HAUNTING THE FUTURE: IMAGINING OTHER FUTURES IN CONTEMPORARY DIASPORIC BLACK AND DIASPORIC JEWISH LITERATURE

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Haunting the Future: Imagining Other Futures in Contemporary Diasporic Black and Diasporic Jewish Literature

Haunting the Future: Imagining Other Futures in Contemporary Diasporic Black and Diasporic Jewish Literature examines how ghosts help those they haunt recognize other ways of understanding history, subjectivity, and living in the aftermath of violence. Most importantly, *Haunting the Future*, argues that ghosts reveal other, potential futures, and encourage the living to build better futures. This study unsettles the assumption that we must always exorcise our ghosts. What happens if we stop expecting exorcism and instead allow literary ghosts can teach us how to honor the past without letting it possess us and how to build more ethical futures? This question at the core of *Haunting the Future* pushes us to reconsider what ghosts do and represent in contemporary literature. While previous studies of haunting often consider it a symptom of traumatic repetition or a representation a past that will not rest in peace, *Haunting the Future* explores how haunting is actually often working in service of the future. Haunting, in other words, is more than simply the resurrection and repetition of past traumas, but functions as a way of engaging in ethical future building. Haunting in this sense, works directly against the concept that history repeats itself and that ghosts are simply repetitions of past trauma; haunting is wholly concerned with the future. This project is organized into two main sections. The first section, "Undoing Expectations and Rethinking the Ghost," discusses the traditional interpretations of

ghosts and the expectations that go along with these. The two works of literature analyzed in this first section each push against these expectations and open other avenues for understanding what ghosts are capable of. Rethinking ghosts makes critics more receptive to other ways that ghosts work upon those they haunt. The second section, "Creating Haunted Futures," puts these retheorizations into action by analyzing how two works of literature and two memorial museums deploy haunting in service of the future. This section argues against the assumption that ghosts are representations of a troubled or troubling past. Rather, it argues that ghosts help illuminate the ways in which the future can be made better, especially for those who come from legacies of violence. At its most distilled, the core principle of *Haunting the Future* remains actually quite straightforward: listen to ghosts and they will show us how to achieve better, more ethical futures.

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INTRODUCTION

A Connective Approach: Methodological Considerations

This study unsettles the assumption that we must always exorcise our ghosts. What happens if we stop expecting exorcism and instead allow literary ghosts to teach us how to honor the past without letting it possess us and how to build more ethical futures? This question at the core of *Haunting the Future* pushes us to reconsider what ghosts do and represent in contemporary literature. This question also drives the methodological approach for the project. The significance of the project, therefore, is twofold. First, it works to dismantle the assumption that ghosts represent a problem to be exorcised. Scholars too often consider ghosts merely metaphorical figures of repressed or unintegrated trauma. *Haunting the Future* meets ghosts as they are –- haunted and haunting characters with their own humanistic work to do. Examining ghosts and haunting in these literary traditions is important for understanding both trauma and resilience. While these historical traumas have affected people into the present, the literature provides strategies not just for survival but for moving into the future. Haunting, in other words, is more than simply the resurrection and repetition of past traumas, but actually functions as a way of engaging in ethical future building.

Haunting the Future adopts three core methodological approaches: Marianne Hirsch's concept of "connective" scholarship, Jacques Derrida's theorization of hauntology, and Avery Gordon's elaboration of hauntology. These three theories serve as the overarching methodologies for the project as a whole and work in tandem throughout — even as the various chapters employ other relevant theoretical underpinnings. In other words, though each chapter takes a unique lens through which to examine haunting, they all cohere around the theories of Hirsch, Derrida, and Gordon.

I begin with Hirsch because her theory explains why and how both contemporary diasporic Black literature and diasporic Jewish literature coexist in the same project. At first glance, combining the work of Black and Jewish authors might appear simply as a work of comparative literary studies, and, indeed, there are important conversations to be had that would be best served by a comparative methodology. For example, a project which examines how Black people and Jewish people coexist in the same spaces, sometimes harmoniously and sometimes contentiously, and how they each view the other would be an interesting study to pursue. While that project is certainly one worthy of academic pursuit, it is not the goal of *Haunting the Future: Imagining Other Futures in Contemporary Diasporic Black and Diasporic Jewish Literature*. It's not inconsequential that comparative approaches, especially concerning histories of violence, can raise some suspicion. They often run the risk of overgeneralization or stoke fears of appropriation.

Rather than a comparative approach, this current study, takes a connective approach. I turn to Marianna Hirsch's explanation of this methodology. In a conversation with Ayşe Gül Altinay and Andrea Pető, Hirsch discusses her work on genocide research and specifically how her work on the Holocaust has informed how she approaches other instances of genocides. Hirsch explains, "I have argued not so much for a comparative as for a connective scholarship that enables different histories to illuminate each other and to explore their interconnections without implying that they are comparable" (Altinay and Pető 389). Hirsch, a scholar engaging in comparative Black and Jewish studies, explains this connective approach as one that puts different histories in conversation without implying that they are parallel. Presenting these histories as parallel inadvertently creates a hierarchy of suffering. In attempting to arrive at general conclusions, comparative studies can often present one history of violence as somehow

worse than another. Connective scholarship, on the contrary, puts two histories in conversation and maintains the individual specificity of each. This approach searches for resonances.

Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* also responds to resonances, albeit of a different register. Derrida's *Specters* examines the presence of Marx and Marxism after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the supposed demise of communism. While *Haunting the Future* does not assume a Marxist sense for its analysis, it does draw on an important aspect first coined in *Specters*: hauntology. Hauntology is a neologism combining "haunt" and "ontology" and at its most basic discusses the presence and work of the specter. According to Derrida, we must follow ghosts because they direct us to injustices; listening to, following, and — in many cases — being pursued by ghosts is an "ethical and political imperative" (Derrida 36). Ghosts respond "without delay to the demand of justice" (Derrida 37). By extension, listening to ghosts allows the living to glimpse injustices and take action to prevent them in the future.

Derrida's hauntology is therefore a fundamental methodology for *Haunting the Future* for two reasons. First, Derrida's *Specters* marks an important development in the scholarly study of hauntings not just as paranormal activity, but as indicators of something amiss. In his many references to *Hamlet*, Derrida's primary concern with the ghost of Hamlet's father is how this ghost represents time "out of joint" (*Hamlet* qtd. in Derrida 1). The ghost marks where something has gone awry. However, the ghost also represents an entry point into ethical future-building. It is only through the ghost that we can make another future. For Derrida, this aspect of the ghost also connects to disjointed time. He explains that "everything begins by the apparition of a specter. More precisely by the *waiting* for this apparition. The anticipation is at once impatient, anxious, and fascinated […] The *revenant* is going to come" (Derrida 2). The revenant is — at once — past, present, and future. In other words, the ghost is a rupture.

This rupture, however, is not merely a disjointing of time. It is also an entry point for (re)making the future, which leads to the second reason Derrida is critical to this project. While ghosts certainly do speak to the past and specifically to past violences, ghosts also indicate ways to make better futures. As Derrida writes, “What does it mean to follow a ghost? And what if this came down to being followed by it, always, persecuted perhaps by the very chase we are leading? Here again what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past” (Derrida 10). According to Derrida, the ghosts arrive not from the past, but from the future. It arrives as the future afterlife of the dead and arrives to guide the living towards other futures. In other words, ghosts find us, not the other way around.

To close *Specter of Marx*, Derrida leaves readers with a particular message to scholars: “If he loves justice at least, the ‘scholar’ of the future, the ‘intellectual’ of tomorrow should learn it from the ghost. He should live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech” (Derrida 221). The ghost, therefore, is intimately tied to the future and it is imperative that scholars, as those individuals who have tasked themselves with theorizing and reshaping the world around them, learn from ghosts. Part of our work as scholars includes working with ghosts and should always include the future-oriented perspective of haunting that Derrida discusses.

Avery Gordon’s influential monograph, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, further develops Derrida’s hauntology. She offers a sustained critique of capitalism, citing it as a main factor for violences that erase certain individuals and groups from visibility (even while still alive). She departs from Derrida at some junctions, however. Whereas Derrida primarily concerns himself with the resonances of Marxism after twentieth-century failures of communism, Gordon takes haunting as a core starting point for her sociological examination.

She explains that "*Ghostly Matters* is about haunting, a paradigmatic way in which life is more complicated than those of us who study it have usually granted" (Gordon 7). Ghosts serve as both and entry point and a representation of how complicated life is, and these complications, according to Gordon, deserve to be honored and explored.

Similarly to Derrida's hauntology wherein the specter directs attention to something out of joint, Gordon's theory insists that ghosts point towards lingering social violences that demand attention. "The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person," Gordon explains, "but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (Gordon 8). Ghosts shape our social world and our interactions with others. Perhaps most importantly, ghosts force us to consider the Other and our relationship to the Other. Indeed, "[f]ollowing the ghosts is about making a contact that changes you and refashions the social relations in which you are located" (Gordon 22). Ghosts track our social obligations to each other.

Learning to listen to ghosts, refusing to resort immediately to exorcism lies at the heart of Gordon's work. She explains that "ghosts get into our matters just as well. This means that we will have to learn to talk to and listen to ghosts, rather than banish them, as the precondition for establishing our scientific or humanistic knowledge" (Gordon 23). Most importantly for this project, Gordon's theorization of haunting as a social practice encourages us to see ghosts as agents of change for the world they haunt. They do not merely represent a past seeking revenge (though they often can), but they also shape the present and the future. The concept of haunted futurities arises from Gordon's important work. This concept will be further explained and explored in the fourth chapter of *Haunting the Future*.

Chapter Outline

This project is split into two sections, each comprised of two chapters. This first section, "Rethinking the Ghost," includes the two chapter most engaged with theoretical reimaginings of the ghostly. These two chapters rethink the ghost and the social work ghosts do. This first section seeks to not only rethink the ghost (as a social figure and as a way of expressing a way of knowing or a sense of self) but also to rethink what ghosts are capable of.

The first chapter, "Haunted but not Mad: Against Pathology in Cynthia Ozick's 'Rosa,'" argues against pathological readings of the haunted Holocaust survivor Rosa. "Rosa" is the sister story of Cynthia Ozick's famous short story "The Shawl" (*The Shawl* was published as a novella including "The Shawl" and "Rosa" in 1990. "Rosa" was originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1983). Set in 1977, this story follows Rosa in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Now living in Miami, Rosa reluctantly leaves her apartment to do laundry. At the laundromat she meets a flirty septuagenarian who insists on taking her for a cup of tea. She manages to escape from the date she never really wanted to go on and eventually finds her way back home. Waiting for her is a package from her adopted niece Stella (first seen in "The Shawl"), which contains her dead daughter's shawl (the famous shawl from "The Shawl"). When Rosa touches the shawl, the ghost of her daughter (Magda) reappears to her. The story ends when the flirty septuagenarian knocks on her door thereby chasing Magda away.

Throughout the short story, Ozick depicts Rosa as both haunted and haunting. In positioning Rosa as a ghostly figure in her own right, Ozick complicates what exactly it means to be haunted by the Holocaust. Specifically, considering "Rosa"/Rosa through the lens of haunting disrupts the assumption that different manners of expressing subjectivity immediately indicate a disordered presentation of identity because it allows for a spectrum of other subject positions.

This chapter reconsiders haunting not as a condition of some kind of post-traumatic stress disorder, but as a means to express a sense of identity that emerges from the aftermath of violence.

"Haunted but not Mad" is the most deeply theoretical of the chapters. As the first chapter of the project, it sets the expectations for the project — not for the density of the theoretical entanglements, but for the way it considers haunting as something working towards the future and not simply a symptom of past trauma that will not rest in peace. Crucially, this chapter turns away from the language of trauma and psychoanalysis and embraces the language of violence and social and political theory. In this sense, this chapter speaks most directly to Gordon's *Ghostly Matters*. As Gordon explains, "The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (8). Rosa as both a haunted and a haunting figure forces us to reimagine what exactly the ghostly can do. In the case of "Rosa," the ghostly demonstrate how violence alters subject position and, more importantly, how social understandings of "normal" identity presentation dismiss expressions that do not adhere to those models. In other words, the haunting and haunted Rosa offers a path *outside* of normal/abnormal binaries about a person's sense of identity.

Whereas the first chapter offers a theoretical reconsideration of haunting, the second chapter applies the theoretical power of the ghost to imagine other histories and futures. This chapter, "Ghosts in the Archive: Possession and the (Un)Making of the Black Archive in Erna Brodber's Louisiana," argues that haunting establishes a new sense of possession of the Archive by (un)making it and representing it in a new form. In essence, this chapter examines Jamaican writer Erna Brodber's use of haunting as a theoretical reformulation of the archive for a Black experience.

Louisiana (1997) follows Ella Townsend as she travels from New York City to St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana for a Works Progress Administration assignment to collect the story of Mammy King. During the interview, however, Mammy King dies and Ella finds herself haunted by not only Mammy King, but also by Mammy King's good friend Lowly. The novel then tracks Ella's journey as she rejects her original assignment, moves to New Orleans, and becomes a seer and a practitioner of hoodoo and conjure. During the novel, Ella dies and her husband finishes her journal, which he then sends to the fictional Black World Press. Brodber positions the novel itself as that same journal.

Brodber's haunted archive includes three specific developments. First is the *relational-archive model* that Brodber's narrative creates. Unlike traditional archives, *Louisiana* creates a model that eschews strict linearity in favor of concurrent histories. History functions less like a simple chain of cause and effect, and more like a complex cohabitation between not only the past and the present, but also the present and the future. Building upon the relational-archive model that the narrative presents, *Louisiana* proposes an alternative Black archival model, referred to here as the *communal archive.* Unlike traditional archives (and the narratives of history that they produce) that are event oriented, relational archives shift the focus to be person oriented. This chapter therefore analyzes the relationships between the characters in the novel and epistemological practices these relationships uncover.

Section two, "Creating Haunted Futures," uses the theoretical work from the first two chapters and examines how these reconsiderations help us create other, better futures. Whereas the first section is about reimagining the ghost itself, this second section is about what these ghosts can do to build a better future. In other words, this section argues against the assumption that ghosts are representations of a troubled or troubling past. Rather, it argues that ghosts help

illuminate the ways in which the future can be made better, especially for those who come from legacies of violence. The chapters in this second section are also shared, meaning that each chapter analyzes a work pertaining to Black ghosts and one pertaining to Jewish ghosts. In making these final chapters shared, it puts into practice the work of connective scholarship to foster resonances without comparison.

Chapter three, "Family Ghosts and Making the Future Together: Haunted Futurities in Thane Rosenbaum and Jesmyn Ward" begins with Thane Rosenbaum's novel *The Golems of Gotham* (2002). Rosenbaum's novel examines the intergenerational transmission of Holocaust trauma for two of its protagonists: Oliver (the son of two Holocaust survivors who committed suicide) and Ariel (Oliver's daughter). Ariel, frustrated with her father's emotional distance and fearing for his writing career as he struggles with a prolonged bout of writer's block, summons the ghosts of her grandparents. However, she also accidentally summons the ghosts of other famous Holocaust survivors and writers who also committed suicide. As the novel progresses, Oliver unblocks his writing and finally tackles writing about the Holocaust. He almost gets pulled too deep, but Ariel and the other ghosts save him and teach him how to live with his Holocaust history without letting it consume him.

The ghosts in this novel introduce haunted futurities to help Oliver create a different future, one not plagued by his Holocaust avoidance. Paradoxically, Oliver is blocked, trapped at an impasse, precisely because he *isn't* haunted by the Holocaust. The ghosts in *The Golems of Gotham*, break repetitive cycles of violence and imagine other possibilities of what the (haunted) future might look like. For the characters in Rosenbaum's novel, it is only through haunting that they can move towards other futures.

This chapter also examines Jesmyn Ward's novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (2017) and what haunted futures look like for the Black characters populating her narrative. Ward's novel is told from three different characters' perspectives: Leonie, Jojo (Leonie's thirteen-year-old son), and Richie (the ghost of a boy Jojo's grandfather knew during his incarceration at Parchman Prison). When Leonie's boyfriend calls and says he's being released from Parchman prison, Leonie packs up Jojo, Kayla (Jojo's younger sibling), and a friend to pick up her boyfriend. On the way, Leonie and her friend do a drug drop to pay for the trip. However, on the way back, police pull Leonie over and she swallows the drugs to hide them. Whenever she gets high, Leonie sees the ghost of her murdered brother, Given. During their trip to Parchman Prison, Richie the ghost stows away in the car and looks forward to talking to Jojo's grandfather again and to learn how he died. Unfortunately, learning how he died does not allow Richie to pass over as he'd hoped. The novel ends with the death of Jojo's grandmother, a gifted spiritual healer.

For Ward, haunted futurities are not only about other futures, but also about Other futures. That is, haunted futurities are directly concerned with creating different futures for those typically consider Other. Ward uses haunting to examine a history of anti-Black violence in the American south that is anything but past. Ward's ghosts, and the novel as a whole, resist resolution to demonstrate how haunted futurities are currently alive in the American landscape.

These Other potential futures made visible through haunted futurities can only be achieved by starting with ghosts themselves. Haunting directs attention to injustices still in need of solving. In other words, the realization of Other futures demands starting with ghosts. Starting with ghosts, however, is exactly that — a start. Rather than simply listening to ghosts' "instructions" about what to do with haunting, the living must discover those answers for themselves. Haunted futurities, in this sense, rely entirely on the interplay between the living and

the dead. Ghosts reveal problems. The living must solve them if they wish to arrive, one day, at a better future. A haunted future is not possible without intervention on the part of the living.

The final chapter, "In the Presence of Ghosts: Memorial Museums, Haunting, and Educating for Ethical Futures," turns its attention to the ghosts alive in memorial museums dedicated to past violences. Memorial museums about historical atrocities build certain pedagogical missions into their very foundations. These memorial museums seek to educate their visitors about proper moral responses to intolerance and injustice. Memorials and memorialization represent public demonstrations of pedagogically motivated haunting. Specifically, this chapter argues that these museological-memorial spaces insist on continued haunting to encourage future social justice action on the part of its visitors. In many ways, these museological-memorial sites become hallowed ground that inspire ethical engagement with others and the future.

"In the Presence of Ghosts" first analyzes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. I argue that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum employs hauntological tactics to teach visitors. Walking among ghosts, visitors enter a space uniquely designed to produce a moral — not strictly intellectual — education. Through haunting, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum compels visitors into future-oriented ethical actions. From the halls of the memorial museum, ghosts rise to guide the living towards a future the ghostly were denied.

The chapter then turns to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and its associated Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. This memorial-museum complex is an anti-lynching museum that is dedicated to educating visitors about not only the history of anti-Black violence in the US, but also to the ways in which this history is still present. The museum and memorial

employ haunting to generate pathways to other futures in which an American legacy of racial violence might finally become a thing of the past. Legacy, clearly a core concept of the museum because the museum's name draws attention to it, moves in two directions: 1) a legacy of past violence that continues to morph into new iterations in the contemporary age, and 2) a legacy of resistance from which springs the potential for a different future. The work of haunted futurities finds itself at home within this second legacy of resistance.

Section One: Undoing Expectations and Rethinking the Ghost

CHAPTER ONE

HAUNTED BUT NOT MAD: AGAINST PATHOLOGY IN CYNTHIA OZICK'S "ROSA"

Rosa Lublin is both haunted and haunting. In her famous short story, "The Shawl," Cynthia Ozick depicts the tragic murder of Rosa's baby in a concentration camp. Rosa's adopted niece Stella, jealous of the "magic shawl" sustaining Rosa's infant Magda, steals the shawl — an act that leads directly to Magda's murder at the hands of a Nazi camp guard. Despite Magda's death at the end of "The Shawl," the character of Magda reappears in an accompanying short story called "Rosa." Pairing the two stories in her novella *The Shawl*, Ozick resurrects Magda nearly thirty-five years later. Though Ozick portrays Magda as the most easily identifiable ghost in the story, the author also characterizes Rosa as traversing her own liminality. The lesser studied of the two stories, "Rosa" not only addresses the aftermath of Magda's death, but raises important questions about the afterlife of the Holocaust for Rosa as a survivor. In positioning Rosa as a ghostly figure in her own right, Ozick complicates what exactly it means to be haunted by the Holocaust. Specifically, considering "Rosa"/Rosa through the lens of haunting disrupts the assumption that different manners of expressing subjectivity immediately indicate a disordered presentation of identity because it allows for a spectrum of other subject positions. Essentially, ghosts help explain the otherness that accompanies surviving a horrific violence without pathologizing.

In the second story of Cynthia Ozick's novella *The Shawl*, Rosa's dead daughter Magda reappears. Murdered in an unnamed concentration camp at the end of eponymous first story of the novella, Magda's ghost returns to Rosa at various points throughout the narrative. However, Ozick does not position this short story as one only of haunting, but other interrelated events. It

begins with Rosa's unexpected move from New York to Miami. The story follows Rosa over the course of a day in which Rosa, reluctant to leave her room, finally forces herself to visit the laundromat. At the laundromat, a flirty septuagenarian named Simon Persky begins talking with her and convinces her to have a cup of tea with him. After this interaction, Rosa convinces herself that Persky stole a pair of her underwear. The narrative then follows Rosa on her search to recover her lost underwear. During this search, Rosa accidentally locks herself in a hotel's private beach whose barbed wire revives memories of her Holocaust survival. Eventually, Rosa finds her missing underwear among her own clothes. During this time, a package containing Magda's shawl arrives (along with a disparaging note) from Stella. While Rosa holds the shawl to conjure the ghost of Magda, persistent Persky finds Rosa's apartment and shows up unannounced. The short story ends with Magda disappearing as Persky arrives at her door.

While most critics agree that surviving the Holocaust alters an individual's expression of subjectivity (usually claiming that the experience itself becomes unspeakable), much scholarship on survivor subjectivity adopts an approach grounded primarily in trauma theory. There are, however, certain risks that accompany such a theoretical grounding. Trauma theory can unintentionally foreclose other ways of understanding subjectivity after surviving violence. Trauma theory, because of its origin in psychoanalysis and psychology more broadly, is intimately tied to medical fields. Medical and medically-affiliated fields generally seek "healing" as the goal of their study. Such a goal, while noble in its pursuit, reinforces certain binaries — including, but not limited to, the dichotomy between healthy and pathological. Consequently, trauma theory tends to approach its subjects through similar avenues, meaning that certain expressions considered intimately impacted by trauma often find themselves on the pathological side of that binary. This prioritization of trauma in discussions of the Holocaust inflicts

unintentional damages upon its subjects by proposing to know which expressions of subjectivity are healthy and which are not.

A hauntological approach, however, opens other avenues for understanding and accepting the Otherness that accompanies surviving the Holocaust. “Rosa” challenges these assumptions and examines alternative ways of expressing subjectivity that Rosa demonstrates through her own spectrality. To understand these alternative subjectivities and break free from the trauma theory monopoly over the literary analysis of Holocaust, “Rosa” demands a different methodological approach. This chapter uses political science to inform its analysis of the various ghostly figures in “Rosa.” The political science used in this chapter, which examines the larger social and structural factors that impact both political inclusion but also how that inclusion or exclusion impacts subjectivity, generates analysis that locates Rosa in larger social conversations rather than seeking to diagnose her as an aberrant individual psyche. While this chapter, therefore, draws upon political science to examine larger structures in place, it insists on grounding the analysis of Rosa in the language of haunting.

Holocaust Ghosts

My identification of ghosts as a recurring theme in writing about the Holocaust is certainly nothing new. Haunted Holocaust histories are a familiar trope in Holocaust writing. Holocaust ghosts prove especially prevalent in Polish writing. Zuzanna Dziuban contends that the abundance of Jewish ghosts in Polish writing stems from “the near-total absence of Jewish communities in post-Holocaust Poland” (“Introduction” 9). She continues, arguing that studying the ghostly, its “aesthetic and affective politics,” “asks about the position of Jewish ghosts in shifting cultural attitudes toward the Holocaust and the >Polish-Jewish past< (and present), and about [ghosts’] role, which is as much representational and symbolic as it is political and ethical”

("Introduction" 9). For Dziuban, the presence of these Jewish ghosts reflects and remarks on Poland's fraught political involvement with the Holocaust (both in the past and in the present). These ghosts, therefore, rest upon a profound connection to place.

Yet, Jewish ghosts appear in literature by writers without direct ties to the countries involved in the Holocaust. Diasporic Jewish writers still evoke ghosts of the Holocaust and, because of their diasporic identification, raise the question of what these ghosts are doing if they no longer find themselves in the European places directly tied to Holocaust memory. Jewish American writer Philip Roth famously resurrects the ghost of Anne Frank in *The Ghost Writer*. Additionally, Roth's novel raises larger questions about the connection between ghosts, the Holocaust, and literary representation. The title of the novel — *The Ghost Writer* — invokes ghosts as spirits haunting the work of the living as well as a person writing on another's behalf. What does it mean, then, to write for and about ghosts? For writers taking up the mantle of the Holocaust in a diasporic context, the ghosts that populate their work connote something other than a strict connection between place and haunting. In other words, critical work on Holocaust ghosts needs to think about these ghosts diasporically to avoid unintentionally over generalizing the significance of these ghosts.

For Ozick, the ghostly figures moving their way through "Rosa" beget other explanations for these ghosts. Loosened from the strict association between haunting and place, ghostly figures in Ozick's novella examine how haunting serves as an expression of subjectivity for those Holocaust survivors who, like Rosa, find themselves displaced by the Holocaust. "Rosa" positions itself explicitly as a diasporic text. Though "The Shawl" begins in the camps, "Rosa" explains how after the Holocaust, both Rosa and her adopted niece Stella immigrated to the United States. Ozick begins "Rosa" with another move for Rosa well. Not only does the very

first sentence of the short story describe Rosa as a "madwoman and a scavenger," it also establishes that she "moved to Miami" (*The Shawl* 13). Rosa, then, is marked by a movement, a restlessness. But her moves also mirror a diasporic movement resulting from the Holocaust itself. Displaced by the horrors of the Holocaust many European Jews found their way to a number of different countries. The very structure of the novella therefore mirrors this diaspora. In the unwritten space and time between "The Shawl" and "Rosa," Rosa arrives in two new places with Magda's ghost following her each time.

Clearly, then, Magda's ghost haunts not a place but a person. While it may seem obvious to note the person-focused quality of the haunting in "Rosa," as I have pointed out above, work on ghosts generally ties them to specific locations. The plethora of Polish works about Holocaust ghosts once again serves as a useful example. Though the ghosts in much of this Polish literature do haunt people, they haunt them *because of where they live*. Roma Sendyka's chapter "Sites that Haunt: Affects and Non-Sites of Memory" argues that the locations of former genocidal violence remain haunted and that these hauntings emanate from the place itself (almost regardless of current inhabitants). Though she makes a primarily affect-theory oriented argument about these "non-sites of memory," her focus on location over people reflects the tendency to tie a ghost to a place rather than an individual ("Sites" 85). Indeed, this tendency exists for works concerned with haunting beyond the more specific field of Holocaust studies. Shirley Jackson's classic neogothic novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (recently adapted into a widely popular Netflix series) is a useful example. Though the family inhabiting the house feels haunted by the ghosts of Hill House even after they leave, the actual ghosts do not pursue them beyond the

property line.[1] "Rosa," where Magda's ghost follows her mother wherever she moves and where Rosa herself takes on ghost-like qualities, encourages a reading that reexamines spectrology's obsession with place.

Severing the tie between ghosts and their physical haunts introduces complications into how we theorize ghosts in general. On the one hand, the ghost could now be considered a vessel for place in which place becomes mobile. Freed from the tether to a singular physical location, does the ghost contain a trace of place? In other words, with the ability to travel, does the ghost become its own specter of place? In this sense, the ghost shoulders yet another duality: it transforms into both the ghost of an individual and the ghost of the place of that individual. Rosa's last name reflects this haunting of place and person; Lublin is both her last name and a city in Poland.

Just as Rosa Lublin is both place and person, grounding a discussion of Holocaust subjectivity in manifestations of haunting opens new avenues for understanding an expression of Holocaust survivor subjectivity that resists binary categorization. Attempts to understand survivor's subjectivity often result in pathologization that ignores the continual oscillation between various subject positions; for example, characters within the novella and critics

[1] Netflix's adaptation of *The Haunting of Hill House* poses some challenges to this claim, primarily because of the differences between presenting ghosts via a visual versus a written medium. For example, in one of the more memorable jump scares from the series, Nel's ghost appears in the car while her sisters Theo and Shirley drive back to Hill House. While it seems quite obvious that the ghost exists beyond Hill House's property line, the reappearance of Nel at this moment occurs as the two sisters drive back to Hill House as the site of the original haunting. Nel's ghost, therefore, is still intimately tied to place in ways that continue to ground her haunting in Hill House itself. Additionally, Netflix's filmic adaptation makes numerous changes to Jackson's original novel (of which this chapter does not have the space to explore the challenges of translating verbal ghosts into visual ghosts). Jackson's original ghosts remain deeply tied to the house itself and, because of the nature of linguistic representation, the ghost's presence is left much more ambiguous than Netflix portrays it.

repeatedly interpret Rosa as "mad." In fact, Ozick makes this association between Rosa's expression of subjectivity as a Holocaust survivor and pathology immediately. The short story begins by introducing Rosa as "Rosa Lublin, a madwoman and a scavenger" (*The Shawl* 13). Ozick later reveals that this description comes from a newspaper article on Rosa after she destroys her store. The story begins with an external source pathologizing Rosa.

The newspaper article assumes that Rosa is "mad" and effectively steals her narrative and co-opts it into one of psychological disorder. For haunted characters, this kind of psychological disturbance is usually blamed on the very ghosts that haunt them — regardless of how the individual feels about their ghosts. These types of examinations continue to capitulate to convenient explanations of ghosts as problems to be solved instead of considering the other possibilities these Holocaust ghosts generate. Psychoanalytic approaches to ghosts simply seek to rid ("heal") the patient of their ghost, not discover what else ghosts can do.

Most frequently, healing comes in the form of exorcism. Indeed, exorcism serves as the primary way both critics and much literature that includes Holocaust ghosts handle their ghosts. To reestablish a "healthy" lifestyle, the ghost must be eradicated. Exorcism as the primary model for how to handle Holocaust ghosts proves troubling for a few reasons. First, similarly to how Ozick includes descriptions of Rosa as a "madwoman," models that demand exorcism as the only viable solution to haunting posit haunting as an individual problem with a singular solution. As a "madwoman" the burden of the problem of how to live as a Holocaust survivor shifts entirely to Rosa's shoulders. Exorcism makes a similar ask of its supposed "victims." Eradicating the ghost ultimately falls upon the individual haunted. Second, because exorcism models shift the burden of responsibility to an individual, they obscure the possibility of identifying and examining the structures that produce haunting in the first place. Exorcism asks

us to see ghosts myopically and apolitically. It seeks a band-aid solution to a much larger problem.

It seems that Avery Gordon shares my fear about rushing to exorcise the spectrological. For Gordon in her highly influential monograph *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, haunting and ghosts are more complicated than we tend to give them credit for. Haunting challenges processes of oversimplification that tend to see dichotomies were spectrums exist. She writes that "*Ghostly Matters* is about haunting, a paradigmatic way in which life is more complicated than those of us who study it have usually granted" (Gordon 7). Instead of assuming that ghosts must be exorcised, that a Holocaust survivor cannot "heal" until they banish whatever haunts them, Gordon suggest that ghosts reveal ways in which larger historical and political violences shape how individuals express their sense of self.

In line with Gordon's groundbreaking retheorization of haunting, understanding how ghosts speak to a specific — and a specifically not disordered — subjectivity for a Holocaust survivor like Rosa allows us to examine ghosts without immediately demanding their exorcism in exchange for peace of mind. Confronting ghosts without the immediate intent to expel them "requires (or produces) a fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge" (Gordon 7). "Rosa" (as both the short story and the character) stages such a shift. Specifically, "Rosa" reveals how ghosts unsettle predetermined binaries and offers other alternatives to theorizing Rosa's subjectivity.

Haunted Theory

Psychoanalytic approaches ghosts in family strict ways. Specifically, much scholarship on Holocaust ghosts reads them as either entirely metaphorical figures or as symptoms of

psychological disturbance. With its roots in psychoanalysis, trauma theory tends to read ghosts as symptoms of mental illness, or, at the very least, as an unwelcome intrusion to be exorcised.

In “Ghosts in the Mirror: A Granddaughter of Holocaust Survivors Reflects the Faces of History,” Nirit Gradwohl Pisano describes the Holocaust itself as a ghost — one that haunts even the children and grandchildren of survivors. Pisano’s examination of Holocaust ghosts confronts an inability to know and heal. Her psychoanalytic approach therefore aligns her with trauma theorist Cathy Caruth. For Caruth, these hauntings serve as evidence of her theory of traumatic repetition. Freudian in its approach, Caruth’s monograph *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* argues that trauma survivors experience “the continual reappearance of a death [they have] not quite grasped” (38). Haunting poses a persistent problem for trauma survivors who continually confront a past that will not rest in peace.

According to Caruth, haunting figures mark an arresting complication in the study of Holocaust trauma: ghostly metaphors indicate a repetition of the past yet an inability to understand that past. As a consequence of this repetition impulse, Caruth argues, survivors struggle to heal and integrate their traumatic experience into a coherent narrative. However, Caruth’s psychoanalytic trauma theory indicates that this unintegrated trauma carries with it the potential to impact others. What she refers to as an “awakening” resembles the kind of fear of contagion that Zygmunt Bauman decries in “The Holocaust’s Life as a Ghost.” For Caruth, trauma can be transmitted to another individual through an encounter with the original individual’s “wounding.” In other words, trauma can be transferred to others in much the same way an airborne illness can: through exposure. Pisano too claims that this transmission of Holocaust trauma reflects not an appropriation of trauma but an instance of foreclosed mourning. This “unmourned suffering” is so great it affects even the grandchildren of survivors (Pisano

144). Though my examination of ghostly figures in writing about the Holocaust is not primarily concerned with the intergenerational transmission of trauma, Pisano's claim that these ghosts reflect a sense of incomplete or foreclosed mourning appears in many other arguments about ghosts and the Holocaust.

Indeed, for many scholars concerned with Holocaust hauntings, ghosts primarily represent this sense of foreclosed mourning. These ghosts, therefore, represent not only a trauma that hasn't been fully understood, but a mourning that hasn't been fully integrated into personal experience. Following this approach, ghosts remain outside of and apart from those haunted. They are manifestations of psychological disturbance and must be separated from the person they haunt. Emily Miller Budick's chapter in *The Cambridge History of Jewish American Literature*, "The Ghost of the Holocaust in the Construction of Jewish American Literature," makes such a claim. Using the language of haunting to expand on Caruth's concept of traumatic repetition, Budick argues that the ghosts that haunt Holocaust survivors reflect "the failure to mourn properly" (Budick 344). She attributes this failure to mourn properly to the "Holocaust-haunted, Holocaust-obsessed way that Jewish writers see the world" (349). Jewish writers, therefore, find themselves consumed by this historical trauma, a haunting that colors the way they see the world. Ultimately Budick imagines the ghosts in writing about the Holocaust as a persistent problem of both an inability to mourn and an obsession with past trauma.

