm serves to reinforce the fictive wholeness of the human body. The monster is partial and disturbing, making 'us' seem whole and 'normal'" (153). And Renee R. Trilling notes that "[a]ll of the poem's monsters both threaten and sustain social order" (5). Grendel and his mother haunt the warriors by calling into question the absolute difference between the life of a brave warrior and the life of a discarded monster.

The language Heaney uses to describe Grendel's dwelling places may not be familiar to all readers, depending on their own particular geographic experiences. For the majority of American readers who haven't enjoyed a trip to Grendel's homeland, the 2005 film, *Beowulf and Grendel* sheds some light on Grendel's environment. Shot on the coast of Iceland, it depicts the moors and fens where Grendel and his mother "dwell apart / among wolves on the hills, on windswept crags / and treacherous keshes" (1357-9). A

trip to the OED may also offer, to those foreign to Icelandic shores, a deeper perspective into the setting of Heaney's *Beowulf*. "Heath" is defined as "an extensive tract of wasteland." And a "marsh," synonymous with "fen," is tract of land "waterlogged through out the year." A "crag" is a "steep or precipitous rugged rock" and Heaney defines "keshes" as "a causeway or bridge across a bog." Grendel haunts a wet and rocky place with treacherous pathways.

Grendel and his mother, like many indigenous tribes (in America and elsewhere around the globe), have been pushed to the land that nobody else wants because it is unmanageable, desolate, and rocky. Frank Battaglia suggests that "several of the specified creatures, most clearly giants and elves, share a connection with large stones in Scandinavian mythology" (425). He goes on to explain that this association with large rocks implies a connection between Grendel and his mother and Germanic fertility religions. The giants and ogres and elves who remain after the "great flood" are *not* of Christian origin (descendants of Cain), but are leftovers from a pre-climate change era which was more conducive to farming. Rising seas salinized the ground water, resulting in failing crops and a growing hostility towards fertility deities who failed to answer prayers (Battaglia 439-40). Grendel and his mother's association with the land places them in the ghostly context of failed pagan goddesses and ancient fertility rituals. The land is ghostly in its pre-Christian whispers. For the pagans of the past, it is land which once held spiritual meaning but has since become diminished, a disappointment to those who cultivated and worshiped it. "One does not have to wait until all the native traditions of the older world have been replaced or forgotten; for the minds which still retain them are changed, and the memories viewed in a different perspective: *at once they become*

more ancient and remote, and in a sense darker” (Tolkien 117-118). Grendel and his mother, through their surroundings, embody the transition between the old and the new and haunt the present with a constant reminder of the scarcity and undependability of natural resources.

Grendel’s association with Cain is also notable here because Cain’s punishment isn’t limited to exile; his exile goes hand-in-hand with his inability to continue to work as a farmer: “When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength” (*Genesis* 4:12). Nothing Cain plants will grow. Although the Bible lists the accomplishments of Cain’s children as city builders and musicians, Cain’s progeny in *Beowulf* seem to be marked with an inability to achieve success or create civilization. The land that Grendel roams is “desolate” (104) barren, difficult, marshy, filled with “cloud-murk” (651, 714) and uncultivable. This is particularly problematic in a world where giving gifts freely “is “[b]ehavior that’s admired / . . . the path to power among people everywhere” (24-25). Grendel has nothing to give.

Because Grendel is not able to contribute to the local economy, he has nothing to offer Anglo-Saxon civilization and remains an outsider, drawing attention only when he attacks. “He has no idea of the arts of war, / of shield or sword-play, although he does possess / a wild strength” (681-3). Because Grendel is seen as a monster, without understanding of treasure or weapons, he must behave like one. Grendel’s human behaviors go unnoticed and his inability to work is associated with evil and with a fall from God’s grace. Grendel’s lack of treasure and Heorot’s constant need for stronger and better warriors, for greater resources to build weapons and armor, haunt one another.

Grendel is marginalized not only by his size and shape and borderland existence,

but also by his questionable paternity. In a culture where paternal lineage defines greatness (no major character in *Beowulf*, including Grendel, is introduced without a full recitation of his lineage), Grendel is a son without a father. Although he was descended from Cain, his more immediate paternity is unknown. Grendel's absent father, along with the son and the mother, haunts the text. Both Grendel and his mother are "fatherless creatures" (1355) whose "whole ancestry is hidden in a past of demons and ghosts" (36). Without a recognizable lineage, Grendel becomes more ghostly, undefined and dehumanized by factors beyond his control and determined before his birth.

Recent film adaptations of *Beowulf*, most explicitly, the 2007 version starring Angelia Jolie, have explored the implications of Grendel's absent father and have implied that the race of monsters (from which Grendel has descended) has been perpetuated by kings (some seeking love, some pleasure, some magic power). Whether or not Grendel's father is present in the mead-hall, Grendel's life is haunted by his absence and by the absence of fatherly acknowledgement from the patrilineal culture. Grendel, because of his absent father, becomes more ghostly, harder to see, harder to place, to identify. Grendel's father becomes a ghost in the story and consequently, Grendel haunts the moors and the mead-hall in search of him. Grendel's unknown paternity suggests a potential and horrifying closeness between Anglo-Saxon and fiend, implying a closer brotherhood between Hrothgar and Beowulf than merely common descendants of Cain and Abel.

In contrast to Grendel's potential brethren at Heorot, Grendel haunts the night but he never appears during the day. He is a nocturnal creature, a "proowler through the dark" (86), a "dark death shadow" (160). In John Gardner's *Grendel*, Grendel gets stuck in a

tree until daylight, when he is caught and tortured by Anglo-Saxons unsure if he is a tree or a tree spirit. It isn't until night falls that his mother appears to rescue him; Grendel never gets caught in daylight again. Grendel and his mother are associated with darkness, with evil and hell, but, more interestingly, with the unseeable "danger abroad in the dark nights" (275). Darkness is a state of danger and blindness, of uncertainty for humans. The parties in the mead hall seem out of sync with the persistent threat that Grendel and his mother pose because the warriors do not fear what they cannot see. Inside the mead hall is light and everything outside is darkness. In this way, Grendel and his mother are able to remain unseen, hovering closer and more constantly without being detected. The darkness associated with Grendel has less to do with his evil nature and more to do with the Anglo-Saxon lack of vision, their inability to see that which is not contained within the hall. Grendel and his mother are able to be ghosts because they are able to go undetected and unseen.

Grendel and his mother both seem more comfortable in darkness, dwelling on the outskirts of society, but, unlike Grendel, his mother lives in dirty water infested with reptiles (Heaney 38). "Grendel and his mother live together, but they never appear together in the poem until he is dead" (Chance 167). In *Beowulf*, Grendel's mother is described as a "monstrous hell-bride" (34), "water-monster" (1411), "wolfish swimmer" (1506), "swamp-thing from hell" (1518), "tarn-hag" (1519), "wolf of the deep" (1599), and "ghastly dam" (2120). In Gardner's *Grendel* she doesn't fare much better: "She whimpered, scratched at nipple I hadn't sucked in years. She was pitiful, foul, her smile a jagged white tear in the firelight: waste" (55). Grendel's mother's purpose in life is done; she is a used up creature, inspired only by rage when her one productive creation, her

monster son, is killed by Beowulf. Even the sexy mother played by Angelia Jolie (2007) turns ugly and monstrous at times; in fact, her seductive beauty seems to be a wicked illusion in order to seduce Beowulf into impregnating her. Depictions of Grendel's mother offer only images of waste and disgust.

Frank Battaglia relates the gruesomeness of Grendel's mother's environment to the Germanic goddesses of the past. "[T]he river which divided the world of men from the world of giants was swollen by, or perhaps comprised of, the urine or menstrual blood of giantesses" (439). While Grendel's mother's home environment implies an Anglo-Saxon disgust and discomfort with a ghosted and haunting pre-Christian world, it also reflects modern horrors towards the body. "However hard one tries, the frontier separating the 'useful product' from 'waste' is a grey zone: a kingdom of underdefinition, uncertainty—and danger" (Bauman 28). Grendel's mother exists somewhere between the pagan past and the Christian present, the civilization of Heorot and the wildness of earth, the miracle of motherhood and the mess of birth. As Renee Trilling puts it, "Grendel's mother functions as the nexus for the representation of the many dialectical tensions—male/female, human/monster, hall/wilderness, feud/peace, symbolic/semiotic—that both underwrite and critique the poem's symbolic order" (1). In this context, Grendel's mother and "waste [are] simultaneously divine and satanic" (Bauman 22).

Grendel and his mother are ghosted from the mead hall and from the story. The story is untold from their perspective. Grendel's mother does not even have a name and Grendel is called what the "country people" (1354) called him. In a pre-literate society, they have nobody to remember their stories and to pass them on; however, their existence is complex and seeps into the primary text. If Grendel and his mother are ghosts, they are

also ghosted, removed from the text, hidden from view (and yet still manage to haunt it). Because Grendel and his mother cannot be easily named, they resist categorization, haunting the structure of Anglo-Saxon life, the mead hall, and challenging the value of the treasured chain mail, the “rare and ancient sword named Hrunting. / The iron blade with its ill-boding patterns / . . . tempered in blood” (1459-60).

