

School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry

**Tracing Phantasms: Envisioning the Haunted Novel in Roberto
Bolaño's *2666* and Gerald Murnane's *The Plains***

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This thesis is presented for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
of
Curtin University**

December 2019

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

Date:

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family – with special thanks to my parents Barb and Norm for their support every step of the way, and in memory of my brother Tim.

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis proposes a theory of the haunted novel as a way of identifying a kind of literature that expresses relation to silent (or silenced) cultural memories through distinctive use of visual devices. These devices, referred to in the thesis as ‘phantasms’, are ghosts and images of the mind that are aesthetically expressed in this imagined genre, often through figures of the uncanny. They constitute an encryption of cultural memory that oscillates uncertainly between homely familiarity and abject violence. Through the tracing of phantasms represented in the novels *2666* by Roberto Bolaño and *The Plains* by Gerald Murnane, this thesis imagines the haunted novel as a literary expression of unsettled history. The first stage of this research works with theories of the uncanny, haunting, and collective trauma, towards the creation of a theory of the haunted novel, which seeks a general applicability to literature beyond cultural specificity. The research then demonstrates the concept put forward in the theoretical discussion through analysis of the two case-study texts. Methodologically, this interdisciplinary project utilises cultural studies textual analysis and psychoanalytic approaches to engage in a discussion of contemporary literature. The above constitutes a timely exploration of the relation between cultural memory and literary representation.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the Noongar people of South Western Australia, the traditional owners of the land on which the Bentley Campus is located and where my studies have taken place.

This thesis was completed thanks to the contributions of many people I wish to acknowledge.

Firstly, I thank my supervisor Antonio Traverso, for his help and dedication in transforming my early writing and ideas into a full vision. The final thesis would not have been possible without Antonio's careful and rigorous feedback, and second wind given to the project. I would also like to thank my co supervisor Suvendrini Perera for her contribution in the final stages.

Several early contributors helped supervise and stimulate my ideas, initial writing, and conference papers, during my candidacy proposal and project's initial development – I thank Christina Lee along with Thea Costantino, Jo and Matthew.

My humanities 'fam' here at Curtin, including but not limited to, Lucas, Daniel, Serena, Maddy, Jess, Marie, Ben, Ashleigh and Liz, are thanked too, for their years of support and comradery on the postgrad journey.

This thesis is dedicated to my family – with special thanks to my parents Barb and Norm for their support every step of the way, and in memory of my brother Tim.

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Figure 1 Giuseppe Arcimboldo *Vertumnus* (1590–91)

“Anyway, these ideas or feelings or ramblings had their satisfactions. They turned the pain of others into memories of one’s own. They turned pain, which is natural, enduring, and eternally triumphant, into personal memory, which is human, brief, and eternally elusive.” (Bolaño, 2666 189)



Figure 2 Giuseppe Arcimboldo *The Librarian* (1566)

“And I traced all the while whatever had the appearance of a theme in that uncertain region: following as far as its seeming source some flaw or fingermark that could have suggested this or that human propensity wavering but persisting in a landscape which itself came and went.” (Murnane, *The Plains* 124)

INTRODUCTION

This thesis begins with an act of envisioning. As I read Roberto Bolaño's *2666* (2008) for the first time, I imagine the face of Giuseppe Arcimboldo's *Vertumnus* (figure 1) as if it were the face of the novel.¹ The face – constructed in Arcimboldo's characteristic style with fruit and flowers – provides a reference point from which to make sense of the story. I begin to ask: might all the disparate parts of the novel come together to form (in a parallax moment) a single impression, like that of a face? The novel, however, is more than a metaphor; it is vitally connected to the cultural context in which it is written, and the context of which it writes. Like the blossoming face of Arcimboldo that materialises from seeds, with all the connotations of a circular re-emergence from burial, the novel absorbs and emerges from life. A face of Arcimboldo's comes into view again, mid-way through my reading of Gerald Murnane's *The Plains* (1982). The narrator is describing himself create a crude dummy of his own likeness out of a feather duster and loose sheets of parchment. A visualisation of *The Librarian* (figure 2) holds for a moment, before it is disassembled.

Both these envisionings respond to narratives of foreclosed, incomplete journeys. Murnane's narrator – never named – is a filmmaker and photographer who never completes his film, to be titled *The Interior*, which was to tell the truth of the novel's immense plains. And Bolaño's story, which follows a man named Archimboldi as a soldier in WW2 Germany to his old age as a writer in Mexico, neither grants the writer's disciples a successful meeting with their idol, nor does it solve the novel's many mysteries.² Both novels slide into an abyss: Murnane's narrator is left photographing the darkness of his eye, while Bolaño's Archimboldi heads off to the heart of darkness, leaving on the novel's final page on a journey that will lead him back to the dark events detailed at the novel's centre. As Northrop Frye says in *The Educated Imagination*: "Literature does not reflect life, but it doesn't escape or withdraw from life either: it swallows it" (80). In reading Bolaño's and Murnane's novels, the experience of the literary turns what it swallows into images of one's own.

¹ This thesis is working with Natasha Wimmer's 2009 English translation of the novel from the original Spanish. An appraisal of the translation's politics can be found in Sarah Pollack's "The Peculiar Art of Cultural Formations" (2008) and her subsequent "After Bolaño" (2013), which analyse how representation of the Latin American region was achieved by English translations of Bolaño and Gabriel García Márquez as the popularity of magical realism waned. The thesis is aware of the limitations of doing literary analysis based on a translation of the primary text. However, it is precisely the identification achieved by this thesis of equivalent narrative devices, here referred to as "phantasms", deployed within the deep structure of these two very different novels that concedes universal validation to this thesis' theoretical discussion of literature beyond linguistic and cultural specificity.

² This detail of the narrative is also analysed in Margaret Boe Birns essay "666 Twinned and Told Twice" (81), included within editor Ignacio López-Calvo's collection *Roberto Bolaño, a Less Distant Star* (2015).

Visibility itself is the definitive enigma of painting: when one paints, they make “visible the act of visualising”.³ In literature, too, images are made available to readers: through *ekphrasis*, the text may describe scenes, and also lament the limitations of the literary (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 76). The visible and invisible are painted in words into an unknown land; the novel is founded upon, and originates from, phantasms (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 77, 85). The unknown lands of *2666* and *The Plains* would appear to coincide, however, with phantasmatic reminders of real-world places beyond them. According to Vilashini Cooppan in *Worlds Within*, nations are “fantasmatic objects knotted together by ambivalent forces of desire, identification, memory, and forgetting, even as they simultaneously move within, across and beyond a series of spatial and temporal borders [...] The space of nations is never simply their own” (xvii). With this in mind, the metaphor of the nation not uniquely as an “imagined community” (Anderson) but precisely as a phantasmatic tapestry of competing forces beckons an envisioning of literature in similar terms. Might a novel’s construction metaphorise the knotting of things, in violation of traditional borders, occupied by forces beyond the scope of their own diegesis?

Thus, this thesis begins by imagining a “haunted novel”, as a figurative way of articulating a theory about a type of literary text whose *raison d'être* is a search for the invisible traces that would link it to the silent and silenced historical context of its emergence. While the thesis commences by tracing the concept of the uncanny, and subsequently the more problematic concepts of the “unclaimed” and “unspeakable”, it finds its focus on the charting of the unsettled, the unnameable, the ungraspable and (un)buried in literature. “The prefix Un is the token of repression,” says Sigmund Freud; and from this psychoanalytic starting point, this thesis’ analysis of the full repertoire of the Un becomes itself “a mark of repression” that emerges and repels (Cixous, “Fiction” 544–5). When the Un prefix returns in its various iterations, it does so as an estranged repetition. It means that: “If all which has been lost returns [...] nothing is ever lost if everything is replaceable, nothing has even disappeared and nothing is ever sufficiently dead; the relationship of presence to absence is in itself an immense system of ‘death,’ a fabric riddled by the real and a phantomisation of the present” (Cixous, *Fiction* 543). A notion of circularity, then, is at the heart of a theorisation of a haunted present, where a

³ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s “Eye and Mind” (1964) and Peter Schwenger’s analysis of the former (*Fantasm* 75).

system of presences and absences produce a present characterised by the unburied – that is, experience that exceeds the “absorptive capacity” of the earth (Tuggle 69).

This thesis addresses the ongoing dispersal and circulation of unsettled, aesthetic symbolisations of cultural memory. It responds to the images – and concurrent cultural anxieties – expressed in the Latin American contemporary narrative of *2666*, and Australian contemporary narrative of *The Plains*. The image of the abyss as an intense figure of loss, for example, comes into view between places, uniting disparate time frames (Birns 76). Connecting the visual to memory, the thesis aims to trace this complex relation, responding to a need to theorise the distinctive literary device – identified in this thesis as the “phantasm” – with which haunting is narrated. As a result, the thesis’ research problem is demonstrating the operation of the proposed concept of the haunted novel within the narrative and form of *2666* and *The Plains*. Towards this aim, the thesis conducts analysis that responds to the ungraspable interplay of the visible and invisible in Bolaño’s and Murnane’s narratives, in which images take the place of words in response to a crisis of experience. Cultural unease with regards to the “phantasmagorical process” that haunts the mind with that which is “here” rather than “there” dates back to the late eighteenth century, when theorists grappled with “groundless figures” – ghosts that hover in the mind (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 12–13). The thesis responds to haunting as “a symptom of repressed knowledge” and an inescapable, unmourned past (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 64). To conceptualise the haunted novel as a kind of narrative that brings forth shared or public memory through the visual re-emergence of phantasms, connections must be established between the literary and the cultural world – the realm of unborn, unburied, or truncated nationhood.

Subsequently, the thesis aims to investigate the problem of how Bolaño’s *2666* and Murnane’s *The Plains* encrypt the phantasms of uncertain collective memory. It responds to the psychoanalytic concept of the “crypt” as a transmittable figure, a communal (un)grave of shared experience that speaks in images. Contextually, this thesis’ research emerges amid trends in the scholarship of spectrality to approach “the haunting of the present by the past” in terms consonant with those “used to describe the affective qualities of trauma” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 11). Indeed, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok’s connection of conceptual metaphors of spectrality to the project of trauma studies in the 1980s, and Cathy Caruth’s definition of trauma experience as to be “possessed by an image or event”, inform this thesis’ textual analysis (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 11). This dovetailing of disciplines leads into a cross-disciplinary approach to narrative, which includes the

theoretical context of philosophical and critical theories of vision. Drawing from methodologically diverse fields, from psychoanalysis and memory studies to phenomenology, this thesis seeks interpretation of the phantasmatic manifestations of psychical processes in literary texts that insistently evoke affinities with their cultural contexts. Thus, the thesis seeks to interrogate the relation between vision and memory, particularly in the case of trauma's irrepressible re-emergence into the visual field.

The analysis of textual visuality as it operates within *2666* and *The Plains* seeks to unravel the thesis' central research problem of how the phantasms of the haunted novel might signify symptomatic national displacements related to uncertain cultural memory. As this thesis argues, the underlying visual device in Bolaño's *2666* and Murnane's *The Plains* is the phantasmagoria. In *2666*, this device creates a strategic map of an area of the world that has seemingly survived historical catastrophe (de Los Ríos 108).⁴ Like a cartographer, Bolaño seeks to visualise invisibly and experience from an internal or mobile perspective, with a broken promise of epiphany (de Los Ríos 111, 119, 121). Indeed, the thesis' core research aim is precisely to demonstrate and illustrate the haunted novel's operation through the close textual analysis of Bolaño's and Murnane's novels. Therefore, the analysis of *2666* and *The Plains* posits the novels as responses to catastrophic experience, subsequently envisioning their narrative phantasms as forms that bring visual expression to the unspeakable wounds inflicted by dictatorship and colonisation in their respective regions. This thesis' analysis responds to existing scholarship on *2666* and *The Plains* that suggests a relation between its narrative and a national uncanny (Rodríguez, McInerney). Characterisations of land as the site of restless uncertainty can be traced back to psychoanalytic interpretations (Freud, Royle), which are applicable to reflections about the phantasmagorical unsettledness of modern Australia and Latin America. Therefore, distorted representations of common reality in *2666* and *The Plains* are contextualised within psychoanalytic interpretation in this thesis.

The thesis also seeks to illustrate the resonance between the literary and the socio-cultural domains, as well as the theoretical basis for this undertaking. It develops amid theorisations of tomblessness, and cultural questions about the confrontation of national mourning, where places of burial are dispersed and difficult to locate. Literature concretises intermittences, possibilities, and conjectures into metonymies that correlate with memory;

⁴ Citations from the Spanish language edition of de Los Ríos's *Espectros de Luz: Tecnologías Visuales en la Literatura Latinoamericana* [Spectra of Light: Visual Technologies in Latin American Literature] (1st edition, October 2011) are translated to English using Google software and revised by the thesis supervisor Antonio Traverso, who is a native Spanish speaker.

it creates a territory of memory from disruptive figures, which encode the experience of the subject's dissolution (Coppola 82, 79).⁵ Informed by the notions of "unclaimed experience" (Caruth) and its latency, the thesis' textual analysis seeks out images in *2666* and *The Plains* of mnemonic significance. Methods of cryptonymy inform the thesis' reading of the novels' phantasms, which are understood as visual signifiers of trauma's secret spaces (Schwab, *Haunting* 53). This analysis is also informed by scholarship that finds that trauma is not just a crisis of memory, but "a crisis in representation and narration" (Buse 182). The thesis' method of close textual analysis seeks to highlight precisely how words and figures recur insistently (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5), at once containing and transferring meaning.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first two chapters outline a theoretical framework for conceptualising the haunted novel. The last three chapters test this conceptual tool through analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*. Chapter 1, *Haunting Reappearances: The Phantasms of Cultural Memory*, proposes the haunted novel as the figuration of a work of literary phantasms that tells the story of uncertain cultural memory. Utilising the methodological framework of psychoanalysis, the chapter conducts analysis of literary responses to the cultural and collective phenomenon of haunting. This methodology facilitates investigation of the psychic domain of literature as a refuge for lived experience; what the literary produces and what escapes it. Working towards the demonstration of the thesis' main argument, the chapter contributes an analysis of "spilling", that is, the psychoanalytic interpretation of unexpected interchanges between places within the narrative (including both physical and psychical places). The chapter subsequently draws connections between theories of the uncanny and haunting, memory and images. This analysis contributes to the understanding of how the once familiar arrives and troubles us unexpectedly. Chapter 1 defines the figure of "phantasm" in visual terms as denoting an absent presence, and connects its appearance to the vitality of collective memory beyond literature's domain. It characterises the haunted novel by virtue of its narration of an uncertain, unsettled space located between history and fantasy.

Chapter 2, *Haunting Inheritance: Incorporation and Encrypted Loss in the Emergence of Literary Phantasms*, develops the proposed theory of the haunted novel into an argument about the work of phantasms that encrypt uncertain cultural memory within the text. Through an analysis of the literary crypt, this chapter contributes a

⁵ Citations from the Spanish language edition of Pavella Coppola's "La memoria como situación literaria" [Memory as a Literary Situation] (2010) are translated to English using Google software and revised by the thesis supervisor Antonio Traverso, who is a native Spanish speaker.

conceptualisation of recurring diegetic visual devices used within narrative as textual expressions of repressed memory. The chapter contributes an analysis of the psychoanalytic concept of incorporation to the thesis' overall argument. As a psychic mechanism, whereby a forbidden mourning lies hidden, incorporation informs the conceptualisation of the haunted novel as a site of encryption. Methodologically, Chapter 2's attention to trauma discourse serves to posit certain representations identified in *2666* and *The Plains* as symbolic manifestations of unclaimed memories of collective suffering. This analysis reflects on the delays, distortions, and apparitions in narrative as freighted with taboo meaning, thus connecting the spilling of images analysed in Chapter 1 to the experience of unsettled history, while positing phantasms as traceable symbols of a collective crypt. This chapter's central proposition – that the haunted novel can be conceptualised as a work of phantasms that incorporate forbidden knowledge – marks the end of the thesis' explication of its theoretical proposal, which is applied to the analysis of Bolaño's and Murnane's novels in the next three chapters.

Chapter 3, *Fantasies of Incorporation: Envisioning the Haunted Novel in Roberto Bolaño's 2666*, commences the thesis' application of the theory of the haunted novel to the first of its two primary texts. Through the method of close textual analysis, this chapter draws upon passages of *2666* to analyse its use of visual devices. By connecting the novel's phantasms to memory, the chapter illustrates how the proposed concept of the haunted novel operates within the text. It contributes the argument that unclaimed cultural memory might be found encrypted in phantasmatic representations of bodily fragmentation within a text and it does so by positing the images of the disarticulated body as figurations of forming nationhood. Furthermore, the analysis of *2666* draws together connections between object, memory, and haunting, positing the incomprehensible, ungraspable spaces of Bolaño's narrative as expressions of cultural anxieties about unsettled memory. The chapter's interdisciplinary approach to the role of vision advances the argument that collective anxieties about memory are narrated by the visual devices of the haunted novel. Following the discussion of incorporation conducted in Chapter 2, this chapter traces Bolaño's novel's visuality, revealing the close connection between image and forbidden remembering found within the text.

Chapter 4, *Fantasies of Incorporation: Envisioning the Haunted Novel in Gerald Murnane's The Plains*, conducts close textual analysis of the thesis' second primary text, and like the previous chapter it does so through the application of the thesis' conceptualisation of the haunted novel. This chapter traces the myriad ways in which *The Plains* narrates an

ungraspable space, through images that flitter between visible and invisible.

Methodologically, the conceptual tools of the phantasm and the crypt feature again in the textual analysis, which links Murnane's evocations of vision to communion with Australian national memory. Chapter 4's demonstration of the operation of the phantasm and the crypt in *The Plains* reveals the text's symbolic expressions of disquiet as correlative to a site of silence. There is in this novel an uncertainty between historical context and ungrounded territory as expressed in the images of the narrative space of the plains. The chapter links Murnane's repetitive use of visual devices in the novel to the emergence of a disquieting landscape of ungraspable memory lurking in Australian history. Impossible place – simultaneously present and absent – is identified as *The Plains*' primary phantasm, which, the chapter argues, narrates haunting through uncertain visual symbols.

The fifth and final chapter of the thesis, "Incorporation in Dispersal": The Phantasms of Roberto Bolaño's *2666* and Gerald Murnane's *The Plains*, analyses these two texts comparatively to connect the proposed concept of the haunted novel to the circularity of unsettled memory. In doing so, the chapter posits the texts' visual devices as cultural expressions tied to national history. Chapter 5 interrogates how Bolaño's and Murnane's images may confront repressed wounds in response to the "unknown and unlocatable" scene that mourning occupies in the current century (Tuggle 71). The chapter mobilises the thesis' theorisation of collective trauma vis-à-vis the concept of the crypt, along with the illustration of visual devices in *2666* and *The Plains* achieved in the previous chapters, to posit these novels' phantasms as forms of dramatisation of cultural and social relations. Through analysis of presences and absences in the viewing fields of Bolaño's and Murnane's texts, this chapter both consolidates the thesis' objective of tracing the re-emergence of visual devices and envisions the concept of the haunted novel's relation to cultural memory. The chapter's finding – that Bolaño's and Murnane's texts are both similarly composed of recurring visual motifs – reflects on the notion that the haunted novel's primary function is precisely to symbolise unsaid collective wounds.

Henceforth, the haunted novel will be envisioned by linking *2666*'s and *The Plains*' narrative expression to the sense of unsettled cultural memory that they hold. Thus, the phantasm's delayed, uncontrolled and repeated intrusions (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 11), as the narrative effect of an overwhelmed memory of "occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance", bring the reader of the two novels into contact with "events in the excess of our frames of reference" (Felman and Laub 5). Ultimately, this thesis does not simply seek to tell the story of the return of the image in the haunted novel;

the narrative of the thesis itself actively recodes Bolaño's and Murnane's novels' visual devices as traumatic, that is, as signifiers of their collective, unspoken interactions with the catastrophic histories that lie beyond the fictional confines of their respective diegeses.

CHAPTER 1

Haunting Reappearances: The Phantasms of Cultural Memory

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores how aesthetic devices are utilised by texts about cultural memory to tell stories of nation formation, proposing “the haunted novel” as a figuration that emerges from phantasms that narrate the uncertainty of cultural memory. The memories, aesthetics and symbols of national histories are shifting and unstable, and they are encountered in their ongoing dispersal as unspeakable social wreckage that always returns and circulates.⁶ This chapter considers this continuous spilling in relation to cultural anxieties expressed in two literary case studies drawn from Latin American and Australian contemporary narratives: Roberto Bolaño’s *2666* (2008) and Gerald Murnane’s *The Plains* (1982). The authors of these novels are like painters of memory whose visual evocations involve spillages and re-emergences of remembrance. As psychoanalysis provides tools for looking at spilling and connection in culture and history, the chapter utilises this theoretical framework to approach the literary description of various unassimilated experiences of crisis. Specifically, the language of psychoanalysis and its affinity with culture facilitates an interpretation of the connection between history and subjectivity (Hinrichsen 16). Therefore, this chapter applies psychoanalytic theories of the uncanny and haunting to work through veiled narration of ghostly experiences and memories in *2666* and *The Plains*.

For this chapter’s purposes, “the uncanny” or *Unheimliche*, is defined as something that frightens by being “long known to us, once very familiar” (Freud, “The Uncanny” 1–2); “haunting” is defined as the experience of being troubled by the “world of common reality” and its unexpected arrivals (Gordon 53); and “the phantasm” is defined as the visualisation of “both a ghost and an image in the mind” (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 5). Indeed, in Murnane’s novel, the plains are a familiar yet distorted landscape, in which the common reality of the plainsmen’s lives is depicted as altogether quite strange. Similarly, in Bolaño’s work, ordinary settings, such as hotel rooms, frequently become sites of unexpected strangeness. The uncanny is addressed first and foremost, as a basis for understanding phantasms in fiction psychoanalytically, of which “the ghost” is a direct figure (Cixous, “Fiction” 542). Psychoanalysis is interested in psychic life in domains such as literature, “with special attention paid to what is produced and what escapes in the unfolding of a text”, and so is used to investigate that which is alive inside the novel (Cixous, “Fiction”

⁶ Concepts of circulation are returned to in more detail in Chapter 2.

523, 527). In accordance with *The Spectralities Reader*, the term phantasmatic “denotes images that oscillate between visibility and invisibility, presence and absence, materiality and immateriality” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 212). This chapter seeks to demonstrate how figures of the phantasmatic first originate and then become traceable in narrative. Cultural memory is thus traced in later chapters by its literary re-emergence in phantasmatic visual devices in Bolaño’s *2666* and Murnane’s *The Plains* in view of demonstrating the thesis’ conceptualisation of the haunted novel.

What links these two texts to the concept of the haunted novel? This thesis brings them together as it views them as sharing an ungraspable, disquieting topography that hovers uncertainly between the visible and invisible, between the familiar and foreign, representing in this sense a kind of synthesis of the haunting and spectrality trends in writing that came before them. As Bolaño discusses in *Roberto Bolaño: The Last Interview: And Other Conversations* (2011), his writing emerges in a dialogue with the poetry and prose of his generation, including fellow Chileans Nicanor Parra, Diamela Eltit, Enrique Lihn, Raúl Zurita, and Pedro Lemebel. These are widely published award-winning writers, some of whose work responded to the cultural context of post-dictatorship life in Chile. Like Bolaño, they are considered influential for their substantial creative output and their abandonment of literary conventions. The introduction to *Roberto Bolaño, a Less Distant Star* illustrates Bolaño’s relation to the fellow authors, in terms of their shared writing on “violence, politics and literature” (López-Calvo 4). López-Calvo also situates Bolaño’s work in relation to that of Julio Cortázar and Jorge Luis Borges, due to their shared reflection on literary life “under repressive governments” (3). As Jane Ciabattari notes: “The detached tone that marks so much of Bolaño’s fiction, giving it that eerie twilight-zone feeling, is straight out of Borges” (Marcela Valdes cited in Ciabattari). A Borgesian influence has been found, too, inside Murnane’s novels. Paolo Bartoloni’s ‘Spatialised Time and Circular Time’ observes their shared “image of the journey in time” as “one of the most powerful metaphors” connecting their works. As one of Australia’s earliest followers of Borges, Murnane works share in a stylistic expression of narrative that represents a “re-evaluation of temporality” (Bartoloni).