In their influential work *The Shell and the Kernel*, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok consider the uniqueness of the individual instead of considering ghosts a kind of cultural call to action. In *The Shell and The Kernel,* they examine the "intergenerational phantom" in their theory of psychic concealment through the image of the crypt. For Abraham and Torok, the phantom is always a manifestation of the unconscious in response to intergenerational trauma:

"the phantom is therefore also a metapsychological fact: what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of other" (Abraham and Torok 171). Similarly to Caruth and Pisano, Abraham and Torok's work includes strong ties to Freud and psychoanalysis as a way of understanding trauma. The ghosts in these crypts represent secrets or trauma that have not been fully confronted (a development of Freud's theories of psychic suppression of trauma). These ghosts, therefore, point to what Abraham and Torok depict as an interrupted narrative. Cryptonomy, they argue, describes the deeply buried traumatic secrets that are often passed on unintentionally and nonverbally, i.e. in the form of the intergenerational phantom. Similarly to other critics mentioned here, Abraham and Torok call for the exorcism of these phantoms to open the crypt and liberate the individual.

Whereas Abraham and Torok (among others) approach haunting as a metaphor for individual psychological states, Magdalena Waligórska's article "Healing by Haunting: Jewish Ghosts in Contemporary Polish Literature," examines characters who appear as ghosts instead of the ghostly simply as an overarching metaphor. Despite this slight difference, Waligórska comes to familiar conclusions. She similarly theorizes that these figures serve as a confrontation with a traumatic past. The main difference between theorists like those previously mentioned and Waligórska is that for Waligórska, the failure to mourn properly also affects people outside of Jewish communities but who share shameful historical connections to the Holocaust. These Jewish ghosts haunt non-Jews to "assist them in dealing with their shameful past of anti-Jewish violence" and to encourage "Polish non-Jews to remember the dead" (209, 213). In this case, Jewish ghosts bear the responsibility for not only tending to their own communities, but also for absolving external communities from their guilt.

As evidenced in this wide array of diverse scholars and critical interpretations of Holocaust hauntings, the afterlife of the Holocaust remains an unsettled question. Despite the various interpretations of these ghosts, however, these critics share a crucial point of intersection; they each, either explicitly or implicitly, subscribe to a model in which the ghost must be exorcised because it signals psychological disturbance for those it haunts. For Budick, Oliver Levin (a character in the novel *The Golems of Gotham* – to be discussed in Chapter Three of this project) can only begin to heal or at the very least come to terms with the past when his daughter "finally exorcises the Holocaust ghosts of the past" (354). In her monograph *Haunting Encounters: The Ethics of Reading Across Boundaries of Difference*, Joanne Lipson Freed writes that haunted texts "stage not only hauntings, but also exorcisms, both for their characters and their readers" (5). The exorcism, therefore, is not only for the trauma survivor, but also for the witness and serves as a way to both heal, but also to expel a painful past.

According to Waligórska, exorcising Jewish ghosts ultimately makes possible a sense of resolution. She claims that "haunting becomes, therefore, a form of retributive or restorative justice, which allows a kind of closure" (216). Crucially, this closure, and by extension, "coming to terms with the traumatic past" can take place only "*in the form of a symbolic exorcism*" (216, original emphasis). The ghost serves as a symbol for other psychological issues. Haunting, then, marks an anthropomorphized "madness" that can only be "cured" through a confrontation with and exorcism of those same ghosts. Examining the critical discussion surrounding ghosts and trauma illustrates how the Holocaust often appears as a haunted subject, one where past trauma can apparently only transform into healing by exorcising its ghosts.

The Drive to Diagnose

Subscribing to exorcism models, however, runs the risk of continuing to pathologize the presence of Holocaust ghosts. The narrative arc demanded by exorcism adheres to what Arthur W. Frank calls a "restitution narrative." Though Frank's monograph, *The Wounded Storyteller*, examines illness narratives mainly with respect to physical ailments like cancer, his definition of the generic expectations of the illness narrative in general offers a useful conceptual foothold for understanding the connection between ghosts and pathology. For Frank, the restitution narrative serves as the "model" illness narrative because it reflects an ill person's journey back to "normal" health (Frank 78). In assuming ghosts represent an "illness" (a "madness"), exorcism narratives can only ever restore a person to a "healthy" or "normal" baseline by riding the individual of the illness (the ghost). By considering ghosts merely as symbolic figures of foreclosed mourning and trauma that must eventually succumb to exorcism, we miss how else these ghosts function for those they haunt and run the risk of pathologizing figures like Rosa.

As mentioned briefly in this chapter's introduction, other characters consistently consider Rosa "mad," in large part because of her seeming inability to integrate her Holocaust trauma that takes the form of Magda's ghost. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Stella, Rosa's adopted niece who survived the concentration camp with her, is one of the main characters who categorizes Rosa as "mad." After her impulsive move to Miami, Rosa realizes she forgot Magda's shawl and asks Stella to send it to her. Recalling that in the earlier story of the novella the apparently magical shawl sustained Magda while in the concentration camp until Stella stole it, Magda's obsession with her lost daughter's shawl seems fairly unremarkable. Yet, Stella disapproves of Rosa's attachment to the shawl and resists forwarding it to her. Once the package finally arrives, Rosa explains how "Stella did not want her to have Magda's shawl all the time; she had such funny names for having it — trauma, fetish, God knows what" (*The Shawl* 31). Rosa continues,

saying that "Stella took psychology courses at the New School at night" (*The Shawl* 31).[2] Ozick immediately associates Stella's interpretations of the shawl as not only a fetishistic object connected to Rosa's Holocaust trauma (but curiously not her own), but also a particular interpretation of trauma as seen through a psychological lens. Stella's assessment of the shawl as "trauma" and her enrollment in the New School for psychology once again assume that Rosa is "mad" because she is haunted. For Stella, Rosa's desire to have her murdered daughter's shawl represents a manifestation of trauma that renders Rosa psychologically abnormal.

Stella makes her pathologization of Rosa clear in her letter accompanying the shawl. In a tone that drips with a mixture of resignation and frustration, Stella writes, "All right, I've done it. Been to the post office and mailed it. Your *idol* is on its way […] You make yourself *crazy*, everyone thinks you're a *crazy woman* […] What a scene, disgusting! You'll open the box and take it out and cry, and you'll kiss it like a *crazy person*" (*The Shawl* 31, emphasis mine). Stella makes some important rhetorical moves in this letter. She implies that Rosa's need for the shawl (and by extension her refusal to let go of what Stella perceives as a decidedly past trauma) is what drives Rosa "crazy." When Stella writes, "You make yourself crazy," she blames Rosa for making herself mad, a rhetorical shift that pathologizes and individualizes Rosa's response to surviving the Holocaust. In other words, Rosa's expression of a haunted post-Holocaust subjectivity, arises from Rosa herself — not the historical events she survived — and manifests as uniquely pathological. After all, Stella does not smash up a shop and move to Miami. Lastly, Stella repeatedly refers to Rosa as a "crazy woman/person." In this rhetorical gesture of the letter, Stella categorizes Rosa's whole person, her entire subjectivity, as disordered. It is not just

[2] It is useful to note that in the aftermath of World War II the New School served as a refuge for German Jewish intellectuals who had escaped Nazism.

Rosa's actions — her smashing of the store, her move, her "obsession" with Magda's shawl — that are "crazy," but Rosa herself.

At the same time that Rosa receives Stella's letter, she also receives another letter that also pathologizes her, albeit it under the guise of academic study. From the "DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL SOCIAL PATHOLOGY" at the University of Kansas-Iowa, Dr. James W. Tree Ph.D. writes to Rosa with the hopes of exploring a new scholarly interest of his: the study of survivors and repressed animation (*The Shawl* 35). Immediately, the letter assumes a pathological nature to Rosa's subjectivity since it arrives from an office of "clinical social pathology." From the outset, then, Dr. Tree pigeonholes Rosa as, to at least some degree, both clinical and pathological.

Rosa balks at Dr. Tree's desire to "observe survivor syndroming" (*The Shawl* 38). Indeed, she finds Dr. Tree's very use of the blanket term "survivor" insulting: "Consider also the special word they used: *survivor*. Something new. As long as they didn't have to say *human being* […] Who made up these words, parasites on the throat of suffering" (*The Shawl* 36-37, original emphasis). Frustrated with other's attempts to describe her subjectivity as a pathology and not as one expression of many, Rosa immediately turns to Magda to sooth her anger. Writing her a letter, Rosa adopts the same systems of communication used by both Stella and Dr. Tree in the previous scene. Rosa therefore uses the same manner of communication that only moments earlier reduced her to a "crazy woman" and a "survivor." Rosa describes writing to Magda as "the deepest pleasure, home bliss, to speak in our own language" (*The Shawl* 40). This letter, which also includes personal memories of her mother and father before the Holocaust, allows Rosa to feel at home and comfortable. Rosa's letter to the ghost of her dead daughter therefore

refuses the previous letters' pathologizing impulses and uses the same medium to reassert her individual expression of subjectivity.

Despite Rosa's clear exasperation at others' attempts to define her expression of identity, some have continued to consider Rosa simply as a "crazy woman." While few call Rosa "crazy" outright, scholars have continued to examine her as a case study for analyzing the psychological aftermath of the Holocaust. The impulse to diagnose forces narratives like Ozick's into the specific genre of an illness narrative, of which the medical narrative takes center stage (Frank 5). For example, Gustavo Sánchez Canales uses Rosa solely to diagnose her with PTSD. In his article "'Prisoners Gradually Came to Buddhist Positions': The Presence of PTSD Symptoms in Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*," Canales argues that there is "one aspect [of the novella] that has been disregarded so far: the presence of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms in Rosa, an illness to which Professor James W. Tree refers to in the story as 'Repressed Animation'" (Canales 30). Canales proceeds to interpret Rosa's various actions in the story as symptoms of PTSD in a way that reinforces certain binary approaches to expressions of subjectivity. At one point, he claims that Rosa's "inability to socialize with others in a *natural* way" clearly indicates Rosa's apparently disordered sense of self after surviving the Holocaust (Canales 35, emphasis mine). Canales's word choice emphasizes how some expressions of identity are not considered "natural" and are therefore pathological and should be healed (available only through exorcism).

Additionally, Canales falls into the all too familiar trap of considering ghosts as purely metaphorical figures. Instead of considering Magda as an actual presence in the novella, Canales remarks that Rosa's continual conjuring of her murdered daughter merely reflects the concept of traumatic repetition, a common symptom of PTSD. Witnessing her murder, he rightly concludes,

represents “Rosa’s most traumatic experience in the camp” (Canales 31). However, her response to this experience is what primarily interests Canales, arguing that “Her persistent reexperiencing of this event is shown in her daily repetition of Magda’s life and death. The reader realizes that Magda has become an obsession, an *idée fixe* for Rosa, for whom time stopped about forty years ago” (Canales 31, original emphasis). This argument asserts that Magda’s ghost only represents Rosa’s own obsessions. The ghost, therefore, remains relegated to the realm of the metaphorical and, most importantly, the psychologically pathological. Canales uses Rosa’s apparent obsession with Magda’s ghost (which Canales assumes to be purely a figment of her imagination that functions primarily as a symptom of her PTSD) to categorize Rosa as both mentally and psychologically unstable. Ghosts, for Canales’s argument, can only mean madness.

Part of what leads to Canales’s diagnosis stems from current ways of theorizing Holocaust trauma that consider trauma unspeakable. Canales, adhering to accepted theories of Holocaust trauma’s unrepresentability, perpetuates a theoretical approach predicated on reading into survivor silences — the consequences of which result in unintentional deafness on the part of the scholar. Additionally, this theoretical approach can uphold certain binary ways of thinking (which will be explained in more depth in the following section). If the Holocaust is either unspeakable or it isn’t, then the complicated middle ground between these two poles disappears. It is this erasure of the liminal that leads to an association between apparent silences and psychological “disorder.” Essentially, though Rosa clearly resists Dr. Tree’s (and by extension Canales’s) pathologization, theories connecting Rosa’s specific expression of subjectivity with mental illness can consider everything she does under the psychological umbrella of a pathological diagnosis. Pathology has a way of, once accepted, consuming every action as evidence of its own presence. In a strange form of circular reasoning, once someone receives a

diagnosis, it renders every aspect of that individual evidentiary of that diagnosis. Where pathology and the study of Holocaust trauma reinforce each other lies in their purported ability to understand the unspoken aspects of an individual's experience.

Canales concludes his argument with what was surely thought to be a fairly optimistic gesture. Looking to Magda's disappearance from the narrative, he writes that "Probably, at this point, as Magda — that is, the traumatic haunting past — goes away, Persky seems to approach. If this is so, a less grim future might be awaiting Rosa at her journey's end" (Canales 37). But what exactly is the end of Rosa's journey and who decided what the ending was supposed to look like? Considering Rosa's "journey" as one wholly directed towards reasserting a sense of "natural" psychological and subjective expression only serves to re-entrench discussions of both ghosts and Rosa's expression of subjectivity as a Holocaust survivor in narratives of psychological healing. Ultimately, Canales's diagnostic reading of Rosa reinforces the common claim that ghosts must eventually be exorcised, a claim that misses how else ghosts function for Holocaust survivors and misreads how Rosa expresses her subjectivity.

Rosa as Ghost

Moving away from psychological explanations for both Holocaust ghosts and expressions of Holocaust subjectivity, "Rosa" and its multiple forms of haunting offers other ways of theorizing Holocaust survivor subject position. Though Magda serves as the most easily recognizable version of a Holocaust ghost in "Rosa," Ozick continually describes Rosa as occupying a liminality. This liminality makes Rosa herself ghostly. Ozick's characterization of Rosa as both a haunted and haunting figure unsettles long-entrenched binaries like sane/mad, healthy/pathological, alive/dead, and speakable/unspeakable. These binaries contribute to the pathologization of certain subject positions. While the spectral cannot overturn these dichotomies

entirely, it does examine the space between them. In other words, approaching ghosts and Rosa's subjectivity from a theoretical grounding that refuses exorcism as the only acceptable solution breaks away from pervasive either/or approaches and forces us to examine the slash between the two. Haunting's liminality produces a freedom of subjective expression, not a trapped one.

To avoid the tendency towards pathologization when analyzing Holocaust survivors' subjectivities, it's prudent to look to other academic disciplines that do not rely so heavily on psychological foundations. For this reason, I turn to political science and philosophy to examine the other potential forms of expression Rosa has. Rosa's subject position represents an interstitial space, one that Jacques Rancière and Giorgio Agamben's theories of social structure help illustrate. In his theory of social and political structure in *Disagreement*, Rancière describes how "the city" is based upon two "parts," the Part and "those who have no part" (9). The distinction between these two parts rests on the difference between speech and noise. On the one hand, the Part can speak. That is, the Part can speak in such a way that it is legible within the dominant discourse. On the other hand, the Part With No Part cannot speak, at least not in the same way. The Part speaks legibly but the Part With No Part can only make noise. The Part With No Part cannot account for their experience.

Rancière's attention to the dichotomy between speech and noise proves especially important for understanding a key tenet that contributes to the pathologization of Rosa's subjectivity: the way other characters doubt her speech. Rancière associates speech with the Part and noise with the Part With No Part. This association also aligns with the connection between the "healthy" and the "pathological." Healthy individuals can speak, but those suffering from some psychological wounding struggle, according to Rancière, to make meaning through speech. However, this claim to speech becomes especially fraught when discussing the Holocaust. A

central theoretical tenet of Holocaust studies claims that the Holocaust itself, because of its traumatic nature, is unspeakable. Holocaust survivors therefore exist in the tension between the two poles of speakable/unspeakable.

Many famous Holocaust scholars, including Berel Lang, Jean Améry, Elie Wiesel, and many more (of whom Améry and Wiesel are both survivors) claim the Holocaust resists linguistic representation almost entirely. What can be described fails to accurately depict the true horrors of the Nazi atrocities. Indeed, Primo Levi argues that even the survivors are not able to truly recount the full extent of their Holocaust experience. In *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Agamben quotes Primo Levi's famous dictum that "we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses" (Levi qtd. in Agamben 33). Levi's theory argues that only the dead can speak to the true horrors of the Holocaust, yet in a tragic twist of irony, these "true witnesses" are destined to remain silenced by the grave. With this pronouncement, the inclusion of Holocaust victims that return as ghosts seems like a clear attempt to bridge this gap. With ghosts offering so much potential to understand some survivors' subjectivities, it seems odd that existing Holocaust scholarship on ghosts has all but relegated them to representing unmourned experiences and traumatic repetitions.

These Holocaust ghosts often serve as representations about what is ultimately considered unspeakable. The Holocaust's apparent unspeakability places survivors on the side of the binary aligned with Rancière's "noise," and psychology's "pathology." This alignment creates a troubling situation for Rosa. On the one hand, if she can speak in a way that others will understand she is considered healthy. On the other hand, these forms of speech cannot, according to the claim that the Holocaust cannot be adequately represented, express her Holocaust experience. Rosa then finds herself caught in the crosshairs of these two dueling claims. Indeed,

Rosa expresses her frustration at this paradox in her first conversation with Simon Persky, the flirty septuagenarian she meets at the Laundromat. After discovering they share a homeland in Poland, Rosa reacts much differently than Persky. Though Persky "could tell you the whole story of [his] life," Rosa refuses to engage (*The Shawl* 22). In lieu of her life story, Rosa simply states that "Your Warsaw isn't my Warsaw" (*The Shawl* 22). Though he emigrated from Warsaw, Persky left in 1920. The crucial difference between these two characters, between Persky's loquaciousness and Rosa's reticence, proves Rosa's Holocaust history and Persky's lack thereof.

However, Rosa's refusal to discuss her Holocaust experience with Persky stems from a conviction that others will misunderstand her, not an inability to communicate. Rosa complains multiple times that "[w]hatever [she] would say, you would be deaf […] Whatever [she] explained to them they didn't understand" (*The Shawl* 27). In other words, even when Rosa does attempt to discuss her Holocaust experience, she runs into the problem of misunderstanding and silencing. Rosa can engage in speech; other people simply cannot comprehend her experience. Others simply interpret it as noise and then diagnosis Rosa pathological because she makes noise not speech.

Rosa therefore reveals the inadequacy of current perceptual models for discussing the apparently "unspeakable." Jessica Lang argues for a reading practice that accommodates the way the Holocaust affects perception in her book *Textual Silence: Unreadability and the Holocaust*. She writes about "a silence that challenges the norms of reading" (3). Contrary to previous readings of what Lang refers to as "textual silence" that perceive silence as a lack or an inability to communicate, Lang reminds us how "meaning derived from the absence of meaning is an essential component of witnessing" (11). In a reading of Ozick's fiction, Lang notes that "the language of imagery and the language of silence are both necessary, even as they work in

opposition to each other" (140). Inherent to the work produced about the Holocaust, then, lies a liminal space between silence and speech. Ghosts help explain this space and the space of Rosa's expression of subjectivity as a Holocaust survivor.

An element of the spectral haunts Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, from which Rancière draws support for his own theorizing in *Disagreement*. For Agamben, the Demos represents the Part and Homo Sacer represents the Part With No Part. As Agamben and Rancière make clear, the Part or the Demos can only exist through the exclusion of the Part With No Part or the Homo Sacer. The Homo Sacer represents a part that "is included solely through its exclusion" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer* 18). The Demos/the Part can only begin to differentiate itself from the Homo Sacer/the Part With No Part by first including them and then using this other part to push against. Before moments of violence, the subject exists as a part of the Demos. This social structure looks like:

Figure 1

However, in order to justify the extreme violence against Jews (and many others) during the Holocaust, the Nazis catapulted their victims from the realm of the Demos to that of the Homo Sacer through an extreme instance of sovereign violence. The mass murder of a part of the Demos would be unacceptable. It breaks every law. The mass murder of people perceived as outside the Demos, however, does not upset the standing social order and sovereign rule. In fact, it seems to uphold it by reinforcing the differential value that social structure thrives on because it enacts the exclusionary force that allows the Part to maintain social coherency amidst increasing heterogeneity. Agamben characterizes the sphere of the Homo Sacer as a place of "abandoned life," or "*life that may be killed and not sacrificed*" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer* 83, original emphasis). We may consider this act of being forcibly thrust into the sphere of the Homo Sacer as a process of dehumanization and countless texts about the Holocaust, both critical and literary, attest to this. During violence the individual shifts from belonging to the Part to existing in the Part With No Part, a move that looks like:

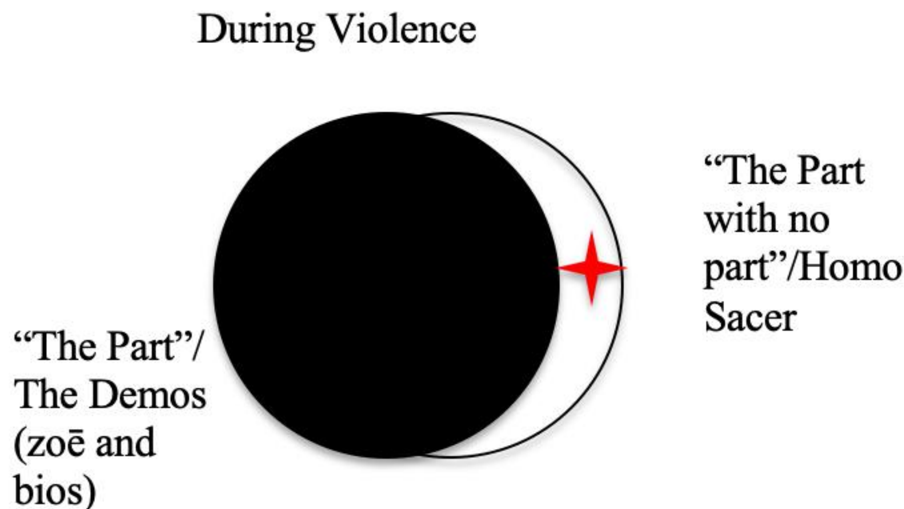

Figure 2

When describing her forced relocation to the Warsaw Ghetto, Rosa describes a scene that captures this social movement. In a conversation with Magda, Rosa describes the spatial organization of Warsaw and the liminality she found herself occupying as a Jew forced into the Ghetto. Specifically, Rosa explains the tramcar and how the tramcar continued to run through the Ghetto yet only catered to "citizens." Rosa exclaims: "When I told about the tramcar, no one ever understood it ran on tracks! Everybody always thought of buses. Well they couldn't get rid of the overhead electric wire, could they? The point is they couldn't reroute the whole tram system; so, you know, they didn't. The tramcar came right through the middle of the Ghetto" (*The Shawl* 67-68). Despite their clear confrontation with the violence of Nazism's exclusion of Jews (and other "undesirables"), Polish citizens could continue on their way — straight through the Ghetto itself — because, as Rosa explains, "no one regarded us as Poles anymore" (*The Shawl* 68).

"The most astounding thing," Rosa continues, "was that the most ordinary streetcar, bumping along on the most ordinary trolley tracks, and carrying the most ordinary citizens going from one section of Warsaw to another, ran straight into our place of misery" (*The Shawl* 68). Rosa outlines the realities of both Agamben's and Rancière's political theories and hints at the association between the various binaries at work. The repetition of the word "ordinary" to describe the social aspects Rosa no longer has access to indicates that Rosa now finds herself peripheral to the ordinary. Ordinary now resides on the same side as "normal" and "healthy," whereas the extra-ordinary aligns with the "abnormal" and the "pathological." Essentially, in noticing the ordinariness about the tram to which she no longer has access, Rosa reveals how this binary approach to social structures transports her into the realm of the pathological.

The peripheral also relates to the ghostly in important ways in that the peripheral exists beyond the ordinary and the natural. Jacek Partyka explains how the "exceptional character of this transit line lies in the fact that it trespasses the forbidden area from which a special permit is required" (Partyka 93). His language describing this tram, however, reveals how the tramcar evokes the spectral: "A means of public transport arrives from *beyond*, from the other world" (Partyka 93, original emphasis). Though his word choice of "the other world" refers to the social world outside the Ghetto (the Part or the Demos), it also reveals the spectral undertones of this scene. Rosa is now firmly located in "the other world."

Understanding where survivors stand after violence represents a trickier move. Are they still part of Homo Sacer? Clearly not because they have been accounted for, something that indicates their inclusion in the Demos; they are no longer abandoned. But does this mean they are once again included in the Demos? Again, it is unclear. In fact, the very theories that argue the inexpressibility of trauma indicate that survivors' speech is not wholly recognized as such, which would mean a Holocaust survivor like Rosa is not entirely a speaking subject as illustrated by Rancière. If survivors are neither a part of the Demos nor abandoned to the Homo Sacer, then they must dwell in an interstitial space between the two. Rosa, as a Holocaust survivor, therefore, occupies a unique subject position that oscillates between these two poles.

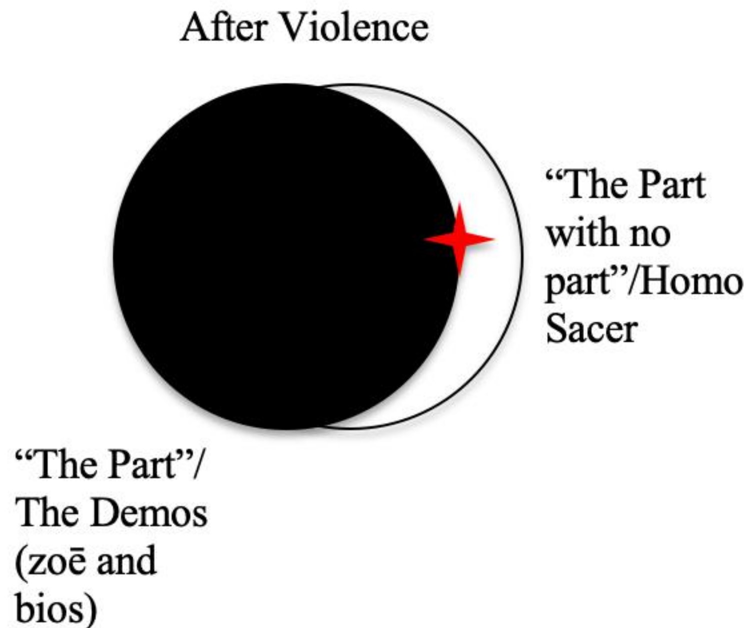

Figure 3

One telling example of Rosa's liminality occurs when Rosa returns home from her initial encounter with Persky in the laundromat. Walking into the lobby of her apartment building, Rosa observes her fellow occupants, but remains separated from them. She notes that "[i]t was real and it was not real. Shadows on a wall; the shadow stirred but you could not penetrate the wall. The guests were detached; they had detached themselves" (*The Shawl* 29). This scene demonstrates Rosa negotiating a kind of liminality. "It was real and it was not real" speaks to the way the Rosa can identify the space between the real and the "not real." However, instead of trying to locate a subjectivity on either side of these poles, instead of saying one expression of subjectivity is "real" and one isn't, Rosa locates herself precisely in the space between the two. In other words, Rosa exists as a kind of ghost herself, and unsettles the dichotomy that would deny one expression a claim to "reality."

Additionally, her insistence on calling her apartment a "hotel" and the other inhabitants "guests" reflects her sense of dislocation. This refusal to see her own apartment as a permanent dwelling place also locates this space in the liminal because a hotel stay implies a short duration. People stay in hotel when they take trips or vacations, but these "guests" (including Rosa) *live* here. Rosa's sense of never feeling fully at home anywhere suggests that her "home" is an unsettled place; home, for Rosa, cannot be strictly identified anywhere. It is perhaps even more telling that she notices the unreality of the hotel — the shadows on the wall — in the lobby itself. The lobby represents a transitory space. No one stays in the lobby. And yet, this is where Rosa observes the other "guests" as detached figures. Their liminality emerges purely from the fact that ghosts exist in an in-between space between life and death.

Against Forgetting: Haunting as Remembering

The question arises, though, of why Stella, who also survived the camps with Rosa, does not confront the same pathologization as Rosa. Quite simply, Stella represents the consequences of a "successful" exorcism. Because of this successful exorcism, Stella reintegrates into the Demos quite smoothly. In return for her assimilation back into the Demos, Stella engages in a necessary forgetting. Rosa, angry with Stella for this forgetting, remarks that "[e]ven Stella, who *can* remember, refuses […] She has a strain of dementia" (41). Rosa balks at such forgetting because it rejects the experience entirely. In order to return to the Demos, Stella negates her own past confrontations with political violence. Stella enters into the narrative determined legible by the Demos, a narrative that either refuses to accommodate others' subjectivities or otherwise rejects these expressions as mere noise.

Ozick's depictions of these two characters through their grammar makes this distinction between Stella and Rosa apparent. While Stella adheres to traditionally "correct" grammatical

structures when she speaks and writes, Rosa often speaks in non sequiturs and fragments. Recalling a woman she sees riding on the tram through the Warsaw Ghetto, Rosa says, "in this place now I am like the woman who held the lettuce in the tramcar" (*The Shawl* 69). When she identifies with the woman with the lettuce, Rosa speaks mostly in sentence fragments. Though her statements, grammatically, are coherent (i.e. they take the form of speech and not simply noise), they also refuse to adhere to conventional grammar rules. Rosa's statements, at this juncture, take the form of a speech-noise hybrid. In other words, through they're very grammatical construction, Rosa's statements about her oscillating subject potion find themselves occupying an in-between space.

Recalling that Rancière's differentiation between the Part and the Part With No Part relies on The Part's ability to speak and The Part With No Part's inability to make anything other than noise, the grammatical structure for Rosa takes on added significance. Neither wholly speech nor wholly noise, Rosa speaks in comprehensible fragments that in turn upset expectations about what does and does not qualify as "acceptable" forms of expression. Because Ozick's limited omniscient narrator follows Rosa throughout the story, readers understand what Rosa's non sequiturs and fragments refer to. Rosa's grammatical breakages refuse to follow structures that pathologize her speech patterns.

These expectations extend to genre expectations as well, especially when discussing "trauma" narratives. In his article "Interpreting Literary Testimony: A Preface to Rereading Holocaust Diaries and Memoirs," James E. Young observes that "upon entering narrative, violent events necessarily reenter the continuum, are totalized by it, and thus lose their violent quality" (Young 404). Essentially, reintegrating into the Demos requires a reentrance into a narrative that forces a rupture into a recognizable narrative of closure. Freed makes the

distinction between “trauma narratives” and “healing narratives”: “the primary difference between narratives that reproduce trauma and narratives that heal it can be seen as a difference in form: the language of trauma is disjointed, interruptive, and repetitive, whereas a healing narrative is linear and integral” (Freed 79). Like Young, Freed describes a model that requires trauma survivors to forget in order to be healed. The ghosts disappear in these narratives. Critics stage a successful exorcism — for reintegration into a pathologizing discourse.

Both of these models recreate Frank’s “restitution narrative,” which follows a basic plot pattern of health, illness, return to health (Frank 77). If we continue to consider ghosts problems, then their exorcism represents this “return to health.” As Frank points out, this preference for the restitution model shapes the way we imagine any kind of illness in the first place. Instead of allowing for the possibility to imagine subjectivities otherwise, restitution models like this refuse to consider any expression of subjectivity that differs from the original “healthy” version.

This “healthy” expression of subjectivity demands a kind of forgetting that Rosa refuses to participate in. Because she refuses to participate, Rosa occupies a unique subject position. While many critics argue in support of this exorcism, it predicates itself on an erasure of self, not a kind of healing. Stella forgets. Rosa remembers; and because she remembers she perpetually occupies a liminal space in which she oscillates between multiple, seemingly mutually exclusive and dichotomous ways of seeing like speech/noise, dead/alive, and pathological/healthy. Recalling the scene in the “hotel lobby,” she alone recognizes the shadows on the wall, the unreality of these guests in this space. While all the guests “were forgetting their grandchildren, their aging children,” Rosa holds tight to her own daughter despite her death (Ozick 29). Rosa cannot allow herself to forget. In other words, to return to the Demos as a “healthy” individual,

Rosa would need to disown her own past (and by extension adhere to a specific expression of subjectivity), to forget her own child just as these other guests and Stella are doing.

Haunting the Future

Despite its resistance to exorcism, "Rosa" does indeed seem to perform one of its own. When Persky comes to visit Rosa at the novella's conclusion, Magda disappears. As Rosa waits for Persky to come up the elevator, she remarks that "Magda was not there. Shy, she ran from Persky. Magda was away" (70). Yet, "away" does not imply the same meaning as "gone." By saying that "Magda was away," Rosa indicates that this disappearance is not a permanent absence. Additionally, unlike other exorcisms in which someone must drive the ghost away, Magda leaves of her own accord. Though desired by her mother, Magda makes her own decision to go away.

Magda's exorcism is therefore incomplete, which means that Magda's disappearance cannot represent the sought-after closure for Rosa put forth in psychoanalytic approaches. If anything, she dreads the disappearance of her daughter's ghost. Magda's disappearance from the narrative, then, introduces a complication to how we imagine haunted Holocaust narratives. Clearly, simple exorcism cannot solve Rosa's "ghost problem." In fact, Rosa does not consider her haunting a problem at all. In this sense, exorcism models need to take a set back and reconsider what it is exactly that they desire. If excising the ghost does not "heal" Rosa, then why do we continue to treat exorcism as a panacea for other external problems.

Instead of immediately considering ghosts as problems, "Rosa" illustrates how to start to imagine ghosts as solutions. "Rosa" actively rejects models that pathologize its protagonist. After receiving Dr. Tree's letter Rosa flies into a rage, burning the letter and calling Dr. Tree and his work a "Disease!" (*The Shawl* 38). This passage represents an important reversal of the

application of pathological diagnoses. Whereas Dr. Tree wishes to study Rosa because he perceives her as psychologically disordered because she is a Holocaust survivor, Rosa considers Dr. Tree's "parasitic" desires evidence of his own disease. Dr. Tree represents a two-fold symbol of disease: 1) his work, which Rosa calls an "excitement over other people's suffering," is a disease, but 2) because of the ambiguity of the referent of "Disease!" indicates that Dr. Tree is himself the disease (*The Shawl* 36). Dr. Tree serves as a synecdoche for psychoanalysis and its pathologizing tendencies. Clearly, then, "Rosa" works to unsettle the very concept of disorder as applied to Holocaust survivors and those who study them.