Grendel haunts Anglo-Saxon civilization because he is deformed (in a culture where strength as a warrior is what makes one a man), he is of uncertain paternity and he is, in fact, human. Depictions of Grendel and his mother in *Beowulf* are both conflicting and inconsistent, indicating creatures never clearly seen or understood, yet their presence is deeply felt. They are at once remembered and at the same time forgotten; their presence only concerns the Shieldings when they are in direct conflict, but is too soon forgotten in drink and sleep. Grendel’s presence is a constant reminder of the existence of unnecessary humans, wasting away due to their inability to fight with swords and shields. He disrupts by reminding those in the mead-hall that humans are expendable and one’s position within society is tentative at best. He must be ghosted because if he is inhuman or deeply, purely, innately evil, his banishment makes sense and can be justified. The fear of being like him can be suppressed.

If “*Beowulf* is a poem of many dimensions” (Donoghue x), through it “we can begin to trace the inner demons . . . and also glimpse the contours of the exiled stranger-others who reside in the margins, not only of *Beowulf*’s world or of Anglo-Saxon history, but also of our own cultural psyche” (Joy and Ramsey XLVI). Grendel is a ghost because he is marginalized and he is marginalized because he is born in poverty, and barred from accessing the resources of civilization that would offer him power and success. The

horror the Shieldings have towards Grendel reflects their own fears and insecurities, much like the wheelchair-bound person presents the ambulatory person with the terrifying potential of becoming differently abled and having to adapt to a seemingly reduced way of life. As Leonard Davis points out, “If people with disabilities are considered anything, they are or have been considered creatures of disorder—monsters, monstrous” (143). “The divisions whole/incomplete, able/disabled neatly cover up the frightening writing on the wall that reminds the hallucinated whole being that its wholeness is in fact a hallucination, a developmental fiction” (Davis 130). Disfigurement and disability, coupled with poverty, haunt the daily lives of those lucky enough to be, for the time, considered whole, healthy and successful.

The ways in which Grendel and his mother are ghosted are parallel to ways in which folks are ghosted around the world today. The story of Grendel and his mother can be expanded outward to explore ghosting in contemporary American life. Grendel offers a starting place from which to begin to see cultural ghosting, not only in Old English poetry, but also in the ways of seeing that we’ve inherited from our most venerated stories because “the culture is anything but harmless” (Morrison 152). While it is easy to identify our personal Grendels by the discomfort one feels in their presence, it is important to consider the following question: Who are America’s Grendels? For many Americans post 9/11, Grendel and his mother could be anyone with dark skin wearing a turban. Our cultural horror at the thought of impoverished women risking their lives to cross the US/Mexico border in order for their children to be born in the mead-hall of America merely reflects our own suppressed knowledge that by circumstance of birth—we could be that very mother. Of course, the object of our national horror is shifty and, as

Nicholas Howe points out, “The texts and context of Anglo-Saxon England are essential, even originary, to a racist, anti-Semitic, and fascist politics in the United States” (96). It is essential that we learn from *Beowulf*, not only of our own history steeped in racism and fearful hate, but how to evaluate our own nation’s collective and powerful ways of haunting and ghosting.

III. REBECCA AND HER MANDERLY: GHOSTED LOVE IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S *REBECCA*

For the second stop on this ghost tour we'll visit Manderley, the setting for Alfred Hitchcock's early film *Rebecca* (1940). Manderley, like Heorot, sits at the protected and admired center of culture and envy, overlooking the sea. But, unlike the mead-hall, Manderley is not haunted by a deformed outsider whose existence can be eliminated through death. In *Rebecca*, Manderley continues to be haunted long after the "intolerable figure" (Modleski 54), Rebecca, has died and is replaced with a safe and unthreatening "nameless girlish character (played by Joan Fontaine)" (Chow 147). While Manderley itself seems to be haunted by Rebecca's presence, Rebecca's unsanctioned affiliations are the more intriguing ghosts in the film. The story's strangeness rests on Rebecca's ability to love and be loved by so many people and yet hated and despised by her husband. Rebecca's love is not contained or controlled by marriage and even after her death she continues to exist, not in the love of her husband (as his new wife painfully suspects), but in the hearts of those she was prohibited from loving.

In *Rebecca* the relationships among people are made invisible. The haunting entities are not easy to identify or isolate because they lie *between* instead of *in* individuals. Through the film, these relationships that haunt, horrify and disrupt (much like Grendel and his mother) only appear where they should not. Unlike Heorot, Manderley's ghosts are hidden within the house, instead of outside it, dwelling in the

nooks and crannies and empty spaces of the film, and haunting the edges of Maxim and the second Mrs. de Winter's married life.

This chapter will focus on the invisible ghosts of *Manderley* and the ghostly qualities of the relationships of its inhabitants, both living and dead. As Mary Anne Doane points out, "The home is not a homogenous space—it asserts divisions, gaps, and fields within its very structure. There are places which eluded the eye; paranoia demands a split between the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen" (124). The gaps, divisions and fields, the known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible spaces of *Manderley* are the territories of exploration we're about to embark upon. Our expedition will begin by looking at *Manderley* as a uniquely haunted house, a house haunted by undying relationships rather than the dead. From there we will follow the ghostly relationships between its inhabitants, beginning with the double haunting between the two Mrs. de Winters, and ending with the oft studied relationship between Rebecca and the housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers. This latter part of the chapter will build upon the body of work on the "dyke disappearing act" (Berenstein 16) in *Rebecca*, in which "lesbianism remains unnamed and invisible" (White 9), and a "ghost in the machine" (White 61), to examine the various ways in which non-marital relationships, especially those between servants and employers, are denied access to culturally sanctified ways of loving. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of Mrs. Danvers herself and the ways in which she disrupts and horrifies even in her death.

In order to explore what is made invisible in the film, we will begin by exploring what is visible: *Manderley*. On the most basic level, *Rebecca* is a story of a haunted house, a house saturated with complex and inconsolable grief and confusion regarding its

late mistress. But, unlike most haunted houses, the house itself is not possessed—although the creepiest scenes employ haunted house tropes to imply some kind of innate threat lurking within Manderley’s walls—curtains billow, rooms are cold, windows are unlatched, even the dog seems to be unexplainably skittish. According to Christine Wilson, “haunted house stories explore the relationship between subjects and their home space” (200). In the case of Manderley, the subjects are multiple and complex. Each person is trying to determine and defend his or her sense of home and family, not only within Manderley, but also within dominant, heterosexual and culturally acknowledged ways of loving. Like Grendel, haunting the space between civilization and wilderness, Manderley’s residents attempt to negotiate a life for themselves within Manderley’s massive yet confining walls.

Manderley, for the people who live and work there, is inescapable. Establishing shots of the house fill the entire screen and seem to leak out beyond the borders of what can be seen. The house is endless, a labyrinth of complex hallways but also feelings and relationships, history and tradition. Even the drive from the entry gate to the house is a long one, long enough for the weather to change from sun to rain. The people who come and go from the house (Maxim’s relatives and Rebecca’s “favorite cousin”) seem lighter in spirit, more fully embodied, more fully mortal, more comfortable and confident than the residents of Manderley. Even the newlyweds seem slightly more relaxed before their arrival. The home movie scene, about midway through the film -- in which Maxim and Mrs. de Winter watch movie footage of their carefree outdoorsy honeymoon -- portrays a stark contrast between their relationship before life at Manderley and the uncomfortable, ill-fitting and uneasy relationship they find themselves trapped in once they’ve arrived.

An oppressive stillness and rigid formality exists within the house. Although the grounds and views are expansive, Manderley remains the “secretive and silent” center of life for the people who live and work there.

For Mr. de Winter, however, the house hardly seems haunted at all. In fact, it is so natural to him, so much a part of him that he doesn't seem to notice its existence. He takes for granted Manderley's stability, its admiration by the locals and the capability of the staff. Nor does he seem to expect or comprehend his new wife's lack of ability to fit into her role at Manderley, because he has never, himself, been made to feel out-of-place. Maxim is perplexed that the new Mrs. de Winter acts “like an upstairs maid or something and not the mistress of the house at all,” despite his knowledge that she previously worked as a paid companion to Mrs. Van Hopper and was, essentially, a glorified servant. Maxim does not see Manderley as a powerful, intimidating or haunted space, because it is a space into which he was born and one which molded him and now is molded by him. For Mr. de Winter, Manderley is his home, quotidian in a way that only people raised with immense wealth can experience a castle. Like Manderley, Mr. de Winter is visible. He experiences the privilege of living life unquestioned and, until his marriage to Rebecca, had never given thought to invisibilities, to difference, to the discomfort of the “divisions, gaps and fields” (Doane 124) within his home and within the others.