Murnane is somewhat set apart from other Australian authors of his generation, as he draws a cultural map from a diverse range of influences that includes European classic literature, psychoanalytic theory, postmodern writing and Australian history and culture. His style of writing has been seen to be reminiscent of Marcel Proust in the way they both evoke involuntary memory. For example, Anthony Uhlmann notes Proust’s relevance in

relation to Murnane's more recent work *Border Districts*. Murnane's style also evokes elements from ethnographically inflected postmodern fiction that adopts the format of the travelogue or the chronicle, such as that of Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (1987). Incidentally, *The Plains* is also reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's classic allegory in *Gulliver's Travels* that depicts a traveller-narrator who uncovers strangeness in a distant culture and people as a means to invite a reflection on the European reader's own world. In addition, both novels contain poignant meta-textual ruminations on the writing process and the practice of literary criticism. In fact, Murnane is particularly well known for his reflections on writing practice; an example of this autobiographical resonance in a fictional text is found in his novel *Border Districts* (2017). Likewise, in Bolaño's endeavours, such as *The Infrarealist Manifesto*, a short piece of writing linked to a real 1975 movement of poets in Mexico, it is difficult to distinguish the real author's biography from his fictional alter-ego. There is also a comparison to be drawn between *2666*'s and *The Plains*' similar pursuits of characters seeking to understand literary movements and writers, and the real-world pursuits of critics flurrying to discover more about these enigmatic authors in recent times. This is literature that emerges from and connects with its social history. Indeed, as Peter Keating briefly notes in the preface of *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875-1914*, literary criticism has often overlooked the connections between novels and other agencies, something that, he argues, a study of haunting ought to be all the more attuned to.

Haunted narrative can provide refuge to the psychic and lived experiences of their historical contexts.⁷ Phantasms and gaps in speech or memory are seen to originate from crisis experience, as it prompts, for example, the need for visualisation of the missing. In the case of *The Plains*, the filmmaker-narrator's time spent working with a blank screen without images serves to force the visualisation of the missing. Through the methodology of psychoanalysis, the experience of modern life may be seen as involving a crisis of the boundary between inside and outside, that is, between the interior of the subject's psyche and external world it encounters (Thwaites 2). There is some rumination in *The Plains* about this boundary, as the plainsmen are depicted as changing as a result of the years spent on the plains. Similarly, *2666* dramatises the exposure and change of a character's

⁷ In this thesis, the phrase "the haunted novel" is specifically used as an abstract metaphorical concept in which actual novels (such as *2666* and *The Plains*) are recognised as exceeding the sum of all their parts, for the motifs and representations used in their narrative have vital connections to memory, settings and history beyond the novel. As such the haunted novel is characterised by its narration of uncertainty between the visible and invisible, history and fantasy. "Haunted narrative" refers to the choices of representation made within novels.

body and psyche in response to Mexico's Sonoran Desert. This crisis of the boundary was first noted by Sigmund Freud in "Mourning and Melancholia," which resituated the uncanny of the public sphere into the subject's interior (Thwaites 2). Narrative may be observed to behave like the psyche, with words moving between the borders of an interior and an exterior.⁸ There is an argument to be made here that phantasmatic representation in literature may similarly invoke boundary breaking.⁹ These matters introduce themes related to uncanny experience, where hauntings across generations create familiar yet frightening new formations.

In proposing the haunted novel as a narrative type or genre that brings forth troubled cultural memory via phantasmatic re-emergences, context must first be provided on what the notion of memory means in a contemporary literary context, particularly with respect to Latin American and Australian literature. The chapter must also make note of what the phantasm and its related concepts are, as understood by a number of theorists of haunting, such as Avery Gordon and Dylan Trigg. In acknowledgement of the importance of psychoanalytic theory for contemporary theories of haunting, several sections of this chapter are dedicated to the concept of the uncanny. Hélène Cixous's work suggests that this is a key concept to appreciate in order to understand phantasms in fiction, that is, strangely familiar visualisations in novels. Psychoanalysis is utilised to support this thesis' analysis of literature by exploring the works of cultural theorists that inquire into the personal and collective experiences of uncanniness and haunting.

This chapter's theory of the haunted novel conceptualises a particular kind of narrative that brings forth memory through the visual re-emergence of phantasms. Through tracing the spillage of memory and images between different sources such as artworks and novels, the discussion conceptualises remembrance as an object of study and haunting as both an individual and cultural experience. Memory is here considered a cultural phenomenon as it produces visible signs of a lived past. In this regard, Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters* (1997) informs the theorisation of haunting in this chapter. Images are primarily considered in this chapter as descriptions in literature that prompt visualisation on the part of the reader. Therefore, this chapter proposes the haunted novel as an expression of the experience of forming or truncated nationhood, a kind of unfinished history that is melancholy in its unresolved stasis, communicated through visual

⁸ The topic of inside-outside circulations is additionally theorised in Chapter 2, and returned to in the case-study chapters.

⁹ This thesis investigates the liminality between place and body, as unassimilated memory makes its way across borders.

devices that are referred to as ‘phantasms’.¹⁰ Context around the experience of haunting is established with the intention of providing an application of its resulting theory in later chapters. *2666* and *The Plains* are novels that individually signify haunted history, and each could be studied discretely. The practice of reading them side by side, however, seeks to emphasise their connected spillages and phantasms of memory, tracing haunting as it moves in-between. This comparative method has been selected to demonstrate how integral spillage and re-emergence are as qualities of haunted memory.

The chapter is organised in seven parts. It commences with an introduction to disappearance as it relates to memory, then includes a definition of the phantasm, and subsequently a discussion of spillage in psychoanalysis, a definition of the uncanny, an introduction to the role of body metaphors in the story of haunting, an introduction to the notion of the ghost, and a final note on the *punctum*. As the study of haunting involves ethics that address silence around people, injustice, and marginalisation, it reflects on the cultural work of bringing attention to ghostly aspects of lived-experience.¹¹ Hauntings, “as a symptom of repressed knowledge”, remind us “we are still shackled to a past that haunts us and that we have yet to face and mourn fully” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 64). This discussion of haunting in relation to the cultural contexts of Bolaño’s and Murnane’s writing directs the attention towards the shifts in culture that have been registered in representations of memory. To establish thematic links between haunting, the uncanny, memory and images, this chapter henceforth not only defines and explains these concepts but also seeks to interpret their application within the analysis. This chapter’s discussion of concepts prepares the reader for the closer analysis of *2666* and *The Plains* conducted in later chapters, using the tool of the haunted novel.

1.2 The Emergence of Narrative Memory

The histories of national formation are marked by anguished memories, for which narrative provides a form of anchor. As the opening paragraph of Michael Lazzara’s chapter “Presence and Absence (On Art and Disappearance)” most saliently notes, memory in the wake of Chile’s post-dictatorship period becomes marked by a “*narrative*

¹⁰ Ramón Soto-Crespo’s (2002) article on national mourning in the context of Puerto Rico expresses this interest in melancholy and forming nationhood as an object of study.

¹¹ The study of haunting as an ethical venture most clearly pertains to works that deal specifically with real world events. For example, authors such as Karen A. Foss and Kathy L. Domenici discuss the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (living relatives of the disappeared in Argentina) and the question of how to deal with this real-world history. Their work in “Haunting Argentina: Synecdoche in the protests of the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” (2001) attends to metonymic substitution as something that keeps the past alive.

void’ like a faceless spectre (101, original emphasis). This void refers to the absent voices, which includes those of artists and writers missing due to political violence. They are among the *desaparecidos*, that is, missing individuals who were arrested or kidnapped by state agents, police or soldiers, and then forcefully made to disappear after suffering torture and violent death, whose whereabouts remain unknown. Chilean visual artist Eugenio Dittborn’s *The 23rd History of the Human Face (Aljo-Violet) Airmail Painting No. 128* is an example of artwork that focuses on the disappeared, demonstrating the efficacy of images of faces to catch our attention (figure 3). The memory narratives after this time period are unable to contain, after all, the narrative voices of those disappeared under the dictatorships of Chile, Argentina, and other South American nations, as societies haunted by the simultaneous absence and presence of the disappeared in visual culture. The aftermath of these historical contexts is constituted by processes of public memory defined by what in this thesis is referred to as spectral haunting, in the sense that the ghostly figure of the disappeared persists “in a kind of limbo *between* life and death” (Lazzara 102, original emphasis). For Lazzara, insofar as absence characterises post-dictatorial experience, absence has a notable, traceable presence as a recurring theme in Latin American literature (103).

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Dittborn, Eugenio. *The 23rd History of the Human Face (Aljo-Violet) Airmail Painting No. 128*. 1999. Paint, stitching, non-woven fabric and photo silkscreen on two sections of cotton duck, 210 cm x 280 cm. Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York. *E-flux*. www.e-flux.com/announcements/32677/eugenio-dittborn/.
Image description: A multimedia collage artwork depicting a series of black and white photographic portraits, interwoven with naïve figure sketches.

Figure 3 Eugenio Dittborn *The 23rd History of the Human Face (Aljo-Violet) Airmail Painting No. 128* 1999

Arguably, Lazzara’s proposition above concerning the tracing of the theme of absence in a national or regional literature is also applicable to the idea that Australian literature may be inspected for its absences, in the sense that images of Australia’s colonial

past have disappeared from view. In fact, *The Plains* reflects precisely on the wide range of images that “seem to emerge from the abyss between a man and his past” (Murnane 112). In addition, Murnane’s text is aware of the interest postmodern culture takes in the question of how to think about the truth of images in the absence of certainty. Therefore, textual analysis of national literature that puts a central focus on spectral haunting considers texts in their material presence as providers of cultural anchorage to the phantasmal that would otherwise be impermanent and untraceable (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 71).

The two primary texts selected for close reading in this thesis, namely, *2666* and *The Plains*, are ones that may both be thought of as being structured around a void, most noticeably in the form of their allegorical settings. Memory narrative marks absence through allegory to bring forth the unacknowledged spectres haunting their national space (Lazzara 105). Within the textual world of narrative, Lazzara suggests disappearance should be understood as an in-between state, melancholy and unresolved, needing to be anchored in a place and story (106). Disappearance as a term must be delineated as simultaneously referring to the concrete occurrence of violence and atrocity, but also as one that has been used to refer to a figure of expression in the domain of cultural and literary analysis. On the topic of writing memory in the Chilean post-dictatorship context, Lazzara sees memory stories as involving dynamic recompositions and recastings of the past in which individual memories are linked to collective contexts (2). Narrating memory involves making choices about how to articulate the remembered in words and emblematic images (Lazzara 2). When inspecting memory narratives, readers must therefore pay attention to images, not only in a literal sense but also as the presence of visual devices within the literary text. In this way, within literary vignettes the mourning of a traumatic period is carried out and preserved.

Murnane’s and Bolaño’s literatures are set in imagined places devised by the authors with connections to real places, such as Australia, Chile and Mexico. In a brief discussion about the setting of the mythical city of Atlantis, Celeste Olalquiaga notes that in cultural myths place becomes an allegory when it is “reconstructed from its own fragments as a figure of destruction and loss” (*The Artificial*, 123). These fragments she identifies as mobile, in the sense that imagined, allegorical spaces emerge from loss and crisis, amid the erosion of societal conventions (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 123). Like Atlantis, the setting of the haunted novel is proposed as an imagined space with foundations placed squarely within “the cycle of life and death” (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial*

128). In this context, the post-conflict world's obsessive quest for meaning materialises as an act of remembrance, which becomes a permanent, enduring condition.

Memory has become a particularly important figure in recent Chilean literature, according to Latin American cultural studies theorist Nelly Richard. She writes that in recent Chilean fiction “the figure of memory has been most strongly dramatised by the unresolved tension between recollection and forgetting [...] between latency and death, revelation and concealment, proof and denial, theft and restitution” marking Chilean narrative with images of unburied bodily remains (Richard, “The Insubordination” 1). In this reflection, lack of burial is the key image of an ongoing mourning process, within a landscape of memory that Richard refers to as “dismembered”, its past “a field of citations” (“The Insubordination” 1, 2). This drama of memory uses traces and fragments, conserving mourning as an unfinished process. Richard’s text suggests, most fundamentally, that as memory takes the form of citations and dismemberments, memory becomes something dispersed that requires mapping and tracing in order to be sensed.

The primary aspect of Richard’s theorisation of post-dictatorship Chilean fiction is its focus upon images and their role in bringing forth memory. Her ideas support the contention that haunting is traceable through the recurring appearance of phantasms in texts. Richard identifies that images, particularly ones of peripheral cultures, “interconnect and recombine their links with history” (“Margins” 41). They disassemble and reassemble, lifting a traumatic repression.¹² In the case of the photographic image, it fundamentally certifies a presence, becoming both witness and guardian of public memory. Resurrecting a photograph is like unearthing the past, “rescuing a collective memory on the verge of drowning” (Richard, “Margins” 41). A concern throughout this thesis’ discussion is the perceived inability of Bolaño’s and Murnane’s texts to certify presence in the absence of images. For example, as Richard argues, loss, recuperation and pacification are the threats of post-dictatorship Chilean culture, where history is threatened by disintegrating breaks in tradition (“The Insubordination” 1). Similarly, central to *The Plains*’ plot is the absence of the images supposedly produced by its filmmaker-narrator.

Tracey Moffatt’s three-minute video “When the White Ghosts Sailed In” (figure 4) serves as an illustration of the kind of image-absence that Murnane evokes in symbolic reflection of the image-absences in Australian public memory. As we watch flickering emulsion over framed, static images of Sydney Cove Australia in 1788, we hear crackling, water birds, and the music of Aboriginal clapping sticks. Then comes drums, howling

¹² Trauma theory as it relates to this thesis’ analysis is discussed in Chapter 2.

wind, a teapot whistling, and lastly a baby crying. Moffatt's screen is profoundly alive; capturing the event of colonisation, "the residue of photosensitive emulsion becomes a stand-in for this history and a metaphor for this flesh" (Annear 112). An instantiation of the representational void of the pre-colonial past, Judy Annear notes that the short film conjures a "phantasmagoria of history" whose ghosts are heard but invisible (112). As theorised by Terry Castle, a "spectacle of civil insurrection [is] a kind of spectral drama", where phantasmatic imagery accompanies terror and rhetorically expresses history's delirium (26–27). Castle recalls the *Oxford English* definition of the phantasmagoria: "a shifting series or succession of phantasms or imaginary figures, as seen in a dream or fevered condition, as called up by the imagination, or as created by literary description", and notes its earlier origins in eighteenth-nineteenth century ghost shows, where the public were entertained with optical illusions of ghosts projected by magic lanterns in front of screens (27). Moffatt's video plunges her audience into cinema's pre-history, where in "darkness [they are] assailed by unearthly sounds [and] subjected to an eerie, estranging, and ultimately baffling spectral parade" (Castle 27, 30). Significantly, the magic lantern shows informed nineteenth-century figurations of the mind as itself an internal lantern projecting images on the "backcloth of the memory", in an analogy that imports the atavistic "language of the uncanny" (Castle 30). Key for the purposes of the thesis' case study analysis is the finding that ancestral ghosts have since been absorbed into the realm of the mind (Castle 29). The outside is brought in, and passed along.

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Moffatt, Tracey. "When the White Ghosts Sailed in." 2017. Video Still. Venice. Biennale.
judyanneer.com/writing/a-sublime-passage/.

Image description: A still image from the video depicting an ocean horizon with a sepia filter and emulsifier pattern overlay.

Figure 4 Tracey Moffatt "When the White Ghosts Sailed In" 2017

Following this section's introduction of theories that relate images to their real-world contexts, highlighting in this way how re-emergences of phantasms are linked to place, the next section elaborates on the concepts of visualisation and phantasm as they relate to the traceable transmission of memory proposed in the haunted novel.

1.3 Visualising Foundational Phantasms

Envisioning is a process deeply linked to both the experiences of reading and remembering. As noted in *The Spectralities Reader*, pre-modern theorists of vision thought of images as *phantasia*, informing both perception and thinking (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 218). In one of her contributions to the discussion of cultural memory and visual culture, Susan Sontag evokes the concept of visualisation as she notes that: “to remember is, more and more, not to recall a story, but to be able to call up a picture” (89). Likewise, in *Fantasm and Fiction*, a key text that looks at cultural memory in the present, Peter Schwenger informs us of a “pictorial turn” in literary studies (2). He invites us to think about visualisation as a threshold or liminal state, as it takes place during a text's transmission of its message. Schwenger's work encourages the use of the term ‘fantasm’ (an antiquated spelling of phantasm which is taken from the work of Freud) as it may be deployed broadly to refer to a full range of different types of visualisation, including and not limited to dreams, symbols, hallucinations and imaginary fantasies; all of which are subject matter frequently evoked in memory narratives (*Fantasm* 4).¹³ To define the phantasm, Schwenger elaborates that this term describes “both a ghost and an image in the mind”, which is to say, its meaning contains both a haunting element and an evocative element of visualisation such that it exists both within and beyond the confines of the text (*Fantasm* 5).

As stated in this chapter's introduction, this thesis proposes a literary genre, the haunted novel, which is to be figured itself as a spectral literary expression of ungraspable history. The haunted novel expresses history by evoking the phantasm through uncanny visualisation, such as dreams, symbolic tableaux, and pictorial representations of the body. Many scenes in *2666* and *The Plains*, for example, make use of the liminal space of vision. Phantasms trouble the relation between word and image as they express a cultural fear of the power of images. Semblance and concealment are recurring thematic issues in the narratives of Bolaño and Murnane, as they involve the phantasm through mistaken

¹³ It is pertinent to note the Latin etymology, as the common-usage Spanish word for ghost is precisely “fantasma”. In addition, Schwenger cites Herman Rapaport as having originally defined “phantasm” as a broad concept.

identity, the hallucination or dream that occurs out of nowhere, and the disembodied presence of the absent. For example, in one stand-out section of *2666*, Bolaño writes at length about the topics of semblance and the play between the visible and the invisible, in which a character claims that the criminals in the scene of Christ's crucifixion were there to conceal the event (790). Murnane, similarly, ponders misrecognitions – such as a buzzard mistaking its mate's head on a pole for a living bird (*The Plains* 75). The resulting image troubles the boundaries between death, liveliness and burial.

Language's ability to fascinate is among the resources utilised by stories that attempt to depict the unrepresentable through figurations of haunting. In a section of *Fantasm and Fiction*, titled "Painters of Reading", Schwenger highlights the aspect of fascination in language, where things become images that are groundless manifestations of absence. Whilst discussing various writings and sketches, Schwenger addresses existing scholarly ideas about how written images bring phantasms into the narrative as a basic foundation of the work (*Fantasm* 85). In doing so, Schwenger evokes the idea of vision's corporeity, that is, its location within the human body. Whereas the visual is made visible in painting as a trace and copy, in writing the visual aspect of the text is an ethereal trace (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 75). Authors can make use of a kind of "allegory of the process of readily visualisation" when they describe a spectacle (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 75). Allegories of vision are particularly noticeable in Murnane's work, for example, his commonly used settings of dark rooms evoke the phantasmagoria, the dark screen upon which plays of ghosts were projected, to produce an overall allegory of historical delirium (Castle 27). One of the fascinations of language is that it elucidates absence and the featureless, that which cannot be represented, giving rise to an "unknown territory" like a "fictional country" (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 80, 84). The writer creates a story as a reflection of their unified body, in the way a child imagines themselves as a whole in a mirror reflection, and then the fragments of the incomplete work constitute a phantasm of that totality (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 82).¹⁴ Foundational phantasms, the images that linger and are born from unresolved processes of nation-formation, are hence locatable within language.

The emergence of mechanised visualisation technologies, such as photography and cinema, allegedly brought the phantasmatic into literary texts in the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. The memory narratives coming out of the Latin American region in the second half of the twentieth century and more recently are in turn affected by the spectacle of photography and cinema as the visual is incorporated into print

¹⁴ In this passage, Schwenger is making reference to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage.

(De Los Ríos 13–15). This pictorial turn in the region’s literature is a reflection of the anxieties that modernity’s technologies of vision provoke, namely the fear of fragmentation, image illusions, and anxiety about the power of images (De Los Ríos 13–15). While Valeria De Los Ríos is writing about the Latin American context behind Bolaño’s writing, these ideas also resonate with the visual fears and anxieties implicit in Murnane’s work in the Australian context as it is similarly affected by a contemporary rush to document and preserve memory. In *The Plains* visual concerns are communicated through evocations of art, photography, cinema, sculpture, textiles, and symbolism; the technology of the camera fascinates the novel’s narrator as he grapples with questions about the nature of representation.¹⁵

The presence of visual devices in Murnane’s work, as a way through which his writing produces meaning, has previously been noted in the scholarship on Murnane’s *oeuvre*. In a 2017 conference on Gerald Murnane, titled *Another World in this One*, Anthony Uhlmann spoke about the role of the mind and the particular link between images and meaning in Murnane’s work. Noting the importance of the mind to the cognitive sciences and the belief of the stoics that perception involved *phantasia*, Uhlmann identifies that images offer insight into meaning and the process of understanding. Associations that gather fragmentary images in patterns lead us to glimpse the meaningful (Uhlmann). In the case of Murnane’s literature, Uhlmann highlights the iconography of marbles and coloured glass that features throughout the novels by giving the example of a woman’s eye being likened at one point to a marble in *Border Districts*.¹⁶ In Chapter 4, this thesis’ interpretation of *The Plains* similarly observes characters looking awry through coloured glass as an anamorphic mechanism with which to attain a different perspective. Uhlmann describes Murnane’s use of colour in *Border Districts* as being like a kaleidoscope drawing together fragments, in which the references to ever changing colours in the novel are suggestive of the search for meanings. Similarly, this thesis’ study of Murnane’s and Bolaño’s works observes their use of colour and kaleidoscopic vision in their narration, thus beginning to imagine this kind of use of images as specifically characteristic of the haunted novel.

Bolaño and Murnane may be thought of as painters of memory, that is, authors whose works are at a fundamental level fascinated by the idea of bringing visibility to the absent and formless. This idea is not unlike the notion of “unborn nation” offered by Ramón Soto-Crespo, who writes that narrative space is discursive as related to history and

¹⁵ See Roland Barthes’s *Camera Lucida* (1980) as a pivotal cultural theorisation of image-making technology.

¹⁶ Barthes provides an extended analysis of word play and puns in “Arcimboldo, or Magician and Rhétoriquer”, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

literature; psychological as it relates to subjective memory; and also studied as an expression of collective memory (461). As painters of memory, writers work to give manifestation to the invisible, evoking “groundless figures” to prominence (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 82). They bring forth the space of the nation through *ekphrasis* (the dramatic or vivid description of a work of art, where one medium attempts to illustrate and tell the story of another), in the sense that there appears to be something concealed beneath the representation. Soto-Crespo defines a “space of national recognition” as a site depicting intense contemplation amid a sea of apathy, in which a creative work may be ripe to symbolise “a defining moment of national aesthetic consciousness” as it reflects on a forgotten or foreclosed space of its national literature (Soto-Crespo 451). Throughout this thesis, mentions of “nation formation” draw upon Soto-Crespo’s notion (originally put forth to analyse the writing of Puerto Rican nationhood) that spaces of art and mourning are constitutive components of an unfinished place’s becoming.