While Rosa overtly criticizes academic practices that seek only to diagnose survivors with certain ailments (academic articles whose sole purpose is to examine the presence of PTSD in Rosa, for example), her interactions with Magda demonstrate how Rosa imagines other possibilities besides the strict binaries with which others attempt to define her. Aside from her palpable disdain for what she considers Dr. Tree's invasive inquiry, Rosa's response to his letter marks another important moment. Immediately after destroying Dr. Tree's letter, Rosa takes up the pen and writes to Magda. Crucially, Rosa uses this letter to reimagine Magda's ghost as something other than the murdered infant seen at the conclusion of "The Shawl." Rosa "wrote the first letter of the day to her daughter, her healthy daughter who suffered neither from thready pulse nor from anemia" (*The Shawl* 39). Though imagining her daughter as a healthy individual may seem to play directly into readings that pathologize Rosa by considering this depiction a delusion of sorts, this ability to imagine other forms of being for her daughter illuminates Rosa's ability to accept other forms of subjectivity besides the binary poles of normal/abnormal.

Rosa engages in these reimaginations of Magda throughout the story. When Magda appears towards the story's conclusion, Rosa eager awaits to see "what age Magda was going to

be" (*The Shawl* 64). After she materializes, Rosa remarks, "how nice, a girl of sixteen" (*The Shawl* 64). Rosa's varying depictions of Magda (which appear throughout the short story) demonstrate Rosa's flexibility at accepting other expressions of self without immediately marking them as disordered. The fact that Rosa *re*imagines Magda at various points in the short story positions ghosts as uniquely well-suited for disrupting binary ways of approaching subjectivity. Indeed, ghosts prove especially poignant to a discussion about imagining other manifestations of subjectivity after the Holocaust precisely because ghosts themselves are so difficult to definitively categorize. Rosa's connection to Magda's ghost and her ability to reimagine Magda's ghost at different temporal states reveals exactly why ghosts should impact how we theorize subjects after the Holocaust; they reveal an expression of identity that allows for flexible renegotiations.

In this instance haunting cannot represent the foreclosed morning that so many other scholars have assumed it means. Rosa's haunting, in its temporal dynamism, expresses not a sense of being trapped in the moment of her daughter's death, but a complex negotiation of what those other futures might have looked like. Denied the possibility of seeing her daughter grow up, Rosa creates haunted futurities for herself and Magda. According to Debra Ferreday and Adi Kuntsman, haunted futurities give us a glimpse of the future, but "unlike the ghost of the past, who is often doomed to repeat the same actions and gestures, the future ghost in unpredictable; its radical potential lies in its instability" (Ferreday and Kuntsman 7). Magda's apparent instability, her ability to transform into a girl of any age and to travel with her mother to different locations, gives her a potential to be something besides a constant repetition of a traumatic moment. In fact, these moments in which Rosa reimagines her daughter provide her with a sense

of optimism; *this is what she could have been*. These different iterations therefore reflect an opening of possibilities, not their foreclosure.

Recognizing these haunted futurities first requires changing the methodology through which we examine ghosts. While I have already discussed the potential pitfalls of exorcism models at length, Ferreday and Kuntsman offer a useful strategy for moving beyond exorcism: "Traditional haunting narratives ask what is to be done, in order to lay the ghost to rest. A better question might be: how do we live with our ghosts? How do we move towards futures *with* those ghosts, without erasing their existence, but equally, without allowing them to determine what is to come?" (Ferreday and Kuntsman 10). "Rosa" lives with ghosts. Part of what it means to live with ghosts involves letting ghosts be ghosts. Models that pathologize refuse to accept ghosts as they are, seeking always to push them away or alter them in the name of "cure."

The haunted futurities that "Rosa" presents protect a future that can take any shape. Just as Rosa reimagines different future potentials for Magda, Ozick's ambiguous ending leaves space open for Rosa to determine different futures as well. Ozick does not reveal what that future might look like for Rosa: Magda will return and Rosa will continue to seek her. But Rosa will not allow an external disciplinary force to determine her sense of subjectivity and what her future entails. "What is at stake in haunting," write Ferreday and Kuntsman, "is *how* we think about futurity, and how this structures the kinds of futures that we make possible" (Ferreday and Kuntsman 8). While these futures might not be better than their pasts or presents (Ferreday and Kuntsman make clear that the radical potential of haunting does not equate to a "better" future), these futures remain open. Canales therefore rightfully asserts that "Rosa" ends optimistically, though not for the reason he proclaims. The optimism found in "Rosa"'s conclusion lies in the fact that the ghosts remain, and with them their reimaginations of future potentiality.

CHAPTER TWO

GHOSTS IN THE ARCHIVE: POSSESSION AND THE (UN)MAKING OF THE BLACK ARCHIVE IN ERNA BRODBER'S *LOUISIANA*

Erna Brodber's novel *Louisiana* confronts the politics of the Archive and redefines what an archive can look like for voices living in the aftermath of violence. *Louisiana* opens with a fictional letter from the editor of "The Black World Press," which introduces Ella Townsend and her found manuscript that the novel positions itself as. This letter explains how sometime in 1936, Broder's protagonist Ella Townsend travels to St. Mary, Louisiana to complete a WPA (Workers Progress Administration) archival project for Columbia University. Almost immediately Ella's project runs into complications. These complications reveal the failure of the archive as conceived by the WPA project's goals and by Columbia's academic expectations. These academic and political conceptions of the archive fail to make space for other voices and fail to acknowledge the violence that determines how these voices can be heard in the first place. In essence, *Louisiana* critiques the Archive's epistemological power over historical representation. *Louisiana*, in confronting the Archive's shortcomings, imaginatively creates opportunities to redesign what an archive is capable of.

Brodber's critique aligns with Ann Laura Stoler's methodological approach of analyzing "archiving-as-process rather than archives-as-things" (20). In her monograph, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Stoler explains that archives represent "condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than skewed and biased sources" (20). In other words, while archives can and do function as literal repositories of historical documents, examining the practices that create these physical locations and collections in the first place reveals the ways in which these methods continue to exclude certain histories. What

institutional practices determine archival legibility or illegibility? Most importantly, what practices does *Louisiana* unsettle and what new forms of archival imagination does it engender through its inclusion of ghostly possession?

Louisiana and the Archive

In an interaction with her parents' lawyer, Ella experiences the violence of the Archive first-hand. Ella's parents, embarrassed by her "change" after her possession, pay their lawyer Mr. Lukas to expunge Ella from the "official" record. Upon entering Mr. Lukas's office and after his palpable disdain for "what" she now is, Ella quickly intuits the reason for her legal summons: "I knew then — he didn't have to tell me — that there was no record of a missing recording machine at Columbia. Through him my parents had somehow paid for that first-edition-and-difficult-to-replace gadget and had paid off whatever else was necessary to expunge me and my history from their records […] I could weep for distorted history" (Brodber 134). According to these altered records, Ella has ceased to exist. This scene therefore creates a situation in which Ella confronts the very archival and epistemic systems for which she was once an agent and which have now expelled her from the record entirely.

Louisiana uses haunting — specifically possession — to stage such a confrontation with the archive. The archive represents simultaneously a kind of sepulcher and a form of communion. As many scholars have discussed, the archive is both a resting place for the dead (as they are contained within their documental debris) and a way of bringing these dead back to life through the documents' interaction. The archive is filled with ghosts. In his chapter "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," Achille Mbembe writes that "[a]rchiving is a kind of internment, laying something in a coffin, if not to rest, then at least to consign elements of that life which could not be destroyed purely and simply" (Mbembe 22). For Mbembe, once a document

becomes "archivable" it enters its own grave. Mbembe argues that the archive exercises not resurrectory powers but disciplinary (in a Foucauldian sense): "The function of the archive is to thwart the dispersion of these traces [of the deceased] and the possibility, always there, that left to themselves, they might eventually acquire a life of their own. Fundamentally, the dead should be formally prohibited from stirring up disorder in the present" (Mbembe 22). In other words, though some proclaim the resurrectory possibilities of working with the archive, the disciplinary power of the archive seeks to quiet the very same ghosts it claims to protect. In the interaction between Ella and Mr. Lukas, Ella, like an unruly ghost herself, finds herself exorcised from the historical record. There exists, then, a tension between the Archive's theoretical goal of resurrection and its praxis of expulsion. Ghosts apparently exist in the Archive only at the convenience of the one studying its records.

These ghosts, however, refuse to remain undetected. Time and time again, ghosts resurface in the work of Black authors.[3] Most famously, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* sees the return of Sethe's dead daughter. The eponymously named ghost serves as a physical reminder of the horrors of slavery and the way violent pasts continue to reassert themselves. While *Beloved* is certainly a famous contemporary African American ghost story, M. NourbeSe Philip's poetry collection *Zong!* is the most relevant to a discussion of *Louisiana* and the haunted Black archive. Unlike Morrison, Philip does not exorcise her ghosts. Instead, these ghosts repossess a history in which they found themselves dispossessed entirely. Named after the famous Zong Massacre in which around 150 enslaved Africans were thrown overboard so the traders could collect

[3] Charles W. Chesnutt's short story collection *The Conjure Woman* could also be included in this grouping. However, his work does not include any ghosts outright and instead focuses on Black folk culture and conjure. I highly recommend Chesnutt to any interested readers.

insurance money, Philip examines what it looks like to give voice to those Africans who only entered the archival record as lost property.

Philip's "Notanda" included at the end of the collection is particularly rich for a discussion about ghosts and the Archive. Worried about the ways in which her work reanimates this famous historical event, Philip interrogates her own methods. She writes, "I deeply distrust this tool I work with — language" (Philip 197). Rather than looking to the archives to resurrect these deceased Africans, she seeks to dismantle the archive's stranglehold on the narrative. "I want poetry to disassemble the ordered," she writes, "to create disorder and mayhem so as to release the story that cannot be told, but which, through not-telling, will tell itself" (Philip 199). For Philip, the poetic form, which already pushes against the boundaries of language, disrupts the implication of logic the archival legal documents about the massacre hold. In the process of writing these poems, she realized that "*Zong!* is a work of haunting, a wake of sorts, where the spectres of the undead make themselves present" (Philip 201). Though Brodber's novel *Louisiana* is a different genre, it speaks to Philip's haunted methodology: only by attending to these ghosts can Black artists make space for the narratives the archive cannot do justice to.

Haunting is a process of archival defamiliarization that ultimately makes other forms of recognition possible. In her article, "Venus in Two Acts," Saidiya Hartman again describes the archive with what should now be a familiar metaphor: "The archive is, in this case, a death sentence, a tomb" (Hartman, "Venus" 2). Hartman, like Philip, struggles to understand what it means to write about lives considered "asterisk[s] in the grand narrative of history," and comes to the conclusion that confronting the archive without replicating its violence entails a reckoning with the limits of the archive itself (Hartman, "Venus" 2). Whereas Hartman calls for a recognition of necessary failure, *Louisiana* asks its ghosted subjects to imagine what the archive

can look like otherwise rather than conceding to the archive as it is. Fiction, the vehicle through which this possession is made available, makes that history that would otherwise be threatened by erasure possible. Essentially, ghosts point to stories that would otherwise be mere whispers, asterisks in the archive. By breaking open the archive and releasing these ghosts to speak on their own terms, *Louisiana* reconceptualizes the archive entirely.

Louisiana's disruption to the archive and archival practices is not to recuperate or rescue in order to fill perceived gaps in the historical record.[4] Neither recuperation nor rescue alter the epistemological systems in place that create these gaps in the first place. In fact, to simply "fill in a gap" seems potentially dangerous because it offers that experience, that life, and that community up to practices that have historically rendered it invisible and vulnerable to violence. Hartman's earlier text *Lose Your Mother* ruminates on questions of archival power and the struggle to write about "lost" histories. Part academic interrogation, part memoir about her travels to Ghana, *Lose Your Mother* confronts the recuperative impulse. She writes that the "archive dictates what can be said about the past and the kinds of stories that can be told about the person catalogued […] To read the archive is to enter a mortuary" (Hartman, *Mother* 17). Despite her initial hope that traveling the Atlantic Slave routes in Ghana would unearth "forgotten" histories, Hartman realizes that the desire to resurrect "lost" bodies in the sepulcher that is the archive necessarily falls short: "But what did all this information add up to? None of it would ever compensate for all the other things that I would never know" (Hartman, *Mother* 79).

[4] "Archival practices" here can be defined in multiple different ways. While it can mean both the scholar's or the fiction writer's engagement with the archive, Brodber's critique of the archives and their disciplinary practices represents a fiction writer's creative and theoretical reimagining of the scholar's design and enforcement of archival standards that continue to do harm to many of its subjects. "Archival practices" therefore primarily means the practices by which certain "artifacts" come to be considered archivable and how *Louisiana* posits a redefinition in which a specifically Black archive repossesses these practices.

A rescue project does not dismantle the system that made such a rescue necessary in the first place. Instead, it simply reproduces the system under the guise of "representation." Archival practices that seek to expand the archive or to make the archive more inclusive fall prey to this recuperative mentality that ultimately interpellates their "rescued" subjects into a system that denies them their existence at every available opportunity.

This chapter critiques the epistemological models that make such rescue seem appealing and just. Indeed, as Christina Sharpe so eloquently asks, "*How can the very system that is designed to unmake and inscribe her also be the one to save her?*" (92, original emphasis). To inscribe someone or some experience into the archive implies that the experience must be rendered legible by the standards of that archive. As Sharpe points out, this inscription process requires a deliberate unmaking before inclusion into history. To fill in the gap makes this experience at once invisible even as it is considered "included" (akin to the invisibility that results from hypervisibility that Ralph Ellison explores in *The Invisible Man*), and at the same time enacts an injustice by requiring a certain legibility in order to be recognized (and then made invisible) in the first place. Filling the gap means changing the subject so that they can fit the space required of them. In other words, current archival practices that merely seek to recuperate "lost" histories unmake them in a troublingly prescriptive model. These stories enter the archive if they can be fitted to match current archival practices.

Philip's *Zong!* helps explain this prescriptive model of archiving. As she points out in *Zong!*'s notanda, the murder of roughly 150 enslaved Africans only exists because the captain of the Zong needed to file an insurance claim that then entered the legal archives. No archive existed for the lives of these victims beyond legal insurance claims and then, later, their use as sentimental abolitionist political tools. Histories that do not or cannot meet these prescriptive

requirements remain doomed to exist outside of "official" history as illegible and invisible. Philip's poetry collection functions as the Black archive of these lost Africans, but, crucially, one marked by "the many silences within the Silence of the text" (Philip 191). Ghosts reside in these silences. Attending to these ghosts means abandoning restrictive Archives.

Louisiana calls for a Black archival practice that dismantles the archive as we know it. *Louisiana* not only offers a fictive reimagining of the archive, but also theorizes what this new Black archival practice looks like. That is, Brodber's novel serves as its own theoretical intervention precisely because it reimagines the archive itself. Though she discusses literary critical theory, Barbara Christian's critique of theory's hegemony over discursive practices in "The Race for Theory" can serve as a useful lens for understanding the politics of belonging in the archive. According to Christian, theory work runs the risk of producing academic hegemony — a hegemony we can visualize is who in included in the archive and what that inclusion looks like. Archival practices create the very gaps it then proclaims the need to fill and these practices continue to see inclusion and representation in the archive itself as a victory instead of a practice of continued domination. While much of the work in African American literary history is vitally important in recuperating stories that would otherwise be lost entirely, literary studies can continue to develop other methods of archiving that allow for greater freedom of inclusions and expression. These initial recuperative steps make this next revision of archival practices possible. By bypassing the archive itself, by refusing to engage in its troubled politics of belonging, literature can escape these overdeterminations and reshape what belonging entails. Christian argues that "the literature of people who are not in power has always been in danger of extinction or of co-optation, not because we do not theorize but because what we can even imagine, far less who we can reach, is constantly limited by societal structures" (78). *Louisiana*'s use of haunting

does the work of breaking apart these limitations. Understanding the theoretical work that literary texts perform proves crucial to unmaking an archive that constantly threatens its Others with erasure.

The Archive and Narrative Form

To begin to understand Brodber's radical reimagining of the archive, a brief summary of the plot will be helpful. In the story-time of the novel, Ella Townsend begins work on her WPA-funded, anthropological project for Columbia University. Ella, "one of those up and coming black women writers the project employed," heads south "to retrieve the history of the Blacks of South West Louisiana using oral sources" (3). To "retrieve" this history, Columbia equips Ella with a tape recorder and suggests she interview Mrs. Sue Ann King, often referred to a Mammy King. Partway through her fieldwork, Mammy King dies, leaving Ella without an informant and without clear protocol for how to proceed with the project. However, when Ella listens back to her recordings from her completed interviews with Mammy King, she notices something unsettling: other voices — Mammy King, Mammy King's friend Lowly, and even Ella herself — having conversations that could not have happened during the actual temporality of the interviews. Ella quickly realizes that she finds herself in possession of a haunted tape recorder.[5] After her romantic partner, Reuben Kohl, gets mistaken for a white labor organizer, Reuben Cole, who once disrupted the "order" of St. Mary, Louisiana, Ella and Reuben relocate to New Orleans where she and Reuben wed and where Ella learns the ways of being a seer. After a

[5] In her short story "The Device," Eve L. Ewing imagines a similar scenario in which a Black community has built a device that can speak across generations. When the youngest member of the device builders turns the device on for the first time she speaks to her great-great-great-grandmother. Although the narratives take different directions, the concept of speaking to the dead through a device of some sort clearly resonates between both Ewing's "The Device" and Brodber's *Louisiana*. I would like to thank Dr. Angela Rovak for bringing Ewing's short story to my attention.

summoning to return to New York City, a lawyer discloses that Ella's parents have returned to Jamaica, leaving Ella with her savings and no forwarding address. Ella returns to her life in New Orleans where she continues to practice her communion with the spirits of Mammy King, Lowly, and with the addition of Mammy King's husband Silas. Eventually, she discovers why Columbia suggested she interview Mammy King and learns more about these other haunted voices that call to her. Ella dies while still in New Orleans and Reuben presumably returns to the Congo.

While this plot summary appears to represent a narrative with a fairly straightforward plot that follows linear story-time, the novel's form and temporality are actually much more complicated. These temporal and formal challenges work to undermine the work of the archive, not only in the novel's fictional archive that the WPA initially enlists Ella to participate in, but also in the formation of the novel as archive in and of itself. The presence of haunting throughout the novel creates opportunities for discussing these challenges as generative for demarcating new archival imaginations instead of just conceptualizing temporal and formal discontinuities as abnormalities or aberrations of narrative form. In other words, haunting serves as a theoretical framework for comprehending *Louisiana*'s archival reformulations.

To understand Brodber's reimagined archive, I examine two limitations of archives that Brodber challenges in *Louisiana* and I offer two archival reformulations *Louisiana* makes possible through haunting. First, I point to the *limit of the recuperative archive*. This recuperative model looks to the rescue mission philosophy of how to address the apparently missing pieces of the archive that I have discussed earlier. Second, and closely associated with the myth of the recuperative archive, I address the *single-story fallacy*. This fallacy posits that, in order to recuperate these gaps in the archive, a single-story history is sufficient. In other words, this fallacy assumes that a solitary history can represent the collective in a meaningful and accurate

way. This fallacy also presumes that an individual is only a single story instead of a multitude of different and interrelational experiences.

In response to these limitations, I first look to the *relational-archive model* that Brodber's narrative creates. Unlike traditional archives, *Louisiana* creates a model that eschews strict linearity in favor of concurrent histories. History functions less like a simple chain of cause and effect, and more like a complex cohabitation between not only the past and the present, but also the present and the future. This final section looks at the novel itself in its own multilayered dimensions. Building upon the relational-archive model that the narrative presents, *Louisiana* proposes an alternative Black archival model, referred to here as the *communal archive.* Unlike traditional archives (and the narratives of history that they produce) that are event oriented, relational archives shift the focus to be person oriented. This section will therefore analyze the relationships between the characters in the novel and epistemological practices these relationships uncover. Brodber crafts an archival model that prioritizes the networks of people that shape history rather than adhering to a teleological historical model that can all too easily threaten to erase particular individuals from history altogether.

The Limit of the Recuperative Archive

During the 1930s, in the throes of the Great Depression, two crucial developments concerning the United States' historical production processes occurred: the opening of the National U.S. Archives (1934) and the creation of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (founded in 1935 and hereafter referred to as the WPA). At the same time that the US builds an "official" archival repository, Roosevelt's federal relief WPA projects actively contribute to the newly created archive of the nation. In other words, in the same short period of time, US historical production processes not only create the building in which "official records"

will reside, but also generate the very documents that will then be housed in that same repository. While the WPA included wide-ranging projects designed to provide relief for Americans struggling under the staggering unemployment rate, the specific project of interest for this chapter is "Federal Project No. 1." According to the *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43*, "Federal Project No. 1 was a single nation-wide project which, with WPA sponsorship, provided a central administration for music, art, writers' [sic], and theater projects and the historical records survey" (63). While the *Final Report* remarks that the main work for writers recruited for the WPA's Federal Writers Project (FWP) involved the creation of guidebooks for different states, it briefly notes that "In addition to the guidebooks, the writers' projects produced popular accounts of the historical background on various localities, compilations of local folklore, books on the American Negro" and various other written documents (65). In other words, many writers found themselves responsible for the collection of historical experiences from different groups across the U.S. and the creation of corresponding archival documentation.

One specific subset of the FWP was the WPA's Slave Narratives. In his introduction to the WPA Slave Narratives for the Library of Congress's digital exhibit *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1938*, Norman R. Yetman explains the basic design and goals of this particular FWP project. FWP writers assigned to this project interviewed formally enslaved persons with the intent to understand slavery from those who experienced it personally. For Yetman, the "interviews afforded ex-slaves an unparalleled opportunity to give their personal accounts of life under the 'peculiar institution,' to describe in their own words what it felt like to be a slave in the United States" ("An Introduction"). For Yetman, these FWP interviews represent crucial recuperative work; they allow the individual to

speak for themselves. Where once there existed archival gaps about Black experiences under slavery, Yetman sees these interviews as recouping "lost" history and expanding the archive.

This drive for uncovering "lost" histories appears well-meaning, and often is undertaken with the intention of bringing to light histories that have historically been deemed "less valuable." To be sure, recuperative efforts certainly prove important for advancing what histories scholars and the public alike have available to them in the first place. Indeed, because of histories of racism, sexism, and homophobia in official archival practices, African American studies has often had to rely on recuperative practices to uncover buried histories and peoples. I want to make it clear that this critique of the desire to recuperate "lost" history lies not necessarily in the recouped material itself, but instead examines the system into which this rescued material is then brought into. Unfortunately, far too often the recuperative impulse for archival inclusion merely brings "lost" histories into the archive without revising the archival practices at work that "lost" that history in the first place. In his influential monograph *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Michel-Rolph Trouillot notes that "In history, power begins at the sources" (Trouillot 29). The material of the archive itself reveals the power of current knowledge-production practices to select certain sources as archivally significant while abandoning others.

For this reason, Jenny Sharpe turns to what she calls "immaterial archives" in her monograph *Immaterial Archives: An African Diaspora Poetics of Loss*. Sharpe writes that "*Immaterial Archives* addresses the paucity of documentary evidence concerning the lives of people who were immaterial to the archiving process, but not by treating contemporary art and literature as an alternative archive. In exploring intangible phenomena, it identifies a different relationship of the arts to written records than as imaginative reconstructions of archival silences

and lost pasts" (J. Sharpe 3). *Louisiana*'s examination of the generative possibilities of possession coincides with Sharpe's examination of the immaterial archives in contemporary art and literature. Instead of searching for the lost pasts or arguing that the arts seek to fill these "lost" histories, Sharpe suggests that the intangible offers new possibilities for critiquing and revising the archive itself. The immaterial does not seek to one day become part of the "material"; it serves as a divergence point where we can begin to conceptualize new archival (and for *Louisiana* specifically Black archival) methods. *Louisiana*'s use of possession locates itself in this generative quality of the immaterial.

Ella only acknowledges the power of the immaterial after her original archival project runs into problems. Working within the parameters of the "material" (traditional) archive, Ella's FWP remains tainted by its own resting place — the official archives of the United States as filtered through Ella's academic employer Columbia University. In other words, the specter of certain repressive measures of control over what Black stories can look like in the archive haunts Ella's initial efforts. As Trouillot discusses, the archival politics of inclusion rest upon authorial politics of perceived credibility. This politics of authorial credibility (and thereby archival credibility) ultimately gives archives "the power to define what is and is not a serious object of research and, therefore, of mention" (Trouillot 99). Ella seeks Mammy King's history (and specifically, only certain parts of that history that the FWP project deems worthy of archival inclusion) to hand over to dominating institutions like the U.S. National Archives. In this sense, the parameters of the FWP project dictate what will and will not be included *without* discussing these parameters with the projects' informants. The FWP unintentionally reinscribes certain histories within matrices of representational power by retaining the ability to determine archival importance.

However, Ella's primary informant Mammy King, refuses to give her history away to such deterministic forces. She refuses to cooperate and does not open up to Ella. All that escapes from Mammy King during the initial interviews are a short laugh — "Ha ha" — and a sigh. Frustrated by Mammy King's reticence, Ella bemoans the situation, muttering that "Mammy will give me nothing else to add to the *white people's* history of the blacks of South West Louisiana" (Brodber 14, emphasis mine). Ella admits what had been up to this point unspoken knowledge: that this project contributes to "the white people's history of the blacks of South West Louisiana." In other words, her WPA project intends to function more like a "recuperative" reinscription into white epistemologies instead of an archival project that gives definitional and narrative power to the subjects of study themselves. Power lies not only in the telling but in the framing. That is, structures of power that continue to delimit what parts of a person's history prove archivally significant also retain the ability to determine what stories enter the archive in the first place.

Mammy's silence refuses this transference of narrative power. Instead of viewing inclusion in the archive as an opportunity for increased representation, Mammy King recognizes the undercurrents of power that determine archival legibility. Her story only matters to the WPA because it somehow informs "the white people's history." Specifically, the FWP primarily shows an interest in narratives connected to histories of slavery thereby prioritizing certain narratives over others. Recalling Yetman's introduction to the Library of Congress's digital archive of the WPA Slave Narratives, the main goal of these FWP projects was to create an archive of slave narratives as told by "those who had themselves experienced it personally" (Yetman "An Introduction"). The FWP project therefore enters these interviews with a predetermined scope trained almost exclusively on Black experiences of slavery in America. In other words, instead of

viewing these informants as whole and complex individuals, the FWP decides which parts of their histories hold the most "value."

In remaining silent, in disrupting the process of archival collection, Mammy King offers a different version of what constitutes archival significance. She refuses interpellation. Though she specifically focuses on queerness, Sharon Patricia Holland's *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* raises many important questions and analyses that help clarify the complex interactions in *Louisiana*. At one point, Holland asks, "If speaking/language is associated with life, and if, to echo a powerful message from the lesbian and gay movement in this country, 'silence equals death,' then what becomes of speaking from the margins or, for that matter, discourse in the margins? Aren't marginalized subjects always speaking from a place of silence — from the space of death?" (Holland 152). Mammy King's silences not only foreshadow her death during Ella's interviews, but also speak to how certain speech acts are coded by systems of power before their very utterance. Mammy King's speech only carries significance if it aligns with the desires of the FWP project. The FWP, in this case, has a severe case of selective hearing, one that Mammy King refuses to oblige.

Whereas Ella reads Mammy King's silence as stubborn refusal, *Louisiana* positions her silence as a protective measure against "recuperative" interpellation. In a conversation captured on the haunted tape recorder between Mammy King and the ghost of her friend Lowly, Lowly comments that "Anna sighed another sigh that leaked from our history and the girl made a note to be sure to find some way of transposing these signs and those laughs and other non-verbal expressions of emotions into the transcript she would *submit to her masters*" (Brodber 14, emphasis mine). Though Ella puzzles over how to translate these nonverbal communicative acts into a linguistic form her project director will accept, Mammy King's silence guards her history,

protecting it from Ella's "masters." Though Ella attempts to capture Mammy King's experience for an archive bent on exercising its continued domination over which narratives can meaningfully contribute to national archives, Mammy King and Lowly recognize the dangers of submitting to the archive's political project.

Though she maintains her silence about her personal connection to slavery during Ella's formal interviews, Mammy King does not fall prey to the false dichotomy between silence and speech in which the archive demands spoken histories in order to be included. Instead, she speaks — but not to conform to the WPA's desires. Towards the middle of the novel, we do discover Mammy King's personal connection to slavery. Crucially, Mammy King introduces her connection to a slave past through the lens of resistance made possible by her possession of Ella as a conduit between the living and the dead. Mammy King reveals her family's connection to slavery through the haunted tape recorder meaning that Ella only learns about this history because of Mammy King's haunted revision to the archive. While Ella initially expresses frustration over Mammy King's reticence, upon listening to the recording on the possessed machine she recognizes the way silences reflect not absence but resistance. Ella describes these silences as "full thick and deep," but only begins to understand them after abandoning her original FWP assignment (Brodber 14). By listening to the possessed tape recorder after Mammy King's death and by foregoing her FWP project, Ella reinterprets the interview's silences as deep moments of haunted resistance to the archive as the WPA and Columbia configure it. It is therefore only through her possession that Ella can begin to recognize, challenge, and deconstruct the archive's interpellative powers.

Listening back to the recordings, Ella notices new information starting with Mammy King introducing her grandfather into the narrative: "My Grandpappy was a thinking man but he

ain't know no word called 'slave'" (Brodber 80). Immediately, then, Mammy King describes her grandfather as someone with experiences beyond simply his time as an enslaved person. She recognizes her grandfather's experience with slavery as *a part of the narrative* and not as *the entire narrative*. Archival predeterminations limit the stories available to us. Considering the narratives and narrators that always haunt archives sets the stage for a reevaluation of the practices that make such histories ghostly in the first place. It is therefore important to remember that Ella only learns about this history after accepting her haunting and therefore only after revising her own archival practices. Mammy King, in refusing to share this part of her history with Ella when she functioned as an agent of the official archive, also denies this archival oversimplification. She blows apart the limited scope of the FWP's project and from these fissures creates spaces where other narratives and narrators emerge.

Brodber imagines this haunted space where other narratives can exist apart from the confines of traditional archival practices through her imagery of the pendant Reuben gives to Ella for their fifth wedding anniversary. Ella describes this anniversary gift as "a solid pendant with a hole through its centre" (Brodber 125). For Ella, the hole through the center represents not an absence but a "passage," meaning that the hole does not signify a lack of substance but a way of encountering other histories, experiences, and insights (124). Though she initially relies on the phrase "ah who sey Sammy dead" to summon Mammy King for a discussion between the living and the dead, she begins to use her pendant to commence spiritual communion. The pendant itself certainly carries sentimental value for Ella, but the hole through the middle links her with the ghostly world. She says, "That hole, that passage, is me […] I join the world of the living and the world of the spirits" (124). Ella sees the hole, the supposed "absence," as that which connects her to the ghosts of Mammy King and her companions.

What does this pendant imagery mean for the archive and specifically for this discussion on the recuperative impulses felt by many pursuing archival work? When presented with a gap (a "hole"), recuperative desires seek to uncover (resurrect) what once occupied that gap. This drive to fill in historical gaps in the archive means that archival work necessitates bringing forgotten or lost histories to light and inserting them into the archive represents radical representational work. However, traditional archival practices assume that once a gap has been filled the work has been completed. The focus remains on representation, not revisionary practices, even if that representation means bringing those "lost" histories into a system that only inaugurates more silences. Trouillot remarks that "Silences are inherent in history because any single event enters history with some of its constituting parts missing. Something is always left out while something else is recorded. Thus, whatever becomes fact does so with its own inborn absences" (Trouillot 49). Archives cannot contain everything. The "discovery" of some lost history simply points to other absences. Given the way Trouillot describes the process of historical and archival production, "filling a gap" only begets more absences. The recuperative impulse, then, can never fulfill its own animating drive. It will always uncover more silences even as it apparently "recuperates" other histories.

Ella's pendant, conversely, imagines silences as points of entry into other ways of archiving narratives. Whereas recuperation seeks to fill in gaps like a stonemason laying in a brick, entering silences without the desire to fill them offers new points of entry. Preserving the gaps, honoring the hole in the pendant, maintains an entryway into Black archival epistemologies and practices. In other words, even as Ella learns more and discovers more about Mammy King and her life, she does not claim to fill an absence. The hole in the pendant acts a space of infinite possibility. Using Ella's pendant as a metaphor for how to reimagine the archive, Brodber

envisions neither a prescriptive nor a redemptive archive, but one that attends to complexity and multiplicity. Whereas traditional archives seek to raise the dead in order to ultimately exorcise them, *Louisiana* includes ghosts as a crucial part of how to interact with history in the first place. Possession is the hole in Ella's pendant through which we communicate with others' narratives on their own terms instead of attempting to constitute historical "facts." Recuperative archives claim to speak for the dead; haunted ones let them speak for themselves.

The Single-Story Fallacy

The archival research model Ella adopts for her FWP project (and, indeed, the very design of the project itself) is that of the single-story fallacy. Or, to put it another way, a single-story model reduces an individual down to a *solitary story*, even as individuals always carry varied and interrelated *stories*. When Ella embarks on her journey south for her FWP project, Columbia supplies her with the name of only one informant, Mammy King. Though the project seems to respect Black voices, even progressively to bring Black women's voices into the "official" historical record, it still assumes that Mammy King's recollection (and only Mammy King's) can illuminate "the history of the Blacks of South West Louisiana" (Brodber 3). The project's very design, therefore, is flawed in its assumption that a single voice will suffice for the history of an entire region and that Mammy King's story is only that of Southwest Louisiana. Though applicable to more than archival projects, Chimamando Ngozi Adichi's concept of the "single-story" and its concomitant dangers reveals the consequences of relying on a single story to tell a wider history. The single-story fallacy has two (at least) serious consequences: 1) the reduction of an individual into one, and only one, story, and 2) the threat of erasure if one exceeds the bounds of that story. *Louisiana*'s haunted archive combats these dangers.

The single-story can work in two ways. It can refer to a single person's story standing in for an entire people or it can refer to a single story of an individual standing in for the entire person. Either case renders the experience one-dimensional. In her widely viewed TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story," Adichi explains how the single-story model not only creates but also reinforces specific power dynamics and measures of intelligibility. For Adichi, "It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power" because "Power is the ability not just to tell the story of other person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (Adichi 9:35, 10:09). While telling the story of an individual or of a single experience is not inherently troubling for Adichi, these single-stories become problematic when they become not only the most recognizable stories but also the only stories. As we can see from the limits of the recuperative archive model, reinscribing "lost" histories into the fraught politics of archival inclusion gives those who determine the order of the archive power to deploy the single-story under the guise of inclusivity. When these archival recovery projects employ the same methodology as Ella's FWP project, the single-story flattens the experience of many while at the same time rendering other experiences ahistorical in the fact that they do not come to reside in "official historical" narratives.