Manderley represents the inescapability of heterosexuality, and presents a context in which it is difficult to see or discuss anything other than heterosexual relationships because there is no language to describe them. Manderley is solid and visible through out the film, a backdrop of immense proportions where even the doorknobs are larger than life. Within the assumed solidity and comprehensiveness of Manderley, the characters

have no choice but to do their best to function within its prescribed boundaries. Marriage is the cornerstone of life at Manderley and Rebecca's deviant love must be relegated to the city or to the boathouse by the sea. Within Manderley, homosexuality and any love or desire outside of marriage becomes "a nonexistent object, a fetish, an ideological form which cannot be grasped in reality, except through its effects, whose existence lies in the mind of people, but in a way that affects their whole life, the way they act, the way they move, the way they think . . ." (Wittig 8). The haunting at Manderley takes place when these "effects" of non-marriageable love seep out onto the screen to horrify Maxim and threaten the happiness of his second marriage, just as contemporary discourse on same-sex marriage horrifies and disrupts the heteronormative ideal of the nuclear family.

Although Maxim is implicitly comfortable in Manderley and with traditional marriage bonds (so much so that he is only bemused when he nearly forgets the marriage license in Monte Carlo), Maxim's new bride is not as comfortable in her new surroundings. To her, Manderley is immense and intimidating. Our nameless heroine is completely unaware, not only of Maxim's ancestry, but also of the recent events leading up to his first wife's death. On the seemingly endless drive between the gate and the house, Maxim attempts to allay his new wife's anxieties about managing the house: "Mrs. Danvers is the housekeeper, just leave it to her." But the bride's understanding of the property is clouded, literally, from her very approach to Manderley, when the newlyweds are caught in a sudden downpour, arriving bedraggled to a formal welcome gathering of the house's full staff. Immediately sensitive to the subtleties and complexities of the house and the staff, including Mrs. Danver's obvious disdain, the new wife is painfully aware of how much remains invisible and inaccessible to her.

From the very beginning, the second Mrs. de Winter has a slightly ghost-like quality. As a paid companion, her role was to quietly follow Mrs. Van Hopper, only speaking to bolster her employer's ego and status. Although the second Mrs. de Winter is the heroine of the film, her existence is made up, almost entirely, as a woman in relationship to others. We know nothing about her except that she rarely eats. She is nameless through out the entire film (and in du Maurier's novel, on which the film is based, as well (Whissen)). She appears to be an orphan of sorts, parentless, friendless and completely unsure of herself. According to Doane, "Joan Fontaine, who plays a character who remains nameless, is represented throughout the first part of the film as passive and incompetent, incapable of assuming the position of mistress of Manderley" (143). And Tania Modleski observes that "the heroine continually strives not only to please Maxim, but to win the affections of Mrs. Danvers" (51) as well. The second Mrs. de Winter's character exists only through her desire to be loved and accepted by others. The heroine's identity and personality slowly become invisible as she tries, but fails, to fit into her new role as lady of the house. Like many women taught that they can realize their own potential only in service to a husband and children, the second Mrs. de Winter walks through the film like an empty vessel waiting to be filled with other's ideas and impressions and attention.

In confirmation of her inability to fulfill her new role and establish herself as a leader of the domestic sphere, the second Mrs. de Winter succeeds in ghosting herself her very first day at Manderley when "she answers the telephone and says 'I'm sorry, Mrs. de Winter has been dead now for over a year'. In not recognizing herself as the one addressed, in announcing [Rebecca's] death, the heroine simultaneously declares her own

nothingness” (Modleski 49). In this moment, the new Mrs. de Winter forgets and ignores her own presence in the house, while at the same time eerily conjuring up the powerful ghost of Rebecca’s presence. Already the new wife seems to be disappearing beneath the power and weight of her dead predecessor.

Despite her invisibility, or perhaps because of it, the second Mrs. De Winter succeeds in haunting her husband with constant reminders of Rebecca. “The night of the ball, the heroine descends the great staircase radiantly dressed in a lavish white gown, only to be greeted by her horror-stricken husband, who, in a cruel reversal of the Cinderella myth, orders her back to her room to change her dress” (Modleski 45). Dressed in a replica of the dead wife’s costume, the new wife appears to her husband as a copy of the now dead original. The new Mrs. de Winter was chosen by her husband for her very lack of sophistication and knowledge. She was unsure and unworldly and easy to form, coach, manipulate. Mr. de Winter, in his privileged blindness, did not consider that, instead of adapting to his own identity, the new Mrs. de Winter might take on Rebecca’s. Maxim’s comfort with his situation in the house blinds him to Mrs. Danver’s deep mourning for his late wife and her resultant manipulation of his new one. It is Mrs. Danvers, after all, who tricks the new wife into wearing the costume Rebecca had worn less than a year before.

In the ball gown scene, Maxim’s worst fears come true. He had pursued a wife he believed would never be “a woman of thirty-six dressed in black satin with a string of pearls” and yet, as it appears to him, the second Mrs. de Winter is becoming a replica of the first. “The Mrs. DeWinter [sic] Maxim wants in the place of Rebecca is one who is true to him” (de Laurentis 153). While Rebecca had possessed the “three things that

really matter in a wife . . . breeding, brains and beauty,” she failed to uphold the standards of monogamy (both sexually and emotionally) on which Manderley, and dominant contemporary world views, were built. Once again, Maxim finds his life disrupted by the hint of a sexuality and desire beyond his control and beyond the visible status and stature of Manderley. Rebecca’s life had spilled over and out of Manderley and into a terrifying territory that Maxim would rather pretend did not exist. In his new wife, he sought something childlike, “dull and girlish and inexperienced,” a woman entirely visible in her simplicity, uncomplicated, lacking the cracks and fissures that mark all human complexity or capacity for power. Maxim had sought a sort of ghost, a woman who would be a shadow of himself, following him around by never becoming fully realized without him. However, in this scene, his obedient wife transforms into a haunting shadow of Rebecca instead.

The heroine’s lack of personality marks a sharp contrast with the self-determined Rebecca, who, on her honeymoon, just four days after her wedding, declares to her husband that she will not remain monogamous to him. “Rebecca herself lurks in the blind space of the film, with the result that, . . . unlike the second Mrs. de Winter, she never becomes ‘domesticated’” (Modelski 53). Rebecca and her replacement seem to haunt together, each conjuring up a different aspect of ghostliness. Rey Chow draws a parallel here to *Jane Eyre*, in which “[f]emininity is polarized into love, understanding, and a capacity to listen to the powerful man . . . on one hand, and uncontrolled sexuality, madness, and a refusal to cooperate with the (white) patriarchal order, on the other”(145). Both women choose marriage, but Rebecca “revels in her own multiplicity -- her remarkable capacity to play the model wife and mistress of Manderley while conducting

various love affairs on the side” (Modleski 54), while the nameless Mrs. de Winter cannot. Instead, the second Mrs. de Winter’s “assertion of identity can only be the same as a reassumption of the place of Rebecca (who was also ‘Mrs. de Winter’). Within the field of language the woman is allowed no access to difference and is consigned to an inevitable repetition of the same” (Doane 143). This dual haunting indicates a tension between appropriate responses to the inescapability of marital privilege.

For both the first and second Mrs. de Winters and Mr. de Winter, the inescapability of the house is tied to the inescapability of marriage. According to Monique Wittig, heterosexuality is a social institution from which one can never escape. Manderley’s ghostly inhabitants must function within the “order-building” of marriage that “casts some parts of the extant population [in this case those who live in unsanctioned ways] as ‘out of place’, ‘unfit’ or ‘undesirable’” (Bauman 5). Rebecca’s extra marital relationships disrupt the order-building process by presenting the possibility that Manderley’s long line of de Winters may be infiltrated by a child fathered by an outsider. According to Judith Butler, “marriage, given its historical weight only becomes an ‘option’ by extending itself as a norm (and thus foreclosing options)” (21). In the rigid world of Manderley, “*Outlaw* and *mad* are the names for those who refuse to go by the rules of conventions as well as for those who refuse or cannot speak the common language” (Wittig 7). In this case the common language is that of marriage. The first Mrs. de Winter rejects the constraints of marriage and is cast out (quite literally) of Manderley. The second Mrs. de Winter, in trying to fit into the role provided to her, finds herself, initially, tricked into impersonating her predecessor. But she eventually learns how to survive by disappearing into her husband.

What Maxim describes as Rebecca's "life of filth and deceit" may simply be the outcome of Rebecca's unwillingness to privilege one love over another or for her sexual life to be controlled by a social system inorganic to her nature. Rebecca's refusal to allow her husband to dictate whom she loves opens the doors to all kinds of disruptions to society as a whole. Because "life at Manderley is the only thing that interests anyone down here," any deviance on the part of Mrs. de Winter threatens, not only the house and Maxim's reputation, but also the social and cultural foundations on which they were built. Should the public find out that the late Mrs. de Winter indulged in extramarital relationships, perhaps with many people, the entire estate would, in Maxim's estimation, begin to collapse.

Although Rebecca's sexual and emotional dalliances are only revealed slowly and euphemistically throughout the film, one thing is clear: many people loved Rebecca. It is also implied that these people loved Rebecca because she was lover to all of them, a wild seductress slut instead of benevolent best friend. "Moreover, the film punishes her for her sexuality by substituting a cancer for the baby she thought she was expecting, cancer being that peculiar disease which, according to popular myth, preys on spinster and nymphomaniac alike" (Modleski 53). While Rebecca loves and is loving, she ultimately must be punished for her sexual and emotional transgressions, leaving, in the wake of her sudden death, an entire community of people who are not allowed to adequately mourn. Instead they must accept their new mistress with the gentleness and care required of their positions, thereby forgetting the woman whom they deeply loved.