The novels of Bolaño and Murnane discussed in this thesis also contain a discourse of visual art criticism that imbues them with an element of spatiality that is pertinent to a discussion of their respective national contexts.¹⁷ In spatial terms, readers are invited to think of Australia, Chile, Santa Teresa or the plains as examples of what Soto-Crespo terms “unfinished space in mourning for previous forms of national connectedness”, a condition of incompleteness that is “unfinished, distraught, and betrayed” (451). By working with visuality, haunted narrative can be conceptualised as an attempt to find its own national space.

This section has provided a basic definition of phantasm as a visual device that evokes haunting, which is necessary to inform an understanding of visual devices in the narratives of Bolaño and Murnane. The section also introduces a key characteristic of the phantasm: it defies borders, oscillating between groundlessness and groundedness in the history of a nation. This refusal to accept the border is the topic to which the following section now turns, in order to address the quality of re-emergence in national narrative.

1.4 Spilling and Connection of Appearances

In looking at the narrative settings of Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels as sites of re-appearance where the uncanny blurs the boundaries between the physical exterior and the psyche, this thesis draws on psychoanalytical theory, such as Tony Thwaites’s, who notes that: “psychoanalysis is about what happens when things spill out from one place to

¹⁷ Ramon Soto-Crespo has previously drawn a connection between art, space, and nation (451).

another, even to places where there would seem to be little connection [...] What seems to be internal is already out there in the world, and whatever is external stands to be already there deep within” (2–3). Writing is filled with forms of spilling-over of boundaries, such as the border between the private thoughts of an author and the page before them. Significantly, spilling as a literary technique may have the effect of signalling meaningful connections within and between texts and the psychological context in which they are written. Thwaites’s psychoanalytic method centres on the connections between places and in observing repetitions and displacements (2). This observation is relevant when considering both the fictional and real-world places and settings evoked in the novels of Bolaño and Murnane. Spillage in these novels includes the connection between the boundaries of the private psyche and the outside world within the text, where the events going on in the mind appear on the outside, be they yoked even in the most banal, contingent or accidental ways. Additionally, Thwaites proposes that things out in the world are also revealed as part of the psyche (2). This latter idea holds special relevance in this thesis as it brings together two novels from different literatures, connecting and considering their conceptual interchange.

Therefore, a psychoanalytic method of textual analysis, which seeks to identify connections among multiple elements and levels of a text, is an important starting point “to follow the traces of a ghost” (Gordon 42). As Avery Gordon suggests, psychoanalysis is the field most attentive to memory. Murnane’s and Bolaño’s texts make themselves particularly available to be analysed for spilling and connection, as details accumulate and re-emerge across volumes, and themes spill between these and other novels in the authors’ *oeuvres*. Their representations involve spillage and re-emergence of subject-matter that expresses anxieties to do with cultural memory. Psychoanalytic theory thus underpins this thesis, as it addresses the haunting qualities of Murnane’s and Bolaño’s novels, namely, melancholy landscapes, violent histories, and the literatures emerging from them.¹⁸

Psychoanalysis may be read as a theory of memory and its reoccurrences, but also as an approach to the study of the mind and its images. It is a practice of reading “the inconsistencies of dreams, symptoms, testimonies” for hesitations that “*cannot help but say the truth of its situation*” (Thwaites xii–xiii, original emphasis). With autonomous

¹⁸ Avery Gordon’s *Ghostly Matters* studies haunting in relation to Argentinian history and an analysis of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987). The connection that she makes between *Beloved* and the images of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is that, for both, the ghosts that return are not simply lost loved ones. The dead’s return is not the end of the story, but rather, a sign of the disruptive acceptance of the phantasmatic into life (Gordon 180).

reappearances and repetition in stories, each reoccurrence is “a displaced version of another absence, and another coming to grips with loss” (Thwaites 3). Accordingly, the analyst of Murnane’s and Bolaño’s novels would have something in common with their key characters, particularly, the filmmaker in *The Plains* and the detectives in *2666*, who are trying to make sense of their world. To read these novels is to trace the many seemingly unconnected paths to the place where these paths appear to converge, namely, the setting of Santa Teresa in the case of *2666*, and *The Interior* in Murnane’s novel. Like the works of Freud, these novels are encyclopaedic. The spillage between volumes, novels, fictional settings and their real-world referents, even without an obvious connection between them, produces a disquieting groundlessness even when their events are rooted in specific places. For psychoanalysis, in order to understand the present, the collectively repressed must be approached (Richard, “Margins” 42). To map reoccurrences in these novels is to work with the convergences of the seemingly unconnected. The haunted novel is the proposed form that emerges from the observation of such liminal and uncertain psychic space.

This spilling-over of boundaries is something to be addressed in the conceptualisation of the haunted novel, where the intimate is already in the world. Thwaites states that for Freud, the unconscious is a topography, an “internal foreign territory” that is “both what is closest to me and radically external to me, me and not me, *in me more than me*” (Thwaites 6, original emphasis). For example, as Thwaites explains, Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism* was a text of “constant recapitulations and repetitions” (50). And he adds: “the unconscious inhabits us” (Thwaites 115). The use of geographical metaphors in this context is particularly pertinent given that landscape is a recurring figure shared by both *2666* and *The Plains*, where the internal and external foreign territories are connected.

The following section pays attention to the manner in which Freud’s idea of the uncanny inhabits, recapitulates and blurs boundaries, towards providing a framework for addressing narratives that are similarly encyclopaedic in their recurrence. This discussion demonstrates that as haunting spans across more than one context, it therefore may be traced by following the movements of visual devices through the haunted novel, where memory finds its place to live an uncanny afterlife.

1.5 Approaching the Role of the Uncanny in Haunted Narrative

In order to theorise haunting as a condition defined by memory’s phantasmatic re-emergences, this section draws comparison with the uncanny, a figure that involves a kind

of re-appearance and sudden return. Like the pictorial turn referenced earlier, the spectral turn noted in scholarly analysis such as *The Spectralities Reader* is relevant to consider here, as it addresses aspects of culture that need to be illuminated. Subjectively, something becomes uncanny when it partakes in a re-emergence from repression. The uncanny emerges as a place that should be familiar and homely but is perceived as estranged, doubled and repeated, which directs attention back to the familiar through disquieting details. Freud's original definition states the uncanny is "a class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" ("The Uncanny" 1–2). Within this definition, there is a tension between familiar and unfamiliar, and a connection between return and terror. Freud suggests that as a starting point for identifying figures of the uncanny, readers should look for:

Doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate [...] wax-work figures, artificial dolls and automatons [...] manifestations of insanity, because these excite in the spectator the feeling that automatic, mechanical processes are at work, concealed beneath the ordinary appearance of animation. ("The Uncanny" 4)

Following Freud's terms, scenes depicting dolls or marionettes inside *2666* and *The Plains* may hence be inspected as signs of an unsettling return. Figures such as automatons and insanity within the novels should additionally be considered as evoking a sense of concealment beneath appearance. For Jacques Lacan, the automaton's key characteristic is its insistent tendency towards repetition, which entails a movement of return (Khazaei 212). The reiterative presence of figures of the automation in *2666* and *The Plains*, which emerge from haunting, become particularly noticeable as a literary aesthetic of the uncanny.

One figure connected to the appearance of the uncanny is the experience of doubling, which is an expression of a haunting that is passed along over generations or across contexts. Doubling, according to Freud, occurs when commonalities in experience may be observed between two people, to the effect of confusion, until "the foreign self is substituted" for one's own: "the constant recurrence of similar situations, a same face, or character-trait, or twist of fortune, or a same crime, or even a same name recurring throughout several consecutive generations" troubles the sense of self (Freud, "The Uncanny" 9). Two key aspects of this definition of doubling are those of substitution and recurrence. With regards to substitution, this thesis deals with semblances: a recurring topic

and theme in both Bolaño's and Murnane's writing.¹⁹ As an example of haunted doubling, *2666* contains the short story of the 'Expósito' family. The story begins with Maria Expósito. The name is passed down to each generation, seven in total, with each Maria Expósito born from rape and each living in the same town (Bolaño *2666* 555). Like Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a novel about the lives of seven generations of a family in an imaginary Latin American town, the repetition of history appears as inescapable. In Bolaño's novel, disembodied voices sometimes speak and the phrase "said the voice" is a common occurrence repeated throughout *2666*. The last in line of the Expósito family is Lalo Cura, whose fortune instead is to become a detective in Santa Teresa.²⁰ The significance of this story is the way it relates together violence, haunting memory and place; the substitutions and recurrences enact the insistent, automatic and troubling return of history.

Cultural memory is recovered through the double's re-emergence. Freud's emphasis on recurrence, in the case of the uncanny effect of doubling, communicates the confusion of identity. The persistence of the uncanny is found in ghosts. There is something irrepressible about remembering, for it always returns to reassert itself in strange ways. Ghosts appear in spectral forms, such as human appearances, disembodied voices, sounds, rearrangements of inanimate objects, and unexplained sensations as "the direct figure of the uncanny" (Cixous, *Fiction* 542). Ghosts in literature emblemise a relation to death and serve to reveal uncanniness (Cixous, *Fiction* 542). To look at ghosts is to study encounters, be it with memory or place. If we view the literary phantasms that this thesis discusses as signs of a relation to death, that is, of a ghost and its relation to repressed memory, then we are working with something that epitomises the uncanny. As in-between space is "tainted with strangeness" (Cixous, *Fiction* 543), the space of signification between two novels can therefore be interpreted as an expression of the uncanny.

Hélène Cixous's interpretation of the uncanny in *Fiction and its Phantoms* provides additional conceptual context to this thesis' claim that it is the phantasm buried within the text that gives rise to the haunted novel. In her take on Freud's concept of the uncanny, Cixous emphasises that Freud captures its "savagery" by writing a text that is provocative and overwhelming (*Fiction* 525). Unexpected and bewildering violence is most apparent in

¹⁹ Chapter 2 further elaborates on how aesthetic techniques are used in the expression of trauma, in relation to examples within *The Plains* and *2666*.

²⁰ This character's name is notable in its connotations: "Lalo" is the standard nickname for Eduardo in Spanish and the word "cura" means "cure" (and also "cleric"). As "Lalo Cura" is a familiar play of words used as a comic nickname for someone called Eduardo, when spoken, its sound oscillates between "Lalo cura", that is, "Lalo cures", and "la locura", literally, "the madness".

2666 and to a lesser extent detectable too in *The Plains*' detours into untamed imagery, such as a reference to beheaded buzzards. In her discussion, Cixous states that the uncanny's provocations unfold into hesitation and doubling (*Fiction* 525). Bolaño also includes doubles in his novels. For example, the character Arturo Belano, who appears and reappears, bears a last name that is an uncanny shadow of the author's last name. Another instance of substitution in his novels is the character of Archiboldi, who is earlier described as a great French writer and reappears later in *2666* as a German one. Characters frequently experience "the horrible peculiarity of the world of doubles", when they see their distorted reflections appear in dreams, or their own faces in the bodies of others.²¹ As Cixous writes:

Through the unending series of substitutions, the eye becomes multiplied, and the familiar work of the eye, in turn, becomes the enigmatic production of its scattered doubles, sparks of fire, lorgnettes, eyeglasses, far-and-near-sighted visions, the theatrical secret which the Freudian text brushes up against, mimics, and even escapes. (*Fiction* 527)

The aesthetic of the uncanny detours and transgresses. Mobile, tactile, and liminal, its returns make the hidden visible (Cixous, *Fiction* 530). Labyrinthine catalogues and lists serve as an example of a spreading detour found throughout the haunted novel. For example, there is a passage of *2666* in which a series of definitions from the "branches of the divinatory art of botanomancy" are listed and described, including: floromancy, cromniomancy, fructomancy, dendromancy, xylomancy, cleromantic botanomancy, rhabdomancy, belomancy, pharmacology and meterological botanomancy (Bolaño 428). The excessive and branching display of everything exposes the uncanny as if lifting a curtain, for example, in *2666*'s listing of encyclopaedic definitions, and *The Plains*' spilling library shelves where "the great works on Time spilled out from the ranks of shelves once thought ample to accommodate them" (Murnane 121).²² The listings reverberate against each other, agitating, echoing and displacing, spreading the uncanny by means of the relations between things (Cixous, *Fiction* 536). Seen through the lens of Cixous's theory, this uncanny is composite, as it "infiltrates the interstices of the narrative and points to

²¹ See Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) as a film text that represents a disturbing dream state based on doubling.

²² Jacques Derrida notes: "Books, the dead and rigid knowledge shut up in *biblia*, piles of histories, nomenclatures, recipes and formulas learned by heart, all this is [...] foreign to living knowledge and dialectics" ("Plato's" 7, original emphasis). This reference suggests that libraries and lists are symbolically that which belongs to the dead.

gaps we need to explain” (*Fiction* 536). A reader may pull a thread from the tapestry, yet the intricate whole of the novel remains, for the uncanny achieves confusion, abundance, enigmas and apparitions (Cixous, *Fiction* 538–539). Significant about this uncontrolled spilling is the quality of excess, suggesting that these irruptions of memory are “overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in the excess of our frames of reference” (Felman and Laub 5). Felman and Laub’s reading of witnessing in relation to art brings emphasis to the boundary-breaking action that is involved in remembering. Literary encryptions are not discrete, but rather spill outwards in the aesthetic of the haunted novel.

Just as Freud’s “The Uncanny” tells a branching, labyrinth-like narrative of history, rebirth and doubling (Cixous, *Fiction* 538), so too are these figures apparent in the haunted novel. Freud’s narrative serves as a model for haunted writing, as it generates a network of doubles and repetitions, stemming into a secondary network of theorists who research the double, and then into a network of anecdotes and stories within stories, which ultimately branches into the doubling of story themes. By referring to systems of metaphors, the narrative seems to disquietingly allude to atavism (Cixous, *Fiction* 539). Cixous describes the double as:

An *in-corporation* whose phantasm gives rise, in its turn, to the metaphor of a disquieting consummation: the double thus also absorbs the unrealised eventualities of our destiny which the imagination refuses to let go. [...] It produces, particularly in the reading, the ghostly figure of nonfulfillment and repression, and not the double as counterpart or reflection, but rather the doll that is neither dead nor alive. (*Fiction* 539, original emphasis)

While Chapter 2 will address the notion of incorporation in more depth, what must be emphasised here is Cixous’s assertion that the imagination (*phantasia*) gives body to an uncanny un-dead. Death-in-life or the living dead are key phantasms apparent in the haunted novel in numerous iterations, including *2666*’s and *The Plains*’s landscapes, which this thesis imagines as both womb and tomb.

Haunted cultural memory leads us to a yearning for a home-country, which in the haunted novel uncannily resembles an atavistic return to the maternal body. The familiar that is found again in the material landscape is unsettling because the truncated landscape

affirms life, yet also asserts death (*Fiction* 545). Certainly, the *Heimliche* does give birth to a liminal state. As Cixous puts it:

The phantasm of the man buried alive represents the confusion of life and death: death within life, life in death, nonlife in nondeath. [...] a bit too much death in life; a bit too much life in death, at the merging intersection. There is no recourse to an inside/outside. [...] Hence, the horror: you could be dead while living, you can be in a dubious state. (*Fiction* 545)

Cixous describes the *Heimliche* as the threateningly mobile return of the repressed. Themes of liminal burials are ones of return and reoccurrence. A novel where characters return to crypts and underground labyrinths is a novel of phantasms; these have grown out of the familiar that has been found again.

This discussion about the uncanny, as an example of something that re-presents, is significant for the purpose of highlighting re-emergence as a traceable aesthetic in literature. Freud's uncanny provides a base for the theoretical address of phantasms in fiction, in Cixous's study and beyond. Like a haunting, the familiar never disappears; the fiction of the uncanny is "a doll, a hybrid body composed of language and silence that, in the movement which turns it and which it turns, invents doubles" (Cixous, *Fiction* 548). Cixous's remark makes a definitive statement about the idea of haunting as a process of creating hybrids through textual re-emergences, which directs attention towards both the emergence and the failure of language as the site where repressed or forgotten memory becomes apparent. When studying the composition of the haunted novel, there is an encounter with doubling and hybridity, an interchange between the novels and volumes that merges life, death, inside and outside into a liminal body. For example, *2666*'s main phantom figure is Archimboldi, whose name's haunting repetition 're-presents' itself throughout the volumes, itself an uncanny doubling of the name Giuseppe Arcimboldo, the painter of composites. Its significance is that it communicates spectrality through the return of the name. In Murnane's case, the Kafkaesque namelessness of his characters speaks of the delirium of the narrative's unstable, non-locatable, evasive world (McInerney 142). The multiplication and doubling of unnamed narrators and places directs attention to his novel's air of uncertainty.

Reading the uncanny in a novel involves paying attention to when and where the text calls upon both the familiar and unfamiliar as part of its telling of a story. *2666*'s and

The Plains' landscapes, The Sonoran Desert and The Interior, respectively, consist of both the familiar and unfamiliar as they blur a line between real-world sites and fictional construction. Their evocation communicates cultural anxieties. Literature, like dreams, is populated by strange incorporations, as there is feedback between the interior of a novel and external reference points through which repressed images and language return (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 8, 17). In being brought into the text, a reader is encouraged to perceive phantasms, how they come and go, and how they stand as a sign of the unburied.

This section has applied the psychoanalytical concept of the uncanny to the theorisation of the haunted novel, introducing the central idea that haunting occurs when the familiar re-appears as foreign within the text. In doing so, the section has demonstrated that haunting can be traced by noting the presence of strange substitutions and rebirths in narrative, most notably on the level of appearances.

1.6 The Role of Body and Place in Haunted Memory

This discussion has so far introduced the concepts of spilling and the uncanny as a basis for envisioning memory and its emergence in phantasmatic devices in the haunted novel. This section subsequently introduces Dylan Trigg's theorisation of the uncanny body, to address the way in which these concepts are visualised by representations of the body. Bodily metaphors and imagery are particularly insistent and mappable in *2666* and *The Plains*. Bodily representation in narrative serves as a site where cultural memory re-emerges. The phantasmic body, lacking in corporeality, represents a disquieting return of the past "in a contradictory experience of presence" (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 232). Indeed, figurations of body and place are integral elements within the work of Murnane and Bolaño. While in *The Plains*, spatiality and ruminations concerning the place of the plains is the most enigmatic figure, in *2666* the bodies within the place referred to as The Sonoran Desert are among its most central and enduring images. Dylan Trigg, in "The Memory of Place: a Phenomenology of the Uncanny", rethinks Freud's concept of the uncanny in terms of phenomenology's emphasis on embodied subjective experience. He argues: "The body activates place. But the same is true in reverse: *Place activates the body*" (Trigg, "The Memory" 11, original emphasis). Trigg points out that the concept of the void, abyss or nowhere implies a body to experience the absent space and that "similarly, the notion of being displaced from one location requires that we are already in another place to observe that movement"; hence writers understand space from their own lived experience as

embodied subjects (Trigg, “The Memory” 11). The bodily experience of place involves familiarity:

We carry places with us. Places habituate themselves in our bodies. Just as we become accustomed to certain patterns in the world—hiding beneath the bed when scared, gazing toward the ceiling when thinking, snarling when angry—so part of our experience of place is solidified by repetition and regularity. (Trigg, “The Memory” 11, original emphasis)

Memory texts can make use of this familiarity. Through repeating scenes and words, or returning to the same settings and characters, the haunted novel shows how place can travel and return almost automatically. It relays an uncontainable sense of a return to place, or the sense that place is carried inevitably within ourselves.

The pages of the haunted novel are homely and hospitable to returns; the persistent imagery of authors’ *oeuvres* settle into their works. Trigg writes of the uncanny as something that lurks and upsets foundations, such as those of clear distinctions between real, unreal, homely and unhomely. It is frightening as it blurs these divides freely: “without the certainty that familiarity is immune to its own defamiliarisation, the uncanny resists domestication, forever seeping through our clutches as it prepares to bleed into each and every domain of familiar life” (Trigg, “The Memory” 28). This thinking links together absence and the uncanny, where the uncanny has the capacity to disturb and disrupt. This uncanny confuses the reading of a narrative with semblances and play. The key part of this definition is Trigg’s use of abject and bodily words in describing the uncanny. The process of defamiliarisation spills and bleeds, so that there is no aspect of the familiar or homely left untouched. Spillage, the fundamental characteristic of the uncanny that demands attention in the analysis of a literature of crisis, has an intimate relation to the body. Such metaphors demonstrate the irrepressible nature of memory experience as pertinent for the analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*, since these narratives are imbued with phantasmatic bodies.

Attention must be paid to the recurrence of bodily metaphors as part of the envisioning of the haunted novel. From the use of the phrase *corpus* to refer to the *oeuvres* of writers, to the tendency of the novels of Bolaño and Murnane to include shocking and unusual bodily descriptions, it is apparent that the task of tracing phantasms is one in which embodiment and disembodiment are recurring figures. Trigg’s discussion of memory detours into a haunted image of bodily invasion in which embodiment and

disembodiment is spilled into by history. In Trigg's words, "*the places in which we live, live in us*. More precisely, those places live in our bodies, instilling an eerie sense of our own embodied selves as being the sites of a spatial history that is visible and invisible, present and absent" ("The Memory" 33, original emphasis). For example, the plains are described as having seeped into the very nature of the plainsmen. Liminality between place and body, therefore, involves an oscillation and interchange between a place that is lived in by a body and, in turn, a body that is inhabited by that place. These theoretical observations by Trigg provide background for ultimately making sense of Bolaño's literary world in which themes, scenes and imagery of bodies invaded by history feature prominently. In particular, these characters and bodies in Bolaño's novel may function as sites of history or memory. In the case of Murnane's literary world, place and landscape are all the more important. The plainsmen dream of "exploring two landscapes – one continually visible but never accessible and the other always invisible even though one crossed and recrossed it daily" (Murnane, *The Plains* 45). The question of how to make sense of spatial history and memory is highlighted by Murnane's novel's contrasting perspectives about the plains.

Strange details and bodily metaphors bring forth the savagery of the uncanny, in a manner that suggestively visualises an unassimilated personal or cultural history. A note by Trigg, who cites an analysis of Lovecraft's literature by Michel Houellebecq, prompts further thought on the evocations of the body metaphor in memory literature: "*The more monstrous and inconceivable the events and entities described, the more precise and clinical the description. A scalpel is needed to dissect the unnameable*" (Trigg, "The Memory" 32, original emphasis). Trigg's and Houellebecq's observations bring together the metaphor of dissection, which evokes the body and the job of the detective, within a discussion of the detailing and description that occurs in literature. Within their writing there is spillage between medical discourse and the language of the uncanny. The uncanny, the alien, and the phantasmatic spill out into the world through literary description.

Within Freud's own work, Trigg detects both "unintentional returns" and "involuntary repetitions" (Trigg, "The Memory" 35). On the literary theme of the doubling, Trigg notes how repetition in representation demonstrates the uncanny's ambivalence, that is, its quality of shuttling between different meanings. He observes a "free-floating oscillation" between the familiar and unfamiliar that highlights how the *Heimliche* contains two ideas in one: "one relating to what is familiar and comfortable, the other to what is concealed and kept hidden" (Trigg, "The Memory" 33–24). The suggestion here is to see both the familiar and unfamiliar within representations that are

repeated, be it when a novel repeats characters, words, scenery or themes. The uncanny emerges in the text when it makes connections and when the feelings of familiarity and unfamiliarity float freely, as they link together the novel's representations.