Part of recognizing and combatting these traditional archival practices includes coming to terms with Ella's own complicity in the single-story model as an agent of the traditional archive. During the interview, Ella attempts to redirect conversations back to her pre-written interview questions, but as the transcript shows, Mammy refuses to play by the Archive's rules. Instead, she either remains silent thereby frustrating the archival collection process entirely, or she misdirects the interviews themselves. At one point, Mammy King actually reverses the interview and begins asking personal questions of Ella during the initial interviews. Whereas her earlier

silence in the interviews refuses the narrative authority of traditional archive, by refusing to either represent a "gap that has been recovered" or to furnish the archive with a distorted single-story, Mammy King's decisions of when to speak and what to say undermine the perceived objectivity of anthropological informant-based research. This "objectivity" lends a sense of authenticity to the archive because it makes invisible the narrativization of the past as The Past. As Trouillot remarks, by positioning themselves as invisible agents, historians can spin these collections of "history" (in Ella's case the informant interviews with Mammy King) as "facts." He writes, a "fetishism of the facts, premised on an antiquated model of the natural sciences, still dominates history and other social sciences. It reinforces the view that any conscious positioning should be rejected as ideological. Thus, the historian's position is officially unmarked: it is that if the non historical observer" (Trouillot 151). In other words, the act of actually signaling when a past becomes The Past through the act of narrativization serves to discredit that same past because it marks the history and by extension the person crafting that history as involved in an ideological positioning. Though Trouillot refers specifically to historians, anthropologists adopt a similar social science methodology in which they too "disappear" from their study. For the past to become part of the official archive, it must render its own collector and narrator an invisible presence.

In this sense, the social scientist transforms into their own kind of ghost that haunts the historical record. For Ella, this means that despite her best efforts to remain outside of the official transcript, she cannot escape her own complicity. In fact, the voice recording technology Columbia gifts her with the capture her interviews with Mammy King makes saying outside of the history impossible because Ella controls the recording machine itself. In thinking about archives more generally, the shaper of the archive always functions as a ghostly presence that

exists both within and without the official record. Despite her best efforts, therefore, Ella finds herself a part of this archive from the beginning by simply being the anthropologist in charge of collection.

However, Mammy King's reversal of the interview makes visible Ella's once "invisible" role. At the end of the third section of the transcript, Ella implores Mammy King to participate and begin telling her story. She pleads with Mammy King to "Tell me anything, everything" (17). The fourth section of the transcript begins immediately following this speech. Though the speech does accomplish its goal of breaking Mammy King's silence, it does not encourage her to share her story. Instead Mammy King calmly asks Ella, "Child who you be?" (Brodber 18). In a project designed to uncover the history of Black people in Southern Louisiana, the presumed methodological practice relies on a unidirectional interview; Ella should be interviewing Mammy King, not the other way around. And yet, Mammy King slyly makes the recorded interviews bidirectional. That is, the interview is no longer between an anthropologist and her informant, but between two people who could now both be considered subjects of an interview that is recorded in the "official" archive. While we could consider all ethnographic interviews bidirectional in that the interview must bring at least some of themselves into the interview even if it's solely through the influence of their physical present, Mammy King's question levels the power relationships between herself and Ella. This shift to bidirectionality also imbues each person involved in the interview with archival authority because they each determine the content of the interview. In this case, Mammy King's reversal demonstrates how a single-story constantly exceeds its predetermined external boundaries.

In flipping the structure of the interview, Mammy King therefore not only reveals how a single-story history can fail if the informant refuses to participate, but also brings Ella into the

process of historical meaning-making. Faced with Mammy King's own questions, Ella must enter the record. Significantly, she enters the record not as the objective and neutral anthropologist she is supposed to be based on academic standards, but as Ella Townsend the individual. Ella cannot remain the invisible author of this archive. By reversing the interview, Mammy King forces Ella to confront her own place in these flawed archival practices. By bringing Ella into the archive not only as the anthropologist recording it but as a personal narrative in it, Mammy King also challenges another aspect of the archive that upsets the single-story narrative model. Mammy King's interview of Ella reveals a theory of archive that cannot be contained within a single-story model. Making Ella's role as co-creator of archival material visible demonstrates how a single story is never truly the story of a single individual.

Instead, Mammy King's simple question "Child who be you?" makes apparent the oversimplification necessary to sustain a single-story archival model. Ella only begins to recognize the importance of understanding the multiple voices that always contribute to an archival history after Mammy King possesses her. Returning to Mammy King's reversal of the interviewing process, Ella only notices that she learned something about herself and Mammy King at the same time after listening to the transcript: "I realised that in cross-examining me about my own past, Mammy had given me information about her own past" (Brodber 42). Uncovering hidden histories therefore can never be unidirectional. There is always a relationship between the speaker and the listener (and those roles often blur as they do here). Though Ella initially bristles when Mammy King asks her about her past, she comes to understand that she not only admits something about herself, but also forges a connection between shared moments in both her and Mammy King's respective pasts. One person's story, therefore, contains

moments of connection between other stories. A single-story is only singular if we don particularly powerful blinders and assume that the collectors of these stories remain invisible.

Clearly Ella cannot remain an invisible observer to Mammy King's stories and therefore disrupts Mammy King's assumed single-story narrative. However, Ella herself contains multitudes. In a conversation shortly after Ella listens to the haunted tape recorder, Reuben notices that Ella sees herself as separate from the St. Mary community. During the argument that follows, Ella reflects that "for all my race consciousness I was making a distinction between myself and the people around me and who I was" (Brodber 41). However, this phrase includes more than Ella simply refusing to associate with the company of Mammy King; Ella introduces an extra splitting. It isn't just a distinction between "myself and the people around me," but between "myself and the people around me and who I was." In other words, Ella creates a three-way dissection between the people in St. Mary, Louisiana, Ella, and who she "was." Already, then, Brodber complicates the notion of a single-story even within the same individual. If Ella can separate herself now from who she "was" then the single-story model wherein an individual reflects a coherently linear narrative of self crumbles. Ella only recognizes these multiple selves after Mammy King begins to haunt her. The moment of haunting introduces a rift, one in which Ella can hold a mirror up to herself and see more than a single individual. She can recognize "her other self" as (dis)associated with herself (Brodber 33). Haunting here functions less like a stubborn past that will not pass on and more like an opportunity for reimagining the self as various selves.

The formal aspects of the transcript illustrate the commingling of multiple stories that make the single-story concept impossible to sustain. After the letter from the editors of the Black World Press, Brodber launches immediately into the transcript of Ella's haunted interviews.

However, neither Brodber nor the fictional editors of Black World Press explain this transition. Instead, the organization of the text simply thrusts the reader into a disorienting document much like shoving an unsuspecting bystander into the deep-end of a pool. Suddenly, we find ourselves adrift in a text that rejects the formal rules we typically associate with novels like linearity and clarity. This disorientation creates a cacophonous effect. Unclear of who is speaking, or even of how many speakers there even are, the transcript breaks apart the single-story by refusing to adhere to narrative rules. This transcript cannot be considered a single-story precisely because we have to struggle to determine what we're reading in the first place.

It is only at the beginning of the second chapter, "First the goat must be killed," that the narrator explains that "The above is as true and exact a transcription as I Louisiana, the former Ella Townsend, now Kohl could with guidance over the years manage to make of my first encounter with my teachers" (31). The initially confusing first chapter, we come to understand, represents the transcript of Ella's interviews with Mammy King. However, as we quickly discover in the transcript itself, these recordings contain more than mere academic interviews. Instead, the transcript is a multivocal and multilayered document that includes these vocal registers:

1) Ella's interview with Mammy King for her WPA job.

2) Mammy King and Lowly talking (often also offering metacommentary on Ella during the interviewing process with which the chapter opens). Lowly talking directly to Mammy King (Anna).

3) "Ah who sey Sammy dead" – Ella speaking (but Ella does not remember speaking this despite hearing it on the tape).

Much of what makes this first chapter so disorienting at first stems from its formal features. Neither Brodber as the author of *Louisiana* nor Ella as the author of the transcript clearly demarcate which voices speak and when. Though paragraph breaks sometimes indicate a new speaker, they also often confound this distinction between speakers by maintaining the same speaker. For example, the transcript opens with Lowly asking, “Anna do you remember? Can you still hear me singing it” and then Lowly continues speaking for multiple paragraphs (Brodber 9). At the same time, and shortly after Lowly’s introductory paragraphs, Mammy King speaks for two paragraphs only to have her speech interrupted by Ella the interviewer addressing her. In fact, much of how Ella (and by extension Brodber) marks dialogue happening in the interview between Ella and Mammy King is not through the use of standard quotation marks but through dashes, a grammatical feature that often does not only sometimes signal speech but itself carries multiple potential grammatical meanings. Structurally, these voices appear concurrently, but they do not appear to interrupt each other. Instead, it is as if the tape recorder can tune to different stations and pick up different frequencies or like a sheet of music in which different bars contain different notes, all of which exist in the same piece of music. We can envision this transcript as thus:

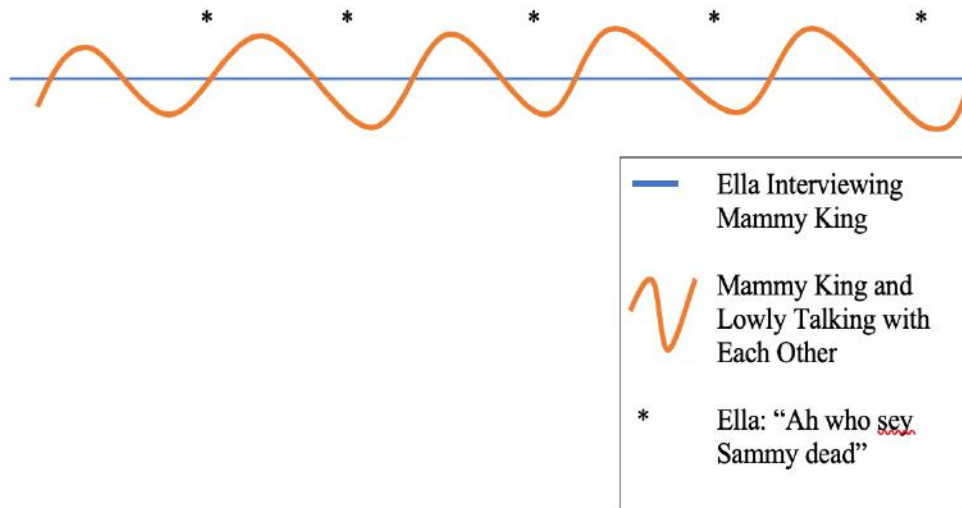

Figure 4

This mutlivocality applies not just to the various voices that appear throughout the transcript. From that very sentence where Ella explains the first chapter as "as true and exact a transcription as I Louisiana, the former Ella Townsend, now Kohl could with guidance over the years manage to make of my first encounter with my teachers," she complicates her own assumed singularity through her claiming of multiple identities and temporalities. Whereas when she departs for her WPA-sponsored archival project she sees herself as solely Ella Townsend, at the beginning of her own writing about the experience she claims the identities of "I Louisiana, the former Ella Townsend, now Kohl." In other words, she claims multiple identities within the same person while at the same time serving as a model for the coexistence of multiple temporalities. For Ella, these multiple identities and their concurrent temporalities do not conflict with each other. Instead of fighting for primacy, each identity exists in tandem with the others and Ella does not suffer from any kind of identity crisis or category collapse. Instead, the multiple identities serve as markers for her own identity journey and introduce a way of interpreting identity in which past, present, and future exist simultaneously.

While the content of the interview itself disrupts the assumed unidirectionality of archival production, the form of the interview's transcript makes these aural layers visual. Following the introductory letter from the editor of the Black World Press, *Louisiana* launches into the (at first) confusing and destabilizing first chapter, "I heard the voice from Heaven say." While the editor's letter explains some background context to the manuscript and to Ella Townsend herself, it neglects to explain what to expect from the text itself. It presents the text in the same way that Ella organized it during her writing of it. In this sense, *Louisiana* disrupts conventional narrative patterns from the very beginning of the found text. In fact, by maintaining Ella's original organization with the transcript at the beginning, *Louisiana* encourages a circular reading practice. The text gives us the necessary information to record these multiple voices and prompts a return to the first chapter after reading the rest of the novel. *Louisiana* is a novel of returns not ends. A strictly linear reading or interpretation runs the risk of missing how haunting creates new avenues of understanding.

The fictional editor from the Black World Press falls prey to trying to determine meaning through linearity. Though the fictional editor conjectures that the chapter titles can be read together to form a message — "Is there a message in these titles, we asked — I heard the voice from Heaven say, 'first the goat must be killed (and you get) out of Eden and get over (to be) Louisiana.' Den ah who sey Sammy dead, (if this can happen)" — this searching for a message in the chapter titles only imposes a linear coherency that the novel itself questions. (Brodber 5). In her chapter on *Louisiana*, Jenny Sharpe notes how "[a]lthough there is a logic to the sentences constructed from the chapter headings, it does not deliver the full meaning of a story that is delivered in fragments" (J. Sharpe 104). For Sharpe, the editor's attempt to project meaning into the fragmentary chapter headings reveals how the "editor nonetheless attempts to understand the

manuscript's significance in terms of traditional historiography" (J. Sharpe 104). The editor cannot escape interpellation into the very narrative practices that Brodber unsettles. An important aspect of the work that Brodber does in *Louisiana* is exactly how the text rejects traditional forms of narrative coherency and linearity.

The lack of explanation, the formal placement of the first chapter (both in the fictional found manuscript and in *Louisiana* as Brodber's novel), and the content of the first chapter all contribute to an overwhelming sense of defamiliarization. This defamiliarization forces readers (both fictional and actual) to confront their own process of meaning-making and discovery. Ella, as the author of the found manuscript, and Broder, as the author of the physical text, both ask readers to confront their own expectations for narrative coherency. Attempting the read a message into the given absences runs the risk of not only advancing a particular reading of the narrative as we expect it to be but also of mistaking gaps as silences. As the transcript demonstrates, some stories are only uncovered by making space for voices that otherwise would not be heard.

According to Trouillot, the formation of any history includes the simultaneous formation of silences. Specifically of archives, he writes that "the making of archives involves a number of selective operations: selection of producers, selection of evidence, selection of themes, selection of procedures — which means, at best the differential ranking and, at worse, the exclusion of some producers, some evidence, some themes, some procedures" (Trouillot 53). Confronting history through archive therefore requires acknowledging that the very creation of certain archives erases other possibilities because of history's selective requirement. Ella finds herself occupying one of these such silences when she enters Mr. Lukas's office. In other words, what

appears as a silence or absence in the "official" historical archive is the very space that Ella inhabits.

Ghosts and haunting attest to how individuals and experiences occupy these "silent" spaces. We can thus envision these "absences" in the historical archive as rich spaces of experience that exists at other frequencies. Recalling the visual of the aural registers in the interview transcript, the multivocality exists despite Ella initially registering these moments in the interview as empty. To escape the restrictive measure of archival construction, ghosts inhabit an interstitial space between official archival recognition (read as interpellation) and the silences these same archives introduce. To see these spaces as more than silence means recognizing how different experiences exist at different frequencies. Indeed, Lowly remarks that the "ears are hearing other frequencies" when she determines that Ella "has come through" (Brodber 28). Listening to and honoring these other experiences requires a retuning, a recognition of what other voices can sound like in the first place. Ella can only "come through" if she picks up on these other frequencies. If ghosts represent the ways these excluded histories create their own archives, then Ella's exorcism represents the dramatic consequences of when we refuse to listen to ghosts and instead seek to get rid of them. Ghosts communicate with us; it's up to us to listen to what they have to say.

In contrast, for Mammy King the record continues on — albeit in a radically different form from traditional archival practices — precisely because Ella does not rush to abandon or silence the historical "aberrations." The second chapter, "First the goat must be killed" most clearly examines this contrast. Under the directive to collect Mammy King's history as *the* history of Southern Louisiana, Ella faces a serious problem when Mammy King dies partway through the project. In losing her solitary informant, Ella also seems to have lost *the* history in its

entirety. That is, Ella seems to lose that entire history when considered from the single-story perspective. However, once Ella accepts her haunting and begins to listen to these spirit voices speaking to her through the tape recorder, Ella can recover not only much of Mammy's history, but other histories as well. In other words, though Mammy King's death initially seems to foreclose access to that past, allowing space for ghosts that disrupt a single-story model allows Ella to re-encounter what was only apparently lost to begin with. Haunting gives Ella access to histories she never would have had access to — even if Mammy King had survived the interviews.

The Relational Archive Model

Though the transcript clearly poses a challenge to single-story models of history and archive through its multivocality, it also raises the concept of a relational archive. A relational archive is inherently multivocal. Rather than merely introducing new narratives into the preexisting archival model, Brodber crafts new ways of imagining archival form in the first place. This section therefore includes the multivocality that runs counter to single-story assumptions in its analysis of key formal features of Brodber's novel.

Though she focuses exclusively on Caribbean slave narratives in her article "Caribbean Slave Narratives: Creole in Form and Genre," Nicole N. Aljoe's interest in multivocality raises important questions about how to read multivocal texts. The many resonances between British West Indian slave narratives and *Louisiana* make Aljoe's examination of Caribbean slave narratives a particularly useful lens for comprehending Brodber's reimagination of the archive. A key feature that Aljoe analyzes in these West Indian slave narratives is their multivocality due to the "narrative collaboration intrinsic to the British West Indian slave narrative" that arises because of the shared narrative work from both author and editor (Aljoe 7). *Louisiana* too

includes editors that partake in crafting the narrative itself (the editor of the Black World Press and Ella as the "editor" compiling Mammy King's history).

Aljoe argues that this collaboration raises questions not only of voice but of reading practices. She writes, "the combination of oral and written forms and the number of voices operating in these narratives suggest the need for a similarly multi-layered theory of reading. The frameworks traditionally employed in examining single authored texts cannot adequately contend with the multiplicity inherent in these narratives" (Aljoe 7). To read these narratives, then, Aljoe suggests moving away from traditional reading practices that hunt for "evidence of a dominant single subjectivity" and adopting "readings that embrace theories of hybridity" (Aljoe 7). She continues, indicating that "one such multi-layered theory involves reading the narratives through the lens of *testimonios* rather than as autobiographies" (Aljoe 7). *Testimonio*, a fundamentally syncretic form that "addresses the simultaneity of form and voice," opens reading practices in ways that consider the other voices the enter and shape a narrative as crucial to the narrative without subordinating one voice to another (Aljoe 8).

I adopt Aljoe's turn to *testimonio* when I suggest considering archives as multi-layered documents that demand new ways of reading made accessible through haunting. In accepting multivocality not as a flaw or authorial weakness in a text, Aljoe's application of testimonio speaks to how Brodber's use of haunting forces us to reimagine archival form and function. The transcript of Ella's interviews is a useful place to see the first layer of *Louisiana*'s relational archive. In particular, the repeated phrase "**Ah who sey Sammy dead**" disrupts not only the supposed singularity of an individual but also the linearity of time (Brodber 11, original emphasis). That the tape recorder includes the haunting voices of deceased figures like Mammy King, Lowly, and eventually Mammy King's husband Silas is clear. However, another voice, and

arguably the voice that initially perturbs Ella the most, is her own voice that speaks "**ah who sey Sammy dead**." In the initial reading of the transcript, these bolded irruptions of this phrase never clarify who exactly the speaker is. Unlike the other speakers in the transcript who often address each other by name (Lowly addresses Anna, Mammy King address both Lowly and Ella, and Ella addresses Mammy King), these phrases have no clear addressee meaning that the speaker remains unidentified beyond the vernacular pronunciation of "I." This phrase is important for many reasons, some of which fall beyond the purview of this chapter, but its significance for a relational archive comes from this phrase's temporal disruption and its introduction of a version of self-haunting.

To conceptualize the many resonances of this phrase, I offer this diagram:

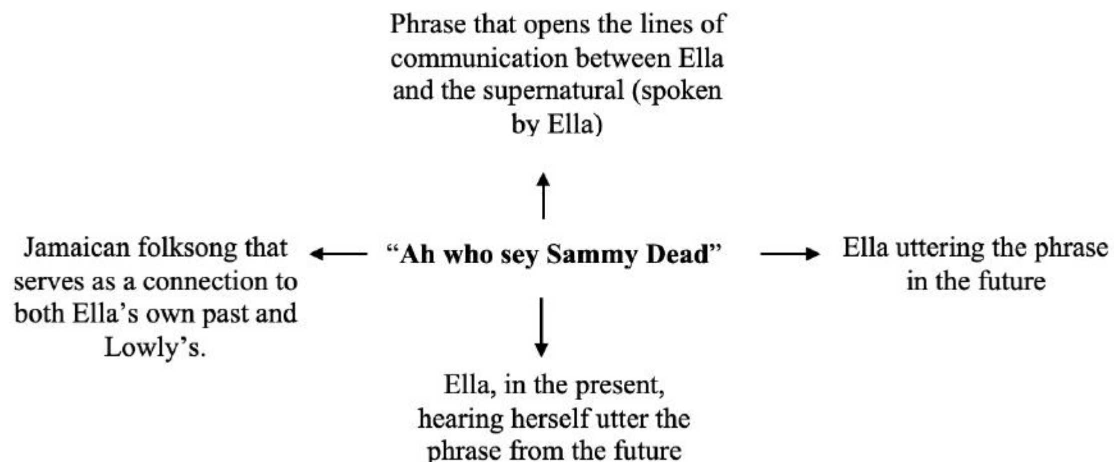

Figure 5

My analysis of this phrase begins with its appearance in the transcript because this is not only the first time readers encounter this phrase, but it is also the first time Ella encounters it. In her diary, Ella describes her initial reaction to hearing her own voice utter a strange phrase on the tape recorder, saying that "It was my voice that kept saying it, though nowhere was that phrase in my consciousness at the time" (Brodber 31). As illustrated in the above diagram, this phrase has

multiple layers of signification, and these various significations include different temporal registers.

These temporal registers include: 1) the past — as a lyric in a common Jamaican folk song, the phrase serves as a tie to Ella's own past, farther back to Lowly's past, and a longer past of Jamaica in general; 2) the present — considering the narrative time of the novel, Ella encounters this phrase in the present when she first hears it as she plays the recorded interviews back to transcribe them; and 3) the future - Ella not only utters this phrase in the future for it to be recorded on the tape itself so she can hear it in the present, but it also refers to her future self using this phrase to open haunting lines of communication between the living and the dead. In other words, this one phrase operates on multiple temporal registers at the same time. It punctures time as it simultaneously collapses time into a solitary point through the utterance of the phrase. We might call this a *convergence point*. This convergence point is only recognizable through an understanding of haunting because haunting represents not only the past crossing the boundary into the present, but time moving nonlinearly altogether. Haunting, in this temporal disruption, envisions a new archive, one not tied to an idea of an unrelenting and unforgiving marching forward of time, but one in which past, present, and future can coexist. Archives, in *Louisiana*, are not just records of the past. They are records of the coexistence of times.

This coexistence of different temporal registers helps explain how Ella can haunt herself. Self-haunting obviously raises some complications. What does it mean to haunt yourself? On the one hand, self-haunting produces a sense of estrangement. Practically, hearing your own voice hailing you from a tape (using an unfamiliar phrase that you could not have said at that moment) seems rightfully estranging. This estrangement worries Ella; she fears she has lost her mind. She writes that if not for Reuben she "might have handed [her]self over to a psychiatrist. It was he

who pointed out to [her] that [she] hadn't heard any more voices than he had" (Brodber 31). In other words, Ella's response to hearing herself haunting herself on the recording seems reasonable given the fact that most people do not encounter this obvious an example of self-haunting. In fact, hearing voices is usually cited as a symptom of mental illness, thereby explaining her impulse to seek medical examination.

On the other hand, self-haunting opens possibilities for new forms of consciousness, personhood, and embodiment to come forth. Given this generative interpretation of self-haunting, estrangement is more usefully conceived of as defamiliarization. This subtle shift in terminology raises important implications about the theoretical work these two terms do. Estrangement and defamiliarization both mean, in essence, to make strange, to make the familiar unfamiliar. While these two terms certainly have definitional overlap, estrangement implies a sense of isolation. Indeed, a common usage of the word refers to familial or marital estrangement and therefore social ostracization to some extent. Had Ella turned herself over to a psychologist, her experience would most probably have been experienced as a form of estrangement precisely because it would have considered her self-haunting a form of abnormality, one that must be removed from everyday social settings. Estrangement creates the impression of a singular and solitary experience of self-haunting.

Conversely, by considering Ella's self-haunting as a defamiliarization, sites of haunting become sites of potential. Defamiliarization opens new space for examining the self and the self's experience without isolating the individual. Because defamiliarization is the act of making the familiar unfamiliar, it affords Ella the opportunity for self-redefinition. Haunting is therefore not just a confrontation with the past, as illustrated in the many temporal registers in the phrase "Ah who sey Sammy dead," but a way of reconfiguring the archive and imagining a new future.

An archive is not just a recording (in the many resonances of this phrase that *Louisiana* generates). It is also a way of shaping the future. In this sense, the idea that haunting represents a past that has not passed carries other meanings. By simply envisioning haunting and its relation to archive as a reappearance of the past, it is easy to overlook the other future-oriented work haunting engenders. Ella's self-haunting demonstrates how the past is not passive. It is not simply passively recorded but actively shaped. We need a dynamic version of the archive to attend to this activity.

Ella's self-haunting (and concomitant defamiliarization) also serves as a form of self-possession. While possession clearly has multiple valences of meaning, including, but by no means limited to, monetary and supernatural possession, Ella's self-haunting gathers these valences into an instance of multiple signification and an assertion of agency. Defamiliarization, as imagined through self-haunting, allows Ella to see beyond her familiar epistemological models and assumptions. The epistemological openings that self-haunting engenders in Ella give her the ability to create new confrontations with others' pasts as well. After moving to New Orleans and under the tutelage of Madam Marie, Ella becomes a seer. However, while the stereotypical ability of a seer is clairvoyance, Ella cannot predict the future but only return to the past. On one particular incident, a man named Ben comes to see her. After learning the name of Ben's former lover, Ella sees his history. In love with his student, Ben impregnates her only to ultimately reject her before her death during childbirth. Despite his guilt, Ben struggles to confront his own feelings; that is, until Ella forces him to return to his past.

However, Ella does not offer comfort or a vision of the future. Indeed, she upsets what we expect from a seer altogether. In thrusting Ben back to his biggest regret, Ella notes that "My job was to help him re-live his painful past. He had to take it from there" (Brodber 105). As a

seer, Ella forces her visitors to re-experience painful pasts. Crucially, through Ella's vision in which she embodies Ben's former lover, Ben must not only remember his past, but as Ella points out, he must re-live it. In this sense, Ella conjures Ben's past in an experience akin to haunting. Through her ability as a seer of the past, Ella creates a living archive. To accept his own history, Ben must resurrect it and then "take it from there." In other words, Ella conjures ghosts and then ensures that they survive in those they haunt. Traditional archival models cannot include these ghosts because they upset its teleological model. Ghosts introduce layers. Traditional archives iron these layers out precisely by demanding an exorcism of these ghosts. Brodber — in introducing the ghosts of Mammy King, Lowly, and Silas — and Ella — in resurrecting others' ghosts — refuses to let the Archive exorcise these histories.

Brodber maintains these other histories through her formal experimentation and organization of the novel itself. Recalling the plot summary provided in this chapter's introduction, the narrative of the novel actually reads fairly straightforwardly. The organization, however, introduces layers that complicate the plot's apparent linearity. For example, Brodber positions Ella's diary at the center of multiple nested narratives. In terms of layers, *Louisiana* follows this pattern: the diaries and transcript recorded by Ella herself sit at the center; the next layer includes the introduction by the Black World Press and positions Ella's diaries as a found manuscript; finally, the novel *Louisiana* written by Brodber encompasses the previous two layers. In much the same way that Ella's interviews with Mammy King bring her into the record and disrupt the notion of a single-story, Brodber's very organization of the novel performs a similar action. In other words, the novel is a novel about the fictionally published and mysteriously found manuscript of Ella's diaries, which are themselves repositories of other embedded narratives of the spirits that haunt her.

The relational archive offers a space for multivocalities to coexist. It provides a structure that can support these multiplicities simultaneously without relegating any one narrative to the periphery. By supporting these narratives, the relational archive allows narratives to retain their own self-possession. Relational archives do not determine a historical teleology as traditional archives do. Lastly, the relational archive, precisely because it can fold upon itself and support these multiplicities, remains indefinitely open to other histories that may enter the narrative. No history is too small.

Importantly, Brodber's inclusion of ghosts imagines an archive as not only a layered document but also a living one. Returning to the transcript Ella provides at the beginning of her diary, we can see how the archive itself becomes the site of haunting, one that requires a specific attention to listening to ghostly voices. Julian Wolfreys's "Preface: On Textual Haunting" begins with key questions concerning texts and spectrality: "What does it mean to speak of spectrality and of textual haunting? What does it mean to address the text as haunted? How do the ideas of haunting and spectrality change our understanding of particular texts and the notion of the text in general?" (ix). While the "text" and "textuality" and the "archive" differ practically, I consider the archive as a collection of "texts" (hence evoking questions of textuality). Wolfreys's concern with texts therefore raises similar questions of the texts of an archive. For Wolfreys, the fact that "books comprise texts extending beyond the borders of a particular publication or imprint, however bound, framed or produced" means that texts contain their own spectrality (xi). The text, regardless of its specific content, births its own ghosts. However, as Wolfreys makes clear, it is "not that the text is haunted by its author, or simply by the historical moment of its production. Rather it is the text itself which haunts and which is haunted by the traces which

come together in this structure we call textual" (xiii). Texts have a life of their own, one that passes beyond the boundaries of the text itself.

The connection between Wolfreys's discussion on textual haunting and *Louisiana* as an archive seems especially apt considering that Brodber's reconceptualization of archives occurs through the text of her novel *Louisiana*. *Louisiana* represents an archive in the fact that it collects multiple narratives concerned with events and people in the past (however recent). At the same time, *Louisiana* radiates beyond the boundaries of the pages of the novel in the same way that an archive is always more than the texts it houses. Trouillot describes four steps in the production of history: "fact creation (the making of *sources*)"; "fact assembly (the making of *archives*)"; "fact retrieval (the making of narratives)"; and the assertion of "retrospective significance (the making of *history*)" (26). Considering the textuality of the archive means considering the ways archives always exceed the individual texts themselves. *Louisiana*'s structure attests to this haunted quality in its multivocal nested narratives. The layered structure of the novel means that the inner texts expand to impact the outer layers. In other words, the formal organization of Brodber's novel renders the haunted nature of texts visible. The fact that *Louisiana* also includes ghosts within the narrative itself magnifies this haunted effect; it makes a reader aware of the haunting that occurs on the textual level because they experience ghosts on the narrative level.

Theoretically, the possibility of a text exceeding the bounds of its own body as a form of textual haunting applies to texts that do not engage with ghosts as deeply as *Louisiana*. Indeed, claiming a sense of haunted textuality runs the risk of considering every text haunted in ways that render the concept of haunting meaningless because it can be applied to almost anything. In their introduction to *The Spectralities Reader* María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren call the risk of overgeneralization "stretching the ghost" (15). In other words, because critics can apply

the concept of haunting widely and multidisciplinarily haunting runs the risk of losing historical and cultural specificity. Roger Luckhurst shares a similar fear. In “The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the ‘Spectral Turn’” Luckhurst argues that “the critical language of spectral or haunted modernity that has become a cultural-critical shorthand in the wake of *Specters of Marx* can only go so far” for explaining the cultural context of certain texts (*Spectralities Reader* 76). While Luckhurst concerns himself primarily with the London Gothic, his admonition applies to any analysis that uses haunting as a general conceptual foundation.

To understand the novel itself (in the many layers it contains) as a specific example of haunted textuality, we need look no further than the first page of the novel. In the fictional editor’s letter that open the novel, E.R. Anderson (the editor of The Black World Press) remarks on the mysterious appearance of the manuscript: “In the early 1970’s, nearly forty years after Ella Townsend’s descent into the unknown, this manuscript called *Louisiana*, then as now, appeared on our desk” (Brodber 3). The editor continues, saying that when their “small black women’s press” most needed a work “on and of black women,” “One found us” (3). The manuscript appears as if of its own accord. Indeed, as the novel makes clear, Ella dies towards the end of the novel meaning that she could not have sent the manuscript herself. While the editor’s letter hypothesizes that Rueben could have left the manuscript with an attorney to be mailed “to the ‘right’ publisher at the ‘right’ time,” the letter also acknowledges that Reuben “possibly dies in the Kasavubu/Lumumba struggles of the 1960’s” (4). Whatever the manuscript’s journey, it still arrives from a haunted source. The text, alive before the publishers, arrives from beyond the grave of both Ella and Reuben. At its core, the text *Louisiana* (both the found manuscript that The Black World Press publishes and the novel we ourselves read) haunts

those it touches. *Louisiana* encourages an engagement with haunted textuality from the beginning. We cannot not think of this text as haunted.

Yet, noticing the textual haunting that *Louisiana*'s archive conjures requires a process of listening and "translation." As previously mentioned, Ella only hears the voices of Lowly and Mammy King once she listens to the recordings. Recognizing haunting means taking the time to listen to the record instead of forging forward with a predetermined intellectual goal. Because traditional archival practices often disregard or fail to hear these ghostly voices, the layered archive builds avenues upon which Ella registers these narratives. Indeed, Mammy King and Lowly refer to their deaths as "translations." By referring to their deaths as translations, Mammy King and Lowly indicate that ghosts constantly surround historical processes, but that they necessitate a process of translation to be heard and understood.

Translating also entails a medium. Ella undertakes that work. By medium, I invoke the multiple resonances that term. First, medium clearly refers to Ella's role as a medium and seer. Second, and inextricably tied to this first meaning, Ella serves as an intermediary figure. She communes with both the living and the dead in the same way some historians envision their interactions with archives. As Francis X. Blouin Jr. And William G. Rosenberg describe in *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*, scholars often describe their engagement with archives as akin to resurrecting the dead. They point to French historian Jules Michelet as a prime example. For Michelet, the fascination with archives originates precisely in the ability to discover those "entombed in the archival sepulcher. This symbolic rebirth came for Michelet when he unfolded the documents, made the ink speak, and wrote dead authors into being" (25). Blouin Jr. and Rosenberg specially describe Michelet's approach as one akin to "translating": "The magical qualities of archival work were this rooted for Michelet not

only in the excitement of scientific discovery but in resurrecting the dead, translating and articulating their voices, and saying 'what they "really" meant and "really" wanted, since they themselves "did not understand"'" (26). According to this approach to archival engagement, the silences of the dead never lay beyond the historian's reach; they need only dust off forgotten documents to reach the ghosts of the past.

While it seems as though Brodber's use of ghosts and Michelet's fascination with the archive's resurrectory abilities align, Michelet's presumption that he can determine what these entombed voices from the past "really" meant and wanted diverges significantly from Brodber's novel. In contrast to Michelet's hubris, Ella never assumes she alone can speak for the dead. Indeed, her very role as a medium remains in keeping with the actual work of translation rather than how Blouin Jr. and Rosenberg use the term. Instead of translating, the archival approach Michelet espouses rewrites. It assumes to "know" more than the actual voices it consults. In contrast, Ella adopts a practice of listening to the multivocal layers of the archive. She lets the ghosts speak for themselves. They retain their agency, their own self-possession. At the same time, these ghosts guide Ella towards a practice of self-discovery through her interactions with these living archives. The ghosts in *Louisiana* continue to shape and interact with Ella's own history. In creating an archival model that holds any number of stories, ghosts become more than mere hauntings of the past. Haunting signals not a repetition of the past, but a way of continuing to embrace that past as it evolves.