The love that the servants had for Rebecca (and they for her, whether erotic or otherwise), isn't publicly acknowledged and must be hidden. Every relationship in the

film has a ghostly, disturbing or haunting presence. Not only does Mrs. Danvers seem to have a strange connection to the dead Rebecca, but Ben, the old man, keeps asking if she is returning. It is implied that the property administrator, Frank Crawley was seduced by her. Rebecca's people miss her, love her, but their connection to her is ghosted. Only her husband has the right to so much loyalty. If Maxim were to refuse to remarry, his grief would be seen as normal devotion, but the staff is expected to move on with their master. They are not paid to feel and their love for Rebecca is certainly not a part of their job description.

Interestingly, sexual love and familial love are confused in the character of Jack Favell, who introduces himself to the new Mrs. de Winter as "Rebecca's favorite cousin," but we later learn that he is also (or perhaps instead) Rebecca's lover. While the English language enjoys a great deal of words for various "kinds" of women, it comes up short when relating the great variety of close relationships that exist between people. To indicate closeness between individuals unrelated by blood or marriage, we resort to using familial terms to describe the relationship. e.g. "Like a sister". In this context, Favell's misrepresentation of his exact relationship to Rebecca makes perfect sense. There is no language for the love between them and therefore, the relationship is unspeakable.

Mrs. Danvers is seen as pathological and evil because she allows her love for Rebecca to surface, to show -- she holds onto it -- instead of settling it into private submission. Mrs. Danvers "adored" Rebecca and after her death kept her room "just as Mrs. de Winter liked it." This kind of devotion would be considered sweet and normal behavior for Rebecca's widower, but when embodied by Rebecca's servant and potential admirer/lover, it threatens the dominant narrative of marriage.

Mrs. Danvers loved the woman she worked for day in and day out, managing her personal life and her home, keeping her secrets. The relationship between a servant and mistress can be a close one. They worked together to maintain the house and shared a sort of domestic partnership that Rebecca could not share with Maxim. This kind of symbiotic work could be especially bonding, especially if Rebecca, unconventional and defiant as she was, refused to honor the boundaries of the employer/employee relationship. In a way, *Manderley* is as much Mrs. Danvers' home as it is either Mrs. de Winter's. The care and attention, even the decorating, has been carefully orchestrated by Mrs. Danvers. Since Rebecca's death, Mrs. Danvers continues to care for Rebecca's home as if it were her own. And yet, she becomes invisible within it. According to Terry Castle, "the lesbian remains a sort of 'ghost effect' in the cinema world of modern life: elusive, vaporous, difficult to spot -- even when she is there, in plain view, mortal and magnificent, in the center of the screen" (2). The lady of the house, if it weren't for class and marriage privilege, should rightfully be Mrs. Danvers. But her closeness to Rebecca, her absolute dedication to Rebecca's life and to her memory, is both invisible and disruptive in the film. Because Mrs. Danvers cares for Manderley, she is in a way, the wife of heterosexual privilege, nurturing a system from which she cannot escape nor be reconciled with.

Mrs. Danvers may feel a love and care for the home that goes far beyond her pay grade. Yet, she must answer to and wait upon the new childlike waif who is only a honeymoon away from being a simple employee herself. The new Mrs. de Winter feels uncomfortable with everyone looking her "up and down as if [she] were a prize cow".

In films like *Rebecca*, . . . the woman marries, often hastily, *into* the upper class; her husband has money and a social position which she cannot match. The marriage thus constitutes a type of transgression (of class barriers) which does not remain unpunished. The woman often feels dwarfed or threatened by the house itself. A frequent reversal of the hierarchy of mistress and servant is symptomatic of the fact that the woman is 'out of place' in her rich surroundings. (Doane 173)

The new Mrs. de Winter's relationship to Mrs. Danvers is complicated, not only by Rebecca's haunting and incompletely mourned memory but also by Mrs. de Winter's former role as a paid companion. The new Mrs. de Winter was once a lowly ghost but she has now risen in rank to queen of the castle. Just as much as Mrs. Danvers has a hard time accepting the new Mrs. de Winter, once her peer, as her superior, the new Mrs. de Winter has a hard time taking on the authority that is so foreign to her prior status and upbringing.

At the conclusion of the film, Manderley is burned to the ground. Tania Modleski sees this as a symbolic elimination of Rebecca, an attempt to remove Rebecca's disturbing and deviant sexuality from the dominant discourse. But, at the same time, acknowledges the inevitability of a homosexual resurrection:

It is no wonder that the film is (overly) determined to get rid of Rebecca, and that the task requires massive destruction. Yet there is reason to suppose that we cannot rest secure in the film's 'happy' ending. For if death by drowning did not extinguish the woman's desire, can we be certain that death by fire has reduced it utterly to ashes? (55)

From a ghostly perspective, Mrs. Danvers, not Rebecca, is the martyr, a woman burned at the stake for loving another woman. But Mrs. Danvers is not taking a stand only for herself. In order to destroy enforced heterosexuality and the exclusive legitimization of heterosexually monogamous ways of loving, she must destroy Manderley. In order for the haunting to end, *something* must be destroyed. At the end of the film, heterosexual marital privilege no longer reigns over the Manderley kingdom. Manderley no longer sits on the top of the hill overlooking the sea and representing all that is great about civilization. Manderley has fallen.

Returning to the opening voiceover of the film, the heroine speaks from some far away place in the future. She dreams of Manderley, but realizes she can never go back there. Once Manderley is destroyed, the marriage relationship no longer exists in the forefront of the story; instead it becomes invisible, heard but not seen, hauntingly absent. Mrs. Danvers' self-sacrificing suicide does not complete the story; Maxim and his new wife go on living elsewhere. But by destroying Manderley, Mrs. Danvers makes the gaps in Manderley visible and reveals what had formerly been unseeable and silent. Manderley in ruins is no longer a monument to heteronormativity, but a temple to the gaps, divisions and fields, which make *Rebecca* and invisible love so haunting.

IV. GHOSTS AND THEIR STORIES: DISRUPTED CATEGORIES IN THOMAS KING'S "BORDERS"

So far on our tour we've been searching the heaths and fens, the nooks and crannies for the monstrous and the invisible. In our search for ghosts we've sought to see the inhuman as human and to make the invisible visible. But in this chapter, we'll explore ghostliness in a slightly different way. Now that we've grown accustomed to seeing ghosts, the next step on our journey is to explore what it means to be ghosted. Instead of seeking to recognize a potential ghost or the uncomfortable space in which a ghosted entity may be present, we'll explore the ghostly experience itself. Thomas King's short story, "Borders," is the only text on this tour in which both the ghostly characters and the ghostly qualities are not hidden or marginalized; instead, the ghostly characters, the narrator and the mother, are the main characters in the story.

If you wondered, when we found Grendel and his mother on the heaths and under the murk, what would happen if the outsiders had a community and could tell their own stories and keep their own history, then the protagonists in "Borders" offer a vision of a more empowered Grendel-kin. The young narrator's mother has "a lot of pride" (King "Borders" 140) and speaks clearly, refusing to define herself by the dominant division, declaring that she hails from the "Blackfoot side" (136) when asked to state her citizenship. Unlike Grendel and his mother, the protagonist and her child are in charge of their narrative. They aren't jealous of the company and stories in the mead-hall and they

don't need a *scop* to pass on their histories. They've got their own stories, their own traditions and their own culture to draw from. Their identity is not determined by lack but by cultural richness. The mother is the keeper of the stories, and, even while they are temporarily trapped between counties, she retains the power to relay them to her child, "repeating parts as she went, as if she expected me to remember each one" (142).

Even while stuck in-between, sleeping in a cramped car in a ghostly parking lot, the characters in "Borders" are never entirely ghosted. Instead of lurking behind the text, they create the text, "undermin[ing] the authoritative narratives by raising questions about their primacy" (Andrews and Walton 609) while allowing the reader to experience not only the outsider perspective, but to begin to understand the impossibility of the insider/outsider categories. In many ways, the real ghost on this stop of our tour is the non-Native reader, the person settled and comfortable in his or her culture, rarely made to feel monstrous or invisible.

The ability of the narrator's mother and sister to contest and traverse the borders portrays an agency that our prior ghosts lacked. At the same time, "[t]he female protagonist of 'Borders' may finally succeed in visiting her daughter without having to declare her citizenship as Canadian; however, there is no promise that such exceptions will be permitted in the future" (Davidson, Walton and Andrews 151). In *The Truth About Stories* King calls the border "a figment of someone else's imagination" (King *Truth* 102), but in "Borders" he "depicts the Canadian-US border as a place of multiple, shifting contact zones, national and tribal, constantly subject to change" (Andrews and Walton 601). The boundaries in the story are at once vanishing and appearing, moved and immovable, unreal and real. "Even while calling the border an imaginary line, however,

King is nevertheless aware of and frequently describes the very real effects this demarcation has on the lives of contemporary Native people” (Gruber 360). Unlike Grendel and his mother, the characters and elements in “Borders” cannot be reduced to simple categories of good and evil, Canadian and American but, nevertheless, they must contend with exclusive and simplistic demarcations of identity.