Lastly, these ideas about phantasmatic spillage can be related to Trigg's thoughts about memory and the body. One characteristic expression of the uncanny that has so far been addressed is that of the figure of the automaton, where an appearance or recollection manifests itself as if alive and with agency. Trigg makes the connection between the uncanny, the body and memory:

First, with its origins in the body, the materialisation of memory can often assume an automatic appearance, thus being 'hidden behind the familiar image of a living person' [...] Here, 'automatic' refers to instances of recall, in which the body's recollection of experience explicitly manifests itself to the subject as a 'thing' in the world, rather than an interwoven aspect of that subject's history. (Trigg, "The Memory" 34)

The familiar person harbours and conceals life, as the automatic appearance of memory finds its place in the world through the body and through recollection. Trigg concludes that "in light of the automated emergence of body memory, the shift from the *Heimliche* to the *Unheimliche* may be understood as a movement of becoming conscious of the body as thing having its own independent history and experiences" (Trigg, "The Memory" 35). Most significantly, hidden memory marks its presence in bodily symptoms. The body becomes an automaton, articulating the memory of a traumatic past and strange "temporal workings spilling over into self-consciousness" (Trigg, "The Memory" 34). A traumatic past spills outwards, to arrive in narrative as an uncanny aesthetic.

There are several key observations here that prove relevant for the envisioning of *2666* and *The Plains* as having the function of the haunted novel. The first is an observation of literary techniques that may be thought of as symptomatic, or as the way in which bodily memory is communicated. The second is to think about the haunted novel's representations precisely in terms of traumatic memory, and indeed this thesis goes on to discuss cases of traumatic remembrance in its studied narratives (see Chapter 5). As the spectral spills into the everyday, when theorising haunted narrative particular attention must be paid to representations that appear as banal, and to the ways in which familiar-yet-

frightening mundanity may be subsequently seen as a phantasm born from an unassimilated past.

This overview of an aesthetics of the uncanny provides background for approaching narrative in which memory persists. As part of an inquiry into uncanny memory, Trigg advises that special attention should be paid to spontaneous recollections, where the past comes to us in flashes and the phantasm disappears before one may see it properly (*The Aesthetics* 23). Remembering, he suggests, involves intrusions. Disruption is what Proust called involuntary memory; it is something that creates shock (Trigg, *The Aesthetics* 28). In haunting, orphan memories that are untethered to an original context are replayed with their origin confused. Haunted narrative may be interpreted as depicting something about the fallout of memory that has been scattered across time and place. Where the origin is concealed but the memory is familiar, readers are lead into the uncanny: “for this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed” (Freud cited in Trigg, *The Aesthetics* 31).²³ These unexpected encounters sustain a feeling of uncertainty while manifesting re-emergence. Fragmented across different settings, re-emergences work together to produce the quality of haunting.

By working with Trigg’s theory of the uncanny body, this section has demonstrated how this concept has been theorised as a site of memory and mnemonic figure in such a way as to direct attention towards Bolaño and Murnane’s own bodily evocations. The next section elaborates on the characteristics of haunting, anticipating the work of chapters 3, 4, and 5 with phantasmatic representations of the body as haunted by memory as identified in *2666* and *The Plains*.

1.7 Re-emergences of the Uncanny

The ghosts that haunt certain cultural time periods and subsequently find expression in literature have been given increasingly serious attention since the end of the twentieth century. These ghosts are metaphors of unassimilated pasts and unfinished histories. In fact, it was Freud’s work on the uncanny that firstly moved the study of ghosts away from esoterism and stories of the supernatural and towards the scientific study of the lingering effects of memory. Studies of re-emergences henceforth beckon to begin with Freud’s

²³ This discussion of origins as being concealed by the psyche is returned to in Chapter 3 of this thesis, which addresses how, as Trigg puts it, uncanny memory can attach a haunting presence to objects, bringing back the past (*The Aesthetics* 31).

concept of the uncanny. Gordon's work on haunting in *Ghostly Matters* directs attention towards gaps, the hidden, and invisible forces as signifiers of haunting (46). She discusses what a study of the Freudian conceptualisation of uncanny experience might teach us about haunting, be it about fright, helplessness, loss or uncertainty. Gordon argues that the feeling of "haunting is a constituent element of modern social life" that emerges when something once familiar has been alienated by repression (7, 51). She defines the concept of haunting as the experience of being troubled by the "world of common reality" and its unexpected arrivals such as that of "ghosts or wolves or eerie photographs" for how it "ruins our ability to distinguish" things (Gordon 53). Gordon's work suggests cultural and literary studies might be in need of a way of grappling with repressed cultural memory. Thus, an understanding of hauntings must precede an analysis of how the haunted novel utilises the uncanny to tell stories of nation formation.

The theorisation of haunting is important for the study of Bolaño's and Murnane's works, to approach how they deal in the ghostly and estranged aspects of common life. Gordon delineates three characteristics of haunting: the introduction of strangeness by the ghost into its sphere of haunting; the ghost as a symptom of something missing; and the ghost as something that is alive (63). She performs an analysis of the latest dictatorship period in Argentina as a case study, inspecting its forms of violence, exile and disappearance, spectrality, and the affect of what is not there, asserting that "a disappearance is real only when it is apparitional because the ghost or the apparition is the principal form by which something lost or invisible or seemingly not there makes itself known or apparent to us" (Gordon 63). Her discussion is especially pertinent to this thesis' analysis of Bolaño's works because of the close resemblance between the forms of expression that arose from the state's repression in Chile's and Argentina's dictatorships, which were coordinated through the infamous Operation Condor.²⁴ Disappearances prompt the destabilisation of boundaries between binaries (Gordon 97). Gordon writes that in Argentina the disposal of the dead may be interpreted as "an effort to cleanse and disinfect the body politic", causing absences with an arbitrariness that has a haunting quality (96). In matters of appearance and disappearance, boundaries and relations between things are made unstable by the ghost.

Delineation between key words commonly used in discussions pertaining to haunting, such as phantasm, phantom, ghost and spectre, is also necessary. In *The*

²⁴ See Fernando López's *The Feathers of Condor* (2016), and Tomás Crowder-Taraborrelli's "Exhumations and double disappearance" (2013) for the historical background.

Spectralities Reader “phantoms” are defined as “bodies rendered optically strange” as if from a different dimension, for phantoms are permeable rather than familiarly solid (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 213). This strangeness is suggestive of the uncanny. Whereas the notion of “phantasm” so far discussed in this chapter refers to oscillating images, the concept of “phantom” appears to refer more to an undead entity (Royle 281). In Nicholas Royle’s *The Uncanny*, the phantom is a figure that comes from the past, which should also be distinguished from Derrida’s concept of the “spectre” from his *Spectres of Marx*, which heralds from the future and never dies (281). Royle notes that Derrida significantly introduced an understanding of language as a cryptic, phantom effect. According to Royle, Derrida argued that phantoms are bound to “language as an experience of the impossible” as they both capture present speech and speak between generations (281). In comparison, in *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word* (1986), Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok focus on “phantomogenic” words, that is, words that generate the phantom and are transmitted down the generations of a family (Royle 281). These key words rule over the family history until the phantom finally disappears. For Abraham and Torok, there are words that fuel phantoms, which generate the unacknowledged, the hidden, and what lies outside of the margins of the text, where it begins its own life. An example of the expression of a phantom in the haunted novel is the repetition of the word ‘abyss’ as a key word that is passed along and imbued with meaning that begins outside of any single novel. Relevant for the study of narrative, then, is this suggestion that words, particularly ones that have become “taboo”, generate and sustain the phantom (Cho 33).

Bolaño and Murnane are authors whose works are deeply linked to their respective settings of Latin America and Australia, in such a way that evocations of those regions’ social and cultural ghosts are unavoidable. When looking at works created within and reflective of real-world haunted contexts, attention is to be paid to how they produce the ghostly in the form of dispersed assemblages (Trivelli 123). Works arising from real-world contexts have ethical significance, for they give agency and autonomy to ghosts. Phantasms pass between authors, readers and contexts. Repeated words create mappable, uncanny composites. Abraham and Torok suggest that ghosts survive as secrets, as in inexpressible trauma hidden in a crypt inside the subject, transmitting neuroses (Trivelli 123). Grace Cho has noted that psychoanalysis provides a method to interpret the unspoken and the “disruptions, articulations, visibilities, assemblages” it produces (33). In keeping with an emphasis on psychoanalysis’ study of haunting, Cho summarizes that for Avery Gordon hauntings are often “unexamined irregularities of everyday life” that reveal “how the past is

in the present” (29). This thesis’ mapping of visual devices in literature similarly observes unacknowledged history by detecting its presence in phantasms buried within the text.

This thesis finds that cultural memory is both situated in the haunted novel, yet also unbounded to individual times and circumstances. It is particularly available to be scattered or dispersed, like dust, a particulate that carries a persisting remainder. On the topic of haunting that traverses generation and borders, Cho notes that secrets travel from one generation to the next, beyond boundaries of families, transformed into ghosts (30). A study of re-emergence must pay attention to its pervasiveness and centripetal movement. Repeated characters in memory narrative might be figured as the ghosts that indicate unresolved history. Such haunting may emerge in dreams in the form of phantasms, for “the haunting works not just down through the generations, but *across* them; and not inside one family, but creating a monstrous family of reluctant belonging” (Rose 31, original emphasis). Cho notes on Jacqueline Rose’s findings that “the transgenerational haunting of collective groups implies the dissolution of boundaries of individual bodies” (30). For Cho, the phantasm arises out of transgenerational disappearances and violence, as “seemingly incomprehensible acts of violence are thick with a history of collective trauma that refuses to remain fixed in the past or in its original place” (30). The ghost emerges between personal and cultural history, facilitating the movement of trauma between borders. For example, in *2666* there is movement of recurring figures between works by Bolaño, and between settings such as Santa Teresa and WW2. This holds true in the work of Murnane; as Chapter 5 addresses, opening lines in Murnane’s more recent work reference back to *The Plains*.

This discussion’s applicability to *The Plains* is most apparent in Murnane’s novel’s reflection on spiritual borders: “the boundaries of true nations were fixed in the souls of men. And according to the projections of real, that is spiritual, geography, the plains clearly did not coincide with any pretended land of Australia” (Murnane 44). Thus, the emergence of a phantasm articulates thematic links within and beyond an individual author’s *oeuvre*. For example, analogous haunted novels may be figured as enacting a diaspora of haunting. Cho indeed notes that gaps in memory are traceable in such a way as to connect “geographic and psychic spaces” of haunting (39). One identifiable pattern is the reappearance of words. Words such as ‘abyss’ and ‘labyrinth’ appear throughout Bolaño’s work, and ‘colours’ and ‘darkness’ throughout Murnane’s. Another pattern is the reoccurrence of characters such as ‘Archimboldi’ or the nameless-narrator, in slightly different incarnations across their novels. Other instances include links between characters,

such as violence or insanity that occurs suddenly within characters or places, across contexts. Significantly, in regards to psychoanalytic theory of the body, Cho emphasises that hauntings generate new bodies. Reiterating the words of Jacqueline Rose, she states that geopolitical transgenerational haunting creates a “monstrous family” (Cho 39).

Memory, body, the uncanny and the automaton are thematically linked. In *Twilight Memories*, Andreas Huyssen discusses whether a stable, whole self is first presupposed in order to subsequently show the “symptoms of disintegration under the impact of the experience of the modern city” (108). Huyssen argues against Freud by stating that the experience of the city is what “triggers the resurfacing of childhood disturbances”, challenging the text to finally address them (112). These discussions indicate that themes to do with the rematerialising of experience are worthy of particular address and attention. Elements of the automaton are particularly showcased in the following scene from *2666* that conjures up a phantasm of a monstrous city: “The city in the distance was a black mass with red mouths that opened and closed. The soldiers called it the bone crusher, but that night it didn’t strike Reiter as a machine but as the reincarnation of a mythological being, a living creature struggling to draw breath” (Bolaño *2666* 704–5). It is of interest, in light of Huyssen’s comment, that this scene of the automaton takes place in a part of Bolaño’s novel that draws together childhood experiences and war as an interplay between civilisation and violence.²⁵ Bolaño’s image may be considered as one of an automaton city of remembrance, an atavism that connects thematically to earlier events, and reflects on modern life outside the bounds of literature.

This section has discussed several concepts of the ghost in cultural texts to inform an understanding of narrative haunting as situated in a tangible context. The following section elaborates on the presence of traceable visual devices in narrative.

1.8 Tracing Reappearances of Memory

This section considers the proposition that haunted memory is both traceable and communicable in its uncanny returns in the form of visual devices within narrative. But first, a note on the role of description in this process is pertinent at this point. Recurrences are most readily mappable in *2666* and *The Plains*, the latter of which is particularly

²⁵ Ihor Junyk’s “A Fragment from Another Context” (2010) proposes that we look at the role of the uncanny in literature that writes of the city, using the example of Rainer Maria Rilke’s writing. The fragmentation of the city, according to Junyk, mirrors an uncanny disintegrating selfhood that occurs in dreams. His argument is inspired by concepts first proposed in Lacan’s “The Mirror Stage” (266).

interested in the camera, both of film and photography. In the opening of *Family Frames*, Marianne Hirsch discusses Barthes's idea that the encounter with the past through photography involves "a kind of stupefaction in seeing a familiar being dressed differently" (1). This encounter with the photograph wounds, shocks, reveals, and conceals (Hirsch 2). Hirsch notes that writing about an image is even more effective for creating a "stab of recognition" in a scene of mourning, for without any of a photograph's objectification or stillness, writing moves us into a world of fluidity (3–4). This moment of signification relates to the automaton, that is, the disturbingly vivid quality of the uncanny. This argument finds that memory narrative is particularly attuned to the uncanny; and that the encounter with written images is also an encounter with memory.

An example of a visual device that brings together visibility and memory is that of the *punctum*, a concept that emerges at the intersection of ideas about memory, haunting returns, and vision. Gordon's survey of haunting makes use of this term that originated from Barthes's *Camera Lucida*. The *punctum* is an uncanny, animated detail that haunts. When accidentally encountered, it "pricks" the viewer with memory that automatically arises (Gordon 107). The word *punctum* is used to refer to any "little but heavily freighted thing that sparks the moment of arresting animation" that "enlivens the world with ghosts" (Gordon 108). Using Barthes's terms, the encounter with the *Heimliche*, the old image of the mother or of oneself, may be said to involve the *punctum*, the accident or shock that disturbs and interrupts the viewing process (Hirsch 4). The scene is punctured by "time itself", a suspended time of melancholy (Hirsch 5).²⁶ Within memory narratives, snapshots of common reality take place in a scene of haunting, where animate details speak about disappearance. The notion of disappearance is an identifiable anchor for memory, as it is traced in the discussion of the use of arresting details, respectively, in Chapter 3's analysis of *2666* and Chapter 4's analysis of *The Plains*.

Narrative devices communicate knowledge of lived history, an ability about which the haunted novel is meta-textually conscious. *2666*'s and *The Plains*' narration overtly raises questions about the transmission of memory. Bolaño, for example, reflects at length about the matter of semblances, such as when the character Reiter discusses semblance as "an occupying force of reality" that proliferates and invades (*2666* 741). Gabriele Schwab notes that those who live through violence experience gaps and distortions of memory, subsequently handing down these unexplainable moods and silences to the next

²⁶ The concept of the uncanny is linked here with that of trauma as accidental encounter. Chapter 2 discusses this idea in more detail.

generation, who must then piece together the received fragmentary memories (*Haunting* 14).²⁷ Both *2666* and *The Plains* are texts within which it is possible to trace memory through its gaps, fragments, and distortions. Where this thesis encounters these qualities of narration, it infers the haunting presence of the unspeakable.²⁸ The task of tracing these devices must be highlighted as one that spans across generations and across texts and cultural contexts.

Narratives bear significance that can be used to work through real world events belatedly, to reflect on and represent the symptoms of survival. It might only be in spillages that haunting can be noticed and addressed. Hirsch suggests that “perhaps it is *only* in subsequent generations that trauma can be witnessed and worked through, by those who were not there to live it but who received its effects, belatedly, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation” (cited in Schwab, *Haunting* 25). For example, it appears that in *2666* the delayed memory of the Holocaust reappears in the next generation’s expedition to Santa Teresa, whereby the movement between different time periods is a narrative strategy, linking outbursts of violence (Birns 82). Like the ghost, fiction exists “between the two states of life and death” (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 23). Memory narrative, in turn, exists in the in-between of past and present.

When tracing un-assimilated cultural and personal experiences, it becomes apparent that some things never disappear, a notion that runs contrary to modern fears of total disappearance. Reminders, littering landscapes of *2666* and *The Plains*, retain their mobility. Concepts such as the *punctum* speak to this quality of persistence and provide means with which to analyse traces. In the place of disappearance, theorists such as Kevin Hetherington suggest there are instead absent presences, by virtue of which emptiness continues to stand for something. In the memory narratives of *2666* and *The Plains*, their settings can be imagined as conduits of disposal, for things that are “seen as outside of the classificatory order of things” are thrown into the open spaces of their settings (Hetherington 161). Attempts at disposal or repression of memory or memory-objects seek to order the world with “the drawing of boundaries, the creation of taboo, ritual forms of controlling an invoked anomaly, labelling, scapegoating” (Hetherington 161). But the idea is present that “the absent is only ever moved along” (Hetherington 162). Similar to Gordon’s arguments about Argentina, Hetherington assesses that “the representational

²⁷ See Marianne Hirsch’s *Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Postmemory* (1997) for a critical engagement with the topic of handed-down memory.

²⁸ Chapter 2 addresses the proposition that to approach memory narrative as cryptographic writing would be to understand it as a breaking open of the crypt.

figure of unfinished or unmanaged disposal is the ghost” (170). The presence of absence, as in haunting, is an experience of spilled boundaries. Following this theory, Bolaño’s and Murnane’s texts may both be considered as composites of spectral presences that bring forth haunting in their visualisations. Such haunted texts play a role in the circulation of ghosts within and between cultures.

This thesis interests itself in the idea that literature invites historical memory into itself in the form of re-appearances, in order to speak the experiences of nation formation (as theorised by Soto-Crespo as an experience of melancholy). As the haunted novel communicates memory through phantasmatic returns, the task of reading haunted literature, as it requires piecing together and re-membering the world, begins to resemble a discipline proposed by Guy Debord in 1955, namely, “psychogeography”; a science that studies the emotional and behavioural effects of an environment, such an urban one, on the people who inhabit it (Pile 12). When tracing “the associations between things” and “their lost or hidden histories”, this thesis pays attention to shifting space, fragments and “angles of perception” (Pile 6, 14) in both Murnane’s and Bolaño’s work. Indeed, their novels are populated and haunted by descriptive scenes that combine dreaming, haunting, the body, and the psychological aspects of space. Such narrative elements connect the haunting of place to the memory of bodies lost to colonial and dictatorial violence, and to a faith in images that has been lost.

1.9 Conclusion

Where memory spills between place and body, narratives become ghostly markers of absence. The intimacy of places, such as the fragments, the interior secrets and the memories they contain, communicate meaning. The concepts covered in this chapter provide the framework for tracing how flashes of the past find their way into the literary present. By dedicating time to discuss the uncanny and the phantasm, this chapter has addressed matters of vision and re-emergence, which remain weighted with particular significance throughout the thesis’ close textual analysis of Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels in the final chapters.

This chapter has argued that haunted cultural memory can be traced by the re-emergence of phantasms, with visual devices serving as the subsequent defining feature of the haunted novel. It has done so by defining phantasms and haunting, and relating their movements to that of the uncanny, a vital figure of re-emergence. In order to demonstrate its central proposition, the chapter surveyed literature concerning disappearance, visions,

psychoanalysis, the uncanny and its bodily metaphors, ghostly haunting, and the ability of visual devices to prick a reader with shock, welcoming them into the world of hauntings. Not yet approached, yet of equal importance to this thesis, is the relationship between the concept of the phantasm and the notion of trauma, which is conceived as a belated, recurring psychic phenomenon in psychoanalysis. The literary encryption of traumatic haunted cultural memory as giving rise to phantasms in literature is the focus of Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

Haunting Inheritance: Incorporation and Encrypted Loss in the Emergence of Literary Phantasms

2.1 Introduction

This chapter expands upon Chapter 1's theorisation of the haunted novel's visual devices that evoke memory, in order to additionally conceptualise literary phantasms in Bolaño's *2666* and Murnane's *The Plains* as devices that encrypt uncertain collective memory. The relationship between the phantasm and ungraspable, disquieting memory is mapped out theoretically by critically applying theory related to cryptographic writing. To chart the emergence of literary phantasms and establish how narrative can act as a literary crypt, Chapter 2 interrogates the notion that mobile and recurring expressions of memory pervade haunted literary texts. The chapter argues that it is in its use of visual devices that the haunted novel emerges as an expression of encryption. It henceforth introduces the psychoanalytic concept of the crypt, which is understood as a narrative figure transmitted across time, space and generations, which re-emerges in evocative representations. In doing so, the chapter puts forth the idea that the transmission of cultural memory may be approached in a manner similar to the way literary manifestations of personal traumatic memory have been theorised, namely, by tracing collective memory through the delayed presences that haunt the aftermath of a catastrophic event.

As the haunting of the present by the past is an insistent characteristic of modern narrative, scholars of spectrality often draw upon similar terms to those used to describe trauma (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 11). They do so, in spite of the fact that some theoretical literature suggests that scholars of haunting should avoid conflating the ghosts of history, loss, and memory with trauma, whilst working to reveal past erasures and current insufficiencies (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 15). Indeed, in studies of spectrality in literary and other cultural expression, psychoanalytic concepts such as melancholy and repetition are seen as productive, rather than negative, elements within texts. In psychoanalytically inflected literary studies, trauma has been defined as a response to an overwhelming event, which is resistant to its being written, spoken or otherwise represented (Hinrichsen, Caruth, Schwab).²⁹ Thus, one of the reasons for working with trauma theory in this thesis is to direct attention towards failures of representation, that is,

²⁹ A caveat in this perspective is that a persisting focus on traumatic representation may draw attention away from the real-world politics that constitutes the context of emergence of the representation in the first place (Traverso and Broderick 9).

towards the haunted novel's characteristically disquieting uncertainty about things that remain ungraspable. Cultural trauma, as differentiated from psychological trauma, has been defined as an activation of "symbolic and imaginative work [...] separate from the event that may have caused it", which may subsequently be studied by its symbolic manifestations in social structures (Traverso and Broderick 8). This chapter draws upon trauma theory, particularly discussions that concern the concept of trauma's belatedness, in order to trace representations found in *2666* and *The Plains* as expressions of unresolved memory.³⁰ Indeed, as it is addressed in this chapter and demonstrated later in the thesis, the literary encryption of haunting can be traced through the recurrence of phantasmatic visual devices in Bolaño's and Murnane's novels, towards an envisioning of the haunted novel as a kind of literary text characterised by its uncertain oscillations between the visible and invisible, and the foreign and familiar.³¹

A key concept introduced in this chapter is incorporation, which is included in the chapter's interrogation of the haunted novel as a site encryption. The chapter works most extensively with the theory of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok in its opening and concluding sections, attention that provides the foundation for conceptualising the psychological aspects of the haunted novel. Incorporation is defined in psychoanalysis as a phantasmatic psychic mechanism whereby something forbidden, such as failed mourning, is internalised within the self.³² Incorporation is discussed in this chapter to facilitate the understanding of the idea of melancholy as a failure of "introjection", with is defined in psychoanalysis as the acceptance within the self of disturbing aspects of the external world.³³ Thus, emerging in the place of successful mourning, the haunted novel is troubled by unclaimed space, time, and memory, all of which manifests in the symbolism of incorporation. The analysis of incorporation reflects on how the full psychological import of events is delayed, displaced, disembodied, and distorted in language. In narrative, the aesthetic motifs of trauma emerge in startling apparitions, desynchronisations and disappearances. Incorporation, as the refusal to reclaim a loss, is understood as a pathology of language, which also affects presence as it generates elliptical and lacunary repetitions (Kristeva, "On" 10).³⁴ Discussion of the psychoanalytic concept of incorporation assists in

³⁰ Paul Genoni has previously suggested that Murnane's images of settler society connote trauma associated with its postcolonial context (5).