The Communal Archive

While the concept of the relational archive offers a useful structure with which to imagine multivocal archives, redesigning the archive to better represent these multitudes requires a more expansive definitional model. To attend to the radical archival shifts that the novel inaugurates,

Louisiana offers *the communal archive*. Whereas the relational archive acknowledges the many and simultaneous voices that make up historical narratives, the communal archive posits a reconceptualization of how we organize archives in the first place. Unlike traditional archives, which purport a teleological and chronological view of history, the communal archive takes a person-first approach. In other words, where a traditional understanding of history organizes its archives based on key events, the communal archive considers individuals and their connections to other people as the foundation upon which we build a history.

Brodber emphasizes the relationships between characters throughout *Louisiana*. The structure of the communal archive indicates that the archive put forth by *Louisiana* prioritizes multiplicity over singularity. Archives need multiple voices. The transcript at the beginning of the novel includes evidence of the communal archive at work. Though we discover that Lowly and Mammy King do not meet each other until Mammy King arrives in Chicago, Lowly describes a relationship with Mammy King that reaches back much further. In the transcript (where they meet through Silas), Lowly paints a picture of the connections between herself and Mammy King before Chicago: "Miss Anna, you are my family. My mother was a Grant. Her grandfather a Grant. All Grants are my cousins. They all born and grow where I come from" (Brodber 16). Despite not actually knowing each other until much later, Lowly and Mammy share a familial bond; they forge bonds across time and space.

In response to Lowly's familial claim, Mammy King remarks that "Well ain't that something! Two places make babies" (Brodber 16). In this statement, Mammy King acknowledges not only the spatial difference between Lowly and Mammy ("two places" — a spatial difference that also influences the spatial difference between the living and the ghostly) but also the generative capabilities of that very space. In other words, distance here engenders

relationships that extend beyond their convergence point; though Mammy King and Lowly do not meet until much later (their convergence point), their pasts intertwine and "make babies." This phrase that "Two places make babies" repeats shortly after this conversation between Mammy King and Lowly. Observing Ella as she conducts her interviews with Mammy King, the two spirits discuss whether or not Ella can support her possession:

> "Who is this gal with some bits of me and some bits of you?"
>
> "Two places can make children! Two women sire another?" (Brodber 17)

Haunting presents another model for historical reproduction. Haunting articulates other histories. For Mammy King and Lowly, both of whom have no surviving children, adopting Ella through possession acts as a way for them to pass on their histories. Ella transforms into their daughter when she accepts her role as a vessel for multiple stories, not just her own or of those immediately related to her.

Ella's "birth," however, represents more than a mere adoption; it represents a coming into being. In this sense, Ella's birth signifies a rebirth, one that Ella commemorates with a new name - Louisiana. When she becomes Louisiana, Ella gives a name to the multiplicity evident throughout the novel. In effect, she gives herself a third identity (Ella Townsend, Ella Kohl, and finally Louisiana), while at the same time honoring the queer trio that Brodber creates through Mammy King and Lowly's haunting of Ella. In other words, when Ella becomes Louisiana she becomes not only another version of herself, but also the combination of Lowly and Mammy King. In fact, in christening herself Louisiana, Ella merges the three of them together symbolically. Ella states, "In me Louise [Lowly's full first name] and Sue Ann are joined […] Do you hear Louisiana there? […] Lowly-Anna. There's Louisiana" (Brodber 124). As the combination of her "parents'" names, the name Louisiana attest to this ability of a person to

honor the communal quality of passing on histories. Contained within Ella, within Louisiana, lies the archives of many others. The sum is more than its individual parts.

Importantly, relationships exist not only amongst individuals but also amongst places. It is no coincidence that Ella renames herself Louisiana after the US state and that Brodber includes multiple Louisianas throughout the novel. Recall the fact that both Mammy King and Lowly hail from St. Mary Louisiana, but that Mammy King's St. Mary is in the US state of Louisiana and Lowly's is St. Mary Louisiana, Jamaica. Like apparitions, the same place appears to exist as both identical and divergent in multiple locations including within the body of Ella herself. Despite these multiple locations housed within a single body, the most important aspect for Ella is how these places connect those around her.

The communal archive, therefore, not only centers the individual (and not just the event), but also widens the scope for what constitutes an archivally significant relationship. History no longer passes directly through biological lineages, but clusters of individuals brought together to form adopted families. We can thus envision an archive that looks less like the

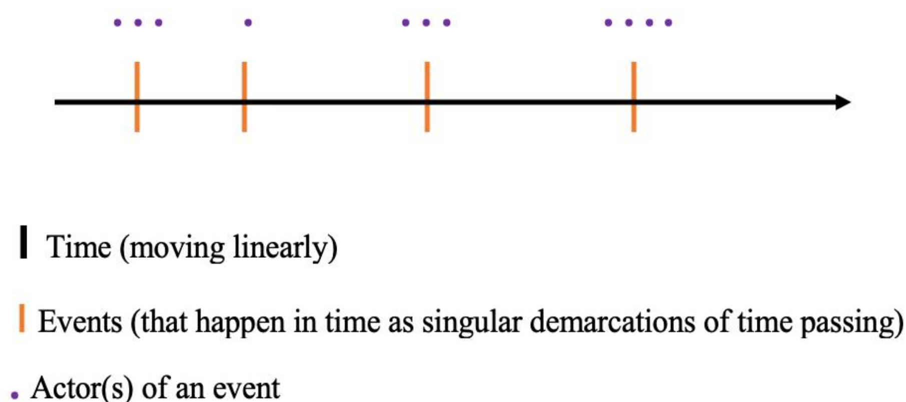

Figure 6

And more like a

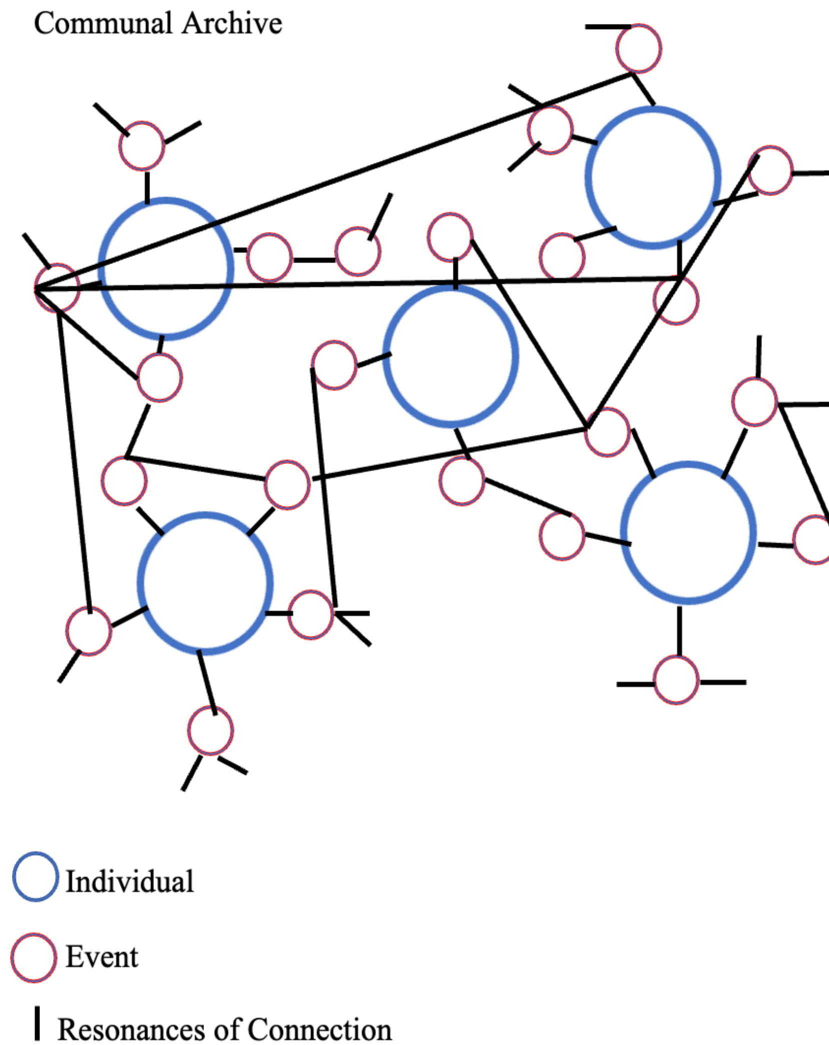

Figure 7

Each individual finds connections amongst other potentially disparate peoples through shared experiences, but the person takes precedence over these "historical" events. People share experiences widely, but the relationships people forge because of these resonances of connection are the focus. Because Brodber positions *Louisiana* as a fundamentally communal narrative, archives that ignore or miss these relations also miss the very history they seek in the first place. For example, the FWP from Columbia assigns Ella to collect Mammy King's history as the

history of South West Louisiana. However, and as previously discussed in “The Single-Story,” Mammy King refuses to comply with the FWP’s goal. Mammy King only shares her part of the narrative towards the end of the novel in an entry of Ella’s diary dated 1952 — a full sixteen years after Ella and Mammy King’s first meeting and the start of Ella’s possession in 1936.

Reuben, at the end of the diary, explains why Mammy King waited so long to share her own experiences: “Mammy would not tell the president nor his men her tale for it was not hers; she was no hero” (Brodber 161). When we conceive of history using the traditional archival model that prioritizes events (with heroes and villains) over complex individuals involved in multiple, overlapping historical moments, Mammy King could indeed play the role of the hero. After all, she advocated vociferously for Marcus Garvey’s pan-Africanism. In the sketch that Ella drafts of Mammy King shortly after finally learning about her role, she writes that Mammy King “continued her political work intertwining it with her psychic work, a combination which served to make her a legend” (Brodber 153). However, Mammy King, Ella, and Reuben acknowledge that though Mammy King may be a legend she did not work in isolation. Hence, the disruptive (to traditional archives) and generative (for reimagining archives and historical narration) work that *Louisiana* does at this point is how it refuses to see peoples and histories in singularities.

In the scene where Reuben explains Mammy King’s rational for withholding her history from the FWP archives, he also emphasizes the shared work of historical production. Immediately following his clarification that Mammy King “was no hero,” Reuben clarifies that the history the FWP wanted to extract from Mammy King actually takes the form of “a tale of cooperative action; it was a community tale. We made it happen” (Brodber 161). Here again, Brodber invokes multivocality. The single pronoun “we” signifies multiple actors. Recalling the

way the novel contains nested narratives that build a layered archive, the use of “we” also contains nested referents. First, “we” refers to the individuals directly involved with Mammy King’s activism and Garveyism more broadly. “We” in this instance references a specific temporal moment (but, crucially, one defined by collective action; “we made it happen” instead of “Mammy King made it happen”).

Moving out from this specifically temporal example, “we” also depicts Reuben and Ella as instrumental in bringing Mammy King’s, Lowly’s, and Silas’s narratives to the forefront. Even if we consider this “we” as referencing only Ella and Reuben, the act still represents a collective undertaking; Ella’s diary, especially towards the end of the text (as both the diary within the diegetic world of the novel and as the novel existing in the non-diegetic world where Brodber authors it) would not be finished without Reuben’s help as an additional author. The fact that Reuben assumes an authorial role because Ella can no longer write for herself complicates a straightforward understanding of what constitutes an author with regard to *Louisiana*. Both Ella and Reuben author her diary, a document generally considered private and singular. Instead, Ella’s division of authorial responsibility means that her diary now serves as a communal document. If we consider Ella’s diary as an archival document (i.e. a document included in a larger archive), then its very constitution demands recognition as an inherently communal source. In terms of authorship, these two layers of “we” include (at least) five authors: Ella (as the primary diarist), Reuben (as an additional diarist), and the possessing spirits of Mammy King, Lowly, and Silas (as ghosts sharing their own and others’ experiences). In other words, though Reuben physically pens the word “we” in this final sentence of the diary, the other voices in the text haunt the pronoun.

And still, “we” continues to widen. At yet another level of community involvement, “we” now branches out to include the publishers at the Black World Press who brought Ella’s text to a public audience. In the same way that Reuben and Ella “made it happen” by translating and transcribing the histories of Mammy King, Lowly, and Silas, the publishers at the Black World Press “made it happen” again by publishing the manuscript. In fact, in the publisher’s letter at the opening of *Louisiana*, the publisher remarks that the press took some small liberties with the text. The Black World Press named the epilogue “Coon can” thereby “entering by this act into the community of production” (Brodber 5). The publisher, in determining the final chapter’s title, introduces yet another communal aspect to the formation of the archive of Louisiana/*Louisiana*. With regard to the publisher’s contribution, “we made it happen” gives the manuscript a wider audience (and therefore enters it into the larger community). At every step of the ever widening “we” more community members enter the archive. Instead of squirreling the archive away in an archival repository building (which are often inaccessible to the general public and therefore primarily the domain of trained archivists and historians), the Black World Press initiates archival interactions that invite communal engagement.

Finally, “we” refers metatextually to the readers of Brodber’s novel. This direct hailing of the reader raises the question of what “we made it happen” means for a reader of this text, especially when that “we” includes a diverse group of individuals. What exactly did “we” make happen? Quite simply, we made another branch in the communal archive. We resurrected histories that had never truly passed on in the first place. Most importantly, Brodber brings readers into the process of archival formation. Communal archives never contain just one narrative; the archive always branches out and touches new points of connection. Readers represent one of those points of connection. An earlier moment in the novel helps illustrate the

reader's function in the archive of *Louisiana*. In Ella's initial interviews Mammy King flips the interview and thereby brings Ella into the process of archival formation as an active participant who cannot hide behind an assumed academic invisibility. In many ways, Brodber's hailing of us as readers accomplishes the same feat. We transform from mere observers into participants in processes of historical production. By including the reader in the communal act of historical production (and act that is never finished, but always working in tandem with ghosts), Brodber demonstrates what a communal archive looks like in everyday life.

This final line of Ella's diary — "We made it happen" — brings together the four main points I have been arguing throughout this chapter. First, it resists recuperative models. "We" did not "make it happen" by unearthing some lost history. Instead, "we made it happen" by actively engaging with the multiple narratives that coexist. "We" did not unbury history; "we" attended to its ghosts from the start. Second, the capacious "we" rejects the concept of a single-story by referencing the many voices and histories that make up *Louisiana* — including our own. Third, in its capaciousness, "we" contains layers, and these layers unsettle traditional archive's linearity. Histories found in Black archives, then, move multidirectionally, not simply on the straight-line of perceived linear time. Again, possession illustrates this fact by disrupting the distinction between the "past" and the "present." As *Louisiana* and its re-imagination of the archive using possession make clear, archives (and the histories they carry with them) are multivocal and relational. Events are not as discrete and distinct as historical production would have many believe. Finally, "we" speaks to the many relationships forged throughout this novel. It also honors the way relationships, not simply events, make up the stuff of history. Archives that take a communal approach cast a far wider net, one that calls for more than just recuperation.

Most importantly, however, "we" removes the archive from the dusty crypt, from the secreted and silent halls of the repository. Returning to the beginning of the novel, Ella fears that history died along with Mammy King. Without Mammy King, Ella worries that the history she must collect can never be recovered. This assumption may very well be true — but only if she ignores the ghosts that emerge from these departures. I draw our attention to this scene for two reasons, which, admittedly, may at first appear contradictory. My first reason is to reiterate that Mammy King is *the* archival repository. The assumption that Mammy King's death also means the death of that history presumes that Mammy King functions as the physical archive. Her death, at least initially, takes that repository to the grave as well. However, my second reason also claims that Mammy King is *an* archival repository. While these apparently reiterate the same claim, I want to clarify the distinction between *the* archival repository and *an* archival repository. In one instance, Mammy King functions as the *only* record. In the other, Mammy King lives among the many other voices that constitute the "we" of the communal archive. In the first instance, Mammy King's history dies along with her physical body. In the other, "we" continue to engage with history by listening to the ghosts in the archive. In essence, this final "we" is so important because *Louisiana* reenvisions the archive as *we*. "We" are the archive, and "we" must listen for the ghosts communicating on other frequencies.

Section Two: Creating Haunted Futures

CHAPTER THREE

FAMILY GHOSTS AND MAKING THE FUTURE TOGETHER: HAUNTED FUTURITIES IN THANE ROSENBAUM AND JESMYN WARD

"Everything around me is now haunted, you know."

"Not more than it was, Oliver. Actually, as I see it, you're much better off now than before they all came"

(Rosenbaum 234)

When Ariel Levine notices that her father Oliver's refusal to confront his connection to the Holocaust turns serious, she takes matters into her own hands in Thane Rosenbaum's novel *The Golems of Gotham*. Oliver, a writer and a member of the second generation of Holocaust survivors, finds himself afflicted with a serious case of writer's block. Ariel, a perceptive young girl, recognizes that Oliver's writer's block stem from deeper-seated personal histories. Oliver's strategy for life after his parents' dual suicide — his "refusal to emotionally confront all that had gone wrong, and all that had walked away" — leaves him constantly trying to outrun his "inner demons" (Rosenbaum 31). Whether he likes it or not, though, Oliver's "demons" have caught up with him. Seeing that her father is unable to fight these painful histories himself and is unwilling to even acknowledge their existence, Ariel resurrects her grandparents' ghosts — along with some other unexpected spirits. Together, Ariel and the ghosts, help Oliver not only come to terms with his Holocaust connections but also his future possibilities as both a father and an artist.

While many analyses of ghosts tie them almost exclusively to the past, the ghosts included in Rosenbaum's novel focus primarily on future building and breaking repetitive cycles.

These ghosts introduce haunted futurities to help Oliver create a different future, one not plagued by his Holocaust avoidance. Paradoxically, Oliver is blocked, trapped at an impasse, precisely because he runs from being haunted by the Holocaust. The ghosts in *The Golems of Gotham*, break repetitive cycles of violence and imagine other possibilities of what a (haunted) future might look like. For the characters in Rosenbaum's novel, it is only through haunting that they can move towards other futures.

The Golems of Gotham follows the three generations of the Levine family as they each struggle with living with a Holocaust connection in a post-Holocaust world. Oscar Levine, orphaned after his Holocaust-survivor parents' suicide, now lives in Manhattan as a successful mystery writer with his young daughter, Ariel. However, their relationship has always been unconventional. Scarred by his parents' double suicide and his wife's sudden abandonment, Oliver refuses to forge emotional bonds with those around him. As a result, Ariel calls her own father by his first name and feels less like the child in their relationship and more like the parent. Rosenbaum, throughout the novel, refers to this "shift in the parental paradigm" in which younger generations of Holocaust-survivor families grow up with distant or distracted parents (Rosenbaum 87). This "shift in the parental paradigm" and Oliver's severe writer's block ultimately drives Ariel to resurrect the ghosts of her grandparents (and accidentally resurrect the ghosts of six famous Holocaust writers: Primo Levi, Jean Améry, Paul Celan, Piotr Rawicz, Jerzy Kosinski, and Thadeusz Borowski). After their resurrection, the ghosts attempt to build a utopian New York by removing all tattoos, disrupting subway and train schedules, and putting an end to smoking. Unfortunately, Oliver remains as troubled over his Holocaust connections as ever. Only after the ghosts save him from an attempted suicide does Oliver begin to return to his life with Ariel and learn how to live with his Holocaust history.

The Golems of Gotham begins with a grim scene: in October 1980, Lothar Levine shoots himself in his Miami synagogue while his wife Rose simultaneously chews on a cyanide tablet. Lothar and Rose's unexpected suicide shocks the congregation not only because of its public nature (in a house of worship no less), but also because of the special status that Lothar and Rose hold within their Jewish community; Lothar and Rose are Holocaust survivors. This double suicide raises a critical question that the novel wrestles with throughout the rest narrative: "Why survive the camps only to later commits suicide — together, in concert, without any explanation? Paradoxically they had turned their survival skills — the very life source that had defeated the Nazis — against themselves" (Rosenbaum 4). Rosenbaum's preface offers an explanation for this conundrum. While describing that the various ghosts resurrected in the novel all committed suicide, Rosenbaum asserts that the "reason is simple: There is no other choice than the one these writers ultimately settled on, which brought about a loss that was unimaginable, and irreplaceable, for their families and readers" (Rosenbaum xi). It seems that for Rosenbaum, faced with the illogic of the Holocaust, only violence and loss can rise to the question.

By opening the novel with an act of violence — one coded to be of particular resonance to Jewish communities because of the victims' identities as Holocaust survivors and because the suicides take place in a synagogue — Rosenbaum suggests that when faced with the horrors of the Holocaust only violence can survive. When Ariel looks Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah) to resurrect the ghosts of her grandparents to help save her increasingly distant father, she accidentally raises the ghosts of six other famous Holocaust figures who also died by suicide. In an early chapter in the novel, Rosenbaum narrativizes Primo Levi, Jean Améry, Paul Celan, Piotr Rawicz, Jerzy Kosinski, and Thadeusz Borowski's suicides. In this chapter, Rosenbaum uses a third person limited omniscient perspective to get inside the mind of each writer in their last

living moments. Crucially, each writer succumbs to death by suicide because they see it as the only viable option in a post-Holocaust world.

These writers express the more conventional understanding of feeling haunted by the Holocaust in that they feel as though they cannot escape the past. The collapse between the past and the present as a result of trauma, a common trope in Holocaust writing and scholarship, dictates how these fictionally represented writers initially express their sense of being haunted by the Holocaust. More specifically, each writer cannot shake the past, which continues to pursue them in every moment. For Primo Levi, “he could not block out what had obscenely, and unconscionably, returned. Neo-Nazis were marching all over Europe” (Rosenbaum 58). Jerzy Kosinski, a controversial figure and larger-than-life personality, turned to suicide because the world had moved past the atrocities of the Holocaust far too quickly. Thadeusz Borowski commits suicide to stop the “music in his head that would never stop; in a broken world it would play on like a broken record” (Rosenbaum 62). Thadeusz, for whom “these Russian comrades had the power to liberate only his body; they couldn’t do anything to free him from his memory,” “could think of no other way to silence the music” than ending his life (Rosenbaum 62, 63). Like Primo Levi, Paul Celan dies by suicide after seeing the return on Neo-Nazis. Jean Améry, after surviving torture and arguing that “*He who has been tortured remains tortured*,” concludes that the only answer to the question of “how does one find a reason to live?” is simply that one doesn’t (Rosenbaum 64, original emphasis). Finally, Rosenbaum describes Piotr Rawicz’s final thoughts along similar lines. Piotr, haunted by the death of his two children in Auschwitz, cannot find any other way to “liberate” himself than ending his life (Rosenbaum 66). And so, Rose, Lothar, and each of these six famous writers commit suicide because their Holocaust pasts

overtake their post-Holocaust presents. A violent survival seemingly demands a violent end — even if they ultimately make that end themselves.

For these characters who eventually reenter the narrative as ghosts themselves, feeling haunted by the Holocaust relies on theories of haunting that connect haunting only with repetitions of the past. In fact, in much literature of the Holocaust, tropes surrounding narrativizing trauma often include the way trauma stops time — or at the very least blurs it. The past and the present collide and collapse into one. For Marianne Hirsch, the intergenerational transmission of trauma plagues younger generations whose parents' "experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their one right" (Hirsch 5). Ariel, justifying her desire to resurrect her grandparents' ghosts to help save Oliver, notes that "Some family histories are so big, the future can't overshadow the past […] The Holocaust is that way with us. It's not in the past. For my family the Holocaust is always present" (Rosenbaum 42). Cathy Caruth explains trauma as a fundamentally disorienting experience. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Caruth argues that trauma leaves its victims without a clear distinction between the past and present; trauma interrupts the present and takes the form of repetitive actions and visions. Connecting haunting with these trauma tropes, ghosts certainly do seem like manifestation of past trauma that merges the past and the present.

Rosenbaum's repeated associations between violence and haunting seem to imply the solution to ghosts (real or metaphorical) must take an act of violence. In fact, though the ghosts attempt to encourage Manhattan's citizens to engage in more ethical behavior in the present upon their spectral return, Jean expresses his frustration over citizens' apparently slow progress. Jean, already depicted as the most cynical of the ghosts, convinces his fellow spirits into taking violent

action. When pressed by the six other ghosts about changing their hitherto peaceful interactions with the living, Jean asserts, "We're golems. We can't be stopped once we get started. We're machines of destruction and retribution. That's the whole point of our existence: to exact revenge, to teach the vile and ignorant important lessons about compassion, fairness, and respect, so they will be decent next time" (Rosenbaum 310). He continues, saying that the current non-violent changes the ghosts have enacted haven't been enough to sway the minds of humanity: "They need a wake-up call, something that will frighten them" (Rosenbaum 311). For Jean, humanity only knows how to react to violence. Only violence will compel people to change their behavior. Though the other ghosts reluctantly agree, Lothar makes a final request: that they leave behind no broken glass. In this seemingly simple request, Lothar actually attempts to avoid reliving and reenacting Kristallnacht, a pivotal moment in the escalation of Nazi antisemitism in November of 1938.

Lothar's well-intentioned request, unfortunately, finds itself short lived. The chapter about the ghosts' riot begins with "*Kristallnacht* had come to the Big Apple. There would be broken glass after all — everywhere, in fact. Lothar's advice and warnings had gone unheeded" (Rosenbaum 321, original emphasis). Despite their intentions to use violence as a wake-up call against a past that seems poised on repeating itself in the present, the ghosts reenact the very event they vowed to avoid. Their call for violence speaks to a complicated response to Holocaust trauma. On the one hand, rage about the horrors of the Holocaust and a desire for revenge seems justified. One way to relieve that rage may be through enacting retributive violence. On the other hand, violence often begets more violence. Taking the ghosts' riot as a key example, the ghosts enact violence under the assumption that the citizens of New York City will not listen to

anything less extreme. However, this push for violence ultimately recreates a pivotal event in the history of Nazi anti-Jewish violence.

Jean's sentiment runs into the complication how what it means to be a survivor of the Holocaust and insist on violence as the only solution. Indeed, though they eventually decide to go through with the riot, the ghosts themselves wrestle with the dangerous precedent set by responding to violence with violence. If the only way to force people in the present to pay attention to the horrors of the Holocaust is through extreme violence, then the bar for violence's shock value increases with each use of this tactic. "Human atrocity becomes commonplace. Tragedy becomes boring" bemoans Paul (Rosenbaum 310). Primo observes that "People are no longer shocked […] We have lost our capacity to be shocked. The victims are dehumanized. And everyone else is simply desensitized. Hooked on the drug of indifference" (Rosenbaum 311). By the ghosts' logic, each time the world requires a wake-up call it simultaneously demands an increase in violence. Eventually, this increase becomes uncontrollable. What perhaps started as a controlled burn rampages into a wildfire.

As Nicola Morris points out in *The Golem in Jewish American Literature*, Rosenbaum's fiction often confronts "the tensions between the use of force for justice and the use of force for emotional satisfaction" (Morris 32). The golems' debate at this point in *The Golems of Gotham* demonstrates how easily these two different uses of force can slip into each other. To understand the connection between Rosenbaum's golems and haunting, a clear explanation of these two different uses of force would help. On the one hand, the use of force for justice represents a future-oriented practice; it seeks to attain justice and ensure justice in the future. On the other hand, the use of force for emotional satisfaction desires not justice but revenge; this use is decidedly past-oriented in that it holds onto a past wrong as a key motivation for determining

present action. However, both of these responses present violence as the only solution, a response that *The Golems of Gotham* actually undermines throughout the rest of the novel. Contemplating violent responses also upholds a long-standing narrative arc of golem stories.

In this sense, the familiar trajectory of the golem myth in which the golem eventually runs amok serves as a useful lens for understanding the pitfalls of using violence as a strategy for creating other futures. In *The Golem Redux: From Prague to Post-Holocaust Fiction*, Elizabeth R. Baer traces the long history of golem stories and retellings through the theoretical lens of intertextuality. One key trope she identifies is the golem run amok or the "wild golem" (Baer 35). "In some versions," writes Baer, "the rabbi neglected to remove the *shem* from the golem's mouth for the Sabbath, the usual practice which provided the golem with a day of rest" (Baer 34-35, original emphasis). In other versions, including Jakob Grimm's 1808 retelling, the golem grows too powerful and his creator loses control (Rothstein, "A Legendary Protector"). In any case, the golem's "wildness remains a staple of twentieth-and twenty-first-century versions" (Baer 35). However, Baer argues that Jewish authors contribute the golem's wildness to human folly: the rabbi who forgot to let the golem rest on the sabbath, the creator who didn't erase the shem before the golem grew too large, the shtetl who — thanks to the golem — no longer needs his labor and protection. In this sense, the golem doesn't run amok to spite his creators but to indicate that his own needs aren't met or that his services are no longer required.

Though Jewish traditions usually depict the golem as a helper figure or a protector of Jewish communities (see Yudl Rosenberg and Chayim Bloch's early twentieth-century retellings), retellings by non-Jewish authors often muddy this portrayal. Paul Wegener's 1920 German film, *Der Golem: Wie er in die Welt kam* (The Golem: How He Came Into the World), serves as a poignant example. Wegener's film not only portrays Jews in highly stereotypical

ways in which Jewish mysticism transforms into Jewish necromancy but also translates the golem into a child-murdering monster, a translation that functions as a kind of confirmation of the oft-hurled accusation that Jews engage in blood-libel using Christian children. In this disturbing use of the golem myth, *Der Golem* contributes to dangerously antisemitic appropriation.

Emily Miller Budick too includes a chapter about ghosts and golems in Holocaust literature in her monograph *The Subject of Holocaust Fiction*. Throughout her chapter, "Golems, Ghosts, Idols, and Messiahs," Budick argues that these various golems that appear in other Holocaust fiction function as idols. She makes the dubious claim that when "Jewish writers and their Jewish protagonists try to undo the rush to death of other Jews […] through acts of conjuring, rescue, translation, and resurrection, they are implying a practice that is reminiscent of Christianity in order to reverse or undo the consequences of Christianity's efforts to obliterate the Jewish world" (Budick 137-138). The turn to Christian symbology feels at odds with many of the texts Budick examines and jettisons the unique approaches Jewish writers take when discussing the legacy of the Holocaust for Jews themselves.

What do these competing representations of the golem mean for Rosenbaum's golems and their use of violence? I contend that their turn to violence must fail precisely because it is retributive and not protective. Written by a Jewish author about a Jewish family and Holocaust survivors, *The Golems of Gotham* includes the trope of the golem run amok without allowing these golems to ever really lose total control. As the golems begin their rampage, Rosenbaum writes, "As should have been anticipated, they had finally reverted to the ancient myth, conformed to the stereotype. The legend of the Golem is not a particularly happy tale. It climaxes in a full-scale riot, and in the center of the maelstrom lies the monster" (Rosenbaum 321). In

turning to violence to make the human world listen, the ghosts appear to fulfill narrative expectations about the golem myth. In this sense, the golems do seem to run amok, to tear loose from their original goal of saving and protecting the Levin family.

However, Rosenbaum immediately undercuts this loss of control by reintroducing a minor character: Alejandro, the Levin's superintendent. Early in the novel, Rosenbaum introduces Alejandro the superintendent as not only a character who fixes the apartment but also as an adopted family member. When describing him, Ariel says, "In a way he's like family, because Oliver and I don't have any other relatives" (Rosenbaum 26). When the golems take up residence in the Levin's brownstone, however, Oliver keeps Alejandro away. His reappearance at this juncture indicates a few important developments. First, in his role as a superintendent, Alejandro repairs and maintains the brownstone. Second, in his role as an adopted family member, his reentrance into the novel reflects a reconnection with family. His return therefore implies a movement towards repairing the damage — either past familial damage or recent damage from the golems' rampage. Finally, Alejandro wonders about the golems' behavioral shift: "It sounds like there are ghosts out there running around like wild animals. But they don't seem like the same kind of ghosts we've been having lately. Are they?" (Rosenbaum 324). This observation suggests that the golems' rampage represents not the culmination of the golems' role in the narrative, but an aberration.

Haunted Futurities

While *The Golems of Gotham* does offer violence as one answer to its key question — how to live after the Holocaust? — it also offers an opposite solution. Instead of ghosts functioning primarily as reminders of a painful past, Rosenbaum's ghosts serve as the potential for imagining other futures. Feeling haunted by the Holocaust, in other words, does not simply

mean an inability to move past this historical atrocity. In this sense, the ghosts in *The Golems of Gotham* represent haunted futurities. Avery Gordon argues that haunting carries with it an emergent quality. By this she means that haunting produces a "something-to-be-done" (Gordon, "Some Thoughts" 2). Gordon argues that this "something-to-be-done" encourages future action intended to heal past violence and prevent future violence: "it [the something-to-be-done] was a way of focusing on the cultural requirements or dimensions of movement and change — individual, social, and political" (Gordon, *Ghostly* xvii). Haunting marks sites of violence and uses that haunting as an impetus for change. According to Debra Ferreday and Adi Kuntsman, this call-to-action revises what questions we ask when confronted by ghosts. They write, "Traditional haunting narratives ask what is to be done, in order to lay the ghost to rest. A better question might be: how do we live with our ghosts? How do we move towards futures *with* those ghosts, without erasing their existence, but equally, without allowing them to determine what is to come?" (Ferreday and Kunstman 10). *The Golems of Gotham* examines what living with ghosts looks like, but more importantly, how this living with ghosts leads to other futures instead of past repetitions.

Though each of the ghosts Ariel summons dies by different methods of suicide, they each share one crucial intersection: fearing the resurgence of neo-Nazism, each dies by suicide to avoid what they perceive as an inevitable repetition of the past. When Oliver first meets the ghosts, Primo explains that the "fact that the Holocaust will one day become marginal, maybe even irrelevant, was too difficult for us to bear. We could see it coming" (Rosenbaum 81). Faced with what they perceive as the increasing ambivalence about the Holocaust and fearing the past relating itself, each choose death over reliving that history.

However, with (literal) new leases on life, the ghosts seek to break this dangerous cycle. In this same first meeting Thadeusz exclaims, “Out of death can also come renewal” (Rosenbaum 81). Primo too argues that the “world must learn how to live with the Holocaust as it steps into the future, otherwise there will be no future” (81). According to the ghosts, learning to live with, not against, ghosts is the only way to move forward into a future that will remember the Holocaust and avoid repeating history. Instead of exorcising ghosts to move forward, *The Golems of Gotham* argues that the future must be haunted — not by repetitions of trauma, but by memory.