The border embodies a ghostly quality while, at the same time, offering multiple depictions of ghostliness within all the characters. The ghostly moment travels, showing itself within different people at different intersections. If, as Kathleen Brogan points out, “Stories of cultural haunting have everything to do with the cultural transformation engendered by immigration, as well as by those involuntary and violent movements of peoples that have rendered inextricable our senses of national identity and national guilt” (16-17), then the border is an excellent place to look into the ghostly experience. Bauman concurs when he writes that immigration officers “stand guard on the line separating order from chaos” and must enforce the boundaries of our order building (29), not only along the 49th parallel, but also along our own lines of cultural identity. As King states in an interview about borders, “The joke is that Natives did not create that construct. The construct is created by whites and it was created as an oppressive thing. So the joke is that now that mantle of oppression has become, to some degree, an advantage” (Andrews 163). Exposing the 49th parallel as socially constructed allows King to play with the notion of borders, disrupting and re-ordering the ghostly narrative.

Native storytelling is notably un-linear in its progression, often switching perspectives and often retelling the story with some slight changes. Because the oral tradition is still revered and respected, the changeability of the story, the possession of the

story is communal and sacred. “At the heart of the Indian American oral tradition is a deep and unconditional belief in the efficacy of language. Words are intrinsically powerful. They are magical” (Momaday 15). Thomas King drives this point home in his book of essays, *The Truth About Stories*, in which he begins and ends each chapter in the same way, but with slight alterations. Each story concludes by directly addressing the reader: “But don’t say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You’ve heard it now” (29). This stop on the ghost tour attempts to participate in the same tradition, engaging with the story in a less linear manner and working from the premise that the story is, in fact, life changing.

King describes the ghostly quality of his audience when he admits that, although he writes to a Native audience, Native readers are unlikely to purchase his \$25 books: “So the audience I write for is in many ways almost becomes a lost audience” (sic) (Davidson, Walton and Andrews 14). In writing this chapter, I had my own struggle with audience. In writing to an audience I assumed to be unaware of the experience of the in-between, I found myself using language that perpetuated the ghosting and “othering” of the in-between state, reversing the disruptions King so effectively creates and reinforcing the borders between the center and the outsider. As Gloria Anzaldúa, renowned investigator of America’s southern borderlands points out, the “rhetoric of dominant ideology, a rhetoric disguised as good ‘scholarship’” promotes a painful ghosting of race and gender and it hushes unique “voices so that we cannot articulate our victimization” (xxiii). In order to remedy this, I’ve adjusted my own method of storytelling to write about the in-between in a way that attempts to honor the experiences that take place there.

In many ways, in writing in a too-linear way, I found myself re-ghosting the unghosted, taking away their voice and examining them only as victims to the dominant narrative. But the ghosting in this story is so much more complex and delightful and, in order to show the multiplicity of ghostly moments and experiences, I've had to make a break from my prior methods of discourse. Therefore, as side jaunt on our ghost tour, I would like to offer the opportunity to hop aboard the ghost simulator, a virtual ghost reality, in which, instead of seeing ghosts, we explore what it is to become ghosted. At this juncture on our ghost tour, I will put my lantern off to the side, pack up some provisions and, if you'll take your seats, we'll embark on a journey to explore the lived experience of ghosted life.

Mel and His Duty Free Store

How does it feel to be ghosted? Take a cue from Mel, the ghost presiding over the literal in-between, the duty-free store located directly between the two borders, relegated to a no-man's land, an unregulated and tax-free alternate reality.

Every day, when you get to work, you pin on your nametag. Your name is Mel, a name that does not indicate gender although you're not androgynous, you are a man, but your name doesn't help convey that. All your name does is put you in the middle. Your nametag has a "tiny American flag on one side and a tiny Canadian flag on the other" (140). Your name, like your place of employment, is directly in between two flags, two countries, two genders. Not only that, you don't own the duty-free store – you are merely a manager, caught between autonomy and service. Oddly enough, nobody else works there. In the eyes of the young narrator, you may as well live in the duty free store – you have no partner, no children, no friends. You don't come and go. Your ethnicity or

nationality is never mentioned in the story but most readers assume that you're white because then your ethnicity would not be worth mentioning.

You spend your entire day in a workplace filled with knick-knacks representing culture but with no cultural depth. You represent the impossibility of the in-between identity because, while the mother and her child have a Blackfoot identity, you have none. Perhaps this is why they are such an inspiration to you, although at first they were a bother, an annoyance and a worry. You don't want to get in trouble for allowing people to loiter; after all, your job is about selling. Although you are supposed to be of both worlds, there is no depth to your identity or lineage. You are merely a place-keeper, a servant to the shallow space of consumerism and untaxed booze. In the end, your existence is about as nutritious and as tentative as the peanut brittle you dispense to the family after they've slept in your parking lot for two nights. You are a person in full possession of no-man's land. Like a parody of the life-sized carved Indian, you seem friendly, but in reality, you're a glorified mannequin of the ghostly hybrid.

Mel, his name bookended by an American flag on one side and a Canadian flag on the other, seems to be always present, a sort of permanent fixture of the duty-free store. Mel is described as "friendly" which is how we describe unaggressive dogs and diplomatic savages. In the Christian thought process, Mel might represent some guardian of purgatory, some benevolent overseer of the in-between. Assuming that Mel does alert the media to the plight of the story's protagonists, he plays an important role in getting the family across the border, but his character is somewhat of a parody. After all, through the lens of the child, the media just "began to arrive" and Mel, like the media, is just a

friendly ghost who checks in and expresses exasperation for the protagonists' situation while being incapable of taking sides or effecting lasting change.

Mel's complete immersion in the in-between illustrates the ultimate impossibility of an "in-between" category. As the 100% hybrid, Mel is reduced to a half-and-half mix and is denied a personhood of his own. If, as Kapchan and Turner point out, "[a] 'hybrid genre' is first of all an oxymoron, insofar as hybrid-genres are actually anti-genres, defying categorical definition" (Kapchan and Turner 243), Mel is a parody of the hybrid, demonstrating the impossibility of true hybridity and exposing the in-between as more of a myth than a reality. The protagonists, however, are not in-between; their identity defies definition while Mel's identity disappears between definitions. The narrator and the mother represent an alternative to the in-between and ultimately, unlike Mel, they are only passing through.

Sheila and her Paperwork

How does it feel to be ghosted? Take a cue from Sheila, the gentle gun-toting ghost enforcing the borders and turning away those who "serve as constant reminders of the fragility of national identity" (Bergland 5).

You try real hard. You have to try hard because you're a woman in a man's world and you have to prove yourself. Even now that you've been promoted to Inspector, you still have to prove yourself to those old cowboy types who think only men are fit to defend America's borders. You like the kid with the mom who won't declare her nationality. You get where they're coming from and all but "it's a legal technicality" (136). You wish the mom would just make it easy on herself and say that she is Canadian and Blackfoot like her kid does. You don't want to have to stop them; there is no point in

them sleeping in the parking lot and causing a whole lot of hullabaloo. If only the woman would just quit being proud and play by the rules. The rules are important after all. You play by the rules; you're all about rules. How else are you going to advance in your career? Or at least you pretend you like rules, although you feel bad for that kid because you know how hard it is to live far away from your sister.

Stella is different from the other American border guards, who are described as clichéd cowboys: "As he walked to the car, he swayed side to side, his feet set wide apart, the holster on his hip pitching up and down" (134) and later joined by another guard, "both men [were] swaying back and forth like two cowboys headed for a bar or a gunfight" (135). Stella seems to be lacking in violence, she is smarter and more human and more interesting because her identity is not ghosted by her resemblance to a Clint Eastwood film.

Sheila is good at her job. She works hard and is kind to the strange people who come across the border. But she has a job to do. She does offer to ghost a little part of her job by offering to leave the spot on the form blank where the citizen part usually goes, but still, if she really lets the woman cross without stating her citizenship, she might get fired or demoted. Even when she gives her title and last name, "Inspector Pratt" (136), the narrator still refers to her by the name scratched into the metal butt of her gun, ghosting her hard won success and status.

In many ways, the mother and the narrator present a threat to Stella's sense of identity. If the border between the United States and Canada is merely imagined, Stella's job, her career, and her livelihood are irrelevant. The mother's refusal to answer the question in the appropriate way puts all of the border guards' identities at risk. Homi

Bhabha suggests that “[t]hese ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovate sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (2). If this is the case, Stella is caught in the middle of this redefinition and her whole world can be ghosted in a moment. “Ghostly Indians present us with the possibility of vanishing ourselves, being swallowed up into another’s discourse, another’s imagination. When ghostly Indian figures haunt the white American imagination, they serve as constant reminders of the fragility of national identity” (Bergland 5). In the story, Stella’s authority is tentative, called into question.