³¹ Harriet McInerney notes that the tension between these opposites is specifically present in Gerald Murnane's work, in the context of her analysis of the uncanny in relation to the postcolonial landscape (143).

³² Maria Torok and Nicolas Abraham use this definition in *The Shell and the Kernel* (1968), which was arrived at by reworking the psychoanalytic theory of Sándor Ferenczi and Melanie Klein.

³³ Introjection is discussed further in section 2.3.

³⁴ Julia Kristeva highlights such distortions as attributes of melancholy ("On the Melancholic Imaginary" 10).

the task of approaching unspeakable secrets in literature. This chapter seeks to explain the logic of incorporation in order to support the analysis of the presence and attributes of phantasms in *2666* and *The Plains* conducted later in the thesis. Through the analysis of motifs of haunting in *2666* and *The Plains*, this thesis' final three chapters demonstrate how the haunted novel narrates memory by representing a shifting traumatic scene that encompasses an array of separate historical events.

The previous chapter proposed the haunted novel as a site for the expression of forming nationhood – a kind of unfinished history that is fixed, unresolved, and melancholy – through visual devices that were referred to as phantasms. A direct connection between incorporation and phantasms is apparent: as phantasms are expressed across texts in the form of encrypted re-emerging trauma, haunting is traceable by looking at textual forms of incorporation. Therefore, this chapter considers psychoanalytic literature about incorporation and the cryptographic writing of trauma to suggest that foundational phantasms are contained and brought forth in haunted narrative. To provide the ground to address the re-emergence of memory between the two novels studied in this thesis, this chapter is organised into seven sections, which draw on the methods of psychoanalysis. The first two sections of the chapter define the concepts of cryptonymy and the crypt. The next three sections work with key ideas primarily related to the writing of trauma, namely, wounding, mobility and latency. The last two sections discuss ghostly possession and the figure of awakening. Each of these themes is addressed to facilitate the chapter's aim of answering its central question, that is, how to conceptualise the haunted novel by tracing literary encryptions.

2.2 Inspecting Literature's Intrapsychic Tomb

Methodologically, this chapter entertains an adaptation of psychoanalytic concepts to literary, cultural and textual analysis.³⁵ It does so by drawing on Abraham and Torok's theory of the readability of the crypt, in which they suggest that literature can be analysed and inspected for phantoms (optically strange renderings, as defined in Chapter 1) using the toolkit of cryptonymy, as an alternative to the dominant Freudian model of interpretation of literature in Western literary analysis (such as the interpretation of

³⁵ In *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) Dominick LaCapra identifies that the application of the psychoanalytic concept of trauma is increasingly performed in literary studies: "psychoanalysis could be a discourse that has more affinity with the social and cultural realm than with the level of the individual psyche" (LaCapra cited in Traverso and Broderick 9).

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in terms of the Oedipus complex, and readings of literature through signs of the return of the repressed or uncanny) (Rashkin 32).³⁶ Esther Rashkin observes that the theory of the phantom “offers a new vantage point from which to reconsider the structure and motive forces of certain works of literature traditionally classified as uncanny, fantastic, occult, or supernatural” (32).³⁷ The translator's introduction to Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word* (1986) remarks on the surprising classification of their theory of readability, which “begins by addressing the problem of establishing a signifying process”, as both critical to psychoanalysis and literary criticism (lii). Literary critics have used this theory to interrogate whether narratives filled with symbolic manifestations are of their own fictitious origin, or the effect of an overwhelming event. This question means that this territory of analysis oscillates uncertainly between trauma and fantasy, and between fiction and reality, linking these qualities together and envisioning their readability. This chapter can construct a dialogue on these qualities by observing the “compendium of rhymes, puns, silent distortions, and secret verbal contortions” within literature, to contend that the haunted novel is readable and can be envisioned as an entity caught between trauma and fantasy (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* lvii).

Adam Lowenstein defines historical trauma as wounds observable in the fabric of culture that spill outwards, which representation works to communicate (1). Meanwhile, *The Spectralities Reader* recommends relating together past events and place to reflect on haunting (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 483). Thus, crucial to this thesis' notion of the haunted novel is the idea that its representations are informed by traumatic national histories. In Chapter 1, Chile's dictatorship period (1973–1990) was gestured towards as a key place and history informing *2666*, while the disquieting context of nationhood behind *The Plains* appears to be the history of land rights in Australia. In dramatising the pursuit and failure of mastery, the central problem of narrating collective or national place is connected to the phantasmatic representation of the body and psyche; in effect, the “ghost

³⁶ An example of a psychoanalytic approach to literary analysis following the work of Freud, Klein, Abraham and Torok is Maggie Kilgour's *From Communion to Cannibalism* (1990), where she analyses, for example, the literature of Samuel Taylor Coleridge not just in terms of the uncanny but in terms of incorporation by looking at metaphors of consumption and rebirth. Similarly, Michael Lazzara uses Cathy Caruth's reworking of Freud's theory of trauma to approach Carlos Cerda's novel *Una casa vacía* (1996) as a metaphor for national forgetting and transition in Chile (124).

³⁷ Rashkin gives the example of Nicolas Abraham's analysis of *Hamlet* in terms of the haunting effect of the phantom and concealed secrets (37).

becomes the formal strategy of representing injury” (Hinrichsen 117) in the novels, as they are haunted by their own sense of place.³⁸

As this chapter works with Caruth’s phrase “unclaimed experience”, a methodological note seems necessary on how the following discussion is to approach the past. In a study of southern literature in the United States, Lisa Hinrichsen notes that authors have tried, problematically, to “take possession” of the past, to heal rather than reflect its patterns (1). To seek mastery of the past, argues Hinrichsen, is to posit it “as a static, reified object rather than the work of memory” (2). She urges acknowledgement that when one works with the past, they change it: they are to add a perspective rather than move towards closure. Her recommendation is to envision the past as living and “in transit”, mobile and ongoing, rather than to remove its ambivalences (Hinrichsen 2). As they are incorporated by literature, symbols of trauma, for example, are to be seen in their broader cultural context (Hinrichsen 3). Here, the turn to psychoanalysis is necessitated as it constitutes a language capable of bringing interpretation to the haunted histories of the past that are repeatedly represented (Hinrichsen 16). A psychoanalytic approach acknowledges the connection between subjectivity and history and provides the framework for their discussion in relation to trauma and literature (Hinrichsen 17). Positioning the analysis of Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels in relation to psychoanalysis assists this thesis to engage with the marks of trauma’s presence.

As this chapter proposes, the lingering effects of traumatic experience are found encrypted in recurrences throughout haunted narrative. For this reason, looking at the textual use of the phantasm is essential for envisioning how this literature communicates haunting. As noted in Chapter 1, motifs of the uncanny such as “repetition of events, images, and localities” propel the reader into a disquieting groundlessness that may be “considered a narrative of haunting” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 396). Repetitions, which connect the losses of the past to the ongoing survivor’s experience, suggest the importance of the re-told, re-surfaced, and re-remembered in the task of holding witness. As noted by Tiina Kirss in *Haunted Narratives*, what haunts is “unbidden, it comes back for visits, and recurs through uncanny phenomena, personified or atmospheric”; these are descriptors of a phantasm that hovers between materiality and immateriality (21). The significance of insistent recurrence is foregrounded by theorists of haunting, whose analysis draws attention to figures of departure, falling, burning, and awakening as being some literary

³⁸ See Lisa Hinrichsen’s analysis of Lillian Smith’s *Killers of the Dream* (1949), which details how an autobiographical story connects the body with inherited memory, specifically in what she terms post-plantation Southern literature (114).

signs of witness (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5). Sensitivity to matters of representation and vision is necessary to approach narratives haunted by incomprehensible violent events, when their cultural impact has been passed on from one context to the next. Bolaño's and Murnane's narratives deal in the impact of unspoken events, where an ungrasped reality returns. They depict a drama of separations that is portrayed in the form of departures, exile, disappearances, and bodily concealments, such as burials, possession and dreams.³⁹ As phantasms, these figures comprise the "ghost dance" of narrative that provokes memory (Kirss 33). By investigating theory related to incorporation, this chapter aims to theorise the drama of incorporation at work in the haunted novel. This study of incorporation provides the psychoanalytic theoretical background to trace the gaps, fragments, expulsions, and possessions that act as emblems of encrypted inheritance, as found within *2666* and *The Plains*.

Literary representations of delays, gaps, repetitions, and images of crisis inform the discourse of incorporation and trauma experience. These representations become reoccurring tropes that transmit the experience of extremity and awaken the inheritance of experience. Haunted imagery thematically connects with Bolaño's and Murnane's writing, for their narratives reflect on the nature of perception and broader psychological life. This chapter's inclusion of a theorisation of trauma provides a way of conceptualising literary phantasms as they emerge insistently. Its discussion examines the crisis of boundaries involved in the writing of fiction that deals with extremities, observing similarity between trauma narrative and Bolaño's and Murnane's fiction.⁴⁰ Caruth's psychoanalytic approach is relevant in the way she borrows from Lacan's "Tuche and Automaton" (*The Four*), which theorises trauma as repetition, reproduction and return. Caruth's theories about the transmission of trauma, developed by drawing upon Freudian psychoanalysis, serve to aid this chapter's discussion in speaking about scenes in literature that involve repetitions and returns, such as the images of transmission and awakening. Drawing on Caruth's conceptualisation of trauma as it relates to haunting leads to an understanding of the haunted novel as a kind of literary text whose phantasms emerge from a crisis of boundaries and the insistent return of memory.

³⁹ An alternative name for these figures, proposed by Tom Cohen, is "secret agents", which he uses to analyse the films of Alfred Hitchcock. He argues that secret agents are the "'secret' visual elements, graphic riddles, letteration, and cryptonymies that traverse all of his works" (Cohen xi).

⁴⁰ For example, Bolaño's *Savage Detectives* (1998) contains writing that is reminiscent of the biographies of dead authors, such as those found in Derrida's *The Work of Mourning* (2001).

Psychoanalytic theories assist in the mapping of loss, memory, and transition proposed to be within haunted narrative. As mentioned in Chapter 1, psychoanalysis provides a way to unearth history and to consider stories as sites of buried secrets and lingering presences. Abraham and Torok's *The Shell and the Kernel* develops the idea of a crypt as the collation of collective experience, traceable by its language and left in texts "by traumatic disturbances of the symbolic order such as ruptures, gaps, designification, and mutilated or invented works" (Schwab, *Haunting* 33). As the literature of violent histories tells both personal and public stories, their structure is informed by individual reactions to overwhelming experience. Here, the victim of some unspeakable loss or violence refuses the normal process of mourning and instead seeks to conceal and preserve the secret of their suffering inside themselves (Schwab, *Haunting* 33). The inclusion of the secret creates a gap in its newly fragmented host.

Within a psychoanalytic definition, trauma is described as a delayed response displaced onto a different scene, which possesses the new place it comes to inhabit. Freud's theoretical position on trauma began by imagining it as something from the outside that "intrudes into our psychic life and disturbs its balance" (Žižek, *How* 73–74); henceforth, symbolising and integrating its meaning becomes a central problem for the sufferer. But developments in psychoanalysis have shown that traumatic events can be resuscitated in the present "to fill in the gaps in the universe of meaning", that is, to break through some "symbolic deadlock" (Žižek, *How* 73–74). Trauma's transferal bears relation to haunting, for displacement is "central to this logic of spectrality" (Trigg, "The Place" 88). In *2666*, historical trauma is allegedly displaced from Chile to Mexico and converges upon the setting of Santa Teresa. In *The Plains*, events converge on the setting of The Interior, as the abyss at the centre of Murnane's novel. The concept of a literary abyss is explained effectively by Margaret Bo Birns's chapter in *Roberto Bolaño, a Less Distant Star: Critical Essays*. Citing Bolaño's executor Ignacio Echevarría, who describes the title, *2666*, as a "hidden centre" and "vanishing point around which the different parts of the novel fall into place", she notes that *2666* achieves the effect of an abyss by telling its story in two timeframes, in which readers only learn that the violence in Mexico is a double of the violence of WW2 later in the novel (Birns 68). Similarly, *The Plains'* enigmatic title forms the novel's hidden centre – in the novel's later pages its timeframe shifts; as decades pass the filmmaker-narrator turns his lens back on himself. A symbolic deadlock comes into view.

Trauma discourse is used in this chapter critically to inspect transmissions of ghostly hauntings and understand how the past lives on in literature. In this regard, Abraham and Torok's discussion about incorporation in *The Shell and the Kernel* informs this chapter's reading of Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*. As 2666 in particular stands as a type of literature that speaks about catastrophic experience through a narrative informed by trauma, it is appropriate to examine the ways in which the haunted novel engages with the "central problem of listening, of knowing, and of representing that emerges from the actual experience of the crisis" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5). Traumatic experience is difficult to represent, as attempts at representation must work with that which is invisible and unassimilated. Similarly, Gemma López Sánchez forwards the idea that "trauma is not just a crisis in the memory of the traumatised subject but a crisis in representation and narration" (43). For example, the failure of *The Plains'* narrator truly to capture a landscape on film over the expanse of a decade, appears as a striking narration of a representational crisis. As part of her study, López Sánchez also makes note of "trauma's disturbance of discourse through gaps and its points of contact with *the abject*" (43, original emphasis).⁴¹ The abject in this sense refers to the visceral and revolting. In abjection nothing is familiar, and there is the constant threat of re-emergence, as is the case also with the uncanny. The abject processes of projection, expulsion and spilling emerge from the representational disturbances of trauma: "the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" breaks, disassembles, and erases borders (Kristeva, *Powers* 12). The novels of Bolaño and Murnane involve the transmission of experience across history and generations through a language that simultaneously rouses and evades our comprehension.

The study of literary phantasms draws attention to the non-assimilation of crisis experience in cultural memory. The process of reading literature for its hidden content is called cryptonymy, and its methods involve inspecting texts for encrypted content, such as gaps, hauntings, and phantomogenic language. Cryptonymy regards "language as a system of expressive traces" (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* lxix) that are concealed references to trauma. In other words, the utterance of key repeated words can be interpreted as holding greater, concealed, significance. Jacques Derrida identifies concealment as an intrinsic quality of writing: "a text is not a text unless it hides from the first comer" ("Plato's" 2). Therefore, despite the fact that the concept of the crypt builds upon Freud's work on the psyche, this thesis' approach to the analysis of literature involves not just using Freudian

⁴¹ The central argument in López Sánchez's abstract originates from a quote by Peter Buse in *Drama + Theory: Critical approaches to modern British Drama* (2001).

concepts but using cryptonymy “to pinpoint areas of silence in works of literature [...] and grant them the potential of expression, that is, the possibility of untying their tongue” (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf/Isxvi*). Key words in a text may henceforth be pinpointed as sites of uncertainty. Cryptonymy provides a tool that interprets resistance to intelligibility by unspeakable secrets as meaningful, in which “the symptoms displayed by an individual haunted by a phantom lie beyond the scope” of previous psychoanalytic tools (Rashkin 32, 40). As Rashkin contends:

What returns to haunt is the ‘unsaid’ and ‘unsay-able’ of another. The silence, gap, or secret in the speech of someone else ‘speaks,’ in the manner of a ventriloquist, through the words and acts (readable as words) of the subject [...] Within the literary and psychoanalytic domains, the phantom provides a new vantage point from which to consider the effect Freud called ‘the uncanny’. (40)

This passage considers texts as unwitting harbourers and effective speakers of secrets, through the lens of cryptonymy. Thus, given that the psychoanalytic concept of the crypt has been used to generate a method of textual analysis, it is applicable to inspect the crisis of boundaries between the seen and unseen within the haunted novel.

In relation to literature, the metaphor of the crypt can be drawn upon to imagine the creation of a novel that serves as a secret enclave and connects to a melancholic past. Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels are henceforth identified as baring connection to the historical context in which they are written. A critical approach to textual forms of incorporation also involves examining how the writing of the crypt concerns the transmission of experience and boundary disruption. Theorists of cryptonymy are unique in addressing the inheritance of experience as involving secrets and inner crypts in which “loss itself is incorporated” (Tuggle 70). These ideas about the crypt are pertinent to address the many cryptic scenes in Bolaño’s and Murnane’s narratives involving covered-up crimes, frightening interiors, and the degenerating continuity of the characters’ psychic lives.

Cryptonymy’s purpose as a “theory of the readability of trauma’s secret spaces” is also critically considered when looking at the literature of crisis experience as a site of encryption (Schwab, “Writing” 107). Cryptonymy establishes how “the crypt becomes traceable, visible, or readable not only in cryptic or hieroglyphic verbs [...] but also in other gaps in or deformations of language: in incoherencies, discontinuities, disruptions, and

disintegrations of meaning or grammar or semantic and rhetorical coherence” (Schwab, “Writing” 107). Gabriele Schwab’s description here provides background for theorising the haunted novel, for it details the crisis of failed cultural mourning as detectable in visible symbols. It would seem that haunting in narrative emerges from a traumatic core of real world upheaval. The novel becomes a place of incorporation and its literary expression in tropes of disintegration, in which external place affects the interior of the subject. In conceptualising the haunted novel, this thesis takes into account that “the spectral and uncanny are models for looking at place [...] in its historical profundity [...] replete with the past” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 399). Thus, the concepts of the spectral and the uncanny allow the interpretation of the haunted novel’s landscape of complex absences and presences. In *The Self and It*, Julie Park touches on the idea that novels (as they emerged in eighteenth century England) have come to embody and objectify “the experience of life itself” (xv). Writing, in this sense, is understood to “penetrate and embody an [...] interiority through complex mimetic strategies” (Park xix). Writing acts as a container that incorporates. As trauma is encrypted and passed along the generations, displacements, fragmentation and distortions occur in the field of representation.

The crypt thematically evokes an image of burial, which is linked to memory in narratives of haunting. Burial as a literary motif functions as a metaphor for remembering and the excavation of memory fragments within (Lazzara 131). In his book on the politics of memory in Chile, Michael Lazzara cites Walter Benjamin’s “Excavation and Memory” from his *Selected Writings*, which contains an extended metaphor of a man excavating an archaeological site, as a critical approach to understanding the past (131). Lazzara notes, however, the difficulty of digging for fragments of the past when material evidence is absent (132). Similarly, in *Haunting Legacies*, Schwab notes that violent histories are transmitted through generations, for unspeakable legacies remain buried in memory (1). The crypt as a site of buried memory is also notably one in which unspeakable events are kept alive. A disavowed history is buried to be kept alive psychically, which results in the haunting quality of violent legacies that are transmitted between generations. By refusing to integrate these events into historical knowledge, the bereft instead incorporate the lost object, sustaining it, becoming themselves like a living dead (Schwab, *Haunting* 1–2).⁴² This

⁴² There is an opposition between movement and image that involves death and life that can be called the “dialectic of mortification”, which Slavoj Žižek suggests is crucial to address towards an understanding of underlying phantasms (*The Plaque* 108). Žižek further notes that photography acts as a symbol of the living body’s mortification that makes its interior visible, a freezing that is achieved by the gaze itself (*The Plaque* 111). The body, frozen stiff, is contrasted with the moving images of cinema where the dead come spectrally alive (Žižek, *The Plaque* 110).

death-in-life “disturbs identity, system and order” (Kristeva, *Powers* 13). Didier Maleuvre in *Museum Memories* has imagined how this “fall into objecthood yields not a cadaver but an un-dead” (243). As memories are attached to the body as instances of an assault on the body by alien forces, psychomotor agitation, nightmares, repetition, and dead voices serve as destabilising symbols of memory when these devices feature in narrative (Schwab, *Haunting* 2). The body becomes a site upon which public concerns are signified (Hinrichsen 115).

How do we deal with a lingering past represented in the present? Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub put forward that creative work inscribes “what we do not yet know of our lived historical relation to events of our times” (xx). *The Spectralities Reader* likewise remarks on the notion that neighbouring nations may bury “hemispheric ghosts” within another, suggesting that literary genres are embedded with cultural anxieties (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 485). Similarly, *Haunting Legacies* suggests “the psychic life of violent histories” are “translated into and recreated in literary texts” in a transformational manner (Schwab 3). Yet, while trauma studies has tended to focus on western histories, more localised representations can be address with methods beyond Freudian approaches (Traverso and Broderick 3). It is then pertinent for this thesis, as it will be shown in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, to approach the symbolisation of psychic histories as phantasms in Bolaño’s and Murnane’s writing, since their novels appear to translate real-world cultural questions into fiction. Schwab notes that violent histories give rise to psychic deformations; transmissions of trauma bring fourth “a history of ghostly haunting by the phantoms of a silenced past” in which literature offers access to the unknown (*Haunting* 72, 1). Demonstrating the application of cryptonymy, Schwab shifts the location of the crypt from the personal, or intrapsychic, to the collective level, by discussing real-world events in which trauma is shared. Her discussion posits the crypt as the grave of silenced events, taboo words and traumatic gaps as ambivalent attempts to conceal, and the phantasm as the form of return proper to the cryptic unconscious (Schwab, *Haunting* 72). In summary, the existing theoretical literature about cryptonymy introduces the central idea that the psychic remnants of past history live on beyond their previous contexts, and become traceable and readable in literature. Introducing these observations demonstrates one such relation between cryptographic writing and literary devices that, as this chapter argues, are key in giving rise to haunted narrative. In responding to the question ‘how does the novel incorporate loss?’ this chapter provides some semantic delineation of several key terms

central to the existing psychoanalytic approach to this area of research. In doing so, the remainder of this section establishes the origins of literary crypts and their phantasms, mapping their vital connections to memory.

A distinction between the psychoanalytic processes of introjection and incorporation as responses to loss may inform an understanding of how haunted literature symbolises wounding. The psychoanalytic concept of incorporation arose from Sandor Ferenczi's 1912 article "On the Definition of Introjection", and is subsequently addressed by Sigmund Freud in his article "Mourning and Melancholia" as well as by Melanie Klein for whom lost objects are redeemed in gratitude (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 111, Kilgour, *From* 169). In Ferenczi's original conceptualisation, introjection involves the individual extending their interests beyond themselves, to make contact and take in the objects of the external world (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 111). In Freud's writing, the individual responds to the "loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal" by accepting it into themselves ("Mourning" 243). According to Freud the proper process for mourning loss is to arrive at a successful separation of the individual from the lost object ("Mourning" 243). Nevertheless, the trajectory of melancholia as incomplete mourning involves the failure to fully grieve and separate from the lost object. The individual, troubled by their unspeakable secret, turns from "the external world of lost desires to the internal world of pathological identifications", and becomes a shelter to preserve and conceal the loss (Eng 1276). This response constitutes the incorporation of the lost object into the ego, which constitutes a failure of introjection as the past persists inside the individual. As such, the concept of the haunted novel is to be envisioned as a site of inscription, where contingent aspects of the external world and its national narratives are brought into the text and expressed in phantasms (imaginary figures). A parallel to psychoanalysis is seen in literature, as both point out tension left behind from wounding (Lazzara 125). The haunted novel is imagined as symbolising and narrating this uncertain memory.

Why might cultures or individuals cover up unspeakable wreckage or unmourned death, or seek ways to express them only indirectly? Incorporation as a concept in psychoanalysis emerges as a fantasy to guard against the effects of loss, by refusing introjection and concealing a prohibited object; according to Abraham and Torok, this involves taking possession of an object by bringing it into the psyche (*The Shell* 113). As Abraham and Torok continue, the notion put forth is that fantasies of "non-introjection" or failure of introjection work to avoid injury to the individual by instead transforming the

world, installing a secret topography (*The Shell* 125). Discussion of the theory of incorporation also highlights the relevance to this thesis' theory of the haunted novel of the notion that the uncertain relation between loss and fantasy informs language and expression in literature. These crypts are metonymies of unresolved crises that persist as internal forfeitures. For example, exiled and displaced characters in *2666* and *The Plains* are unable to articulate their loss, so their unresolved attachments lurk everywhere, rather than being localised. Where the unspeakable is concealed in the flesh, the past and the reality of loss to the individual are parried (Schneider 97).