Using Oliver’s character as a touchstone, Rosenbaum makes a clear distinction between memory and obsession throughout the novel. Oliver traverses a wide range of potential responses to the Holocaust. As a member of the second-generation of Holocaust survivors, Oliver’s responses prove especially tangled. At the beginning of the novel, he refuses to acknowledge his Holocaust past and his parents’ status as survivors. First orphaned by his parents, then abandoned by his wife, Oliver explains “that’s why for as long as I can remember, I’ve been haunted by loss. Everywhere that I’ve lived has been haunted this way. It is my private ghost. My private companion, always with me. The loved ones are long gone, but the loss never leaves my side” (Rosenbaum 32). According to Oliver at this point in the novel, haunting can only embody loss. Haunting only serves as a painful reminder of loss, the outline of that which no longer exists. His response typifies a sense of emotional repression that arises from trauma (or the proximity to it). In her introduction to *Third-Generation Holocaust Narrative: Memory in Memoir and Fiction*, Victoria Aarons explains how survivors’ children and grandchild feel “simultaneously remote and also consciously connected to the memory of the Holocaust” (Aarons xvii). For Oliver, that conscious connection is too much. He relies on emotional repression as a coping mechanism,

arguing that "Self-preservation works best for those who don't dwell" (Rosenbaum 33). In other words, Oliver approaches living with the Holocaust by refusing to acknowledge it and its impact in his own life.

Part of the ghosts' mission involves helping Oliver free himself from this repression. Rosenbaum uses Oliver's (in)ability to write as a symbol for his suppressed emotional response to his own family history. In other words, in freeing Oliver from his writer's block, the ghosts will simultaneously free Oliver from his emotional block. Early in the novel, Oliver distinguishes between the type of work he writes and "art." He explains that for artists "Repression is not an option. Neither is forgetting nor denial […] There is a tragic human paradox at work here: The more painful the life, the more profound the art" (Rosenbaum 29-30). In this sense, the golems that come to life to help save Oliver qualify as "real" artists. Oliver, however, refuses to identify as an artist, saying that "none of this really applies to me. I mean…I *am* a writer, but I'm no artist. Far from it. I write gothic mysteries; courtroom legal thrillers. My aesthetic never qualifies as emotionally complex or intellectually challenging" (Rosenbaum 30). Oliver's writing, in other words, does little to work through his own Holocaust history or to inspire ethical responses in his readers.

While Oliver's genre fiction appears unartistic to him, it provides a clear connection with ghosts and the redemptive power of haunting. Not only does he live on Edgar Allan Poe Street, but his "gothic legal thrillers" comprise the entirety of his published works (Rosenbaum 33). Oliver surrounds himself with ghosts, even as he attempts to ignore the ghosts of his parents and his Holocaust connection. Whether he likes it or not, Oliver continues to conjure ghosts — a skill his daughter Ariel inherits and uses to literally conjure the eight ghosts in the novel. In her analysis of *The Golems of Gotham*, Baer claims that the golems are "summoned not only to

rescue a people but to rescue art" (Baer 175). Connecting "real" art with writing that confronts (instead of avoids) the aftermath of genocidal violence, implies that Oliver can only overcome his writer's block by finally facing his emotional blockages. The two cannot be teased apart for Oliver. On multiple occasions, Rosenbaum makes this connection between artistic creation and emotional attunement and the ultimate success of Oliver's emotional and literary dam breaking clear to readers by implying that parts of the very book we read is Oliver's novel written during his period of haunting.

His progression from "gothic legal thrillers" to his literary novel *Salt and Stone* provides a glimpse into precisely how ghosts, when considered harbingers of haunted futurities, can lead those trapped in repetitive cycles into other possibilities. While his earlier published works pay the bills, they all follow predictable genre conventions. Oliver himself admits that "My work is all mindless, connect-the-dots formula […] My characters are flawed but easy to figure out" (Rosenbaum 30). Immediately after this, Oliver details the plot sequences he follows in these novels. In each of his earlier novels, he simply inserts a different character of the same type and follows his pre-patterned plot sequences. These gothic legal thrillers are interchangeable. Oliver finds himself stuck in a shallow narrative loop of his own creation.

The ghosts that enter his real life force him to abandon this loop and seek depth. They push him to a different future. Though this future is still haunted, its ghosts disrupt repetition instead of upholding it. To see this disruption in action I turn, once again, to the golems' rampage. However, this time I direct our attention to Oliver. As the ghosts discuss their plans to riot, Oliver struggles to control the breakthrough of his emotional dam. In their individual pursuits, the ghosts abandon Oliver to his own devices wherein the river of the intergenerational transmission of Holocaust trauma sweeps him away. Oliver immerses himself in his work on *Salt*

and Stone, but “Too much immersion leads to madness. But neither Oliver, nor Ariel […] would have known that. The Golems, of course, knew the risks of Oliver’s freewheeling, mindspinning adventures in word processing. But their motives in judging him there were compromised, their interests conflicted, their loyalties both dual, and in a duel” (Rosenbaum 223). Enraptured with their own interests, the ghosts send Oliver down a path that he cannot travel alone. He needs the ghosts to help guide him forward. But, at this crucial juncture, the ghosts turn to their own journey down a familiar and repetitive road: the golem run amok.

While the ghosts riot, Oliver sinks further and further into his obsession with his Holocaust past. As he feels himself slipping from the world around him, Oliver notes that the “Golems are drawing me in too deep. That can’t possibly be good for me. The same thing is happening with feelings. I am having them — all of them” (Rosenbaum 257). Even the ghosts of his parents notice how Oliver “is losing himself in that book” (Rosenbaum 273). Finally, when the ghosts abandon Oliver for their riot across New York City, Oliver takes his father’s pistol (the same on Lothar used for his own death by suicide) and ventures to the little red lighthouse on the Hudson River. A third-person omniscient narrator explains how in deciding to die by suicide, “Oliver was returning to the beginning” thereby indicating how Oliver’s intent to commit suicide serves as a repetitive act (Rosenbaum 338). Using the same pistol as his father, Oliver intends to die in the same manner. And with none of the golems keeping watch over him, it seems as though Oliver will succeed in upholding this apparent family ritual.

Luckily for Oliver, however, the golems recognize the error of the riot in time to save him. Seeing Oliver poised to die by suicide, the golems remember that their “task was never intended to be the same as that of the Prague Golem: Their manner and method of rescue was all about inner transformation, not outward violence” (Rosenbaum 340). In this moment,

Rosenbaum revises the golem myth to create a different ending; in making the golems ghosts and not merely clay figures like the traditional golem myths, Rosenbaum uses these figures to not only examine the dangers of falling into repetitive patterns concerning Holocaust mourning and remembrance, but he also uses the ghosts/golems to create haunted futurities. These ghosts demonstrate the dangers of trying to right past violences with violence and from that space offer other visions of what Holocaust mourning looks like in the future.

According to Budick in *The Subject of the Holocaust Fiction*, Holocaust fiction with ghosts of famous murdered Jews raises important questions about what it means to mourn the Holocaust from a historical and generational distance. In her analysis of fiction by Cynthia Ozick, Philip Roth, and Jonathan Safran Foer (among others), she writes that the “question is how to mourn the Jewish dead, for to mourn is not to forget. It is not to make the dead disappear; rather it is to place the deceased in a vital, life-sustaining relation to the living. It is to make them present in a way that neither possesses nor paralyzes the present” (Budick, *Subject* 167). Rosenbaum’s golems, in fact, perform this life-sustaining work through haunting by saving Oliver from his intended death by suicide. Ariel’s involvement in this rescue represents the connection between the dead and the living, the necessary and continued interactions between the dead and the living for protecting future Jewish life.

For Rosenbaum, later generations learn to live with the Holocaust by striking a balance between memory and moving forward. As previously discussed, Rosenbaum precipitates Oliver’s suicide by inundating Oliver in memory. Oliver cannot see past the Holocaust that haunts his family (both literally and metaphorically). The ghosts rescue Oliver by encouraging him to live, not simply relive memories of the Holocaust survivors surrounding him. According to *The Golems of Gotham*, Oliver needs memory to move past his writer’s block and truly

confront his familial history, but he needs a way to imagine a future beyond that memory just as urgently.

In Oliver's almost-suicide scene, a key argument Rose uses to snap Oliver out of his melancholy includes appealing to Oliver's important role in shaping a different future. Rose turns to Oliver and reminds him that while the ghosts will be leaving soon and cannot inhabit the world in the same way Oliver can, "that young girl who is over there in the lighthouse, your daughter, is real, and very much alive" (Rosenbaum 345). While the ghosts talk to Oliver on the ledge of the George Washington Bridge, Ariel mans the lighthouse, which had lain dormant and dark for years prior. In this sense, Ariel represents not only the literal continuation of generations of Jews after the Holocaust as a third-generation Holocaust survivor, but also the light by which to help lead others to safe harbor. Rosenbaum therefore speaks to how haunted futurities do not forsake the past in favor of moving on ("burying the dead"), but how they use haunting to envision other futures. Ghosts make apparent the repetitive cycles the living undertake and push them to create new ways of engaging with the world.

Exodus: A Way Out

The Passover seder at the conclusion of the novel speaks to how haunted futurities posit other futures while maintaining a connection to memory and history. In their home on Edgar Allan Poe Street, Oliver and Ariel host the ghosts for Passover seder — meaning that the dead and the living engage in this process of Jewish celebration and memorialization together through a shared meal. As *The Golems of Gotham* makes clear, the characters can only find other ways of living through their encounters with the golems/ghosts. The Passover seder, therefore, proves an important moment not only in Oliver's reintegration into Jewish life but also because the Passover seder memorializes the Israelites exodus (and concomitant salvation) from Egypt.

Oliver observes that "This was a time to celebrate and commemorate. A time to think about the Exodus and emancipation — for his forebears and himself" (Rosenbaum 348). Symbolically, Oliver's engagement with this specific Jewish holiday represents his own exodus from his two emotional journeys throughout the novel: first, his repression of and refusal to acknowledge his Holocaust connections, and second, his descent into the other end of the spectrum with his Holocaust obsession. Oliver can now actively engage in specifically Jewish ways of remembrance without losing himself in the process.

This particular Passover seder proves especially important for the Levin family because they combine it with Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. Surrounded by the ghosts of Holocaust survivors, Oliver makes space for these ghosts at his table. However, sharing Passover with Yom HaShoah does not make light of the horrors of the Holocaust. In fact, it remembers the generations that come after who must "make a home for those who are still wondering in the desert" (Rosenbaum 349). By combining Passover and Yom HaShoah, Rosenbaum indicates that out of this tragedy too there will be an exodus. Indeed, as Oliver's parents express, the main focus on the night is not on merely memorializing the past, but about how to honor that past moving forward: "Despite everything that had happened, Lothar and Rose still had hope for the future — just not theirs. They wanted better for Oliver; they just didn't know how to make it so, recognizing their own limitations" (Rosenbaum 350). While these ghosts, and *The Golems of Gotham* more generally, do inspire haunted futurities, their limitation lies in the fact that they cannot be the ones to enact those new futures. For a haunted futurity to become a realized futurity, the living must make it so.

Rosenbaum's ghostly seder also marks one of the final interactions between the Levin family and the eight golems because following this seder Oliver, Ariel, and the golems visit

Miami where the golems take their leave. For Oliver and his parents, this return to Miami represents a kind of homecoming. More importantly, this return allows Oliver to reestablish his connection to his family's past without losing sight of his own future. Upon his return to Miami, Oliver notes how "everything about his childhood was now finally okay. He had come back, not to shout, but to listen. He was able to look around without the blinders and blackout goggles of the Holocaust. He could step more freely, look ahead, and not only down" (Rosenbaum 363). Through his interactions with the golems, Oliver finally finds balance between remembering the Holocaust and living in the present. This balance affords him a better view of other futures; he no longer struggles to see past blinders or see through blackout goggles.

As the ghosts prepare to leave, Ariel reminds readers that the "whole purpose of ghosts being around is to remind you of what you've done wrong. But sometimes they also give you a way out" (Rosenbaum 363). The line is important a few, interrelated, reasons. First, it recalls the dual interpretations of the golem myth itself. On the one hand, the golem carries with it the potential to run amok. On the other hand, it serves as a protector for Jewish communities. It is both the reminder of something gone wrong and the way to right other wrongs. Second, Ariel's astute observation points to the potential for ghosts to function as more than simply reminders or repetitions of past wrongs; "they also give you a way out." Oliver requires both functions of ghosts — to reveal his own entrenched patterns of refusing to confront his connection to the Holocaust and to provide an escape from those same patterns. Rosenbaum's ghosts therefore not only bring problems to the surface, but also teach those they haunt how to change those patterns that caused problems in the first place. As *The Golems of Gotham* demonstrates, the way forward can only happen because of the Levin family's interactions with ghosts. Haunting is not a simple repetition of the past, but a way of making new futures.

In this sense, the golems represent not harbingers of a past that will not rest in peace, but a future that demands a different outcome. During the Passover seder, Rosenbaum describes the golems as “effective and resourceful maintenance men” (Rosenbaum 351). This description refers most directly to the golems’ cleanup of Manhattan after their riot thereby reinforcing how haunting makes apparent existing patterns of confronting history that simply repeat entrenched patterns and how haunting carries with it the potential to repair that same past damage. As Rosenbaum states, “Magic often works both ways — in the upheaval, and in the cleanup” (Rosenbaum 351).

The description of the ghosts as “maintenance men” also recalls another important, if fairly minor, figure in *The Golems of Gotham* — Alejandro, Oliver and Ariel’s superintendent. Early in the novel, Ariel describes Alejandro’s role as “the one who takes care of some of the brownstones on Edgar Allan Poe Street” (Rosenbaum 26). Professionally, Alejandro works as a maintenance man; he comes to the Oliver’s rescue when something breaks and Ariel notes that “Oliver wouldn’t even know where to find the fuse box if Alejandro wasn’t around to help out” (Rosenbaum 26). The ghost’s ability to fix the various problems they see around Manhattan does certainly make them their own kind of maintenance men. Whereas Alejandro maintains the real world for the Levin family as symbolized in their brownstone, the golems repair the spiritual and familial.

However, Rosenbaum characterizes Alejandro as much more than a mere maintenance man. Ariel and Oliver adopt him as a part of their family. Because the Levins have lost so many of their direct blood relations (Rose and Lothar, extended family in the Holocaust, and Ariel’s mother), Alejandro becomes a member of their makeshift family. By including Alejandro in the Levin’s sense of family, Rosenbaum indicates that family can take many forms. Most

importantly, though, Rosenbaum indicates that Oliver and Ariel can forge human connections with the living despite the tragedy that haunts their family. In other words, the Levins can "repair" their lost family through these connections with the living. Though their neighbors consider them strange for forging such a bond with their superintendent, Ariel explains that "it's Alejandro's job to watch over the building so we don't mind if he also watches over us" (Rosenbaum 26). Alejandro serves as an important connection not only to the living, but to human connection and care. This ability to maintain a sense of family apart from lost relations proves especially important for the Levins as the ghosts take their leave. Without this connection to Alejandro as not only their superintendent but also a member of their family, Oliver and Ariel would once again find themselves orphaned when the ghosts return to the supernatural realm.

Additionally, this allusion to Alejandro connects the work of the ghosts with the work of the living. Rosenbaum positions both Alejandro and the ghosts as figures who can repair previous damage and maintain function. Because Alejandro represents a part of the Levins found family, he is also an important contributor to maintaining relationships to the living. As Oliver's almost-suicide demonstrates, Rosenbaum's characters need balance between memory and the present. Once again, the Passover seder offers a useful moment in which to examine these relationships. Though this first Passover seder that Oliver hosts includes only Oliver, Ariel, and the golems, Oliver expresses a desire to expand this holiday tradition with members of his living family: "Next year, Oliver and Ariel would perhaps invite other guests, human ones, to the seder — Evelyn Eisenberg, Tanya Green, and maybe even Alejandro, who wasn't Jewish but who would work his way back into the lives of this family, as caretaker and friend" (Rosenbaum 347). While the experiences with the golems certainly speak to how to reestablish a connection to memory without abandoning the present, the Levin's inclusion of Alejandro serves as a direct

connection to present relationships. That is, while ghosts help reveal other potential futures, the living must maintain and repair that future.

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"The old folks always told me that when someone dies in a bad way, sometimes it's so awful even God can't bear to watch, and then half your spirit stays behind and wanders, wanting peace the way a thirsty man seeks water"

(Ward 236)

Haunted futurities are not only about other futures, but also about Other futures. That is, haunted futurities are directly concerned with creating different futures for those typically consider Other. In her novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, Jesmyn Ward uses haunting to examine a history of anti-Black violence in the American South that is anything but past. As Greg Chase points out in "Of Trips Taken and Time Served: How Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing* Grapples with Faulkner's Ghosts," Ward places her novel, in many ways, in a lineage with Faulkner's representations of the American South. Chase clarifies that "Ward's own work becomes a means not just of supplementing Faulkner's legacy but also of correcting its racial blind spots" (Chase 201). Ward, then, is intimately involved with imagining what Other futures entail and places those Other futures in direct lineage with pasts that gloss over that alterity. Ward's ghosts, and the novel as a whole, resist resolution to demonstrate how haunted futurities are currently alive in the American landscape. These Other potential futures made visible through haunted futurities can only be achieved by starting with ghosts themselves. Haunting directs attention to injustices still in need of solving. In other words, the realization of Other futures demands starting with ghosts. Starting with ghosts, however, is only that — a start.

As Ward's novel makes clear, simply recognizing the ghosts of anti-Black violence cannot solve the ongoing issue of that violence. For the characters in *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, the ghosts that haunt them do not provide any answers. If anything, the ghosts of Richie and Given complicate the lives of the living by refusing to let violent deaths rest in peace. As Nicole Dib argues in "Haunted Roadscapes in Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing,*" the ghosts in Ward's novel serve an important function precisely because they refuse to be exorcised. Richie in particular has a specific connection to Jojo in that he haunts as a reminder of how easily Jojo could become just like him. Dib explains how the "ghost becomes a politically effective cultural mechanism through which we learn of the racist forces that turned a boy into a specter so that Jojo, the other boy, can grow up an avoid premature death" (Dib 148). To that point, Ward's ghosts haunt only the younger characters of the novel, indicating that Ward's use of haunting is not simply a return of the past to plague the present. Rather, Ward's novel reveals how achieving Other futures falls to the younger generations as they figure out how to cohabitate with the ghosts of past anti-Black violence that is not past at all.

While this chapter elaborates on themes explored in previous chapters it also diverges in important ways. First, the haunting of Jojo by Richie falls more in line what we can consider a "typical" haunting than the other literary works examined in this project. By this, I mean that Richie represents a soul seeking to "cross over" by discovering what happened to him (the classic resolution of haunting). Jojo neither wants to help Richie nor be haunted by him. In this sense, the haunting that the novel dedicates the most time to developing is also the one where the individual haunted displays a sense of apathy about his haunted status.

To further explain, the haunted characters in the other literary works examined in *Haunting the Future: Imagining Other Futures in Contemporary Diasporic Black and Jewish*

Literature do, in varying degrees, want their ghosts around. The Jewish character of Rosa in the eponymous short story by Cynthia Ozick desperately awaits each time her murdered daughter Magda haunts her. Thane Rosenbaum's characters Oscar and Ariel Levine, discussed earlier in this chapter, see their ghosts as an extension of their family by the end of the novel. In *Louisiana*, Erna Broder's protagonist Ella embraces her ghosts and even haunts herself. All this is to say, that Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, complicates these previous examinations and speaks to the way this haunting illuminates a distinctly Black American experience.

Additionally, these ghosts of a past that is still present in an American landscape raise the second important way in which Ward's imagining of haunting diverges from the earlier examples analyzed in *Haunting the Future*. Whereas other ghosts actively assist their haunts and direct them towards other futures, Ward's ghosts do no such thing. In fact, the presence of Richie and Given only confuses Jojo and Leonie respectively, neither of whom know exactly what to do with these ghostly figures. Even when Richie does discover how he died, he still cannot cross over, meaning the assumption that ghosts simply require closure does not hold true for *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. While Ward's ghosts do work to help the other characters imagine Other futures, the main work these haunting presences do is to draw attention to ongoing problems that prevent the realization of those Other futures in the first place. Actually making a better future for Others — in Ward's case, for Black Americans in particular — remains the responsibility of the living.

To help understand how ghosts illuminate Other futures, I turn to Avery Gordon. Specifically, I turn to her chapter on Toni Morrison's famous novel *Beloved* because though it discusses a different novel, Ward's chapter clearly exists within the lineage of Black American fiction about ghosts of pasts that are not past at all. According to Gordon, the moment a ghost appears, the haunted becomes compelled to action. She writes that the haunted "are *already*

involved, implicated, in one way or another" (*Ghostly Matters* 205, original emphasis). Central to Gordon's hauntology, (and also the heart of this project), lies the responsibility that haunting demands. Though I have discussed Gordon's theorization of ghosts as a call to action earlier, it bears reiterating here: haunting produces a "something-to-be-done" (*Ghostly Matters* xvi). Haunted futurities arise when the living respond to that call. Crucially for Ward, ghosts cannot create these haunted futurities alone. The living must do that for themselves.

Rejecting the Ghost: Consequences of Not Listening

The first ghost to appear in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* does not at first (and, indeed, throughout a large portion of the novel) seem like an actual ghost. To understand this first ghost and his relationship to the other characters, a brief summary will prove useful. At its most distilled, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* examines the relationships between a group of related characters: Mam (Philomène) and Pop (River), their daughter Leonie and her white boyfriend Michael, and Leonie's children Jojo and Kayla.[6] Leonie and Michael both suffer from drug addictions, with Michael's addiction ultimately sending him to prison. Because of her addiction, Leonie has a strained relationship with not only her parents Pop and Mam, but also with her own children, for whom she is largely absent. The novel begins on Jojo's thirteenth birthday and takes place over the course of only a few days as Leonie and her two children drive to Parchman Prison to pick up Michael after his release. Ward organizes the novel by giving different characters — Jojo, Leonie, and Richie — chapters that use first-person perspective to discuss the various events happening. Similarly, to Brodber's novel *Louisiana*, Ward's novel is therefore multivocal in its organization, an important aspect that this chapter will discuss later.

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[6] For the purposes of this chapter, whenever a character's race goes unmentioned, we can assume they are Black. I do this to combat the assumption that "un-raced" characters are by default white.

First, however, this chapter needs to discuss how the novel presents its ghosts. As mentioned above, the first ghost that appears in the narrative does not immediately seem like a ghost. Feeling guilty for her lackluster birthday present for Jojo, Leonie visits her friend Misty and together they get high. After her initial hit, Leonie looks up and the visage of her murdered older brother Given returns to her. Fifteen years prior, the white nephew of the white sheriff murdered Given after Given bested him in a hunting competition. The white nephew, in a rage at his defeat, shot Given (who was armed with only a bow). The white sheriff — Michael's father "Big Joseph" — then helped cover up the murder by calling it a "*Hunting accident*" (Ward 50). In many ways, Given's reappearance does in fact resemble a ghost's haunting, but Ward makes it clear that Leonie only sees Given when she's high: "Last night, he smiled at me, this Given-not-Given, this Given that's been dead fifteen years now, this Given that came to me every time I snorted a line, every time I popped a pill" (Ward 34).

Associating Given's appearance with Leonie's highs raises questions about not only why Given arises at these particular moments as well as why Given appears at all. Ward sows doubt in Leonie and the readers as neither can truly trust if Given actually exists or not. If Given is only a result of Leonie's drug trip, then does he count as a ghost? I would contend that he does. I would also argue that his appearances during Leonie's highs is an important facet of his haunting and Ward's use of haunting in the novel in general. For Ward, ghosts can arise from anything; they need not derive purely from the supernatural. Leonie's mother possesses a gift for the supernatural; she's a healer with a special connection to spiritual guides, including "Our Lady of Regla," "the Star of the Sea," and "Yemayá, the goodness of the ocean and salt water" (Ward 159). Mam explains her talent to Leonie, explaining that

"You might have it," Mama said.

> "Really?" I asked.
>
> "I think it runs in the blood, like silt in river water […] Rises up over the water in generations. My mama ain't have it, but heard her talk one time that her sister, Tante Rosalie, did." (Ward 40).

Leonie, unfortunately, doesn't share her mother's natural inclination for the supernatural or spiritual. Though she "realize[s] [she] had been hearing voices, too," she does not actually learn how to harness her ability like her mother does. In other words, just as she can see Given but refuses to examine what his presence tells her, she also hears the spiritual voices that guide her mother's healing practice but neglects to learn how to actually listen to them. In fact, Leonie is utterly incapable of listening to Given since he's mute throughout their interactions. The first time Leonie sees Given, both Leonie and Given realize that he cannot speak: "He tried to talk to me but I couldn't hear him, and he just got more and more frustrated" (Ward 51). Leonie, then, does share some of her mother's supernatural abilities; she can see Given. She cannot, however, understand him. Nor does she really want to. Almost anytime Given appears to Leonie, she tries to turn away and desperately hopes he will not be there when she turns back. In other words, she rejects his haunting.

Leonie's ability to access the spiritual but her resistance to it helps explain why the appearance of Given is so distressing for her. Given's haunting forces her to confront the supernatural as a potential guide — and still she turns from it. Acknowledging Given as a ghost would mean that Leonie must also recognize her own guilt about his death. Specifically, Given's ghost identifies a key tension for Leonie: her love for her dead brother and her guilt for falling in love with the cousin of his murderer. Given's ghost, in other words, manifests at the crossroads of two seemingly mutually exclusive loves.

This chapter begins with Leonie and her resistance to the supernatural because Leonie's experiences with Given speak to two important aspects of haunting in *Sing, Unburied, Sing*: 1) recognizing (and therefore accepting) haunting, and 2) the living's responsibility to the dead. As Kathleen Brogan argues in *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*, contemporary ethnic literatures frequently turn to haunting to explore what it means to be "ethnic" and how to reckon with a sometimes forgotten but often painful past. Though Brogan's compelling monograph was published in 1998 — well before *Sing, Unburied, Sing* published nearly two decades later — her analysis of how different ethnic writers deploy ghosts helpfully explains aspects of Ward's novel. Specifically, Brogan coins the genre of "cultural haunting." Unlike other ghost stories or modern-day gothics, works belonging to the genre of cultural haunting arise only from "ethnic writers" and their use haunting "potentially leads to a valuable awareness of how the group's past continues to inhabit and inform the living" (Brogan 8). She continues, writing that "exorcism of all forms of ghostliness could result in a historical amnesia that endangers the integrity of the group" (Brogan 8). Ghosts, in other words, help identify important histories within an ethnic group and therefore cannot be wholly exorcised without potentially dangerous repercussions.

The character that most obviously refuses to accept her haunting is also, not coincidentally, the character that struggles to create a better future. Throughout the novel, Leonie struggles to be present for her children and she struggles to make decisions that will improve not only her own but her children's future. This is not a judgement of her character, but an examination of what happens when she resists haunting. Ward's portrayal of Leonie is heartbreakingly human, but her refusal to let haunting guide her towards a better future has drastic consequences. For example, on the night of Jojo's thirteenth birthday while she and Misty

both get high, Misty convinces Leonie to transport meth for someone when they go to pick up Michael from Parchman Prison. "*If we do this, the trip's paid for,*" Misty assures her (Ward 91). As Misty persuades her to serve as a drug mule, Leonie stares at the ghost of Given. "Given was even more still" when Misty speaks, and Leonie knows this stillness; it means he doesn't approve (Ward 91). Leonie agrees anyway.

Leonie's resistance to listening to Given leads to distressing consequences for almost everyone involved in the trip to Parchman — including her two young children. On their way home, a police officer catches them unawares and pulls their car over for "swerving" (Ward 161). Unable to rid themselves of the meth they are transporting, Leonie swallows the little baggie of it whole. While the meth slowly courses through her veins, the police office asks them where they're coming from. "Parchman," Leonie responds, but she "know[s] it's a mistake soon as [she] say[s] it […] The handcuffs are on my before the *n* is silent" (Ward 162). The office then goes on to handcuff Michael and, between Leonie's white friend Misty and her thirteen-year-old son Jojo, opts to handcuff Jojo.

At this point, Given reappears. While his appearance could be considered a manifestation of Leonie's impending high, Given's ghostly visage also serves as a reminder of his own murder and a reminder of how the ordinary can easily turn deadly for Black bodies. Given sits next to Jojo, even though Jojo cannot see him. Leonie looks up and sees "Phantom Given […] sitting next to Jojo on the ground, reaching out as if he could touch him. Given-not-Given drops his hand" (Ward 165). Despite his desire to comfort his nephew, to help the situation, Given cannot actually effect change. Only Leonie could have prevented this specific situation, had she only accepted Given's haunting in the first place. Given's haunting speaks to the larger structural issues at play that shape a Black experience in the American South. Given's ghost reflects a

specifically Black perspective and how systemic racisms determine the ways in which Black bodies are allowed to move and exist. According to Debra Ferreday and Adi Kuntsman in "Introduction: Haunted Futurities" understanding ghosts is crucial to making a better future. They suggest that "Being in the presence of ghosts, then, might mean simply listening" (Ferreday and Kuntsman 9). Listening to Given means learning how to navigate a broken system. Leonie, unfortunately for herself and her children, refuses to hear him.

Even when the ghost clearly presents itself as a ghost, however, the living in Ward's novel hesitate to accept them. When Richie the ghost slips into their car at Parchman Prison, Jojo understands that he is a ghost, but Jojo is utterly apathetic (even, at times, antagonistic) to Richie's presence. Jojo's apathy, in part, arises because of the ways in which Richie's haunting speaks to a past that still reverberates in the present. Not only is Jojo familiar with Pop's connection to Richie, but Jojo also lives in a present in which racially-motivated violence is still a disturbingly quotidian occurrence. As Megan Ashley Swartzfager so eloquently explains, because this past is still present (and a past that in many ways could easily become a potential future for Jojo himself) Richie's haunting speaks to "shellack of political and social difference between Richie's experiences and Jojo's" (Swartzfager 325). In other words, in a Mississippi that continues to see Blackness as threatening and in need of policing, Richie's haunting doesn't so much teach Jojo about something he doesn't know but reminds him all too well of what he already understands at the young age of thirteen.

Richie also serves as a reminder of Jojo's family's longer history with Parchman Prison. When River (Pop) was fifteen, his older brother Stag got into a fight with some white navy men stationed nearby. When these white navy men chased Stag, they also found River. Recounting the story to Jojo, River says,

> *When all them White men came to get Stag, they came to get Stag, they tied both of us up and took us up the road. You boys is going to learn what it means to work, they said. To do right by the law of God and man, they said. You boys is going to Parchman.*
>
> *I was fifteen. But I wasn't the youngest noway,* Pop says. *That was Richie*. (Ward 19)

Not only does this passage reveal that River was wrongly incarcerated at Parchman Prison, it also introduces Richie — the youngest boy at Parchamn and someone River took under his wing. Jojo, therefore, knows about Richie long before his ghost enters the narrative, but, he explains that "Pop's told me some parts of Richie's story over and over again. I've heard the beginning at least too many times to count […] I ain't never heard the end" (Ward 72). Richie's fate remains a mystery for much of the novel. In fact, it remains a mystery even to Richie. As Richie sits crunched at Jojo's feet for the duration of the drive home, he chats with Jojo:

> "I couldn't live with it [life at Parchman]. So I decided to run. Did Riv tell you that?"
>
> I nod.
>
> "I guess I didn't make it." Richie laughs, and it's a dragging, limping chuckle. Then he turns serious, his face night in the bright sunlight." But I don't know how. I need to know how." (Ward 181)

Richie desperately seeks the answer to how he died, hoping it will help him escape the limbo he currently exists in. In this sense, Richie's ghostly desires seem fairly straightforward and track with theories of haunting that surmise that understanding their death will help ghosts finally "move on."

Richie himself seems to believe that finally hearing about his death will release him to the afterlife. After finally arriving back home, Jojo goes to talk with Pop. Richie follows. However, when Richie sees River, he's devastated to realize that River cannot see him; only Jojo and Kayla can. Jojo hesitates, concerned about what effect forcing Pop to finally finish his story about Parchman will have. "It's enough we brought you back. Brought you here. What if Pop don't want to tell that story?" Jojo says. Richie responds, "Don't matter what he want. It matter what I need" (Ward 230). According to Richie, the responsibility to the dead trumps the emotional toll it may have on the living. To pass on, to be exorcised from the novel, Richie believes he needs the closure of hearing about his death. Richie's ghost, then, reads as a fairly straightforward account of haunting in which the ghost only exists because of a lack of closure, and once that closure has been reached the ghost will be able to rest in peace.

Ward, however, undermines that reading of Richie. The climax of the novel occurs when Richie finally hears the rest of River's story and discovers that River killed him as an act of mercy. By sheer chance, Richie catches fellow Parchman inmate Blue — a brutal rapist and murderer — raping a female inmate. Blue immediately decides to escape and Richie, dreaming of escape since his arrival at Parchman, seizes his opportunity. Blue proves a disastrous traveling companion though and attempts to rape a white woman their first day on the run. River, as the keeper of the Parchman hounds, must track Blue and Richie, knowing full well that their capture leads directly to a death sentence. Soon, River's hounds successfully track the two and incensed white citizens fall upon Blue and brutally lynch him.

River finds Richie some ways off and knows that "They was going to do the same to him. Once they got done with Blue. They was going to come for that boy and cut him piece from piece till he was just some bloody, soft, screaming thing, and then they was going to string him

up from a tree" (Ward 255). Faced with this reality, River tries to comfort Richie and promises "*Yes, Richie, I'm a take you home*" before slitting his throat (Ward 255, original emphasis). River effectively saved Richie from a far crueler fate at the hands of a white mob, but he also saddled himself with a lifetime of guilt over killing such a young boy. He tells Jojo that "I washed my hands every day, Jojo. But that damn blood ain't never come out" (Ward 256). Clearly, River has never been able to forgive himself for killing Richie, but telling this story finally seems to relieve some of the pressure. Jojo comforts his grief-stricken grandfather.

When Richie learns the truth about his death, he grows more and more distraught and uncontrollable. Jojo consoles his grandfather as "Richie goes darker and darker, until he's a black hole in the middle of the yard, like he done sucked all the light and darkness over them miles, over them years, into him, until he's burning black, and then he isn't" (Ward 257). Initially, it does appear as though finally knowing how he died encourages Richie to pass onto the afterlife. In this sense, this scene seems to uphold the notion that simply uncovering the truth about a violent death is enough to exorcise the ghost.

Ward quickly dispels that notion. In the very next chapter, told from Leonie's point of view, Richie makes his vengeful reappearance. After a long battle with cancer, Leonie's mother finally succumbs. While she is dying, however, Richie reenters the narrative. Richie, starved for love and a sense of belonging, latches onto Philomène and attempts to drag her into the liminal space between life and the afterlife. Philomène sees Richie on the ceiling and describes Richie as "still a boy" and "Pulling all the weight of history behind him" (Ward 265). Richie's ghost represents more than his individual story. He serves as a figure for the weight of American history on the Black body. This weight is too much for one young boy to bear; he needs a mother. He needs to feel connected to community.