Stella seems to have some compassion for the young narrator and his mother, but the demands of her job as an enforcer of borders forces her to ghost her own feelings about the situation. Her good intentions are ghosted by her inability to alter the system, to make exceptions. Also, paperwork is paperwork. Without records, all her work would vanish.

The Mother and the Borders

How does it feel to be ghosted? Take a cue from the mother, the storytelling, sandwich-packing Blackfoot woman who, desperate to see her daughter, and “[r]efusing to be pushed across one border, . . . is refused permission to cross another” (Davidson, Walton and Andrews 123).

You don’t have a name. You’re just the mother of Laetitia and the narrator. Life on the reserve is safe for you, but once you leave the reserve to cross over into another country, you’d better make sure you’ve got some blankets and some sandwiches, because you’re on a long journey and there is a treacherous river to cross, one which might, if

you're not careful, wash away your identity. You don't know how long you'll be delayed and you don't trust the territory you're going into, but you also don't want people to mistake you and your child for foreigners, so you dress up in your least foreign clothes. You dress in opposition, against what you're not instead of what you are because dressing as a statement of your Blackfoot identity could be even more problematic. Approaching the border, you feel anxiety. The border shouldn't even be there. It is an artificial annoyance created by white folks. Sometimes it is difficult for you to see the border because it is so stupid. So you straighten your "dress across [your] thighs, lean[. . .] against the steering wheel, and [drive] all the way to the border in first gear, slowly, as if [you] were trying to see through a bad storm or riding high on black ice" (134). The border threatens to obscure your identity, your vision of yourself.

Although nameless, the mother in the story is powerful in her resistance. The description of her driving towards the border could be read as both fear and determination. Perhaps her packing up of blankets and sandwiches for the journey is in anticipation of a potential overnight stay in the parking lot. Perhaps she prepares for this experience in order to impress the importance of her cultural identity upon her second child before s/he too disappears into the blonde cities of America. Carrie Dawson further illuminates the power of the mother's parking lot stories:

"The stories that the mother tells her son [sic] are like the scripts followed by the guards and the news item crafted by the reporters in that they, too, are citizenship stories—understood in the context of the mother's ongoing struggle to win federal recognition of her Blackfoot citizenship, the stories that she teaches her son represent an invitation to participate in an alternative, *sui generis* form of

citizenship, one which posits an ecological form of belonging rooted in an understanding of kinship, history and culture.” (26)

The Blackfoot mother may be stuck in the parking lot but she uses that moment to instill cultural heritage and value into her young child. “We sat out under the stars that night, and my mother told me all sorts of stories. She was serious about it, too” (142). The moment in the parking lot is perhaps the most important moment in the story, the moment in which the child’s identity begins to be shaped.

Laetitia and Salt Lake City

How does it feel to be ghosted? Take a cue from Laetitia, a young woman who leaves home on the reserve to live in Salt Lake City, “a promised land of sorts” (Dawson 25) with “nothing but blondes in the whole state” (“Borders” 137).

You think that living on the reserve is really boring because you grew up there. You got out as fast as you could. You think Salt Lake City is so exciting, a paradise, an escape, heaven. Everyone is so different in Salt Lake City, the culture is so strange and new and wonderful. Everything is so clean and perfect. The people are perfect, especially on Sundays when they dress up for church. You are proud of having a swimming pool in your apartment complex; nobody on the reserve ever had a swimming pool like that. And yes, there are blondes everywhere and it is so strange and exotic. You wonder how they get their hair to be that color? It is so bright. You figure that when your mom and your sibling come to visit you’ll take them to get pie because there is no shortage of pie – or anything for that matter – in Salt Lake City. You love how much there is of everything. It is the opposite of the reserve. So much pie, so many blondes, so much shopping.

Once the young narrator and his mother arrive in Salt Lake City, Laetitia takes them out to eat at a place with a whole list of pies. The restaurant, like the narrator and the mother, remains unnamed. The pies are named because they are exotic and exciting, an essential American food. Laetitia's fascination with Salt Lake City is a parody of the way Americans behave when they visit exotic places like India or even Paris, a parody of the exotic other. The way Laetitia's boyfriend tells stories about the city and the way that Laetitia orders up brochures from some visitor's bureau, pouring over them as if they offered a magical escape into a foreign land, points a finger at the way all of us exoticize and idealize people and places we see as distinctly different from ourselves. In doing so we ghost the complexity of the exotic other's human experience and see their otherness as existing only for our own purpose.

Laetitia may be the least ghosted character in the story. Her choice to live in Salt Lake City is her choice and it provides her with a life where she can define herself according to her own whim. Of course, as a non-white person in a very white city, her identity and nationality will often be called into question, (as mine was when I lived in Utah). However, (unlike me) Laetitia is not American and so she does not need to defend her native right to be in America. For Laetitia, America is a foreign country into which she can escape the complexities of negotiating the borders of her identity.

The Young Narrator and the Story

How does it feel to be ghosted? Why not take a cue from the young narrator, an unnamed and un-gendered minor, denied his/her right to declare his/her nationality.

You have a story to tell and you tell it even though you don't know everything that goes on in the world. For some reason your mom won't say she is Canadian, which is

fine, except you really want to see your sister so you wonder why can't she just say "Canadian" and be done with it. You're funny without knowing it, because you're a kid and kids say strange things but you also know that maybe kids are really the smart ones. One some level, you know you're the coyote. You've heard about him. But you'll never admit it. Especially not now.

Stella tells the young narrator that his/her voice doesn't count because s/he is "a minor" (137) and in doing so, she ghosts his agency but she also respects the mother's resolve not to define herself as Canadian. Later, when "he is repeatedly asked how it feels to be 'an Indian without a country,' the answers he offers go unheard precisely because they do not accord with the reporters' expectations" (Andrews and Walton 610). All along, the narrator never reveals his own name or his gender. He is assumed to be a boy because the author is male but the text never actually reveals the child's gender, allowing the reader to imagine the child however he/she sees fit.

The young narrator is not ghosted by the border because he does not have the experience to understand the consequences of defining himself through the language of the Canadian/American divide. He is unsuspecting of the potential power and harm in language. In this way, he creates a safe space for a non-Native reader, who may also be innocent to the identity battle that takes place through language. The narrator isn't afraid of being ghosted because he hasn't yet experienced what it means to be a ghost, although, throughout the story, he is learning, growing accustomed to these experiences, to his voice, his agency, his cultural identity being both built up and chipped away.

The Reader and the Ghostly Experience

How does it feel to be ghosted? Take a cue from your own experience as the reader of this story.

You see how some readers, depending on their experiences, can not help becoming ghosted, at least in part, in this narrative. Thomas King states that “[i]n a number of my books editors have asked me to gloss terms or events so the reader understands what’s happening. I’ve refused to do that. Because what it does it is ‘others’ the text . . .” (Andrews 181). If you’re a Native reader, or someone with a great deal of ghostly experience, this story needs no gloss. It is a mirror, a reflection, a glimmer of your own reality. But if you’re non-Native reader, a person unaccustomed to border hassles, this story forces you out of your comfort zone and asks you to experience the world from an entirely different perspective.

For a short story of only fourteen pages, Thomas King’s “Borders” is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional text, one that is difficult to dissect from one angle without falling into another. King himself is a citizen of two countries, raised in the United States and a naturalized Canadian citizen “[o]f mixed Native and European descent, moving in Western and Native spheres, and national/territorial categorization as he blurs the lines between the disciplines . . .” (Gruber 355). As King points out in his interview with Jennifer Andrews, “Borders are these very artificial and subjective barriers that we throw up around our lives in all sorts of different ways. National borders are just indicative of the kinds or borders we build around ourselves” (172). The borders in this story are not limited to citizenship and nationality. Borders are constantly being constructed and reconstructed all around us. Sometimes they are visible, sometimes they are not but they

are always present. For the ghosted reader, the borders are perhaps becoming present for the first time. Like the mother, the uncomfortable reader has left the safety of the reserve and must contend with an abrupt and arbitrary demarcation, which is, at first, difficult to discern, to see.

Carrie Dawson, in her essay “An Indian Without a Country”, recounts another time a native person has been stuck between artificial borders; in 1923 “Deskaheh, a Cayuga statesman . . . used a passport issued by the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy to travel to Switzerland, where he applied for membership in the League of Nations on behalf of the Six Nations”. He was denied and, “broke and exhausted”, he attempted to return to Canada but was denied entry; he died a few months later on the “Tuscarora Reservation near Buffalo, New York” (27). The borders, which disappear in King’s story, have a real and tragic history. More recently, “Sir Alfred” Mehran lived for 15 years at the Charles deGaul airport, “trapped in international no-man’s land without the proper documentation needed to move on” (Mehran).

Border crossings are particularly difficult for ghosts. The border is a place where they are both potentially unseen and where they are potentially caught and constricted. “Borders” was first published in the early 1990s, several years before American borders became more fiercely guarded in the wake of 9/11. Since then border crossings have been a place of anxiety and tension for everyone, but even more so for those who fail to present fair skin, light hair and an American accent.