Incorporation on the individual level involves the imagination that a loss has not been suffered to oneself. By refusing mourning, the individual refuses to acknowledge the extent of the loss, rather indicating an absence where introjection failed to occur (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 113). Moving between psychoanalysis to literature, a text can be inspected for gaps and silences as signs of refusal. Absence is a key experience that narrative reincorporates into itself (Lazzara 116). As Susannah Radstone suggests, rather than render metaphors literal our focus should be placed on how texts articulate and discursively produce loss (Traverso and Broderick 8). Gaps in writing act as inscriptions of loss, pointing towards a failure of introjection. The takeaway from Abraham and Torok's notion of incorporation as an intrapsychic situation is a consideration of silences, possessions or gaps in language as articulations of a sustained loss. The application for the purposes of envisioning the haunted novel considers the novel's uncertain position between fantasy and trauma as produced in its language and representations. Fantasies of incorporation may conceal an absence or loss, turning the individual into a container for their unresolved attachment (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 113). In this way, unspeakable loss is perpetuated and sustained within representations of the body and place. In the case of *The Plains*, an example considered in Chapter 4 is the novel's rumination on skin and bodies as sites of inscription, for example, when it asks: "do we know what our own bodies are leading us towards?" (Murnane 63). The study of incorporation places focus on representations of the body in literature as sites of concealed loss, and the novel itself as a corpus and potential container for memory.

Central to the drama of incorporation is the idea of an inner tomb or crypt that is established through words. The burial of unspeakable grief in this tomb is its central image. In the foreword to Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, Derrida writes that a "crypt keeps an undiscoverable place" as an "inner safe" for an absence or loss (xii). This crypt disguises and hides the body it holds only through the act of dividing and

fragmenting the self, so one must save their secret inside, beside or outside of themselves (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* xiv). This crypt arises from, and is built upon, a traumatic scene whose violence is initially mute, as the marks left upon the self are silent yet persistent. The crypt memorialises history in the body which becomes like a monument in which the incorporated object signifies a taboo or prohibition (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 114). As the consequence of a loss that cannot be acknowledged, the loss is:

Swallowed and preserved. Inexpressible mourning erects a secret tomb inside the subject. Reconstituted from the memories of words, scenes, and affects, the objectal correlative of the loss is buried alive in the crypt as a full-fledged person, complete with its own topography. (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 130)

The burial of the unspeakable in this example signifies an instinct to conceal lived grief in a vault and also a desire to obtain and resurrect eyewitness testimony, lest it die with the previous generation. However, in Derrida's own theorisation of secrecy, the secret may be considered unspeakable not simply as it is a taboo, but as something that pushes at what can be represented in language and generates mystery within the text (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 58). In consequence, literature can be conceived as a site where the uncertain effects of unspeakable events come to be narrated; likewise, the haunted novel may be imagined as an intrapsychic tomb for an uncanny afterlife where what is absent or dead lives on.

In summary, the topography of the crypt is one of reconstitution, burial and preservation. The specific contribution by Abraham and Torok to the crypt's conceptualisation is the idea that secrets can be passed down over generations, imagining the phantom as something that misleads (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 54). However, rather than revolving around the revelation of secrets, this thesis' envisioning of the haunted novel views phantasms as visualising encounters that provide insight into the text's construction. This section has highlighted existing theory about cryptonymy to demonstrate how texts can be read as encrypted and traced for the aesthetic motifs of trauma. In the case of the haunted novel, then, narrative phantasms may be considered as inscriptions replete with memory. *2666* and *The Plains* are to be considered as readable places home to an uncertain oscillation between trauma and fantasy that is reconstituted from cultural memories. It is in the haunted novel's use of visual devices that the phantasms of individual and collective pasts are being encrypted.

2.3 Acts of Incorporation: How Literature Swallows Loss

Thus far a series of thematic links have been drawn on the metaphoric concealments of the crypt as they relate to the phantasmatic devices of haunted literature. Most relevant to the discussion of phantasms is the argument that incorporations play out in the form of aesthetic representations that stimulate vision, such as of bodies or dreams. Characters in Bolaño's and Murnane's novels often suffer from hallucinations and mistaken identity. An array of literal and metaphoric crypts, labyrinths, coffins and other theatrical or museum-like settings featured in *2666* and *The Plains* discursively signal loss. Characters' attempts to reconstitute their past and make sense of their present can be seen in their symbolic actions. In psychoanalysis, the role of introjection is the implementation of metaphorisation as a means to channel ineffable desires into substitutes (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 169). The discussion of metaphoric substitution is also relevant to the analysis of literature, as a medium that makes use of figures of language. Examples of metaphors for an unspeakable history in the two novels include Murnane's writing of Australia under the name of The Interior, and Bolaño's writing of Ciudad Juárez under the name of Santa Teresa. These literary places narrate a site of unresolved national absence. Just as photographs of an empty landscape may confront the viewer with absence, a belated witness of literary nothingness urges reflection on cultural memory (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 398). In this way, phantasmatic substitutions in the literary setting serve as places of incorporation, that is, inscriptions in the text of uncertain memory.

An explanation is warranted here regarding the matter of metaphoric substitution in order to justify the claim that novels encrypt unspeakable memory as a means to transpose cultural memory into representations. As Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren suggest, the metaphors of spectrality have been "deeply embedded within the discourse of loss, mourning, and recovery" of trauma studies (11). The settings of *2666* and *The Plains* are sites of incorporation as they contain communion and cannibalism, as both themes and metaphors in the novels. For example, the desert setting of *2666* serves as a figurative "carnivorous flower" and tomb (Bolaño 129). Similarly, the interior grasslands of the plains are characterised by their vitality as the grasses thrive, yet are also home to buzzards and darkness. As it will be seen in Chapter 3, the re-envisioning of Freud's work by Maggie Kilgour assists in this thesis' critical exploration of *2666*'s shuttling between homely representations, evocative of a return to the Garden of Eden, and violent scenes in the text that describe acts of cannibalism. For Freud, all "pathology stems from either fixation in or

regression to an earlier stage” (Kilgour, *The Function* 244). Kilgour, following Freud, begins the discussion of substitutes with the metaphor of eating, as it relates to the earliest phase of development in which the individual experiences “a state of oneness with the world” (Kilgour, *The Function* 244). Rather than viewing unity as the final achievement of dialectical development, its pathology may be located in a regression to unity as the original state of the subject. As such *2666* is particularly representative of a kind of novel in which a “repressed instinct never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction”, containing a compulsive repetition of the primary state of satisfaction (Kilgour, *The Function* 245). Irruptions of atavistic imagery in Bolaño’s novel (also noted to a lesser extent in *The Plains*) constitute encryptions that oscillates uncertainly between homely familiarity and abject violence.

Similar to the metaphor of eating, the haunted novel evokes metaphors of the mother’s body that come to feature as one of its most notable phantasms. Body evocations of this kind would imagine the crypt atavistically as a uterine space – ambivalently a womb rather than simply a tomb. Fantasies of a regression to original oneness in the mother’s womb are expressed alongside anxious metaphors of body fragmentation. Chapter 5 of this thesis later addresses a scene from *2666* depicting the savagery of a regressive return to the woman’s body, as well as several scenes entailing bodily fragmentation (Bolaño 299). This imagery can be described as phantasmatic in the sense that it oscillates between an uncertain materiality and immateriality, creating tension as it is unclear whether to take the scenes literally or as images in a character’s mind. Frances Pheasant-Kelly’s observations about the body as symbolic place are applicable to this thesis’ discussion of the space of the haunted novel as one that may articulate and transmit the experience of loss. Not unlike the way in which, according to Pheasant-Kelly, the fantasy of incorporation involves boundary blurring between an interiority and the world around it, space in the haunted novel can similarly be proposed as “abject in that it involves either a return to a symbolically uterine state, or a loss of subjectivity [...] a controlling maternal body [...] links with death or decay or with premeditated cruelty” (Pheasant-Kelly 18). Pheasant-Kelly further notes that in Freud’s writing, the repression of unconscious desires threatens to re-emerge, for the child must relinquish the mother; as such, fixation on a prior stage of development is abjection that must be worked through to achieve coherent wholeness (13). Literary figures can subsequently be imagined as descended from an unassimilated past, in which literature is the place for working through uncertain memory. As regressive bodily

metaphors irrupt into the haunted novel, they serve to constitute and bring forth an uncontrolled remembering.

Encryption involves, in particular, the inclusion of taboo words and figures that are subsequently represented in phantasmatic substitutes. In Freud's theory, the cannibalistic drive is the most primitive form of organisation, whose emergence entails a "moment of recognition as a repetition, cannibalisation and a performative act of naming" (Royle 208). Freud discusses cannibalism as an example of taboo, the kind of secret that must be encrypted: "the ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and, in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it" (Freud, "Mourning" 249). Thus, the object of the ego's cannibalistic desire, according to Freud, is a loved object. Likewise, scenes in literature that depict cannibalism appear to demonstrate the logic of incorporation. One example in *2666*, is a scene of sacrifice that narrates the crucifixion of a Romanian general by his soldiers: "they loved General Entrescu [...] the soldiers were crazed with hunger and fear and they killed him and nailed him to the cross" (Bolaño 746). As a basis for identification, the sacrifice made by the starving soldiers is one of love: "they decided to eat him: by incorporating a portion of the dead body, each of them would be able to carry with him a piece – a good piece – of him" (Gallo 260). Biblical mythology notably provides the original paradigm of the figure of the cannibalised body in literature as a cluster of metaphors that exceeds its component parts (Kilgour, *From* 235).⁴³ Correspondingly, the notion of literature as a site of incorporation likens the act of writing to eating, as an atavistic metaphor for the process of encryption.

The haunted novel's envisioning in this thesis is situated amid modern day attempts to obtain testimonial truth under the aegis of its disappearance. History is imagined as something to be stored, concealed and carried by survivors, who turn themselves into tombs housing the pains of memory. Cultures and artists try to repair loss and discontinuity, a process of resurrection and disinterment that Kilgour describes as "remembering" (*From* 168). In terms of this notion, the body becomes a type of museum by serving "both as burial chamber of the past with all that entails in terms of decay, erosion, forgetting – and as site of possible resurrections, however mediated and contaminated, in the eyes of the beholder" (Huyssen 15). The logic of incorporation conceals unspeakable wreckage in the flesh. In other words, tensions exist between introjection and

⁴³ In this section of her text, Kilgour is working with ideas developed by Northrop Frye, such as in his *The Educated Imagination* (1963).

incorporation, for incorporation represents both a failure of introjection and possession by a traumatic inclusion. As a narrative device, the crypt of the haunted novel is henceforth produced by representations of incorporation, such as body metaphors and symbols, including delay, possession, literality and repetition.

Psychoanalytic theories of incorporation establish a link between metaphors of incorporation and the encryption of loss, which can be applied to trace how national narratives relate to symbolic narratives within literature. The metaphors used to understand incorporation are characteristically atavistic. Indeed, following Freud, Abraham and Torok liken introjection to a child's first language acquisition as they learn to speak by filling their mouth with words (*The Shell* 128). In incorporation, on the contrary, words fail, or are prohibited, from filling the mouth: as the "mouth is unable to say certain words and unable to formulate certain sentences", it regresses into a "food-craving mouth" that "absorbs in fantasy all or part of a person" in the place of words (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 128). A subject's incorporation, therefore, turns to metaphoric cannibalism by refusing to mourn. As Abraham and Torok put it: "The words that cannot be uttered, the scenes that cannot be recalled, the tears that cannot be shed – everything will be swallowed along with the trauma that led to the loss" (*The Shell* 130). Likewise, in haunted literature, as the novel is structured around a silence or void, we may observe that the novel absorbs life, so to speak, and transforms refused mourning for a nation or a literature that never existed (which, as its foreword suggests, *The Plains* laments) into a work of metaphoric incorporation.

Engagement with Abraham and Torok's theory encourages inquiry into phantasmatic narratives that deploy the metaphor of introjection, which this thesis sees as evident in *2666* and *The Plains*. For example, in *The Plains*, a man attempts to paint "landscapes of dreams" reducing them to an array of colours that were "unmistakable landmarks of his private country", and he remarks that "a man could dream of nothing stranger than the simplest image that occurred to another dreamer" (Murnane 87, 88). He does not seek merely to recapture the past, he "wants his own affairs to equal [...] a zone of mystery enclosed by the known and the all-too-accessible" (Murnane, *The Plains* 117). In this example, the colours of paint are tools of incorporation, and encryption is produced through means of things that are familiar. Similarly, in a passage of *2666*, a battalion of WW2 soldiers descend into a literal crypt in a castle. A character called Reiter begins to dream about the crypt and the soldiers within it:

Then he dreamed about the inside of the crypt. The stairs led down to an amphitheatre only partially illuminated by the SS officer's flashlight. He dreamed that the visitors were laughing, all except one of the general staff officers, who wept and searched for a place to hide. He dreamed that Hoensch recited a poem by Wolfram von Eschenbach and then spat blood. He dreamed that among them they had agreed to eat the Baroness Von Zumpe. (Bolaño, 2666 680)

This scene's evocation of cannibalism exemplifies the psychoanalytic notion of the return of the repressed in dreams, where to avoid accepting a loss "we fantasise swallowing (or having swallowed) that which has been lost, as if it were some kind of thing" (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 126). In other words, something "othered" by the ego disappears into the unconscious, and in failing to find a place on the inside, the subsumed other returns to disrupts the harmony of the body. Literary phantasms, such as Reiter's dream of the crypt, then, are to be addressed as textual incorporations that represent repressed cultural memory and, as such, a community's refusal to mourn.

Theorisations of the crypt highlight the way in which the encryption of memory and its re-emergence spans generations and carries figurations of violence. To put it another way, the haunted novel is envisioned as containing vital connections to generational secrets and taboo topics as part of its narrative. Abraham and Torok state "the crypt itself is built by violence" and is established by the violent oscillation of generations (*The Wolf* XV). Writing as a mimetic practice draws upon imitations and internalisations of the past. Moreover, Norman Brown explains incorporation as something passed down the generations, in which the self is formed by internalising its ancestors, withdrawing the external drama into its own invisible interior. Incorporation entails mimesis, specifically, an imitation of ancestors (Brown 104). Mimesis and internalisation entail violence, that is, the tearing apart of the introjected object that may only be "atoned for through the reassembling of those pieces in the self. In a Kleinian sense, the lost objects are remembered and restored, even redeemed, through an act of gratitude" (Kilgour, *From* 169). In this way, the crypt is understood as a parasitic internalisation, explained as a system of introjections where the previous generations are incorporated (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* xvi–xv). Ultimately, the interior of the body and selfhood mirror and conceal "fragmented strata built violently on the subordinations and secrets of others" (Hinrichsen 115). The relevance of these psychoanalytic notions for this thesis is in their productive potential when applied to the analysis of what is being referred to here as haunted

narrative. The haunted novel may in this sense be imagined as a site of cryptic inclusion, which both harbours and imitates ancestral history. In addition, a certain violence may be inferred also in the writing process of the haunted novel, for it entails the scattering and reassembling of phantasms, as well as the construction of textual crypts through evocations of collective secrets and taboos.

This thesis considers national mourning in Bolaño's and Murnane's literature as a source of sustenance to phantasms, since failures of mourning largely result in fantasies of incorporation. Introjection, as defined in psychoanalytic theory, begins when the infant's mouth is first imagined as if it were filled with words. In contrast, the absence of words and meaning characteristic of a failure of mourning results in an atavistic regress into the fantasy of incorporation, where fiction fills the place of speech (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* xvi–xv). Fantasies of incorporation are considered to be regressive as they entail a return to a cannibalistic relation to the world in the place of a communion of speaking subjects (Kilgour, *From* 169). This failure of speech and triumph of fantasy is suggestive of one of the central concerns of trauma studies, namely, that some experiences might be unspeakable. As explained in the introduction, the attention given to Abraham and Torok's theory of incorporation in this chapter provides a foundation for the conceptualisation of the haunted novel, particularly for imagining how it might represent and speak about traumatic experience. Indeed, when working with literary analysis, symbols of the process of mourning may be observed in the narrative devices used within texts. This section has summarised psychoanalytic ideas about metaphoric substitutions, highlighting the relation between fantasy and trauma, and offering insight into the abstract relation between literary devices and the figure of the crypt. The next section critically addresses Cathy Caruth's theorisation of trauma writing as a means of engaging with the re-emergence of the figure of the crypt, as a strategy for reckoning with the repressed cultural memory imagined in the haunted novel.

2.4 “Released Through the Wound”: Unassimilated Past in Haunted Narrative

As the haunted novel's topography is envisioned as a container for memory, the irruption of phantasms in narrative may be related to the function of trauma to arrive as an accidental re-encounter. Textual forms of incorporation speak through absence, silence and repetition, and their own relation to time, in which a relationship exists between crisis experience and the ability to produce words. Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* highlights how literary texts speak through the representation of

experiences of survival. Caruth's theory is pertinent to the study of incorporation for it directly addresses a concept of trauma as the non-assimilation of crisis from where haunting arises. For Caruth, the literature of catastrophic experience is centrally concerned by the pathology of "listening, of knowing, and of representing that emerges from the actual experience of the crisis" (*Unclaimed* 5). According to Michael Lazzara who is writing about Chilean national narratives in relation to art, Caruth emphasises that memory does not surface coherently within texts (116). As Chile's disappeared exist both outside of historical narrative and outside of literature, and as "the traumatic moment remains somehow outside the traumatised individual's life narrative", they must be "incorporated into that narrative through an ongoing process of 'working through'" (Lazzara 116). Furthermore, Caruth suggests that the question of "knowing and not knowing" is where literature and psychoanalytic theory about trauma meet (*Unclaimed* 3). In relation to the haunted novel, the idea of the unassimilable past bears relevance both as a failure of introjection and as resistance to introjection that generates a gap in the subject's memory. An observable pathology of language emerges from a loss, as words fail to fill the mouth of its sufferer. Henceforth, when this thesis approaches its envisioning of haunted literature with an understanding of trauma's symptoms and their representation, the appearance of phantasms may be interpreted as taking the place of silence. The language used in the writing of trauma involves non-assimilation and repetition, where violent events or catastrophic secrets evade being fully known and cry out beyond the initial injury. As Kirss notes, literature connects with intense events simply through the aesthetic of the uncanny and its phantasms (31). In the novels of Bolaño and Murnane, this writing of unspeakable experience takes the form of delays, repetitions and witness-bearing devices.

As they are subjected to repeated events, the survivors of catastrophe appear to be possessed by fate, a concept a key character of *2666* is named after. An observation stemming from the groundwork of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is that events are prone to repeat themselves for those who have lived through catastrophe (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 1). The example Caruth uses to illustrate this claim is the story of a soldier who accidentally kills his wife, and who, after burying her body, slashes a tree with his sword and hears the voice of his wife cry out from the wound as if "he has wounded his beloved once again" (*Unclaimed* 2). This story conceptualises the way trauma is characterised by the unwitting repetition of events that make it apparent in the world. The story recalls the Lacanian contention that "the encounter with the traumatic real [...] occurs as if it were by chance" (Khazaei 212). When discussing Freud's concept of fate, Caruth's story shifts the

attention away from the repetition of injury and onto the “sorrowful *voice* that cried out, a voice that is paradoxically *released through the wound*” during the act of repetition (*Unclaimed* 2, original emphasis). The experience entails both a repetition and the voice of a loved other bearing witness to the events, asking to be heard (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 3). The trauma is found in the “unassimilated nature” of the unknown event’s return, rather than in the past (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). Thus, through the repetition of wounding the presence of an unspeakable loss becomes identifiable. Stories and descriptions in the haunted novel may similarly be inspected for this kind of repetition that cries out. To this end, re-emergences are framed as fateful encounters with memory.

It was mentioned above that Murnane’s and Bolaño’s novels narrate events as they occur in precarious settings, which appear to be unassimilated into history in a manner that reiterates the impact of unspeakable events. What is unassimilated, in other words, what is it that animates memory in these authors’ respective literatures? According to Lazzara, memory in the Nietzschean sense “is not at all stagnant” as it serves as “an ethical battleground upon which multiple senses of the past compete” (130). “Memory sites should be understood as palimpsests” as they are continually re-imbued with meaning (Lazzara 130). The kaleidoscope redoubling of meaning places the reader in relation to the void, “allowing us to sense the catastrophe” whose materiality has been lost from testimony (Lazzara 131). The act of witnessing is vital to consider when addressing the traumatic scene, as crisis “simultaneously defies and demands our witness” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5). Notably, what returns is not just the “reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 6). The unknown, ungraspable violence of the event continues to demand attention from readers as it reappears in narrative. Haunted narrative can henceforth be imagined as writing a defied and demanded scene of uncertain memory.

Deferrals, skips and lapses in time are forms of language taken by the crypt of collated experience, each of which is to be considered here as belonging to the category of phantasms, according to Abraham and Torok’s definition of incorporation. Repeated acts of wounding and witness by the individual, Caruth suggests, indicate that trauma exists in the unassimilated nature of their past (*Unclaimed* 3). Literature about traumatic experience tells “the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). Truth remains unknown and resists being known by action or language (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). Trauma does not simply emerge in the cracks or wounds of the psyche; it emerges as a phantasm

and in the form of a postponed address. In *The Plains*, for example, we read: “somewhere out among the swaying grasses [the plainsmen] had learned the true stories of their lives and known the men they might have been”; for Murnane, truth emerges unexpectedly and out-of-place (Murnane 58). Noted in *The Spectralities Reader* is the observation that “the unearthing of old histories of a place can often result in the revival of past narrative stylisations of the uncanny” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 397). A voice that speaks unexpectedly resembles the function of the uncanny’s automaton. To inspect a novel for encrypted memory or experience, therefore, entails tracing its symbolic manifestations.

Just as literary analysis is interested in the question of how literature might represent the unknown, so too is the haunted novel envisioned as meta-textually concerned with the question of representation. By approaching *2666* as haunted literature, a broader analysis of the connections between literature and psychoanalysis is offered below in this chapter. An example in *2666* is the way the history of Ciudad Juárez is belatedly addressed and referenced by Bolaño’s representations; his Santa Teresa functions as part of an overt artistic and public response to the failure of government systems to end pervasive violence, in which the haunted literary crypt finds a new way of narrating an event that sits inside and outside of collective knowledge. *2666* devotes much of its fourth volume to painstakingly relaying the detective process of the police in his fictional city of Santa Teresa, which recounts the cases of various victims. The novel’s chapters then branch into many different side stories, populated by characters such as poets, madmen, clairvoyants and ventriloquists who partake in the experience of the crisis befalling the melancholy city. The arising vision of traumatic experience is one of recurring dreams, departures, delays, the loss of nations, death and various mnemonic articulations. Similarly, *The Plains* often diverges into branching side stories, remarking fearfully at one point that “such glosses and footnotes surround the trickles of actual text” (Murnane 138). Meta-textually, the narrator of *The Plains* fears to be beguiled by images, as he looks “for anything in the landscape that seemed to hint at some elaborate meaning behind appearances”; the landscape populated by wealthy patrons, with its history of battles between the Hareman and Horizonites, may give voice to the unspoken crypt of post-colonial Australia (Murnane, *The Plains* 3). A theory of the haunted novel observes how literatures conceal loss in textual bodies, in such a way that it can cry out unexpectedly from behind their images.