But his desire for vengeance clouds his attachment to the living and makes his haunting entirely past-oriented. Swartzfager's reading of this climactic scene argues a similar point. She contends that although Richie's search for the truth about his death seems to represent a desire for reconnection and understanding, "Richie's pursuit of knowledge about his death and his profound emotional needs for parental figures are ultimately destructive impulses that threaten to destroy the present by dragging in the past" (Swartzfager 324). Revenge only looks backwards, only dwells on past wrongs. It never imagines a future past that vengeance, which explains why Given thwarts Richie's plan and ultimately passes over with his mother. Given, though also the ghost of a violent death, seeks not vengeance but reunion with his family. Finally, thanks to Jojo who has "unlocked and opened a gate," Given can reconnect with his mother and move beyond their respective past suffering (Ward 268). Richie, however, finds himself trapped in the liminality yet again because he cannot imagine a different future.

Full Circle (Almost)

As Ward clearly demonstrates, haunting is not merely about finding closure or completing a sense of mourning. While Given's ghost does pass over into the afterlife, Richie does not make the same move. In this sense, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* comments on the other possibilities haunting makes available and the way haunting encourages certain future actions. Specifically for *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, creating a better future, one where these characters are not constrained by anti-Black violence, starts with ghosts. As Ward's ghosts make clear, this history of anti-Black violence in the United States is anything but past. These ghosts, and the novel as a whole, resist neat resolution to demonstrate how the Unites States is currently in its own haunted futurity — a haunted futurity only achievable through a sociality with ghosts. For Ward, haunted futurities entail creating a future for these characters that memorializes, mourns, and continues to

move forward with ghosts. Essentially, the future for Jojo and his family always includes ghosts; living with ghosts opens haunted futurities that exorcising all ghosts would otherwise foreclose.

The novel's conclusion demonstrates how many ghosts never leave, and only once someone has learned how to recognize them can they begin to identify ways to make other futures. As Arthur Redding examines in *Haints*, a monograph studying "contemporary gothic fictions" by ethnic writers, narratives that resist closure through exorcism reveal the important work ghosts continue to do. He explains, "ghosts refuse to be fully assimilated, evade the boundaries of generic resolution, and gothic deploys, charges and elements that cannot be fully accommodated within any narrative boundaries. They demand more: justice, we might say, an impossibility that everywhere trumps recovery" (Redding 52). Ghosts that haunt, even after what we might consider typical moments of closure, demonstrate how the living require the dead to create o/Other futures. Without them, Redding suggests, justice cannot survive. Building upon Redding, though, Ward makes clear how the work of making these Other futures falls to the living — even if it means they never "move on" from past pain.

Following Philomène's death, each character mourns in unique ways: Leonie seeks escapism from the pain through continued drug use, Pop dwells in the pain, and Jojo matures and becomes more confident in his growing independence. Jojo, who still feels a haunting presence, takes to walking around the property by himself. One day, he stumbles upon Richie. "I'm here," Richie says, "I thought once I knew, I could. Cross the waters. Be home" (Ward 281). Instead, Richie is still stuck in a liminal space. As Richie talks with Jojo he states that "There's so many [...] So many of us [...] Hitting. The wrong keys. Wandering against. The song" (Ward 282). Jojo looks up in the tree and see that "the branches are full. They are full with ghosts, two or three, all the way up to the top, to the feathered leaves. There are women and men and boys and

girls" (Ward 282). The ghosts speak in a cacophony, each explaining their own violent deaths. Jojo stands transfixed and only once the sun goes down does he turn back towards the house.

Though Jojo feels perturbed by this haunting, he does learn something from these ghosts. When Richie talks with him, he explains, "Now you understand […] Now you understand life. Now you know. Death" (Ward 282). This passage connects with the novel's opening lines, in which Jojo expressed that "I like to think I know what death is. I like to think that it's something I could look at straight" (Ward 1). In connecting the beginning and the ending, Ward brings the novel full circle — almost. Whereas Jojo would "like to think [he] know[s] what death is" in the beginning of *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, he doesn't. At the smell of a butchered goat, Jojo runs from the barn and vomits. By the conclusion of the novel, however, Jojo can look at death straight.

Jojo is not the only character to help create a haunted future in the present. Tellingly, the youngest character in the novel also sees and helps the ghosts achieve a sense of comfort despite their violent deaths. At the novel's conclusion Jojo picks up Kayla, who — along with Pop, has come to meet Jojo at the ghost-filled tree. Kayla sees the ghosts and says, "Go home" (Ward 284). The ghosts do not move. Kayla does, however, calm them. She starts singing "like she remembers the sound of the water in Leonie's womb, the sound of all water" (Ward 285). The content at the novel's conclusion mirrors the structure of the novel. Just as the novel brings readers back to the beginning (with a slight twist), the ending too implies a return to the beginning. In this sense, it indicates a return to the beginning of life. For Ward, death and life are two always intertwined concepts.

The reference to "Leonie's womb" also speaks to the living's responsibility to the dead, and concomitantly, the living's role in engendering haunted futurities. As Kayla sings, the ghosts recite "*Home"* in unison (Ward 285). Kayla's song soothes the ghosts precisely because it

reminds them of Leonie's womb — the beginning of life. The ghosts' home, then, is at the same point at which life begins. To reiterate, life and death are always intertwined for Ward's characters. But this return to the womb at the novel's conclusion also suggests that the work to make better futures through an interaction with ghosts falls to the living. In other words, ghosts illuminate injustices, they commemorate wrongful deaths, but they also rely on the living to actually enact change. Just as knowing isn't enough to soothe Richie and allow him to pass over, simply trying to exorcise every ghost that appears will not actually solve what caused these ghosts to haunt in the first place.

Ward, therefore, uses the novel form to enact its own haunting. The novel begins and ends with a death that haunts. It brings the readers back to death. This haunting fulfills a haunted futurity. Rather that ending at the exact same spot he begins, Jojo grows. This haunting does not repeat but re-envisions. Through his interactions with ghosts, Jojo begins to move towards a different future. It is therefore quite odd that of the few articles published on Ward's recent novel, many contend that an exorcism does take place. Chase's article "Of Trips Taken" asserts that "Kayla's performance, the novel implies, represents the final push these ghosts need to take their leave of this world" (Chase 213). In his article examining African-based spiritual traditions in both Ward and Colson Whitehead, James Mellis too misreads Ward's ending by asserting that "the final scene in the novel is one of release, as Michaela sings the ghosts haunting the family away to a final rest" (Mellis 12). Clearly, the assumption that the only "successful" interaction with ghosts must end in their exorcism continues to impact how critics read ghosts — even as the text never asserts, and even pushes against, this assumption. Understanding Ward's novel and use of haunting is therefore even more important to shift the way both scholars and the general public consider haunting.

For this reason, Gordon's paradigm-shifting work *Ghostly Matters* assists with this reckoning. In *Ghostly Matters* Gordon turns to Benjamin's concept of the "profane illumination" to explain this function of haunting. As Gordon paraphrases, "Profane illumination is a kind of conjuring that 'initiates' because it is telling us something important we had not known; it is leading us somewhere, or elsewhere" (Gordon 205). The profane illumination alerts those it haunts to lingering problems that demand the living's attention — even if, like Jojo and Leonie, they are reluctant to give it. Gordon's use of the profane illumination also explains why *Sing, Unburied, Sing*'s ghosts are not comforting spirits. They disturb. But they disturb in the way that they attempt to disrupt the systems that lead to their haunting in the first place. Once haunted, the living must attend to their ghosts. Indeed, Gordon writes that

> When you have a profane illumination of these matters, when you know in a way that you did not know before, then you have been notified of your involvement. You are *already* involved, implicated, in one way or another, and this is why, if you don't banish it, or kill it, or reduce it to something you can already manage, when it appears to you, the ghost will inaugurate the necessity of doing something about it. (Gordon 205-6, original emphasis)

The ghost, using Althusser's terminology, hails the living to make a difference. Ghosts demand neither exorcism nor simple knowledge; they demand change. Ghosts demand haunted futurities. The many ghosts that sit in the tree by Jojo's house, will not be exorcised. The living still need them to keep moving towards better futures. Indeed, much of Jojo's developments result from his haunted interactions. As Swartzfager points out, "Jojo's quest for maturity is largely informed by the prematurely terminated questions of Given and Richie" (Swartzfager 318). In interacting with ghosts whose own growth was stunted by the violent racial logic of the United States (both

past and present), Jojo actually moves beyond them. He enters a future they never had the possibility to join, and this future is one informed by haunting. While these ghosts remind Jojo of the harsh realities of racially motivated violence in the United States, they also cannot build Jojo's future for him. As previously mentioned, whereas Richie dies at only age twelve, the novel begins on Jojo's thirteenth birthday. Jojo has begun his quest into what can be considered a haunted futurity.

For *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, that future begins now. As previously discussed, both the content and the form of the novel reflect a circularity, the connections and indebtedness between life and death. The grammatical structure of the novel emphasizes this connection between ghosts and the living because Ward uses the present tense throughout. Each narrator — Jojo, Leonie, and Richie — uses the present tense for verbal conjugations, not the past tense. The novel, in other words, is at its core about the present. While other interpretations of ghosts consider them primarily repetitions of the past or calls for commemoration, Ward's novel is wholly concerned with the present. The novel is about the changes these living characters make *in the present* (even as the past continues to interject). *Sing, Unburied, Sing* refuses to dwell on the past. Rather, ghosts push these characters forward. Jojo and Leonie's character developments serve as useful examples. Whereas Leonie refuses to face the reality of her present after her mother dies, Jojo matures and continues living and trying to make life better for his younger sister Kayla. Crushed by her guilt and grief, Leonie remains static and falls into her old patterns of drug abuse as escapism. Jojo, though not thrilled by the ghosts that now surround him, accepts their role in his life. Essentially, it is through living with ghosts instead of trying to banish them that Jojo grows.

In fact, by reframing how we should approach ghosts, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* make an argument for the positive potential of ghosts. As Yesmina Khedhir clarifies in her article "Ghosts Tell Stories: Cultural Haunting in Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing,*" ghosts represent more than just unresolved trauma or incomplete mourning; they also represent the potential for community bonding and progress. She explains, "Though the overall picture of the past drawn by Richie's ghost is gloomy and ghastly, the flip side of the picture tells other stories as well — stories of love and emotional bonding" (Khedhir 22). Ghosts carry the potential to connect people — not only to the past, but also to each other in the present and to future generations whose lives they must work to better.

Fittingly, Ward draws the reader's attention to this use of ghosts before the narrative proper even begins to emphasize how haunting penetrates life moving forward in this novel. In the epigraph, she includes an excerpt from the Derek Walcott poem "The Gulf" in which Walcott uses the phrase the "uninstructing dead." For Ward, these "uninstructing dead" are quite literal; *Sing, Unburied, Sing*'s ghosts illuminate persistent problems, but they never instruct on how to solve them. In fact, the one time a ghost does try to solve a problem — Richie's assumption that knowing about his death will release him — nothing changes. Ward's characters instead face a different challenge. Rather than simply listening to ghosts' "instructions" about what to do with haunting, the living must discover those answers for themselves. Haunted futurities, in this sense, rely entirely on the interplay between the living and the dead. Ghosts reveal problems. The living must solve them if they wish to arrive, one day, at a better future. A haunted future is not possible without intervention on the part of the living.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN THE PRESENCE OF GHOSTS: MEMORIAL MUSEUMS, HAUNTING, AND EDUCATING FOR ETHICAL FUTURES

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum looms before me, an impressive marble building that matches the architecture of the other buildings lining this part of the Capitol. The day is hot and humid, and the streets are alive with the hustle and bustle of tourists and D.C. residents going about their day. Once I enter the memorial museum, all the outside noise disappears. Inside, I am at first surprised by the sudden quiet, but I then settle into the solemnity of it. Even children seem to understand the significance of the building they have just entered and the severity of the historical atrocity they are here to learn about. I enter the permanent exhibit, understatedly titled "The Holocaust," and though I am alone on this visit, I do not feel alone.

The Memorial Museum: Form and Function

I begin with the United Stated Holocaust Memorial Museum because it is one of the first museums specifically designated as a "memorial museum." Later, this chapter also examines the newly opened National Memorial to Peace and Justice and its associated Legacy Museum (which together form a memorial museum compound). However, the connection between these two institutions runs deeper than their appearance in this chapter. In a show of solidarity, Rabbi Sharon Brous blessed the National Memorial for Peace and Justice at its grand opening. In her prayer, Rabbi Brous reminds listeners that the "memorial to the thousands of African-American victims of lynching was inspired in part by memorials to the victims of the Holocaust" (Rabbi Brous). In this sense, the memorial work previously done to commemorate Holocaust victims helps generate similar work designed for other communities that have experienced historical

violence. I want to make it clear that though these institutions inspire each other and engage in similar practices, each has a unique mission and each seeks to represent specific victim communities. In other words, although I bring a Holocaust memorial museum and an anti-lynching memorial museum compound together, this does not equate to a comparison of their respective histories of violence.

Memorial museums about historical atrocities build certain pedagogical missions into their very foundations. These memorial museums seek to educate their visitors about proper moral responses to intolerance and injustice. Memorials and memorialization represent public demonstrations of pedagogically-motivated haunting. Specifically, this chapter argues that these museological-memorial spaces insist on continued haunting to encourage future social justice action on the part of its visitors. In many ways, these museological-memorial sites become hallowed ground that inspires ethical engagement with others and the future.

In recent decades, museums have had to reckon with the public need to remember and learn about violent pasts. As Elain Heumann Gurian's chapter "Savings Bank for the Soul: About Institutions of Memory and Congregant Space" argues, "we all need to be rooted in our collective past in order to face our collective future" (Gurian 141). Museums specifically tied to moments of violence, then, consider the use memory and history to shape the future part of their mission. From mourning state-sponsored genocide to exposing the long-lasting consequences of racism and colonialism, the work museums do to educate the public proves even more important in the face of contemporary violence. The rise of museums dedicated to documenting and displaying artifacts from historical atrocities attests to the public's interest in preserving these events in a formal setting. Using curated exhibits that contain both historical artifacts and important contextual information about these objects, museums lead visitors through particular

moments in history. Fueled by a mission to educate the public, museums construct a particular narrative of history with a particular pedagogical outcome.

Museums, however, are only one formal space in which the public reckons with the past. Unlike their educationally motivated sibling, memorials exist as specific commemorative spaces in which individuals can reflect and mourn. Memorials serve one primary function — to conjure memory. The hauntological aspect of memorial, then, is designed into their very function. Memorials encourage visitors to commune with the dead, to remember their lives, and to welcome the ghosts of history. However, memorials are limited in the scope of their goals: remember those who lost their lives as a result of violence. In this sense, memorials are less concerned with providing context and more concerned with serving as spaces for grief and reflection. This primary concern with grief and reflection attracts a specific audience, often one with a personal connection to the tragedy being memorialized. Consider the famous Vietnam Veterans Memorial, also in Washington D.C. and designed by Maya Lin. Lin's design features dark granite walls engraved with the names of soldiers killed during combat during the Vietnam War. Although powerful in and of itself as a memorial, the monument offers little contextual historical information. This lack of historical information means that one must already be familiar with the controversial war to truly understand the impact of the memorial.

While many have turned to memorials as symbols of public mourning, visitors now demand more from these public commemorative spaces. In an effort to both educate the public about historical atrocities and to provide space for remembrance and mourning, a hybrid form has emerged: the memorial museum. In *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities*, Paul Williams explains the growing popularity of this hybrid form. According to Williams, the "educational work [of memorial museums] is stimulated by moral considerations

and draws ties to issues in contemporary society in a way that is uncommon in standard museum presentations of history" (Williams 21). Though still dedicated to the presentation of history, most memorial museums are also committed to enacting an ethical mission for their visitors. Specifically, memorial museums (whether they intend it or not) lead visitors to make connections between past violence and current injustices, connections that encourage visitors to intervene in the name of a more ethical future. In fact, Gurian argues that "we all need to be rooted in our collective past in order to face our collective future" (Gurian 141).

Combining the affective resonances of memorials and the pedagogical role of museums, memorial museums employ haunting to educate their visitors both intellectually and morally. In this combined state, the memorial uses historical context to direct its emotional impact and the museum introduces affective elements that deny it the status of simply relaying "objective" history. Examining the memorial museum's connection to spectrality addresses this dual mission of the memorial museum. As Carla Freccero writes in "Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past," "Spectrality is, thus, also a way of thinking ethics in relation to the project of historiography" (Freccero 338). Haunting, history, and ethics intersect in the formal space of the memorial museum. Addressing history by connecting visitors to both the historiography and the affective registers of a specific event allows visitors to feel the memorial museum's effects long after they leave. In other words, the memorial museum creates the conditions of haunting.

As we get farther and farther away from the historical moments being memorialized, the drive to create other ways of remembering and interacting with painful pasts becomes increasingly urgent. Without something to mark these public spaces as memory holders for past violence, many fear that we fill fall prey to the old adage that those who refuse to study history are doomed to repeat it. Museums typically fill the educational role for communities at large

while memorials encourage continued remembrance. In this sense, museums and memorials often supplement each other yet the separation between the two can impede the potential of both. As more and more people call for commemorative acts that recognize painful pasts in public ways, memorial museums have taken up the difficult task of commemorating victims of historical atrocities and educating the public. Memorial museums, a hybrid form that takes advantage of the educational mission of museums and the affective role of memorials, create the conditions for haunting that allow visitors to engage with instances of historical violence and to use that engagement to create better futures.

Forms of memorialization are crucial in an examination of haunting because they represent public demonstrations of pedagogically-motivated and future-oriented haunting. While traditional museums do certainly work to "preserve history," when confronting histories of atrocity, the museum itself is not enough to truly ensure that such atrocity will never happen again. As David Petrasek makes clear in "Illusion and the Human Rights Museum," simply presenting history may not be enough to prevent its repetition. He writes that "Conventional wisdom holds that one can build respect for human rights today by learning of the abuse of these rights in the past. But it is not clear enough that the knowledge of past human rights abuses prevents their reoccurrence" (Petrasek 93). Though it is undeniably important, education alone does not necessarily prepare visitors to act more ethically in the future.

Memorial museums, therefore, are especially critical to consider because they combine the educational potential of museums with the commemorative capabilities of memorials. In other words, memorial museums combine the most powerful aspects of both memorials and museums to generate haunted futurities. Jay Winter examines the shifting landscape of museum and memorial approaches in his article "Historical Remembrance in the Twenty-First Century."

Faced with the atrocities of the previous centuries, contemporary museums and memorial practices must also shift to accommodate the public desire for public commemorative spaces for victims of historical violences. "History is a way of thinking; memory is a way of feeling" he writes (Winter 11). The memorial museum takes both functions and combines them for its visitors. Memory conjures the ghosts; history lets us learn from them. Both are essential to the moral educative mission of the memorial museum.

Specifically, this chapter argues that memorial museum spaces insist on haunting their visitors in an effort to encourage future social justice action on the part of its visitors. According to María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren in their comprehensive examination of spectrology as a trope and methodological approach, ghosts are now inextricably tied to a sense of morality: "To believe or not believe in ghosts no longer involves a determination about the empirical (im)possibility of the supernatural, but indicates contrasting validated attitudes — a welcoming seen as ethical and enabling, and a rejection considered unethical and dispossessing" (Blanco and Peeren, *The Spectralities Reader* 9). In connection with memorial museums, when the museum creates "haunted" spaces and elicits haunted feelings in the visitor, it also evokes ethical responses. A visitor accepting haunting indicates that they want to engage in ethical future building. Rejecting haunting implies that they do not. In many ways, then, these memorial museums become haunted spaces that inspire ethical engagement with Others and the future.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: "A Living Memorial"

Upon entering the permanent exhibit at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, each visitor receives an identification card. These identification cards, "[d]esigned as small booklets to be carried through the exhibition," offer biographical glimpses into individuals caught in the crosshairs of the Holocaust (USHMM, "ID Cards"). Museum staff created the cards

based on real individuals — survivors and victims — in an effort to "help visitors to personalize the historical events of the time" (USHMM, "ID Cards). Visitors therefore adopt a new identity when they enter the exhibit, of which much includes recreations of iconic Holocaust imagery (most notably the cattle car and the entrance gate to the Auschwitz concentration camp).

Personal identification with victims of this historical atrocity lies at the heart of the museum's pedagogical goals. However, while personal identification with atrocity certainly accounts for a visitor's emotional resonance with the exhibits, this resonance includes more than metaphorically stepping into the victims' shoes (a particularly apt metaphor for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum given that one of their most memorable exhibits is the pile of victims' shoes). In fact, as Edward T. Linenthal explains in *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*, encouraging visitors to feel hauntingly connected to Holocaust victims was central to the memorial museum's plans for inculcating visitors with a particular ethical education: "the design team was determined to personalize the Holocaust, since it wanted visitors to eschew forever the role of the bystander" (Linenthal 171). Personalization, apparently, leads to an increase in ethical social interaction. Yet while personalization may indeed increase an individual's ethical outlook, more is at work in the halls of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Rather than simply asking visitors to identify personally with victims, I argue that memorial museums haunt their visitors in an effort to educate them for future ethical engagement with the world around them.

In *Figures of Memory: The Rhetoric of Displacement at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, Michael Bernard-Donals examines the ways in which memory "moves" in the memorial museum. Though he adopts a rhetorical analysis methodology, a methodological approach different from my own, his analysis of the memorial museum also speaks to a

hauntological approach. For Bernard-Donals, the "space of the United States Memorial Museum, and the shape of its permanent exhibit […] produces a space in which visitors 'dwell'" (Bernard-Donals 126). This dwelling, which I contend resembles haunting, forces visitors into (sometimes uncomfortable) other possibilities. Referencing Hart Research Associates surveys of visitors, Bernard-Donals notes that

> respondents are clearly aware that *something else is happening* to them in the space of the museum, and that in spite of the intellectual understanding they are gleaning from the permanent exhibition, there is something else that seems to be working in tandem with, and sometimes against, that more historical, conventional understanding. (Bernard-Donals 139, original emphasis).

Clearly, then, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exceeds the bounds of both of its combined forms: it is more than a straightforward presentation of a historical event and it is more than a designated space for mourning and remembrance. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum haunts — and it haunts with an eye to the future.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter referred to as USHMM), developed 600 identification cards, with about half of them corresponding to Holocaust survivors. The other half "represent the experiences of people who died" (USHMM, "ID Cards"). These individual booklets are designed to correspond to particular moments in the permanent exhibit and to follow the exhibit's curatorial organization: the first section describes important biographical information about the individual; the second corresponds with the 4th floor of the exhibit, which introduces contextual information from 1933-1939; aligning with the third floor, the next section details the individual's life during the war; finally, the ID card reveals

whether the individual survived or perished during the events of the Holocaust and the circumstances (if known) surrounding their death.

As the rationale provided by the museum explains, these "ID Cards" serve a dual function: to educate visitors about different experiences during the Holocaust, as well as — and perhaps more importantly — the personalize the experience for visitors. USHMM has skewed the age range of these cards to include mainly those who "were children (aged ten years or younger) when the Nazis came to power in Germany" (USHMM, "ID Cards"). This move to make the majority of cards about younger survivors and victims of the Holocaust not only attempts to connect with a younger audience (school children and children accompanying their parents) but also to evoke certain affective responses in its visitors. This emotional connection with the historical event, encourages future action in its visitors. As Amy Sodaro so succinctly puts it in *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence*, memorial museums harness memory to "translate the suffering of the past into ethical commitments to creating a better future through education and commemoration" (Sodaro 4). Memorial museums therefore serve to not only remember the victims of past atrocity, but to mobilize memory in the service of the future through the museums' ethical pedagogies.

While museums certainly take various approaches for achieving their pedagogical goals, the nature of the dual status of the USHMM as both a memorial and a museum indicates that the memorial function and the museological function operate in tandem. That is to say that the museum derives its educational function from the event being memorialized, while the memorial contemporaneously consists of memory imbued with an educational function. In *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*, Michael Rothberg explains this dual function of the memorial museum. He writes that "The narrative structure of the permanent

exhibit reveals the museum's character as twofold: both a pedagogical tool for the dissemination of historical knowledge and a site of identifications meant to guide and evoke emotional responses based on personal interaction with the various 'characters' in the story" (Rothberg 259). For Rothberg, visitors' adoption of different identities when they receive their identification cards inserts visitors into the narrative of history as constructed by the museum space itself. Sodaro too discusses the USHMM's drive to include the visitor in the experience beyond simply observing history from a contemporary perspective. "Going further than history museums that impact knowledge about the past," writes Sodaro, "memorial museums use experiential techniques and affect to make visitors feel that they have a personal experience of the past that will shape their present moral sensibility" (Sodaro 25). According to the logic driving memorial museums, personal connections to the past (even if that past atrocity is not one actually experienced by the individual's relatives or community) directly impact contemporary ethics.

Visitors to the USHMM do not merely passively observe history by being stuck behind a rope and the admonition "do not touch." Instead, the museum encourages them to imagine themselves as participants by proxy. By encouraging visitors to "enter" history themselves, USHMM creates a distinctly experiential museological model with which individuals can feel like a part of the narrative. According to Sodaro, "Experiential museums are focused more on teaching and creating an experience for the visitor than they are on traditional museological functions of collecting and displaying. Rather than simply telling the story of the past, memorial and other experiential museums seek to make the visitor 'experience' it" (Sodaro 24). The ID cards the museum gives to visitors upon entering the permanent exhibit quite literally ask individual visitors to experience the Holocaust as if they were actually there. This personal

identification, according to Sodaro, accomplishes the museum's ethical pedagogy because it asks visitors to embody a victim's perspective directly. The visitor cannot help but put themselves in the metaphorical shoes of the person whose identity they have assumed.

However, personal identification alone does not explain the power the USHMM has over its visitors. As one of the most popular museums globally, the museum certainly draws visitors for more than merely encouraging personal identification with victims. The ID cards the museum gives visitors serve as a particularly poignant example of how the museum evokes haunting to affectively educate its patrons. Indeed, what is the adoption of another's identity but a possession? According to the museum's exhibit, the visitor must allow this other individual from the ID card (of which about half did not survive the Holocaust) to inhabit their body and perspective — at the very least while they circulate the museum grounds. Visitors transform from contemporary individuals into vessels for ghosts of a violent past. In other words, while in the USHMM, visitors walk among ghosts.

In addition to the ID cards which possess visitors from the very beginning of the permanent exhibit, the USHMM also includes other experiential elements that contribute to its haunting effect. Photographs, artifacts, and reconstructed spaces all encourage the visitor to actively engage with history. The "Lighting and architecture create spaces of claustrophobia and exposure, and haunting ambiance and sound effects —music, testimony, historical speeches, and political rallies — help round out the 'experience' of the past" (Sodaro 24-25). The very architecture of the permanent exhibit generates ghostly encounters through its use of both occlusion and instances of transparency. For instance, the building's design occasionally breaks the oppressive architecture by including glass walkways. As a result, "visitors may have an uncanny sense of being watched, as people move on the glass-bottom walkways on the floors

above" (Linenthal 91). These glass walkways allow visitors to see not only other visitors but to enter haunted spaces through these interactions. Visitors see and feel people moving around them yet the architectural design makes these other figures feel simultaneously near and distant. They feel the *presence* of something more than themselves and other museum goers — as if the ghosts also walk with the patrons walking above them.

A key exhibit feature, the Tower of Faces, displays the Ejszyszki Shtetl Collection. This photo collection includes personal photographs of Jews who lived in this shtetl, a community that was eventually entirely wiped out by the Nazi genocide. However, as Linenthal details, the decision to display these photographs proved somewhat contentious. Whereas exhibit architects wanted to change the order of photos to illicit a particular affective response from visitors, Yaffa Eliach, the owner of the collection, refused. She insisted the photos reflect and respect the dynamic of the shtetl as it was before the Holocaust, because the "collection was an organic whole, a living memory of the town" (Linenthal 182). The photos therefore contain the life of the individuals pictured in them. In maintaining their original personal relationships (Eliach refused to allow photos of feuding families to be placed next to each other), the photos haunt visitors through their insistence on life rather than death.

Because of the peculiar temporality of the permanent exhibit that has visitors ride an elevator to the fourth floor to begin their journey at the liberation of the concentration camps then almost immediately jump back in time to 1933, the Wall of Faces feels especially eerie. Though Ulrich Baer's examination of contemporary Holocaust photography analyzes photographs of Holocaust sites of trauma, his discussion of the power of photography related to atrocity helps explain the visceral reaction many have when confronted with the Wall of Faces. He writes that these photos make viewers feel as though they "don't belong here, that [they] have

arrived too late" (Baer 417). The temporal composition of the permanent exhibit, coupled with the un-timeliness of the photos themselves, instills in the visitor of sense of displacement, of being out of time (both in a sense of history but also in a sense of urgency). By starting visitors at the end of the Holocaust, the USHMM colors every exhibit with the knowledge of the outcome of the Holocaust. It is as if visitors have read the final page of a novel first then flipped back to the first page to begin reading now that they already know the ending.

While we could certainly call this a heavy-handed instance of foreshadowing, Michael André Bernstein would consider this a clear instance of "backshadowing." Unlike foreshadowing which hints at an inevitable outcome even if that outcome is not fully comprehended until it arrives, backshadowing leads with the ending to frame the moments leading up to it. Bernstein explains it as "a kind of retroactive foreshadowing in which the shared knowledge of the outcome of a series of events by narrator and listener is used to judge the participants in those events *as though they too should have known what was to come*" (Bernstein 16, original emphasis). As visitors encounter the Wall of Faces, they enter into it with the knowledge that the individuals peering back at them are the ghostly faces of those murdered during the Holocaust.

The use of backshadowing is especially pertinent to the haunting quality of the memorial museum because "the bitterness of inevitability, whether seen as tragic or pathetic, endows an event with a meaning, one that can be used both to make an ideationally 'rich' sense of the horror and to begin a process of coming to terms with the pain by enfolding it within a larger pattern of signification" (Bernstein 13). Photographs, especially ones of people we know perished in the Holocaust, serve as haunting reminders of the dangers of intolerance and injustice. As Sodaro states, the use of individual photographs, "restore[s] humanity and individual identity to the victims and inspire[s] empathy and affect in visitors" (Sodaro 49). The

pedagogical power to influence visitors' ethical leanings arises precisely from the haunted nature of the photographs. In backshadowing the inhabitants of the Ejszyszki Shtetl, the USHMM brings them back as ghosts who haunt visitors as they learn about the Holocaust and as they develop a new moral sensibility.

The Wall of Faces also overwhelms it visitors. Filled floor to ceiling with photographs, the Wall of Faces leaves little room for visitors to hide in the seemingly less affective realm of historical fact typically presented by museums. This inability to hide behind fact is a key feature of what makes the memorial museum form so powerful. In "Haunted Historiographies" Blanco and Peeren explain how "Historiography is in fact a form of haunting — of the past haunting the present, as much as it is the present's haunting of the past" (Blanco and Peeren, "Haunted Historiographies, 482). History is populated by ghosts — even if the facts try to purge them from the narratives. In embracing the affective resonances of the haunting potential of the museum, the USHMM acknowledges that the "smooth narrative that the historian might have envisioned is taken over by the recognition of a thickness of details […] or a multiplicity of versions that are full of unquiet ghosts" (Blanco and Peeren, "Haunted Historiographies 483). Instead of shying away from an abundance of detail, the museum uses it to its advantage. After all, "In combining historical storytelling with experiential memory, the USHMM seeks an emotional response from its visitors, not merely intellectual understanding — it is meant to upset and disturb" (Sodaro 46). The museum's goal is not to present history from its perceived objective (read as "unemotional") perch, but to embrace the affective's ability to inform intellectual intake and direct ethical future making. Haunting is an essential part of that goal.

Just as the photographs force visitors to confront the individuality of victims of the Holocaust, other artifacts make visitors inhabit the same spaces victims were forced to navigate.

The museum reconstructs various environments, most famously a cattle car used for deportation to concentration camps and a recreation of the recognizable entrance gate to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Hollywoodesque recreation of these spaces generates an uncanny experience of being "there" while simultaneously knowing you can never be "there." The space feels both authentic and inauthentic. In this sense, these recreated spaces exist in the liminal bounds of the haunted. As visitors walk through them, they can feel the presence of the murdered surrounding them, gliding around them like whispers or smoke— a constant reminder of the fate visitors know they will meet later in the museum's retelling of the Holocaust killing centers.

By the time visitors reach the cattle car and other recreated spaces, they are already possessed by the person on their identity card, and they have already encountered the ghosts of the Ejszyszki Shtetl. In working through the exhibit about escalating Nazi violence, visitors walk though spaces designed to mimic those that victims themselves inhabited. Almost every aspect of the museum, in other words, encourages visitors to step into the role of the victim. While Sodaro claims that the museum asks visitors to adopt this victim persona to activate their affective connection with the horrors of the Holocaust, this push to identify with victims raises some concerns about the ability for someone to experience the Holocaust secondhand. In fact, it relies on the logic that the only way to develop a moral sensibility is by imagining yourself in the violent situation. Empathy is not enough; you must feel as though you yourself experience the Holocaust.

This logic, however, predicates itself on a practice of appropriation — even if it's only temporary. Imagining yourself in another's situation certainly heightens your own affective response, but it does so at the expense of the Other to whom the event actually happened. In other words, assuming that simply imagining yourself as the victim will lead to more moral

decision making in the future fails to accomplish the museum's goal of increasing a person's sense of ethical responsibility because it directs the narrative towards *me* and not *you*. The responsibility would still be to myself and my ethical actions would be inspired by a drive for self-preservation — not a desire to help others.

Haunting, conversely, maintains the separation between self and Other while embracing an empathetic connection. Through a haunted encounter, the visitor can feel as though they understand victims' hardships without needing to become the victim themselves. The museums ID cards serve as an important reminder of that critical separation. The USHMM could have easily created an equally (if not more so) experiential opening exhibit by giving visitors their own ID cards. Rather than a booklet with a historical figure and their biographic information, the museum could have posed visitors and given them an ID card with their own photograph and a biography inspired by real individuals. But the museum refuses to overshadow the victims and individuals at the center of the Holocaust by asking visitors to truly feel like victims themselves. By beginning the journey with ID cards for other individuals, the USHMM maintains the distinction between visitor and victim even while creating pathways for emphatic connection.

This distinction between self and other is critical to actually achieving the USHMM's pedagogical goals of a moral education for visitors. In his interview with Jacques Derrida, Bernard Stiegler asks Derrida about his influential theory of hauntology. When asked about the meaning of ghosts, Derrida replies that "Respect for the alterity of the other dictates respect for the ghost" (Derrida and Stiegler, 42). While Derrida claims that respect for the other raises respect for the ghost, the USHMM clearly demonstrates that the opposite is also true. Respect for the ghost leads to respect for the Other. Rather than hoping that personally adopting the role of the victim will instill in visitors an elevated ethical responsibility to uphold the dictum of "never

again," the USHMM creates the conditions for haunting through which visitors embrace the Other without the need to enfold them into visitors' own experiences or identities. Through the ghost, the Other can exist as they are. It is to these Others-as-they-are that we owe our ethical responsibilities.