“Laetitia’s determination to move to Salt Lake City, a border crossing that challenges the racial make-up of the state, and the narrator’s mother’s desire to have her own national affiliation acknowledged by the border guards on both

sides of the forty-ninth parallel, can be read as political acts that are intended to reverse (even if only temporarily) dominant paradigms.” (Davidson, Walton and Andrews 124)

For a non-Native reader who has never experienced the anxiety of potentially being detained at the US border, this story ghosts his/her own easy experience and brings into the forefront the difficulties of a ghostly identity.

V. CONCLUSION: MY GHOSTLY CONFESSIONS

Our tour has almost come to a close, but before we part ways I'd like to explore one final haunted territory—my own life. I wouldn't be writing about ghosts if I hadn't found, in myself, some personal seed of interest in ghosted life. Like the child and mother in "Borders," I have spent many nights stuck in the cramped space between contexts, countries, and constructed notions of race. And, like Mrs. Danvers, I have often worked in other people's homes, my labor visible only when it seeks to be acknowledged. Like Grendel, I am distanced from the mainstream by my hybridity and parentage, an appearance neither Anglo-Saxon nor Chinese. I, too, am often unseen and unheard, disrupting the social narrative when I demand recognition.

Although it is uncomfortable for me to write about my very personal experiences in such a public forum, I feel that it is vital to expose my own personal angle of vision, as well as to explore the "sharp needles of experience" (Anzaldúa xv) within my life. Gloria Anzaldúa, one of the primary investigators of borderlands, writes that by "uncovering the inter-faces, the very spaces and places where our multiple-surfaced, colored, radically gendered bodies intersect and interconnect" we create "linkage-making strategies and . . . [heal] our broken limbs" (xvi). Tina Grillo points out in her work on intersectionality that "each of us has a limited view of the world" and "we have a better chance of forming a vision of a post-patriarchal, post-racist society by trusting our own experiences and by seeking out voices that are drowned out by essentialism in all its forms" (38). I hope that

in this concluding narrative, I may contribute my own voice to the story. Although the following pages seem, at times, to point more towards the individual, rather than the universal, experience, I hope to expose not only my own ghostliness, but also reveal my own limited vision, my own ghosting tendencies.

I, unlike Grendel and his mother, “have acted as a spy in my life” (Arias and Senna 450). As mixed race author Danzy Senna states in her interview with Claudia Arias, “I’ve learned that invisibility only has power when you disrupt it in some way, by speaking out, airing dirty laundry, disrupting comfort zones” (Arias and Senna 450). Despite this, I often ghost myself, allowing people to forget that I am, indeed, different from their assumptions. Every day, I inevitably pass for one thing or another. Often times the only place where I can be 100% visible is when I am 100% alone. My ability to shape shift based on expectations, my daily practice at trying on different aspects of my identity, may have been what, at a very young age, led me to pursue a career as an actor.

Acting, for me, was always a sort-of spiritual calling; the stories mattered above all else. I, like Thomas King, believe in the power of stories to push at the boundaries of our thinking, to change, to enlighten, to transform, because “[t]he truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (*Truth* 153). Fortunately, in my hometown, the children’s theatre program was run by a woman who was also deeply interested in the transformative stories of the border, of invisibility, of human struggle. The plays she chose to stage were not the typical children’s fare. I played the lead in *The Rememberer*, a play by Steven Dietz, in which a Native American girl is kidnapped and taken to a mission school where she is forced to forget her language. This experience is particularly problematic for her because she is the rememberer for her tribe, the keeper of stories. As a young teenager, I

connected deeply with a sense of spiritual responsibility for telling the important stories of our time.

Although I am not of Native American descent, I was picked to play this part, because I could pass for Native American. The casting was, in some ways, based on my physical appearance; however, I would have been considered for the part if I were less “ethnic” looking. Because of this colorblind casting, I thrived as a youth and teenager in local productions and I was able to perform key roles in summer Shakespeare without regard for my ethnic appearance. At thirteen, I played Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, but later that year, I was passed over for the mainstage production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Although I, in many ways, had experience with the Jewish tradition (my parent’s community consisted of two Jewish families and we often celebrated both Jewish and Christian holidays together), a devout Christian actress, with no Jewish affiliations, who looked a great deal like Anne Frank, won the role. It was the first time I lost out on a role based on my physical appearance, and while I was comfortable with the idea that an actor could play any role, I was confused and heartbroken that one of the most challenging roles for teenagers was unavailable to me because I didn’t look Jewish (or white) enough. My own sense of identity became irrelevant as I learned that passing has to do entirely with appearance and has little to do with lived experiences or alliances.

As I prepared to enter college, I became more painfully aware of the roadblocks I would face based on my appearance. Although “ethnically ambiguous” has become a fad look on shows like “America’s Next Top Model,” this obsession with mixed faces rarely translates into mixed minorities’ careers, especially when those faces aren’t easy to “type.” The summer before college, I attended a summer program at the famed Oregon

Shakespeare Festival. It was there, in an attempt to advocate for their diverse casting practices, where I realized how limited my performance options would be, even in Shakespeare, even in the race-radical, liberal theatre world. Traditional plays, the stock of theater training, rarely call for ethnically ambiguous actors. Although Shakespeare companies often attempt to diversify plays by casting a minority in roles that do not specifically state the ethnicity of the character, these choices are still seen as political and complicated. Because plays often center on families (and families are often cast with an aesthetically cohesive look), there remain far fewer roles for non-white actors.

As an adult actor, I switched to film, hoping that I would find more opportunities. I quickly learned that breakdowns (descriptions casting directors issue to agents for submission of talent) for commercial, film and television work state a character's ethnicity immediately after gender. Very few roles call for "open" or "any ethnicity." And, for Asian American actors, the roles are limited and mostly stereotypical: a doctor, a student, mother of an overachiever, a restaurant owner. Asian American women are seen in terms of their sexuality or sex appeal. Asian American women who don't look like Lucy Liu aren't seen at all. On the other hand, Asian American men are seen as sexless, unthreatening and, for non-Asian women, they're often invisible as candidates for sexual partnership. Asian American actors encounter an ongoing struggle to find a place for themselves outside of these typecast roles.

Perhaps this is why some of the most successful and visible Asian American performers have created their own work, their own one-person acts. Margaret Cho, for instance, gave up on Hollywood after her sitcom, *All-American Girl* failed. "For fear of being too 'ethnic,' the show got so watered down for television that by the end, it was

completely lacking in the essence of what I am and what I do” (Margaretcho.com). Less well known than Cho, but equally brilliant, solo performer Kristina Wong takes on ethnicity and depression in her one woman show titled *Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Although the number of Asian American faces on television and film is increasing, it is still difficult for Asian American actors to land parts in which they play fully developed, non-stereotypical characters. It is unusual for minorities, as a whole, to portray humans instead of some kind of human subcategory, colored, before they even step into frame, by an assumption of their ethnicity.

As a mixed Asian/white actor, each audition offers a potential moment of ghosting for me. I’ve been asked several times to try and make my eyes look more “Asian” so that I can get a part or fulfill some ethnic quota for a project. On the other side of the equation, I’m never sent to audition for roles calling for Caucasian actresses, even if I fit the other specifications. My non-white features define me but not enough to fulfill the requirements of the stereotype. Leng Wong, founder of LuckyChaos Theater in Austin, Texas, describes my situation as a “black hole.” While Leng is not mixed, she has also been told that she doesn’t look Asian enough. We’re excluded from work as actors because our eyes don’t slant in the right way. Kristina Wong parodies this situation in a youtube video titled “Debbie Spend It Now-- Superbowl Commercial OUTTAKES Senator Pete Hoekstra/ spoof parody,” in which Wong stops mid-scene to apologize for her performance; she is struggling because the sun is directly in her eyes, making her squint. The director replies: “It’s totally ok. It’s a good look for you. It gives it authenticity.” By mainstream American standards, we are not Asian enough the way we

are. Our exotic look must be exaggerated and amplified while our skill and talent is ghosted.

In my life as an actor, as a mixed race individual moving through the world with a face that cannot be categorized, I have often found myself stuck between the constructed borders of race, which we use to identify one another. Like the characters in King's "Borders," I have waited a long time at the convenience store, ready to cross the line as soon as someone with a camera shows up to usher me out of the in-between and into a space where I can travel freely. But for me, the cameras only offered to follow me in one direction, and as the sun set over Hollywood, I had to decide if I would just squint my eyes and move forward or if I would move in another direction all together—one where my words, rather than my appearance would determine the quality of my performance.

In addition to falling between the ghostly cracks of constructed identity, I, like Mrs. Danvers, have found myself loving, caring for and committed to people in ways that have gone unrecognized and uncelebrated. I grew up in a community of public interest lawyers. My Chinese American father and his two Jewish friends worked at the same Legal Aid office in my hometown in northern California. My father's friends and their white Christian spouses became my adoptive extended family. They shared the same values, the same work ethic and the same complex minority status as my parents. They also shared in the practicalities of life in public service. They all started out with very little income, despite their high level of education, drove cars named "stinky" and "rust bucket," raised similarly aged children and kept in touch with relatives far away. Growing up, I was taught to call these community members "Aunt" and "Uncle" and I thought of their children as cousins. These individuals played a far more integral role in

my upbringing than my biological relatives did, and they continue to behave towards me as if I were family, even as I too have grown up and moved far away.