The haunted novel’s composition of recurring motifs is proposed as integral to its ability to voice the impact of some unassimilated past. Storytelling is a place where persistent recurrences bear witness to an original wounding. As Caruth traces the

“insistently recurring words or figures” (*Unclaimed* 5) contained within literary and psychoanalytic texts, it becomes apparent that these figures contain and transfer meaning. For example, references to the abyss are one of the most noticeable figures in the haunted novel, resultant of memory resisting being seen or known. Murnane reflects on “the abyss between a man and his past” as a source of artistic productivity that produces strangeness and uncertainty (*The Plains* 112). This thesis’ theorisation of the haunted novel is interested in things that are out-of-sight, out-of-language, delayed in time, as well as incomprehensible cases of survival. The idea of the unknown is associated with sudden encounters and unexpected appearances. This section has cited the metaphor of the wound that belatedly speaks to illustrate the traumatic basis of certain re-emergences, in order to inform the analysis of such figures in the novels of Bolaño and Murnane, respectively, in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

2.5 Phantasmatic Delays and Departures

The notion of traumatic memory as mobile, in the sense that it appears and reappears in new and unexpected contexts, informs the figuration of haunted literature as a site where memory re-emerges in phantasms. *The Plains* begins with an arrival: “Twenty years ago, when I first arrived on the plains, I kept my eyes open” (Murnane 3). Meanwhile, *2666* begins by recounting the movements of four literary critics, with two subsequent volumes commencing with the arrival of characters in Santa Teresa. The act of leaving one place and arriving in another is often the scene from where signifiers of trauma arise, for trauma is typically experienced “as a temporal delay” (Caruth, *Trauma* 10). The writing of trauma enacts a drama of exile, departure and disappearance, which serves to connect the past, present and future. Writing itself may observe the organisation of traumatic experience by being structured as deferral and repetition. Trauma’s transmission from place to place both exposes and conceals. A parallel should be drawn here between the two primary novels analysed in this thesis and the form of Freud’s own writing, which Caruth suggests is a site of trauma, divided into parts by its history (*Unclaimed* 20). Caruth identifies the trauma as one to do with leaving a place (*Unclaimed* 21), which this thesis considers in relation to the travel and exile found in both *2666* and *The Plains*. Trauma involves a pathology of punctuality, where its narrative symptoms are observed in the form of delays.⁴⁴ In this

⁴⁴ Julia Kristeva has discussed punctuality in relation to melancholy more extensively, identifying disturbances in time as a signifier of melancholy’s presence in “On the Melancholic Imaginary” (1987).

thesis' discussion, narrative techniques that connote trauma, such as repeated delays, are placed in the category of phantasms as they emerge insistently to possess the text.

An example of the unexpected arrival of memory is found in Bolaño's earlier novel *Amulet*, where the character Auxilio narrates her experience of arriving in Mexico City while sweeping the floors of apartments and washing their windows. As she looks upon bookshelves, she conjures "wonderful and melancholy scenes" and imagines "books sitting quietly on shelves and the dust of the world creeping into libraries, slowly, persistently, unstopably" (Bolaño, *Amulet* 4). In the character's imagination, dust creeps into libraries unstopably in the same way that clouds of dust, like ashes, blow into Mexico City. The books are preyed upon; Auxilio sees "whirlwinds, clouds of dust gathering over a plain" within her memory, as they advance upon Mexico City (Bolaño, *Amulet* 4). These clouds belong to everyone in the city. They cannot be kept at bay. Likewise, no amount of sweeping will separate the books from their dust, which is an integral, almost life-like part of the books (Bolaño, *Amulet* 6). Auxilio's thoughts turn to the other objects sitting on shelves, such as vases and figurines, and how the broken ones serve to nourish the dust of Mexico City. Her thoughts about these seemingly inoffensive objects centre upon thoughts of loss. The novel is related to the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of students, as the main character is depicted hiding in a university. In this story, memory is shown to be intrusive and melancholy through its imagery.

In *2666* and *The Plains* events depart and converge on the fictional city of Santa Teresa and the imaginary place of The Interior, respectively. At one point *The Plains* describes the necessity for the plainsmen to appear as citizens of the non-existent nation lest its border be "beset by a horde of exiles from the nation that had never been" (Murnane 44). Likewise, in *2666*'s first volume, four literary critics leave and arrive in the city in search of a famous German writer. In the second volume, an exiled Chilean professor arrives. In the third volume, a journalist travels to Santa Teresa to cover the news of the femicides that are occurring in this city. In the fourth volume, the bodies of the dead are uncovered in the desert and detectives descend upon the scene. The fifth and final volume ends with the German writer leaving for Mexico. Acts of departure are found throughout and often signify an act of survival, as in the seeming escape from a violence. The very structure of "repression and repetitive reappearance" signifies that the effects of history cannot be effaced; to this end the trauma encrypted in the act of leaving, which cannot be grasped, implies the persistence of history (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 20, 21). Characters appear to escape their history, losses, or the crisis their country underwent, as if walking

from an accident. Nevertheless, repetitions, hauntings, and other signifiers of persisting memory inevitably arise in the two novels.

Just as the act of leaving is particularly evocative in theorisations of trauma, the movements of characters in the haunted novel are to be envisioned as bearers of meaning. Even in Freud's own work, according to Caruth, the effects of the historical context of Nazism and Freud's departure from Vienna to London leave their mark (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 20). The haunting effect is particularly noticeable in the events of *2666*'s fifth volume, where the central character Hans Reiter moves from one defeat to another as a German soldier in WW2, his division constantly travelling, escaping death several times. In these departures and escapes (as further analysed in chapters 3 and 5) the character bears a crypt. This literary representation of departure, like Freud's own, bears the traumatic traits of the character's experience of escaping from dreadful events. Moreover, departure as a phantasm is often encrypted as a shameful secret that is carried from place to place.

The act of leaving and the experience of the events that occurred beforehand are, in their unconsciousness, encrypted by the impact of history. The *deject*, a character who is forced to leave one place for another, carries out a separation of themselves from a catastrophic, divisible place (Kristeva, *Powers* 17). The kind of self-imposed exile of Bolaño's character Amalfitano in *2666* is a form of freedom that brings the character to another place. In the case of *The Plains*, the landowner characters also seem to live in a self-imposed exile from the land. However, freedom is paired with death: the acts of departure are as frequent as the surfacing of corpses in *2666* and murmurs of darkness in *The Plains*. Fate and exile are aesthetic motifs of trauma literature to be observed in the haunted novel. Caruth writes that "the trauma of the accident, its very unconsciousness, is borne by an act of departure" (*Unclaimed* 22). Bolaño specifies that exile is "a natural movement, something that, in its way, helps to abolish fate, or what is generally thought of as fate [...] full of inconveniences, of skips and breaks that essentially keep recurring and interfere with anything you try to do that's important" (*2666* 117). Departures speak; just as Freud's voice emerges in his work and addresses the reader as a departure (Caruth *Unclaimed* 22), so too does the narrator's voice in the haunted novel speak from the experience of leaving. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will address this speech of departure when discussing the status of *2666*'s exiled character Amalfitano, and self-imposed exile of *The Plains*' narrator.⁴⁵ While these characters, as sufferers of loss and self-imposed exile, seemingly escape their past by

⁴⁵ These chapters will show Bolaño's *2666* as overtly interested in the depiction of violence and representation of historical trauma, whilst Murnane's novel is overtly interested in formulating questions of visual interpretation.

arriving in Santa Teresa and The Interior respectively, their stories bear the impact of their act of departure, with their external loss returning in the narration as an encrypted internal forfeiture.

The figure of leaving henceforth contains a phantasmatic quality, wherein it leads towards terrifying scenes of misrecognition, or gives rise to a disembodied voice, sweeping into a new context like dust. By regarding Torok's definition of incorporation, figures within Bolaño's and Murnane's novels, such as repeated delays and departures, are therefore to be considered as phantasms. The narrator of *The Plains*, for example, is not just a character who leaves one place for another. Rather, the narrator is a character who in forfeiture draws out his uncompleted goals over a decade, a lacuna that becomes a haunting figure in the novel. By highlighting how departure makes memory's re-emergence possible by being rooted in a traumatic foundation, this section has proposed the phantasm's underlying function within the haunted novel. The following section introduces the additional cryptic figure of survival, similarly suggesting it be approached as a phantasm, as it provides ground for unspoken collective memory within the haunted novel.

2.6 Tracing Latent Representations

As this thesis' discussion addresses the visualisations called up by literature, it observes how the signifiers of trauma only come into view as they are re-encrypted from one place to the next. The signs of trauma within the haunted novel may indicate the uncontrollability of memory, yet at the same time such novels grapple with the fear of forgetting. For example, Bolaño's interpretation of the femicide of Mexico's Ciudad Juárez and his address of Chile's dictatorship, the Second World War, Tlateloloco, and the First Liberian War emerge in the contemporary age of the "pervasive threat of historical amnesia" (Ma 139). Following a traumatic event there are attempts to piece together the past while traces and living testimonies still remain. Searches for meaning are particularly apparent in *The Plains* as Murnane's characters obsess with recording that which evades interpretation: the narrator observes how the "plainsmen commonly consider all art to be the scant visible evidence of immense processes in a landscape that even the artist scarcely perceives" and notes when "the artist had failed to see the scattered vestiges of what passed for another country to another observer" (123–4). Trauma is preserved within the gaps of the text between one date and place and another (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 21). This retention means that history and memory are "never simply one's own", as in effect they

become “precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 24). Just as Freud’s work is addressed by the unseen history of the time period in which it was written, haunted literary representations reflect trauma’s latency as they encrypt their narrative with the memory of others.

Depictions of survival enact a drama of incorporation where memory travels and is brought into the novel, just as how place is included in the body or how the body is included in place. Lacan suggests that symbolic repetition is key to the subject’s survival (Khazaei 212). In psychoanalysis, the repetition of trauma represents an attempt to introject one’s own history, that is, “the endless attempt to assume one’s survival as one’s own” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 64). If trauma’s symptoms and repeated structures are only made visible when they are transmitted from place to place, the act of leaving one’s homeland is significant in the literature of traumatic experience. Caruth highlights that in trauma’s delayed effects and return the victim is “never fully conscious during the accident itself”, referring to the belated impact as latency (*Trauma* 7). To put it differently, the surviving victim does not truly escape unharmed. Significant for this thesis’ analysis is both how the return of characters and settings relate to the idea of the incorporation of loss, and how memory becomes evidenced when observing events in multiple settings. Caruth states that “since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time” (*Trauma* 8). A character in a haunted novel may escape an incident in one setting only for the full impact to be made evident after they arrive in the next.

Only in confronting the impact of the loss, crisis or accident in another time and place may its truth begin to be grasped. Survival speaks, communicating through repeated confrontations with threats that are vital to grasp (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 62). Trauma is an indirect “missed experience” that comes back later in its full immediacy, often in the form of repetition in dreams, hallucinations or fateful recurrences (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 62). Impacts are only apparent when they are transmitted, for “trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site” (Caruth, *Trauma* 10). In fact, details described in one section of a haunted novel are exhumed in later sections, often emerging from the dreams of characters. In the case of *2666*, for example, descriptions of skeletons, coffins, and mirrors re-appear across the volumes. When a character states: “Wherever we dug we found bones [...] the grounds were brimming with human bones. It was impossible to dig a trench without finding little hand bones, an arm, a skull”, this scene mirrors a greater novel-wide process in which fateful recurrences seem unavoidable

(Bolaño, 2666 854). While the re-emergence of trauma evidently continues throughout the volumes, it notably exceeds the boundaries of the novel. Observation of this spillage is central to this thesis' envisioning of the haunted novel, and indeed the same tropes and metaphors can be located within the works of Murnane.

Phantasmatic images of horror and shock experience in the haunted novel first arise from, and are built upon, the displaced images of historical trauma that spill out from a wound. Fright for Freud and Caruth is "the lack of preparedness to take in a stimulus that comes too quickly" (*Unclaimed* 62). The missed, unexperienced and unknown event becomes "the basis of the repetition of the nightmare" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 62). To look at haunted literature as a container of unspoken memory is to confront a grand circulatory system where nothing goes away (Steedman 166). As discussed above, trauma becomes apparent in its repetition and secondary reencounters. Caruth imagines "the formation of history as the endless repetition of previous violence" (*Unclaimed* 63). The haunted novel is proposed as a network of repetitions, in which latent content resurfaces, linking together cultures and events of crisis: indeed, "trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures" (Caruth, *Trauma* 11). Caruth notes that endless repetitions may even represent an inherent and necessary characteristic of survival (*Unclaimed* 63). This idea of linking cultures shares somewhat in the concept of incorporation, because both the psychoanalytic concepts of incorporation and trauma are about the bringing together of bodies and memory. Significantly, language and figures found in *2666* are similarly encountered in *The Plains*. Semblances, labyrinths and vestiges are encountered in Murnane's novel, which while being largely pastoral in its scenes, hints repeatedly at a darkness beyond the surface of things.

Placed in a literary context, real-world experiences are transmuted into cryptonyms by the haunted novel, reiterating their impact and the tension between the known and unknown. In "Tarrying with the Negative," Bo Earle provides a critically applicable analysis of the relation between experience and meaning. By drawing upon Freud's theory of trauma to analyse poetry, Earle emphasises the significance that Freud places on fright experience as involving an abyss of meaningless repetition, as the mind fails to attach meaning to the frightful. Here trauma is precisely "re-membered" by being brought into the world and given meaning only through the processes of rehearsal that Freud calls "repetition compulsion" (1019). Literature depicts the experience of shock as a *mise-en-abyme*, that repeats itself until it becomes "meaninglessness" (Earle 1019). Haunted narrative is to be imagined as instructing the reader about the abyss of repetition, by

quilting together representations that communicate the disquieting sense of an ungraspable landscape.

Theory related to cryptographic narrative and the function of trauma as accidental arrival is relevant to this thesis' conceptualisation of the haunted novel. The thesis' reading of *2666*, a novel with foundations in overtly stated historical trauma, both informs and affects the reading of *The Plains*, a novel concerned with the matter of interpretation of the land as an uncertain, contested space. In this dual reading, haunted-figures are re-found between the novels as prompts for memory. The textual analysis in the next section subsequently demonstrates the role re-emergence plays in remembrance, by laying down the theoretical concepts related to trauma as only discoverable within repetition. Following this analysis, a renewed discussion of the phantom is conducted in the chapter's final section, in order to give illustration to the phantasm's relation to literary incorporation.

2.7 Literary Possessions as Incorporations

The concept of the phantasm that was first defined in Chapter 1 can also be inspected as a carrier of memory and device of encryption that the haunted novel is proposed to manifest. Rather than a mere visual image, the phantasm is a visually signalled haunting, in the sense that it is an unexpected arrival that enters into a work and is inscribed in the interior (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 397). Discussion of the matter of ghostly possession is necessary to highlight how haunted literature is influenced by images of the material and immaterial. Significantly, the first chapter of Gabriele Rippl, Philipp Schweighauser, Tiina Kirss, Margit Sutrop and Therese Steffen's *Haunted Narratives*, "Seeing Ghosts", begins by asking "where is the 'place' where the ghostly lies harboured, and from whence does it return? What is the ghost's time, what are the rhythms and circumstances of its return and departure?" (Kirss 21). These questions concern the ghost's passage into the familiar, which "represents a connected and connecting encounter with the traces of events that have transpired" (Kirss 31). So far this chapter's discussion has addressed, in psychoanalytic terms, how trauma is transmitted from one generation to the next through the repetition of structures and acts, unresolved and encrypted, in which the suffering is framed "as the possession of some people by a sort of fate" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 2). Ghosts are considered as "metaphors for a wounded historical experience" as a result of theorisations of trauma that look beyond individual experiences and towards cultural experiences as symptoms of history; they do not all embody trauma, but trauma theory enables an interpretation of certain ghosts (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 12, 14). By

addressing the phantasm and its function in Bolaño's and Murnane's narratives, this thesis addresses the manner in which an inherited past enters the living in the form of haunting. This section's analysis of the phantom builds on the theoretical framework addressed earlier in the chapter to explore how phantasms and their encryptions function in Bolaño's and Murnane's storytelling.

A phantom has previously been defined as a foreign body that intrudes into a text. In "Notes on the Phantom," Abraham discusses the phantom's haunting returns: "*The phantom which returns to haunt bears witness to the existence of the dead buried within the other*" (*The Shell* 175, original emphasis). This description illustrates that the phantom does not simply arise as an effect of refused, melancholic mourning; that which returns to haunt is rather "the tombs of others" (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 172). The descendants of those who suffered the loss are the ones that inherit and encounter the phantoms. Abraham argues that phantoms give body to "the gap produced in us by the concealment of some part of a love object's life [...] what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others" (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 171). Moving from psychoanalysis to literary theory, it is suggested that literary characters may also come to bear a common phantom:

The incorporated phantom dwelling in the crypt would come to haunt and obsess the suffering, traumatised subject transformed into a phantom bearer or cryptophore [...] it would appear that the common internal foreign body that has come to haunt the various characters is the same one. (Ganteau and Onega 21)

The phantom in its psychoanalytic definition indicates an unspeakable gap, which like a burial is a structural feature of the crypt, built upon deceptive images of violence, suffering, or loss. For instance, Figure 5, a work of graffiti, serves as a visual depiction of this kind of communal enclave. The ghost-like headscarves surrounding the tomb are a repetition of the headscarf symbol chosen by mothers whose children were lost to real-world political violence in 1970s Argentina. The symbol holds witness and persists in the face of concealment; paradoxically it shows in order to hide, and shows emptiness and absence in order to visualise what is not there. In literature, writing that contains gaps or refers to the unspeakable is writing about the material and immaterial images of history and memory.

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Cooke, Kasia. "The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo." 2006. Photograph of street graffiti.

Buenos Aires. *Travel Blog*. www.travelblog.org/Photos/545116.

Image description: Black and white graffiti depicting six of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo's iconic white headscarves circling a stone monument.

Figure 5 Kasia Cooke "The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo" 2006

The phantom is sustained by false appearances and secret words (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 133). Where it returns, it possesses language and repeated phrases. Like the uncanny, "the phantom's periodic and compulsive return lies beyond the scope of symptom formation in the sense of a return of the repressed; it works like a ventriloquist, like a stranger within the subject's own mental topography" (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 173).⁴⁶ For example, a passage of *2666* describes the visions of a seer named Florita (Bolaño 433), which can be interpreted as a succession of image-emergences suggestive of an unavoidable or automatic generation of the repressed. Within Florita's story, *2666* describes a dummy animating against its master "to suck life from the ventriloquist's capillaries" (Bolaño 435). History may work autonomously within the novel through its secret words or individual images: "Here the phantom is characterised by its quality of strangeness and unavoidable and reiterated return. The phantom is more alive and embodied than a mere return of the repressed, for it constitutes a literal possession whereby a novel and its characters become 'ventrilocated by history'" (Boulter 7). In this way, the author's personal set of themes, words, settings and characters forms its own language, hospitable and available for the phantasm to speak through.⁴⁷ *2666's* living-dead (notably, Santa Teresa's prison, which simultaneously resembles a living and dead woman) are concealed and preserved; the unspeakable is sustained in its encryption.⁴⁸ Both the

⁴⁶ Ventriloquy is a surrealist trope that will be returned to later in chapters 4 and 5.

⁴⁷ Lindsay Tuggle (2013) suggests that certain texts invite haunting into themselves as an act of hospitality.

⁴⁸ In *The Spectralities Reader*, Giorgio Agamben describes Venice as a "cadaver", a spectre that speaks in some way (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 473). The suggestion here is that a historical place can speak through signs that are dreamlike and a form of life (475).

language of trauma and narrative work with the uncertainties related to the past and enable cultural work that can move beyond melancholy (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 16).

The literary act of collation may be analysed through metaphors of ghostly possession. Disinterment is a word referring to the digging up or bringing the dead back to life, an act involved in writing and its analysis. Quoting Freud's *Three Essays*, Maggie Kilgour states that "the finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it" (*From* 231). When considering the restoration of substitution, incorporation, and possession, the return of false appearances is thematically apparent. The key observations Kilgour makes are ones that enquire into how a novel is possessed or even ventriloquised by the past. She begins with the notion that writing a novel is like an attempt at mending something broken, for "collation itself" resembles "the remembering of a past which, like the primal man, had been fragmented"; to this end the novel is a corpus which the "collator restores to its original wholeness" (Kilgour, *From* 160).⁴⁹ Through violent and bodily metaphors, Kilgour imagines the construction of a literary universe as involving an act of remembering. In her words:

The inside/outside distinction depends upon a nostalgia for total insideness [...] breaking of the originally cosmic body of one man who incorporated all humanity as members of himself. When this body was broken [...] and its limbs scattered, the separated members found themselves in a relation of complete opposition and even cannibalistic antagonism (*From* 10).

Collation from many sources entails violence through which memory is re-embodied. The familiar and unfamiliar are brought into the text alongside each other. In *The Plains*, the narrator reflects that: "the great works on 'Time spilled out'" producing unfamiliar rooms in a library that becomes "the visible embodiment of one or another of those patterns attributed to 'Time'" (Murnane 121). A strange metaphorical body, then, is created from the processes of spilling and collation. The status of the phantom is of an appearance connected to ideas of both disembodiment and embodiment that carries a traumatic inclusion such as an unspeakable history. By observing how the concept of the phantom has been worked through in the context of trauma theory, this section has built on Chapter 1's definition of the phantasm, which largely focused on its status as image, demonstrating that it can inform a reading of literary motifs of possession by collective history. The

⁴⁹ Kilgour is informed by A. Bartlett Giamatti's *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature* (1984).

following section, and the chapter's final, utilises this expanded understanding of the notion of the phantasm for a final note on literary motifs, such as departure and awakening, in *2666* and *The Plains*.

2.8 Writing the Crypt: Phantasms as motifs of Incorporation

How can the tension between the seen and unseen within the haunted novel's representations be theorised with an understanding of incorporation? The events of Bolaño's *2666* are divided into five interconnected volumes evoking the melancholy and uncertainty of culture in the aftermath of the dictatorship in Chile, the Second World War, and the First Liberian War, while centring upon the femicide that occurred in the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez at the turn of this century. In fact, the novel's fourth volume depicts in detail a detective's procedures and imagines the past lives of murdered women. The process detects that lingering images, unassimilated into personal or cultural history, are transmitted freely from one setting to the next, recurring insistently in repeated acts and structures. The novel addresses historical trauma, displacement and memory as recurring and accumulative. Traumatic experience is presented as borderless, connecting times, cultures and people, acting as an uncontainable reminder of unspeakable secrets or shame. Abiding by the notion that trauma only becomes visible in repeated structures when it is transmitted from place to place, it is precisely the shifting context of haunting that gives rise to the haunted novel.

As literature that seems to respond to the uncertainty of post-catastrophic experience, Bolaño's writing leaves much of the real-world events informing his writing unknown, as it communes with their material remainders. The Sonoran Desert of *2666* is where plumes of dust billow behind cars like the tail of a coyote (Bolaño 387). In a society beset by memory and death, dust speaks of a grand circularity where nothing goes away (Steedman 166). Like jet lag, there is delay in the time it takes to settle. Dust disappears and resurfaces; as a metaphor, it functions as a witness and a concealer "like the attack of a local virus" (Bolaño, *2666* 203). These remnants speak of a catastrophe or accident that has taken place and that inevitably returns to us. The person who escapes the catastrophic event may discover the dust some time later when it has settled elsewhere, as testimony that the event was not initially comprehended. In other words, the remainder bears the impact of the escaped event. The unclaimed past inevitably returns in its full violence. The narrative devices in Bolaño's novel are ones where signifiers of an aftermath are nourished and multiplied.