It is also these Others that we encounter only through haunting that compel visitors to change their moral sensibilities because they serve as reminders of the tragic consequences of Nazi atrocity. The USHMM, through its hybrid form, creates haunted futurities for its visitors to serve its pedagogical goal of moral education. As Derrida says, "The future belongs to ghosts" (Derrida and Stiegler 38). Only through these haunting encounters, can visitors imagine other possible, better futures. Sodaro explains that "Memorial museums in particular attempt to burden their visitors with responsibility — if not for the past, then for the future — and empathy for their fellow human beings" (Sodaro 27). This responsibility must be directed towards a *you* and not inwardly directed towards a *me*. If we are to truly effect ethical change, it must come from a sense of responsibility for Others as Others, not Others-as-if-they-were-me. The ghosts that creep through the USHMM remind visitors of the individual lives at stake when injustice and intolerance overtake communities, and those lives must be protected even if I cannot see myself in them.

Walking among ghosts, visitors enter a space uniquely designed to produce a moral — not strictly intellectual — education. Bernard-Donals explains how the USHMM creates "an ethical space of unsettlement" (Bernard-Donals 183). This unsettlement arises from the haunted nature of the memorial museum. Even if they may not rationally be able to name the experience, visitors *feel* haunted by their time in this space. "The effect on the visitor," writes Bernard-Donals, "is a catalyzing one, attuning her to what resides beyond memory and *haunting her with*

its excessive possibility" (Bernard-Donals 184, emphasis mine). This excessive possibility of memory drives visitors into a sense of ethical urgency. If Holocaust memory is not simply about historical facts and figures, then our commitment to that memory must incorporate haunted futures shaped by ethical interpersonal engagement. The USHMM's haunted futurities "cast memory into the future" to force visitors to "bear witness not to the past but to their involvement in the present, a present both haunted by traces of the past and racing into the future" (Bernard-Donals 19). Through haunting, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum calls visitors — compels them — into future-oriented ethical actions. From the halls of the memorial museum, ghosts rise to guide the living towards a future they were denied.

As I leave the museum, I pass through the Hall of Remembrance — a hexagonal, marble memorial space. Enveloped in quiet, the Hall of Remembrance clearly embraces the commemorative responsibility of the memorial museum. Here, visitors reflect on and remember those murdered during the Holocaust. This space, however, also reflects the way in which haunting, despite its reputation for being a representation of an obsession with the past, inspires different futures. At the heart of the Hall of Remembrance, an "eternal flame" burns. This eternal flame not only serves as a symbol for enduring memory, but also a light for a new future — one inspired by and realized because of ghosts. When I finally walk towards the USHMM's exit, I feel as though someone is watching me. Even as I push open the door and brace myself against the D.C. humidity, I feel a presence accompanying me. I can't help but feel motivated as I walk alongside these ghosts. I carry them with me wherever I go. The time for haunted futurities begins now.

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Alabama in July. I should've expected the heat and the humidity but somehow it still catches me by surprise. As I wait in line to enter the Legacy Museum — one part of the Equal Justice Initiative's antilynching museum and memorial — I curse myself for forgetting sunglasses. The sun burns with an intensity that feels almost too bright. Aggressively bright, despite the thunderstorms that have rolled through Montgomery the past few days. I have to shield my eyes to look around. The white exterior of the Legacy Museum's building intensifies the sun's potency. It is only 9 o'clock in the morning. The waiting security guard opens the doors and allows those of us in line entrance into the air-conditioned reprieve of the museum. Released from the discomfort of the weather, visitors are not freed from the discomfort of the fraught racial history of Montgomery (and the United States more generally). The entrance area is narrow, with tight quarters through which staff check any bags, run visitors through a metal detector, and scan tickets. The exhibit then starts immediately after my ticket is scanned, meaning that the museum merges with the noise of visitors entering, chatting with each other, and staff walking them through the entrance process. A cacophony of voices and noises surrounds me as I read of Montgomery's history with slavery. The chatter reminds me that this building once served as a warehouse for enslaved persons. The museum is not set apart from Montgomery or its history; it refuses to separate itself from its surrounding environment.

The Legacy Museum: Learning and Legacy

Unlike the USHMM, which necessitated arguments as to why an event that occurred in Europe belonged in the United States Capitol, the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice ground themselves in three increasingly more specific locations in the United States. At its most general the museum and memorial speak to a legacy of anti-Black racism that haunts the United States to this day. The museum then moves to a regional lens,

examining the specific ways in which anti-Black racial violence has shaped — and continues to shape — the American South. Finally, at its most specific, the museum locates visitors in the city of Montgomery by outlining the history that surrounds them in the very city they attend the museum in. In these ways, the museum contends with the difficult aspect that this history hits close to home (or theoretically should) for every American that passes through its doors. This history happened *here*. It continues to happen *here*. Anti-Black racial violence haunts the United States in that it is a past which is not past. Like a ghost, the manifestations of anti-Black racism slips through the wall or evaporates into thin air just when we think we've captured it.

The museum and memorial, however, also employ haunting to generate pathways to other futures in which this American legacy of racial violence might finally become a thing of the past. Legacy, clearly a core concept of the museum because the museum's name draws attention to it, moves in two directions: 1) a legacy of past violence that continues to morph into new iterations in the contemporary age, and 2) a legacy of resistance from which springs the potential for a different future. The work of haunted futurities finds itself at home in this second legacy or resistance.

One part of the Equal Justice Initiative's museum and memorial educational project, the Legacy Museum traces instances of anti-Black racial violence from "enslavement to mass incarceration" (https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/museum). While I will discuss the National Memorial for Peace and Justice later in this chapter, I begin with the museum because it most clearly positions itself as an educational space. Although the Equal Justice Initiative (hereafter abbreviated as EJI) prescribes no particular order in which to visit the memorial and the museum, beginning with the museum establishes a helpful background with which to better understand

and participate in the commemorative work of the memorial. Haunting plays a key role in both spaces.

The first exhibit perhaps most obviously embodies a haunted pedagogy. Upon entering the museum, a staff member directs visitors' attention to informational signs explaining some contextual information about the transatlantic slave trade and about Montgomery's very active role in that trade. After reading, the staff member explains that the first exhibit uses "authentic testimony" in each of the dramatizations. Visitors then walk down a short ramp and find themselves in a small room with a series of holding cells reminiscent of jail cells. Immediately, the Legacy Museum confronts visitors with the history of the very building they now stand in. Located "midway between an historic slave market and the main river dock and train station where tens of thousands of enslaved people were trafficked during the height of the domestic slave trade," the museum itself "is built on the site of a former warehouse where enslaved Black people were imprisoned" (https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/museum). The first exhibit, tucked into a dark dead-end hallway, uses holographic technology to dramatize this authentic testimony.

The holograms very design evokes a sense of haunting. They are black and white, with a slight blue overtone. This coloring not only makes them feel eerie, like apparitions, but as if they exist out of time. Like old photographs, they feel simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. The innovative hologram technology also makes them feel futuristic. It is as if the past itself is talking to us, but also as if there exists a gulf between these two times. The holograms also do not depict the entire speaker's body. At the bottom of the hologram, the individual's feet fade away, making it seem as if the people reenacting the testimony float above the ground. It also lends the holograms a phantom feeling; it feels like I could run my hand through them and feel

only the cold smoke from the apparition. They are there, but not completely. They are both corporeal and incorporeal.

Finally, the holograms flicker as they speak. Sometimes bright and sometimes dark, the holograms fade in and out like a being not completely tied to the physical realm. The final holding cell, the only one facing a different direction than the others, sets the mood for the exhibit as a whole. From the final cell, visitors can hear an older woman singing a doleful song. Her song pervades the entire exhibit. Instead of informational plagues around the exhibit, it — quite literally — speaks for itself. A discordance permeates the museum from the beginning of the exhibit, a discordance that creates a haunted soundscape. This dissonance marks the eerie spot between the real and the uncanny because visitors never hear just one voice, just one narrative. Rather visitors hear a cacophony of voices; the ghostly voices of the holograms, the videos playing in the main exhibit space, the voices of the living who work at and tour the museum all mesh together and create a space from which the haunted emerges.

The first hologram depicts a distressed woman, asking insistently about the whereabouts of her two children. She speaks softly, pleading with visitors to answer her questions, to provide her with some information about her missing children. At one point, she breaks eye contact with the visitor, looking off to the side as if concentrating on something far away. She says softly, "I can hear them […] I can feel their presence" (Legacy Museum). The hologram emphasizes the ghostliness of this exhibit. Despite physical separation, she can still feel their presence. This line also works to alert visitors to other presences they may feel moving through the museum space.

As visitors move further into the dead end of the exhibit, they also encounter a hologram of a man sharing his experience as an enslaved person. Most strikingly in the context of the museological experience, is how the man's testimony both speaks directly to visitors and to other

holograms. By addressing his testimony to "you children," the man includes a moral lesson for children around him — both in terms of the enslaved children who are also held captive in the warehouse as well as the children who visit the museum today. He encourages "you children" to "stay strong. Have faith" (Legacy Museum). While this call to fortitude in the face of injustice and misfortune certainly serves as a takeaway for children visiting the museum, this hologram also speaks directly to the penultimate cell just next to it.

In the penultimate cell, visitors encounter two children nervously holding each other. They are young — no older than thirteen or fourteen. Their voices sound raspy, as if they've fatigued their vocal cords through either crying or yelling. They huddle close together and gaze directly at the visitor as they whisper, "have you seen our mother?" Seeking their missing mother, this hologram references the first in the exhibit and therefore forces the visitor to recall an earlier testimony. In this sense, the Legacy Museum actively encourages information retention. A visitor cannot passively engage with the material in front of them. Instead, the museum tasks them with connecting different pieces of the exhibit. The visitor's job here is not just to listen to testimony, but to connect various testimonies in a web of overlapping stories and experiences. In other words, the connections between the various holographic testimonies demonstrate how individual stories make up a tapestry of collective experience.

The children's hologram emphasizes one other key aspect of this first exhibit: how easy it is to miss these connections. As previously stated, the holding cells are built into a dead end. In this sense, the flow of traffic that museums so carefully control to move visitors through the exhibits, is not a flow at all but a jam. As I patiently waited for those in front of me to finish listening to the testimonies ahead, I also noticed many other visitors who listened to the first and maybe part of another one before giving up and moving on to the next set of exhibits. Or,

wanting to avoid the crowd waiting at one cell, other visitors listened to the testimonies out of order, thereby missing certain testimonies altogether or not understanding the connections between the various testimonies.

This design calls attention to the layout of the museum itself and immediately confronts the visitor about their own expectations about what the museum can accomplish. Jennifer K. Ladinos's monograph *Memorials Matter: Emotion, Environment, and Public Memory at American Historical Sites* discusses how the physical environment impacts visitors' experiences and takeaways. "It's not enough," she explains, "to simply presume that 'healing' happens. We need to grasp how the physical environment and the emotions generated at sites of memory have serious implications not only for how we remember the past but also for how we understand the present" (Ladino 27). For Tony Bennett, the organizational design of museums engenders certain forms of "civic seeing" through which "the civic lessons embodied in those arrangements are to be seen, understood, and performed by the museum's visitor" (Bennett 263). The seemingly dysfunctional design of this first exhibit, then, refuses to let visitors slide into any sense of comfort. Rather, they must contend with their own bodies in space and consider the ghosts of the victims now surrounding them. As Bill Hillier and Kali Tzortzi so clearly explain, museological "space not only reflects and expresses social patterns, it can also generate them by shaping a pattern of movement and co-presence" (Hillier and Tzortzi 286). In this instance, the co-presence exists not only among museum patrons, but also explicitly includes that of the Legacy Museum's ghosts. The ghosts of this first exhibit are neither fleeting nor seen from merely the corner of an eye. The ghosts are here, with visitors, as they navigate the architectural dead end.

The design of this first exhibit, clearly meant to generate an affective response from visitors upon seeing and hearing testimony from entrapped enslaved persons, also forces the

visitor into sometimes conflicting perspectives. Simultaneously a confidant for the woman looking to see her children and the recipient of the man's advice to "stay strong" and "have faith," the visitor must also reckon with the fact that a barred, cell door separates them from the holograms. This perspective, obviously, interpellates Black visitors differently than white visitors. As I was leaving the museum, a Black couple visiting from Atlanta stopped me. "We've been watching you with your notebook. Are you doing research or something?" they asked me. Thus began a conversation about how the museum "works" differently for visitors of color versus white visitors.

As we chatted about the holograms, I mentioned that obviously my position at the exhibit is different. While they spoke of feeling an empathetic connection with the holograms of the men, women, and children behind bars, of feeling personally connected to these testimonies, I felt a sense of distance between myself and the holograms. The exhibit, in other words, drew this couple in and had them imagine themselves as victims, whereas I felt a growing distance. At one point, one of the couple said, "my ancestors would be in those cells" to which I replied, "mine, embarrassingly, would be outside." In this moment, what I feel first is shame.

However, because of how the museum deploys haunting, it refuses to let me rest in that sense of shame and guilt. This museum is not about me; it's about how to create a different future. Shame can often be debilitating. Outrage, on the other hand, transforms affect into action. In this space, in this conversation, the museum has facilitated dialogue and solidarity building. Surrounded by other visitors and the dissonance of the sound within the exhibit space, this couple and I engage with each other in ways not necessarily encouraged in other museum or memorial designs. In fact, where we have this conversation is almost as important as what we discuss. On the wall of a hallway stretching the length of the exhibit that leads to the exit,

questions about key issues raised by the museum encourage visitors to continue to engage even as they leave the exhibit.[7] In this sense, the museum transforms visitors' affect into action. The museum haunts, therefore, as it directs affect towards future-oriented action. After encountering ghosts throughout the exhibit, the Museum will not leave its visitors in peace.

After emerging from the confined space of the holographic exhibit, visitors enter a large room sectioned into various different exhibits through shelving and half walls. Almost hidden behind hanging tapestries with quotes and reproductions of descriptions of enslaved persons for sale, a large shelving unit holds jars of dirt. A small description explaining how EJI mobilized community action to go collect soil from lynching sites accompanies the shelves of dirt. "Hundreds of previously forgotten have been remembered in this way" (Legacy Museum). Visitors can read the names of individuals murdered by lynching as well and the date and location of their murders. The exhibit, mixed in with the others occupying the main space of the museum, is understated. In a room filled with the noise of various video exhibits and situated directly behind an interactive touch screen map, the jars would be easy to miss. However, during my own visit, I noticed that visitors congregated by the jars. Their pace slowed, even if for a moment, as they paused to read victims' names or to notice the differences between the soils. The jars haunted.

Behind the shelves of jars, visitors could sit for a minute in a dark alcove and watch a video about this "Community Remembrance Project" to memorialize victims of lynching. The video explains that a main goal of the project is to "change the narrative" and force different US counties to "concede" that these crimes occurred (Legacy Museum). In this sense, the Legacy

[7] Some of these questions include: Should we have the death penalty if we know we have wrongful convictions? Should the US Supreme court acknowledge and apologize for former overly racist rulings? (The Legacy Museum).

Museum, like the USHMM, engages in a moral pedagogy grounded in the imperative "never again." A video at the museum's exit reiterates the moral educational design of the museum by stating the primary goal of museum: "We hope people will leave with the sentiment that never again will we tolerate racial violence" (Legacy Museum). The museum creates this sentiment in large part because of the way it haunts its visitors. Visitors commit to a moral and ethical pedagogy because they feel the spirit of these individuals in the soil. The jars are not merely proxies for those individuals murdered by lynching but designed to evoke the individual themselves.

The soil, however, creates routes for connection to the past in ways specific to memorializing violence that occurred in the US itself. The soil contains what the museum projects as a direct connection with the various sites of atrocity. There exists a sense that the soil in the jars is the same soil present at the time of violence and thus generates a route to connect through time and to the person. These routes for connection build themselves upon a haunted form of connecting with the past.

While the jars of soil clearly resurrect the spirit of individuals murdered by lynching, they also serve as signs of haunted futurities — ones hopefully not marred by such anti-Black violence. The video directly behind the jars of soils in the museum explains how this soil is also a key component for the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. The National Memorial, the sister site of the EJI's anti-lynching memorial museum, includes this direct connection not only between the two sites but also between the many victims of lynching. Another video near the exit of the museum addresses the significance of the jars of soil. This particular video — a recording of the memorial's dedication — discusses the memorial specifically and indirectly reinforces the hauntological aspects of the memorial museum's design. The video claims that there is the trace

of the body ("blood, sweat, tears") in the soil (Legacy Museum). Although the sense of the body still present, the spirit still alive, in the soil certainly speaks to a haunted sensibility, the dedication moves beyond mere haunting to how this soil works to create other futures through its haunting: "but in the soil we can plant something" (Legacy Museum). Out of this haunted soil rises the potential for a more ethical future. In other words, the ghosts of these victims are resurrected in service of building better futures.

Bringing the Ghosts Home

For the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, this work towards building better futures begins now. The memorial's visitor and education center contains a similar display of jars of soil to commemorate victims of lynching. While the memorial's visitor and education center is across the street from the memorial proper — meaning visitors can easily miss this twin display — the soil, does make an appearance in the actual memorial (albeit in a different container). After walking through much of the memorial — which will be discussed in further detail shortly — visitors turn into the final covered hallway. This hallway, architecturally the lowest topographical point in the memorial, feels cool and slightly more open than the one visitors just emerged from. Here, sitting in the middle of the path, lies a large glass display case filled with soil. On the side of the glass, a sign reiterates the EJI's "Community Remembrance Project" motivating the soil collection.

Unlike the other two displays of soil collected from sites of lynching, the memorial has not separated this soil into distinct jars with specific names, dates, and locations. Rather, the soil — a rocky mix of black, red, and light brown earth — is all mixed together. In this sense, this soil transforms from a commemorative act to remember specific individuals into an act to remembered all of the victims of racially motivated lynchings. However, it also serves as a

memory of those lost to history, victims who still find themselves anonymous ghosts. Even in this display, which does not indicate specific places or people, the spirit of the body makes its presence known. Peering into the glass case, visitors see the clear markers of a hand running over the surface of the soil. Groves from between fingers and the trace of a hand smoothing the soil are visible (see image 1). In the soil, visitors see the haunting effect a body leaves behind in the soil. The display haunts visitors, not by naming victims or asking visitors to imagine themselves in victims' positions, but by making the body known even in its absence.

Image 1. Photo taken by author 16 July 2021.

In addition to the soil, the memorial conjures the presence of ghostly bodies throughout its design. After following the path up and around to the main memorial structure, visitors encounter large rust-colored sculptures. Each hanging sculpture represents a county in which a lynching occurred and victims' name are inscribed on the rectangular metal boxes. The boxes' understated shape allows the sculptures to contain multiple symbolic resonances, the first of which being a representation of a body. Even though many of the sculptures include multiple victims' names, the box feels like a proxy representation of a body. This sense of the sculptures as bodies becomes all the more significant given the fact that many of the victims of lynching's bodies were brutalized and disfigured by the murderers. The sculpture evokes the sense of a body without trying to recreate lost bodies. Their loss is still felt as a present absence.

At the same time, the sculptures recall traditional memorial markers or tombstones. Similar in form to the obelisks and other World War I memorial Jay Winter examines in *Sites of Memory*; the rectangular boxes use a recognizable commemorative structure to alert visitors to the work done at this site. While memorials are, by their nature, spaces dedicated to honoring and remember the dead, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice takes this direction to create a space to remember the dead more literally. Filled with these rust-colored sculptures with inscribed names and death dates the space evokes a graveyard. Because of the dual representational work of the sculptures — as both the body and the grave — the memorial refuses to let the bodies of lynching victims be forgotten and disappear, either literally with the many unknown victims or metaphorically with a form that ignores the body itself.

As visitors first enter the memorial structure, the sculptures begin attached to the ground, a memorial maze where visitors can move amongst and between individual markers. However, the architectural design of the memorial shifts as visitors move along the path. While the

sculptures begin on the same level as visitors, they begin to ascend into the air as the memorial slopes downward. In other words, as visitors descend further into the memorial, the sculptures shift from occupying the same level as visitors to hanging above them. In their article, “Taking the Reparatory Turn at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice,” Marouf Hasian Jr. and Nicholas S. Paliewicz describe this architectural shift a key moment of “affective materialization” (Hasian and Paliewicz 2228). They continue, saying “By this we mean the objects the EJI used to build this dark tourism structure were purposely selected and positioned so visitors to the NMPJ would feel as if they were witnessing historical lynchings” (Hasian and Paliewicz 2228). Effectively utilizing moments of affective materialization proves essential to the memorial’s pedagogical goal because the resonance it generates within visitors encourages them to “do something about marking these lynching pasts long after they leave Montgomery” (Hasian and Paliewicz 2228). What is haunting but the feeling and memory of a place, person, or event following you long after you leave? Clearly, then, the hanging columns elicit haunting in memorial visitors.

This perspectival shift is important for a few reasons. Not only does it reinforce the sense that these sculptures somehow contain the lunching victims’ bodies — a ghostly sense apparent from the beginning of the memorial — but it also forces visitors into the perspective of spectators of lynching. Hanging above visitors, it is as if the sculpture is now the ghostly body of a victim, and this shift makes visitors contend with their own body in this memorial space. For Black visitors, these sculptures carry the potential to transform into the ghostly bodies of lost loved ones and walking beneath them emphasizes the violence of their deaths. For white visitors, they now must occupy the space of the perpetrator and spectator.

The way that EJI's memorial complex interpellates different visitors in different ways is most apparent at the NMPJ. In their article "A Visit to Montgomery's Legacy Museum," Allyson Hobbs and Nell Freudenberger confront these various levels of interpellation during their own visit to the memorial. While they title the article a visit to the Legacy Museum, their focus on the memorial component of the dual memorial museum proves telling for the power of the memorial in invoking different subject positions. Before visiting, Hobbs and Freudenberger explain how "We knew that the museum and memorial would ask different things of black and white visitors," but it is their visit to the memorial that brings those "things" into stark contrast (Hobbs and Freundenberger). Under the hanging sculptures, Hobbs searches for her family's home county hoping not to recognize the names emblazoned on the empty boxes. Freundenberger, conversely, searches for her family's home county hoping not to find it in the memorial at all.

By separating different viewers through this perspectival shift, the memorial maintains a key distinction between Black and white visitors. Where some Black visitors like Hobbs can look to the sculptures and empathize with these ghostly bodies, white visitors like Freundenberger cannot. White visitors can express sorrow and commit to solidarity in future social justice movements, but their moral and ethical education springs not from the ability to empathize but from the memorial's haunting reminder that have the potential to be perpetrators. As Elena Gonzales points out in *Exhibitions for Social Justice*, "If visitors are to be part of any collective action, they must feel solidarity" (Gonzales 10). Empathy inspires individual-to-individual action. Solidarity, engendered through haunting, inspires visitors to work towards the dismantling of collective and systemic violences that affect others beyond those with whom they can empathize. In other words, though the push for empathy is certainly an important aspect in generating a moral sensibility for many visitors, haunting builds the same sense of ethical

responsibility to for others without blurring the boundary between who would and would not be a victim for those who visit.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice engenders this sense of haunting in its own visitors. Near the entrance, the memorial clearly explains its pedagogical goals with a sign that reads,

> At this memorial, we remember the thousands killed, the generations of black people terrorized, and the legacy of suffering and injustice that haunts us still. We also remember the countless victims whose deaths were not recorded in news archives and cannot be documented, who are recognized solely in the mournful memories of those who loved them. We believe in telling the truth about the age of racial terror and reflecting together on this period and its legacy can lead to a more thoughtful and informed commitment to justice today. *We hope this memorial will inspire individuals, communities, and this nation to claim our difficult history and commit to a just and peaceful future.* (NMPJ, emphasis mine)

As stated in this plaque, the memorial attempts to not simply build empathy but to build community — and more importantly, to build solidarity among many different groups. The sign employs the use of the plural "we" to mean both the creators of the memorial, but also visitors who engage with the memorial. Each sentence demonstrates what the memorial envisions as acts of solidarity: we remember, we believe in telling the truth, we hope. Yet, each of these acts of solidarity arises from a sense of being haunted and not necessarily from simply encouraging empathy.

Whereas empathy asks every visitor to consider the plight of the victim, haunting maintains a crucial distinction between visitor and victim. This distinction speaks to the

pedagogical goals of the memorial museum institution. Though Martha Watterson explains her experience at The Chicago History Museum, her reaction an exhibit on called *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* is particularly relevant in the context of the Legacy Museum's role as a specifically anti-lynching institution. After working through the exhibition, she remarks that "As I left the exhibition, I took a small card, which said, 'I will remember William James, lynched 1909, Cairo, Illinois.' Although the exhibition space was empty when I entered, when I left the room was full — full of ghosts" (Watterson). Watterson leaves not primarily with a sense of empathy — though she certainly experiences that as well. She leaves with a sense of haunting.

From the beginning, the memorial asks visitors to engage with haunting and to use haunting to inspire future action. Empathy is undoubtedly important. Haunting inspires empathetic action. As Avery Gordon writes, haunting produces a "something-to-be-done" (Gordon, *Ghostly Matters* xvi). Without haunting visitors would not feel the same drive to participate in social justice work because the consequences of failing to fight for social justice would fade into a memory about the memorial and not action in the present aimed at bettering the future. The memorial evokes haunting to encourage visitors to work towards building more just futures after leaving the site.

Finally, because of its ability to haunt, the memorial explicitly asks visitors to engage in future-oriented social justice actions as they wind through the final part of the memorial. Similarly to the twinned jars of soil displays, the memorial includes another twinned display for visitors as they leave the memorial. As they exit the focal memorial structure, visitors enter Memorial Park, where they encounter matching steel structures to those they just saw hanging in the main memorial site. This time, however, the rusting steel sculptures lay flat. From a distance,

these matching sculptures appear like benches and the space an open site for reflection and rest after traversing through the memorial. Indeed, without prior research, I would've considered these matching sculptures just that when I first saw them at the beginning of the descent into the memorial.

After exiting the covered portion of the memorial, visitors walk around a corner to these twinned sculptures. Here, visitors learn of the memorial's most clearly future oriented request. A sign explains Monument Park and its goal:

> In this park rest duplicate monuments for each county in American where a racial terror lynching occurred. The Equal Justice Initiative is inviting cities and counties across the country to engage in EJI's Community Remembrance Project where local activities are planned to acknowledge each community's history of racial terror lynching. Acknowledging our collective history must be both national and local. Advancing an era of Truth and Racial Justice will require the landscape of America to more honestly reflect our true history. (NMPJ)

As the sign explains, these monuments functions as an invitation for cities and counties across the US to participate in the haunted futurity of racial justice work. Specifically, cities and counties are tasked with not only claiming their roles in racial terror lynchings, but that they will also claim the physical monument itself and display it back "home." In reclaiming the sculptures, cities and counties also symbolically reclaim the bodies of those victims of lynching. Yet, this reclamation is not a call to "put the past to rest" or to exorcise the past. Rather, it is a call for continued haunting. Returning the monuments — which, as previously discussed, serve as ghostly bodies of those murdered by lynching — brings the ghosts home and allows them to haunt their own communities.

Ultimately, the NMPJ hopes that Monument Park will eventually be empty of these twin sculptures. When communities claim their sculpture, they also publicly claim their role in racial terror lynching and their commitment to building a more just future. Part of the memorial's pedagogical goal rests upon the imperative to remember past violence and more specifically to remember victims. Ghosts refuse to let the living forget. As demonstrated in the interactive haunting that visitors must partake in the museum and that communities must foster by bringing these ghostly monuments home, haunting is never simply about redressing past wrongs. Ghosts demand different outcomes, other futures. So yes, while many ghosts concern themselves with confronting the past, they simultaneously seek to ensure that that past does not repeat. In this sense, the homecoming of these monuments represents haunted futurities in action; visitors to the memorial, inspired by the ghosts around them, seek social change to honor, defend, and realize the imagined futures made visible by ghosts.

A crowd now forms near the entrance to the memorial. School age children with matching shirts and adults reminding them to speak quietly and stick with their buddy. I'm winding around the final path of the memorial, one that takes me out into the open and exposes me to the heat and sun — already feeling unbearable even though it is only 10:30am. This path winds and curves. Dotted along I stop at sculptures or look back and see the hanging monuments on the hill behind me. The grass is so green and manicured that I almost forget I'm in downtown Montgomery until I look up and see the tops of buildings peeking out past the memorial grounds. I'm struck by a pillar engraved with a poem by Elizabeth Alexander titled "Invocation." The act of invoking, of calling upon the spirit of another, powerfully fits with the haunting affect of the memorial as a whole. I stop and read and I'm called to the line "Here you will find us despite."

Isn't that exactly what ghosts do? Persist, exist — despite. As I linger, I reread and move closer to the pillar until I stand directly in front of it. It is then that I notice my own reflection caught in the dark stone. Here, I find myself a living part of the poem. Here I recognize myself as one of the many "you"s addressed in the poem. A "you" who "will not find us extinct." I turn to walk away and feel the gentle pressure of ghosts resting their hands upon me, guiding me forward towards a better future.

CODA

As I read through Thane Rosenbaum's *The Golems of Gotham* in preparation for this project, one small detail stood out to me though I wasn't yet sure how to include it. I knew it had to make an appearance, however. Just as *Haunting the Future* talks about the ghosts that haunt Black and Jewish Diasporic literature and cultural institutions, these ghosts come to haunt those of us who interact with them. Ghosts leapt from the pages of the novel as I was writing this dissertation and followed me from room to room — not to intimidate or spark fear (though they are certainly capable of that), but to ensure that I did not lose my way. I too felt haunted and pushed towards recognizing how the work of writing this dissertation contributes to haunted futurities. More than a mass of pages, this dissertation haunts me as a constant reminder to work towards making other, better futures with the work I put forth into the world.

This one detail from Rosenbaum makes its appearance during the golems' rampage — a focal point of my own analysis of the novel. In the description of the supernatural mayhem the golems rain down upon Manhattan, Rosenbaum includes a poignant line given the current political state of the United States of America: "Gargoyles dressed up as Nazis were seen goose-stepping down Fifth Avenue, *heiling* Trump Tower with a left-handed salute" (Rosenbaum 326, original emphasis). Though written in 2002, this detail strikes a chord for those of us who witnessed Trump's presidency first-hand. From his blatant refusal to condemn white supremacist military groups during the first Presidential debate of 2020 ("Proud Boys — stand back and stand by") to his support of the storming of the Capitol on January 6th, 2020, Trump certainly embodies many of the telltale warning signs of a Fascist leader and, as a consequence, the very warning signs Rosenbaum's golems desperately fear the return of throughout the novel (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/29/us/trump-proud-boys-biden.html). In fact, it's not

difficult to find articles that examine the striking similarities between Trump and Hitler, though I am always wary of such comparisons.[8] For so many, Trump's election and subsequently stormy presidency seemed an eerie and disturbing repetition of the past.

Many of us living in a post-Trump Presidency United States feel our ears prick up at any mention of "Trump" so it comes as no surprise that I was poised to notice this line. While we could chalk my attention to this detail up to the political upheaval following an unstable four years from 2016-2020, I'm not ready to admit that I may simply be, as naysayers of literary studies everywhere argue, "reading into it too much." Rather, I contend that this detail speaks to the resonances that carry through history into the present and finally push us towards the future; these resonances are hauntings. Just as Erna Brodber's protagonist in *Louisiana* haunts herself from the future, Rosenbaum's line in his 2002 novel seems nothing short of a similar premonition, a haunting hurtling through time waiting to spook those who encounter it. This haunting encourages those whom it spooks to act in such a way so that the future does not repeat the past. Haunting in this sense, works directly against the concept that history repeats itself and that ghosts are simply repetitions of past trauma; haunting is wholly concerned with the future.

While Rosenbaum's Nazi gargoyles certainly haunt post-Trump readers, Jesmyn Ward's ghosts in her novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing* speak to the cultural visibility and resurgence of Black Lives Matter and the power that haunting inspires in popular social justice movements. I begin with the connection between Ward and Black Lives Matter to underscore the ways in which literature is directly in conversation with and theorizing about the injustices impacting Black

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[8] Waitman Wade Beorn's *Washington Post* article, "It's Not Wrong to Compare Trump's America to the Holocaust. Here's Why" is a useful example. I choose Beorn's article over others because Beorn is actually a Holocaust and genocide studies historian (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/07/16/its-not-wrong-to-compare-trumps-america-to-the-holocaust-heres-why/).

bodies in the United States to this day. The first ghost to appear in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* is Given, Leonie's older brother who is murdered by a white boy after Given beats him in a hunting competition. Given's death is then covered up by white police officers related to the murderer. Though Ward rarely delves into the aftermath of Given's murder, this kind of police-authorized murder of Black bodies speaks directly to the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice (to name only a few).

Though the Black Lives Matter movement first appeared as a twitter hashtag in 2013, the murder of George Floyd by Derek Cauvin sparked widespread popular involvement ("Black History Milestones: Timeline"). Floyd's murder on May 25th, 2020 — during difficult months of a contentious presidential campaign in which Trump openly encouraged violence against non-supporters — spurred protests across the country. Floyd's murder in particular stoked the fires of discontent and outrage over the murder (the lynchings) of black bodies in American because it occurred only shortly after two other high-profile murders. The murders of Ahmaud Arbrey by white civilians February 23rd, 2020 and Breonna Taylor by police mishandling a warrant procedure on March 13th, 2020 captured the attention of citizens across the country and encouraged engaged civil protest against police violence and other extra-judicial killings of Black bodies.

The faces and names of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbrey, and George Floyd soon became signifiers for the Black Lives Matter movement on a popular scale. It is my interpretation that these three highly visibly murders (and their subsequent social signification about police reform and deep-seated racism in the United States) haunt the Black Lives Matter movement. These ghosts — much like Richie and Given in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* and like the ghosts that haunt visitors to the Equal Justice Initiative's Memorial Complex — function as

individual representatives for a larger whole. However, even as social movements like Black Lives Matter mobilize the ghosts of Taylor, Arbrey, and Floyd to speak to larger sociopolitical threats to Black bodies, these specific people also retain their individuality. In other words, Black Lives Matter's use of these ghosts helps them to spur public involvement for large-scale issues like wide-spread police reform *without* collapsing all Black experiences into a single story. Recalling Erna Brodber's work in *Louisiana*, haunting actively creates space for multiple voices (even multiple versions of the same voice). In this sense, the ghosts haunting Black Lives Matter are both specific and communal; they tell individual stories and command community activism. These ghosts reveal haunted futurities. The living enact haunted futurities only when they listen to ghosts and are inspired to act because they are haunted.

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