Perhaps this wonderful community of aunts and uncles and cousins primed me to create my own deep and lasting non-biological ties. Not long after I graduated from college, I returned to my hometown and began mentoring a thirteen-year-old girl, the younger sister of my best friend who was then living in Utah, attending Brigham Young University. I soon began calling my friend's younger sister my "little sister", since the term seems to be the best option our language offered to suit the situation. Although I had known her from birth, our relationship was neither biological nor legal. She needed a caring, responsible adult in her life and I needed someone to care for. Although I was not my sister's legal guardian, she was a constant presence in my life from the time she was thirteen until long after she turned twenty-one.

I bought my house in Austin with my sister in mind. I was focused on trying to become a full time actor and she, right out of high school, had very little income. We shared the upstairs and rented out the master bedroom downstairs. After my sister moved out to live with folks her own age, I began to rent out furnished rooms in my home, turning it into a modern-day boardinghouse. I currently have three boarders. I am the one who cleans the house, pays the bills, manages conflict, restocks the toilet paper. If, as Gay Hawkins suggests, the public sphere is one in which human waste is no longer an individual responsibility, my home is no longer my home, but a shared, public space in which it is my job to "ensure that shit doesn't disturb the stability of the system" (Hawkins 47). My domestic work within the house is only noticed when it is not done,

when the cardboard core of the toilet paper roll disturbs the routine of going to the bathroom.

Unlike Mrs. Danvers, I own my home, but like her, I work within it. I am both mistress and servant. Now, at 32 years old, I have no relationships that have been sanctified by church or culture. I am unmarried and childless. Legally, I am an only child. One might look at the surface of my life and typecast me as someone “unsettled,” living life only for herself, enjoying a life of ease and freedom—unfamiliar with sacrifice. But this freedom is new to me. I didn’t attend a theatre school in New York, or even in Seattle, right out of high school because my grandmother, who had always been mentally ill, needed care. From my teenage years until my late 20s, I never considered my own needs without considering the needs of someone else. I frequently worked in other people’s homes, which, more often than not, were—and continue to be—also my own. While I continue to receive love and support from my extended hometown family, I am not unfamiliar with sacrifice.

The commitment and caring I have both received and given has never been publically celebrated or legally recognized. More often than not, people object—sometimes vehemently—to my use of familial terms to describe relationships that are not “really” family. They see these relationships as something silly and fictive instead of venerated and true. My caretaking, nurturing and sacrifice, as well as the love and care extended towards me, have been ghosted along with my identity as a sister, as a cousin, as a niece.

My experience as an uncoupled individual has led me to observe how the privileged space of the marital relationship results in the ghosting of all other

relationships. The variety of caregiving, love and nurture that goes on in addition to and outside of marriage is a vital and essential part of human survival and needs to be honored and acknowledged in the same way marriage is. As Judith Butler points out in her discussion of kinship, “the relations of kinship arrive at boundaries that call into question the distinguishability of kinship from community, or that call for a different conception of friendship. . . . and [open] kinship to a set of community ties that are irreducible to family “ (37-38). I am certainly committed to my sister’s well-being (as are my aunts and uncles committed to mine) and I hope that I may have helped to ease the pain, confusion and loneliness of growing up in a dysfunctional world. I am proud and privileged to have played a part in her upbringing.

While I have not yet burned my own small home, named “Granola Empire,” to the ground, I continue to disrupt narrow definitions of family, love and sacrifice. With an identity as complex as mine (Christian by upbringing, Jewish by association, Californian and Hispanic by culture, Chinese, Virginian and British by ethnicity) it is almost inevitable that I’ll always somehow be misinterpreted. So, while I am somewhat accustomed to ethnic passing, I refuse to let my relationships be ghosted. I speak proudly, but also with concern, of my sister finding her own way in the world. I invite people to visit my hometown to meet not only my parents, but my extended family as well. Although I use familial terms to describe my ghostly relationships, I take the time to describe, with pride and joy, the quality of our kinship. The love, care, respect and nurture I’ve both received and given is something I refuse to allow to go unseen.

Much of the caring work I have done in other’s homes has been with physically disabled individuals. My proximity to those, like Grendel and his mother, exiled from the

mainstream social sphere has given me a perspective on disabled life that, I've come to realize, few able bodied people are privy to. Right out of college, I found myself working in a group home with six physically and mentally disabled women, most of them around my own age. Because of the quantity of time I spent with these women, I was able to get to know them and I came to see that the complexity and strength of their characters and personalities is in no way diminished by their disabilities.

While my work with disabled people has been fortifying and rewarding to me, it has been disturbing and horrifying to those who, in the course of polite conversation, have asked me what I do for a living. More often than not, able-bodied people assume that working with disabled individuals is inherently depressing and disgusting. I have endured more than a few deflating jokes about adult diapers. And I have seen first hand how disabled people and those close to them are ghosted from dominant discourse, defined by their disability, while their humanity—even their right to life—is ghosted.

The ghosting of disabled people from their own human right to live and thrive is common, and is not limited to the ignorant or unkind. During Sarah Palin's run for the Republican Presidential Nomination, I was working, part time, for a local acupuncturist. My boss, without any shame or chagrin, asked me how Palin's much publicized status as a mother to a disabled child could be "noble? That is just another retard in the world for someone else to have to take care of." I was shocked, not only that I would hear these words from the mouth of a professed "healer," but that he would say this to *me*, knowing that my other job at the time was working for a woman physically disabled from birth.

Unfortunately, the acupuncturist boss has never taken the time to see a disabled person as human. Leonard Davis points out that "[r]ejection is the learned response on an

individual level that is carried out on a societal level in actions such as incarceration, institutionalization, segregation, discrimination, marginalization, and so on” (13). The acupuncturist’s revulsion towards Sarah Palin’s disabled child is complicit with a greater cultural tendency to ghost the people who “remind[s] the hallucinated whole being that it’s wholeness is in fact a hallucination, a developmental fiction” (130). Unfortunately, the acupuncturist is only one of many unwilling to consider the harmful power of their unwillingness to see disabled people as human.

For those visibly disabled, their disability defines the way they are perceived in the world, often eliminating them from consideration as complete humans. For those with invisible disabilities, their needs are easily ghosted under a broad assumption of normality, an assumption that is inherently flawed, since there is no one normal experience. Everyone, able bodied or not, functions under these surface level perceptions. Nobody is immune from being ghosted based upon the way they look. The athletic blonde may have more roles available to him in Hollywood, but he will spend most of his career fighting to play roles outside of type. We all typecast one another and in doing so, we ghost the complexity of the human experience, the wonderfulness of our own individual identities and stories; we over-simplify.

One reason I’ve decided to address various texts from various genres and to change the narrative voice between chapters is to bring attention to, and attempt to speak from, my own ghostly perspective. As an actor, I struggle with the in-between of the way I look—but in academic life, my interests are ghosted by the nature of their interdisciplinary-ness. But even the word “interdisciplinary” indicates that there are different distinct disciplines in which a person may study. While my background is

certainly within the discipline of English, my interests and thinking cannot be so easily bound up into one way of knowing. As Tina Grillo points out, “Those of us who are outsiders or who do not fit neatly within standard categories have various voices within ourselves. We speak partly with one voice and partly with another, going back and forth, a process that Mari Matsuda has said can lead to genius or madness or both” (32). I find it difficult to confine myself to one way of thinking or creating or speaking. My audience, like King’s, “almost becomes a lost audience” (Davidson, Walton and Andrews 14) because I do not always know how to direct my ideas. Although I only speak English, I am fluent in a variety of contextual dialects and I change my pronoun use depending on the company I’m in. By engaging with multiple genres and various timeframes and by using a variety of voices, I’m attempting to take my first awkward toddler steps towards expressing my own perspective within the confines of academic discourse.

In the end, one thing we all share is our potential and realized ghostliness. Just as race is a construct, so is perceived identity—every person has qualities within his or her self that go unnoticed at the surface. I’ve shown you the ways in which I am ghostly, the stories behind this thesis. But what part of your identity, your existence, your love, your humanity been ghosted? It is time to build cultural norms that are inclusive and fluid rather than exclusive and constrained, ones that acknowledge the complexities within each person instead of eliminating those who don’t fit.

We’ve come to the end of our tour. But as you walk home through haunted streets, I encourage you to approach ghosts with curiosity instead of fear and to look for ghosts in the nooks and crannies and on makeshift stages everywhere.

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VITA

Winifred Hunton-Chan has been a sometimes-ghost as long as she can remember. She is a ghost with a loud, brash and powerful voice, someone impossible to ignore. However, since moving to Texas and resuming graduate studies, she has become intentionally and uncharacteristically quiet, passing unseen between worlds, observing and strategizing the best way for ghosted stories to be heard. This thesis is the result of those reflections and presents the method behind her future journeys into the performance of ghostly stories.

Permanent Email Address: vwchan27@gmail.com

This thesis was typed by Winifred Hunton-Chan.