Similarly, *The Plains* is a novel haunted by the tension between off-screen and unseen events. In Murnane's novel a filmmaker researching a film to be titled "The Interior" travels to the plains, the vast and lush grassland that the narrator is fascinated by, to interview the plainsmen, the rich landowners of the plains. The reader is unaware of the events leading the narrator to journey to The Interior to invest his life's work into deciphering the plains deceptive surfaces and studying the people within. The novel's strange moments of *ekphrasis*, contemplation of "scattered vestiges" (Murnane 124), and ruminations on darkness read like signifiers of an aftermath of an unseen disaster. As indicated earlier, whilst *2666* is literature that overtly depicts violence, *The Plains* is literature that is more subtly marked by incompleteness and mourning. A disquieting contrast exists in Murnane's novel between the pastoral landscape and other more chaotic scenes depicted. The sense of something concealed beneath the representation is palpable. Landscape in *The Plains*, for example, raises anxieties as it functions like a canvas. The space that the filmmaker-narrator studies is an incomplete space, suggestive of the birth of the nation.

Incompleteness and unresolved melancholy are proposed as vital figures in the haunted novel. *2666*'s nonlinear narrative and the incompleteness of the novel's detective investigation section, titled The Part About The Crimes, both evoke circularity and unresolvedness. As for *The Plains*, the failure of the narrator to make his film or to deliver a final complete understanding of the plains has the effect of presenting the novel as detailing an unfinished, unsatisfied process. While the novel's composition broadly resembles the work of an ethnographer's study of a foreign culture, most significantly, the novel's structure reads as a reflection of the process of mourning. Indeed, as signalled earlier in this chapter, Wayne MaCauley's opening words in the Text Classics edition of *The Plains* describe Murnane's novel as "a lament for an Australian Literature that has never been written" (vii). To this end, incompleteness acts as both a signifier of lamentation and of a "lack of burial", in which the "national body" has yet to be "laid to rest" (Richard, "The Insubordination" 1). Melancholic attachment to the loss of national literature that was never to be may be read as a signifier of the traumatic.

As highlighted above, theorisations of the figure of departure assist in interpreting *2666* and *The Plains* as texts inscribed by uncertain memory. Caruth makes two key observations about departure based on the work of Freud. Firstly, leaving one's home brings one's "voice to another place", with the effect that the voice emerges "as a departure" that addresses the reader (*Unclaimed* 23). Secondly, "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own [...] history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's

traumas” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 24). In the above passage, departure is illustrated as addressing the text like a voice that is carried from one place to another, a recurring trope in haunted literature. Trauma in this theorisation is represented as a voice that is not simply one’s own, spilling between contexts and characters. The representation of memory, therefore, involves a movement between sources, with the experience of the other kept alive by a narrative voice that departs and re-emerges.

The departure of a voice from one place to another is the transference of an event. Subsequently the voice’s arrival entails an automatic and uncontrolled return, like a dream. In conventional theorisations of trauma, “the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it” (Caruth, *Trauma* 4). Phantasms, then, can be imagined as a product of events leaving one place and arriving at another, through which history is carried. Just as Caruth would suggest “the traumatised [...] carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess”, so too may haunted literature be figured as a site of symptoms and accidental arrivals (*Trauma* 5). The haunted text is possessed by images, events and words holding trauma from beyond its pages. Separate persons or places are implicated, as the text is possessed by images from other places. When applied to envision the haunted novel, this analysis leads into a reflection about the interplay of images between Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels, and whether the texts are possessed by each other’s phantasms.

Imagery in literature, such as dreams, enacts and encrypts a circular return of an event. On the matter of the crypt’s insistent return, Caruth notes “the delay or incompleteness in knowing, or even in seeing, an overwhelming occurrence that then remains, in its insistent return, absolutely *true* to the event” for it constitutes “history itself” (*Trauma* 5, original emphasis). A narrative of awakening is ultimately the story of a phantom’s presence, traceable by observing its language and apparently borderless possessions, recurring in different times, places and characters. By paying attention to “staged words”, key images and settings placed throughout an *oeuvre*, the literary engagement with history can be observed (Schwab, *Haunting* 82).

How can the haunted novel be proposed through a theorisation of cryptographic writing in more recent theorisations of the crypt? In the foreword to *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word*, Derrida asks whether he is writing a crypt. He forwards the idea that a crypt can be written and that language or novelisation may be cryptographic in nature. He wonders whether the title of his foreword, *Fors*, may alone function as a cryptonym, or magic word

that keeps and contains an “undiscoverable place” in the location of an absence (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* xi). A word can function both as a symbol and as a safe to keep a secret. To put it another way, a magic word both encrypts and disguises a traumatic scene. Phantasms, as they are traced, enable “insight into texts and textuality” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 57). By approaching how the process of incorporation involves the creation of crypts that words and images keep alive, open observation can be paid to the voices of the past speaking enigmatically to the future.

An example of the crypt as a narrative device can be found in the fifth volume of *2666*, where the central character Hans Reiter comes across a diary that belonged to a man named Ansky, which then leads to the description of a novel. The fictional novel is called *Twilight* and its plot is recounted (Bolaño, *2666* 718). A reading of the text finds that *Twilight* is home to awakenings, hypnotism, Mexican detectives, voids, fever, masks, burning, wounding, voices, and escape. The narrative of *Twilight* observes a cryptic structure similar to the many other small narratives contained within *2666*. Likewise, in *The Plains* the narrative lapses into a series of short stories contained within the overall novel about the Haremen and Horizonites, which recount a drama of departure and enact a series of disappearances. Several motifs are repeated within the stories as the characters of the plainsmen are particularly interested in symbols, while their settings are uncontained and enigmatic landscapes. As Imre Salusinszky suggests, it becomes unsettlingly uncertain as to whether “*The Plains* is a story of things that are supposed to have happened to a man, or whether it is a reverie” (41). Both stories are laden with spectral encounters, where later appearing characters bear startling resemblance to earlier ones. Incorporation is the underlying function in haunted literature, for the text appears structured and encrypted by unmourned and unknown disappearances.

The story-within-a-story narrative device is one way in which the haunted novel grapples with trauma, delayed experience, and escape from death that attests to a series of unclaimed impacts. Stories found in dreams generate persisting images for the stubborn literary pursuit of providing witness to a forgotten wound. The “landscape of dreams” draws attention to the matters of perception crucial to remembering and understanding (Murnane, *The Plains* 87). To awaken is to survive as a witness in order to awaken others. Put differently, awakening transfers the act of seeing from one time and place to another. As first theorised in Freud’s “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, “dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation *from which he wakes up in another fright*” (Caruth, *Unclaimed*

64, original emphasis). In *2666*, for example, the character Reiter's experience of seeing a soldier burn resembles a call to awaken. Departure, arrival, and awakening are experiences that evoke and communicate memory, for they are sites in which trauma becomes representationally apparent.

The notions of the phantasm and the crypt as narrative devices illustrate that haunting both makes itself at home in a literary text and is carried between contexts. The image of a ghost or phantasm transforms the novel and its relation to history, signifying the haunted novel's uncertain oscillation between the material and the immaterial. Recalling Ganteau and Onega's assertion that incorporated phantoms transform the bearer into a crypt, it has been noted that intrusions of the familiar and unfamiliar play out an uncertain oscillation between interior and exterior (21). A crypt treats words as things, isolating them from the pathways of signification and materialising them in the excremental form of their remainder (Ganteau and Onega 21). By inspecting Bolaño's and Murnane's acts of collation and repetition within the texture of their novels, this section has shown, beyond simply a reading of the uncanny, how haunted narrative tells the story of cultural memory through phantasmatic re-emergence.

2.9 Conclusion

The thesis' first chapter introduced the idea that spilling and connection involve memory that finds its place in the body to live an uncanny afterlife. That chapter also addressed how narratives of cultural memory are told through depictions of haunting and use of uncanny aesthetics, which heralded Chapter 2's specifications about unclaimed memory as giving sustenance to literary representations. This chapter discussed how the irruption of memory into the haunted novel resembles the function of trauma as accident and defined the psychoanalytic concept of the crypt to envision haunted literature as a cultural practice involving encryption. It considered the cultural re-living of traumatic memory to illustrate how Bolaño's and Murnane's novels function as haunted narratives. In addition, the chapter suggested that cryptonymy is an evocative method of textual analysis that pays attention to recurrent images and themes. This chapter's consideration of psychoanalytic theory also foregrounded literature as a site where encrypted trauma might re-emerge. The psychoanalytic concepts of the crypt, trauma and the phantasm were drawn upon to address the "cultural legacies" represented by the devices of the haunted novel (Schwab, *Haunting* 79).

The discourses related to cryptographic writing are appropriate for conceptualising phantasmatic re-emergence in the haunted novel, as they establish memory as something that returns following a delay in new, strange, and encrypted forms. When the writing of memory is understood as an act of collation, we pay attention to ideas of bringing together, keeping alive and giving sustained life. The key suggestion here is to consider phantasms as encryptions, that is, as devices that contain and, as such, make it possible to bear witness to events that precede their arrival. The chapter further demonstrated that this thesis' proposal of the emergence of memory in the haunted novel is not limited to the study of the uncanny (as discussed in Chapter 1) but also involves an understanding of trauma's encryption as passed along by the phantasm (as discussed in this chapter).

The following chapters will apply the theory discussed so far to a close textual analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*, in order to demonstrate how collective memory's phantasms are expressed within them. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, respectively, discuss visuality as a device used in *2666* and *The Plains*, analysis that is supported by the theoretical context of haunted narrative that Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 have provided. Chapter 5 subsequently connects the comparative textual analysis of *2666* and *The Plains* to matters of cultural memory.

CHAPTER 3

Fantasies of Incorporation: Envisioning the Haunted Novel in Roberto Bolaño's *2666*

3.1 Introduction

The first two chapters foregrounded the key figure of the phantasm, the visual narrative device that, as this thesis argues, defines the haunted novel as a genre that brings forth ungrasped collective memory. Chapters 3 and 4 subsequently apply the theory of the haunted novel to the two primary case study texts, Roberto Bolaño's *2666* and Gerald Murnane's *The Plains*, so as to demonstrate the applicability of this theory. This chapter focuses specifically upon examples from *2666* to demonstrate the presence and operation of phantasms within the novel, making note of the memory effects of the novel's visual devices. To conceptualise the haunted novel, Chapter 3 focuses primarily upon the following: vision as a phantasm, the gaze, descriptions of object vestiges as phantasmatic manifestations of psychological processes, and fragmentary uncanny details in Bolaño's novel that carry mnemonic meaning. This chapter considers the representation of bodily fragmentation in the landscape as a kind of foundational phantasm, an atavism that points to a return of history that reasserts itself in startling symptoms. It traces Bolaño's vast phantasmagoria, the extensive visual device that underlies all his work, which in an article of 2001 he described as his "literary kitchen", where he dwells as if in a "dream" or "nightmare" (cited in de Los Ríos 107). The chapter argues that the haunted novel can be envisioned by tracing the ways in which the *2666*'s phantasmatic visual devices encrypt cultural memory.

This chapter's discussion introduces key elements at work within *2666*'s usage of vision and spatiality. Considered in this discussion of vision is Valeria de Los Ríos's finding that Bolaño's cartographic narrative strategy places his characters into the differential power positions of both observant and observer: "They are not victims (like the disappeared detainees, those killed during World War II or the women exterminated in Santa Teresa), but something similar to a silent accomplice, covered by the false aura of art" (114). Indeed, "Bolaño responds cynically to the belief that the discourse of either literature or philosophy is truly revolutionary and not a regressive attempt to return to, or reimpose, some form of mastery" (Piccini "The Secret" 4). The sections in the earlier part of this chapter study a scene from the novel's second volume, titled *The Part About Amalfitano*, in which the titular character, Óscar Amalfitano, finds an old forgotten book

and suspends it on a clothesline. The lost book is identified as a primary example of a haunting re-emergence. Its enduring presence is repeatedly highlighted throughout the volume, and also repeated in other objects and gazes within the text. As atavistic evidence of the past, phantasmatic objects bring forth a sense of the uncanny, and serve to signify the irrepressibility of real world haunting. Several sections of this chapter turn to a study of a series of descriptions of fragmentation and distortion in *2666*'s volume 'The Part About The Critics'. The volume details the movements of four "Archimboldians", scholars who revere a great German author that they hope to meet. The chapter's sections pinpoint an ancestral voice as a figure that haunts Bolaño's novel. Having grappled with the concept of haunting as something inherited and mobile in Chapter 2, this chapter seeks to flesh out an understanding of the manner in which haunting inheritance finds expression in *2666*.

In addition, the chapter relates the disorderliness and incomprehensibility of *2666*'s setting, the melancholy city of Santa Teresa, to cultural anxieties about disappearance and fragmentation. Its discussion enquires into how the phantasm in narrative might signify the symptomatic displacements that emerge from the formation of an uncertain nationhood. Bolaño's construction of a desert dreamscape setting with uncanny qualities edifices a site of cultural debris, where an unseen disaster has seemingly taken place. Indeed, his descriptions of bodies and their distortions within the dreamscape indicates tension in the realm of society and culture. Within this chapter's analysis of *2666*, references to the work of Jorge Luis Borges, Jacques Lacan, Jean Paul Sartre, and Pascal Bonitzer are included, expanding the theory of the phantasm put forward in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, for these authors address the role of vision in the narration of anxieties about the way in which the past moves along.⁵⁰ Moreover, the psychoanalytic methodologies detailed in Chapter 2 are utilised in this chapter's textual analysis of *2666*. Abraham and Torok's *The Shell and the Kernel* provides a basis for the idea of the crypt as the collation of collective experience, noticeable in texts in the form of "traumatic disturbances of the symbolic order" (Schwab, *Haunting* 33). Particular attention is focused on disruptions in the area of *2666*'s visuality in this chapter, drawing on ideas about the visual from a variety of frameworks, from psychoanalysis to philosophical phenomenology. The application of such a diverse array of visual concepts in the chapter results in a productive consideration of correspondingly fluctuating visual narrative devices within the textual analysis of Bolaño's novel.

⁵⁰ For example, "secondhandedness" is a key concept championed by Kevin Hetherington in "Secondhandedness: consumption, disposal, and absent presence" (2004), which puts forth that absence is something passed along between sites.

To demonstrate the thesis' theoretical concept of the haunted novel as a figure that evokes memory through visuality, the next section addresses the way the gaze hits objects in *2666*. It interrogates the manner in which vision in *The Part About Amalfitano* relates to processes of memory, in particular, traumatic memory. The section works with Bolaño's *2666* to demonstrate the proposition that vision's irrepressible re-emergence is central to the novel's narrative procedure of reflecting on a nation's shameful secrets. Thus, this analysis acknowledges that, as Pablo Corro puts it, "[v]isual devices work as structural elements of clarification in Bolaño's oeuvre" (132).⁵¹ Methodologically, criticism of Bolaño's work often places its trauma within "the confines of a generationally specific failure of Latin American revolutionary ideals" (Piccini "A Dirge" 5). Similar to Mark Piccini's approach, this thesis is interested in psychoanalytic and literary figures themselves, rather an address of the trauma as specifically Latin American ("A Dirge" 5). The final section of the chapter goes on to work with the example of phantasmatic vision in relation to *2666* to illustrate Bolaño's evocations of vision as a form of testimony of an uncertain past. Where Chapter 2 argued that the setting of the haunted novel, as exemplified by *2666*, is a scene of incorporation, Chapter 3 goes on to trace and contextualise the novel's oscillation between visions of homely familiarity and abject violence. Thus, this chapter's final section works with these ideas in direct reference to the text of *2666*, both illustrating the way in which images provoke cultural memory and conceptualising the haunted novel.

3.2 The Part about Amalfitano: Fragmentation in the Field of Vision

The survey of trauma's role in haunted narrative in Chapter 2 generated the observation that life within uncertain national space is typically characterised as fragmentary, disjointed, and melancholy. Within the literature of unclaimed experience,⁵² *2666* (and *The Plains*, as Chapter 4 will address) represents this sensation of disintegration through a style of fragmentary recollection, which is particularly noticeable in passages where the text depicts bodies and dreams. The fantasy of a world in ruins, presided over by a single dismembered, lethargic book may be likened to an atavistic return to the child's original experience of the body in pieces. De Los Ríos finds Bolaño's work to be strongly mimetic, as if by impulse it creates a map of a world exploded forth from total catastrophe, highlighting its dark and illuminated areas as if from above (108). Encrypted by a cartographic aesthetic, Bolaño's

⁵¹ Citations from the Spanish language edition of "Dispositivos Visuales en los Relatos de Roberto Bolaño" [Visual Devices in the Narrative of Roberto Bolaño] are translated to English using Google software and revised by the thesis supervisor Antonio Traverso, who is a native Spanish speaker.

⁵² See Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* (1996).

work charts spatial and identity mobility; it metaphorically seeks “to visualise in a context of invisibility” a territory that is to be experienced rather than described (de Los Ríos 109–111). Depictions of bodily fragmentation within a fantasy space arise from the logic of incorporation, in which unspeakable social and psychical wreckage is concealed within the flesh.⁵³

Bolaño’s novel’s second volume, *The Part About Amalfitano*, represents the fictional city of Santa Teresa, a place in which the titular character, the university professor Óscar Amalfitano, has just arrived through self-imposed exile. The events of the volume concern Amalfitano’s life in exile, his interactions with the phantasmatic object of an old book he has recovered by chance, and his seeming descent into madness, via his being possessed by the disembodied voice of a forefather that speaks to him from the book. As a kind of cryptophore, the character avidly keeps and consumes the past. Pavella Coppola suggests that Amalfitano’s behaviour may provide mnemonic clues and insight into memory as a literary situation (78). Significantly, she connects the representation of Amalfitano’s foreign, exiled selfhood and failure to belong in the territory of Santa Teresa to a broader narrative of abandonment in the volume (Coppola 80). Coppola finds that while *The Part About Amalfitano* contains less violence than the other volumes, suffering and violence are encoded into the horror of the “dissolution of the self” that the central character experiences (79). The introduction of the foreign bodies of dust from the desert and the object-voice into Amalfitano’s body would appear to disrupt and decentralise his subjectivity. The events related in this volume of the novel will henceforth be analysed in psychoanalytic terms.

Imagine an old photograph found in a house, which signifies a loss that has taken place and suggests something foreign about the viewer’s present. Salman Rushdie writes of the way in which an “imaginary homeland” arises from a fundamental separation or expulsion from a formerly idyllic and now unmentionable country (9). Might a sense of the remainder of a lost, idyllic time arise every time an old object resurfaces to the alarm of a viewer? An unreachable time and place, and its haunting absence, may arise from finding the object. Barbara Straumann, a theorist of exile in aesthetic representation, notes that an object’s place in fiction may cover “the lacuna of loss and displacement” so as to deny that

⁵³ See Teresa Brennan’s *The Transmission of Affect* for a discussion of the concept of affect in regards to the body (156). References to “flesh” in Brennan’s book are also loosely related to Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the “Flesh of the World”. Although much of this theory is outside of the immediate scope of this thesis, its relevance is found in that this discussion of literary phantasms pays particular attention to the visible body.

bereavement has occurred (34). In particular, she emphasises that privileged objects, which are encrypted with the unspeakable secret of the subject's dislocation, host "secret knowledge from which the cryptophoric subject remains separated" (Straumann 56). A privileged object, such as Amalfitano's hanging book, may be conceived as the signifier of a "transgenerational haunting", because loss is inherited, or as an "encrypted secret" that permeates the subject's memory (Straumann 56). Bolaño's constructions and evocation of phantasmatic objecthood can therein be imagined, within the conceptualisation of the haunted novel, as visible signs of an unspoken past.

An examination of an encrypted literary text allows for the location of textual movements that are themselves haunted by the effect of the historical losses they inscribe (Straumann 71). Exile and absence are driving forces in *The Part About Amalfitano*, which begins by recounting the central character's travels and ends with a dream about the disappearance of a poor Chilean professor who is "swallowed up" by a crater or hole (Bolaño 2666 228).⁵⁴ Amalfitano's status as a foreign entity who cannot take root within the city would constitute a metaphor for history (Coppola 80). Based on this reading, the signs of loss and longing in *The Part About Amalfitano* depend upon the exigency of mnemonic objects, such as a forgotten book, which work like bodies that are inscribed to "make explicit, to render literal, the symbolic foundations by which the thrall of loss and insatiability is exhibited" (Schneider 6). The text can then be approached as an explicit body performance and symbol of longing that contributes to the circulation of objects in its dreamscape.

The irrepressible return of objects into the field of vision produces an explicit uncanny effect. As Rebecca Schneider notes, "ubiquitous and nostalgic paradigms of loss [...] riddle a society devoted to accumulation" (6). Social and psychical experiences have a way of incorporating themselves into visible, embodied manifestations. Teresa Brennan similarly identifies the manner in which affects create disorder and how the psyche becomes an "embodied thing":

The psychical actually gets into the flesh, whether it is manifest as the inertia of depression, or as an actual psychosomatic illness, or in other ways, such as anger. It is these embodied psychical urges, these constellations of affects, which lead us to

⁵⁴ The symbolism of this trope of a fall into a crater relates to Chapter 2's discussion of the fantasy of incorporation; the landscape that swallows is a landscape that also metaphorically encrypts.

eat the wrong way, do the wrong things, push ourselves for the wrong reason, and so forth. (156)

Brennan observes an inside-outside style movement where collections of strange behaviour can be traced back to an explosion from some psychological dilemma. With respect to Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Schneider suggests that dreamscapes, like Brennan's "flesh", are recipients of our symptomatic displacements (Schneider 97). Following Schneider's suggestion, the events in *The Part About Amalfitano*, such as the sequences of dreams and the invasiveness of the desert's dust into the social body, can then be imagined as an expression of the way narrative may reflect upon a society whose surfaces are a landscape of symptoms.

Images of incorporation displace the threshold between interior and exterior, a distinction that is blurred by the bodies that disappear and are incorporated into Bolaño's novel's landscape. The dreams that take place in the desert setting entail a division and multiplication of self that reflects the distortion and melancholy of *2666*'s fictional city of Santa Teresa. Earth, the element that invades and disrupts the body, trespasses into society like death. For *Amalfitano*, a voice has been subsumed into his mind, which has become a crypt housing something both intimate and other. A failure of introjection has occurred within *Amalfitano*'s consciousness that pervades the dream sequences of the volume. Objects such as the geometry book come to stand in for the human subject and perform the work of mourning in their place. *The Part About Amalfitano* disrupts the wholeness of the social body by exposing it to the devouring gaze of an other. Thus, depictions of bodily fragmentation within a fantasy space arise from the logic of incorporation (as detailed in Chapter 2), where the unspeakable is concealed.

The following section will directly analyse passages of *2666*, towards demonstrating the manner in which the haunted novel encrypts memory within phantasms that blur the distinction between body and place.

3.3 The Unhappy Readymade: Object Vestiges and Sight

Reminders of memory appear as phantasms due to the intrusions of uncertain presences that oscillate ambivalently between the seen and unseen, the literal and metaphorical. As highlighted in Chapter 1, memory as a figure in Latin American literature is often dramatised through the representation of tension between "recollection and forgetting [...] latency and death, revelation and concealment, proof and denial, theft and restitution",

while being communicated via images of unburied bodily remains (Richard, “The Insubordination” 1). As such, failures of burial operate as key images of an ongoing mourning process within a dismembered landscape of “citations” (Richard, “The Insubordination” 1, 2). Analysis of the drama of memory in *2666* can illustrate the manner in which narrative fragments encrypt mourning in unresolved stasis. In Bolaño’s novel ungrasped memory takes the form of citations and dismemberments as it disperses throughout the pages. By this token, this section seeks to demonstrate the conceptualisation of the haunted novel through a detailed textual reading of *2666*.

In the closing pages of *2666*’s first volume, The Part About The Critics, the characters Elizabeth Norton and Piero Morini have arrived in Turin. The novel describes a place populated by the stone statues of mythological figures as well as statues of simple peasants and disembodied shadows, and we read of an unsettling dream that involves the disturbing gaze of an object in a deserted hallway (Bolaño, *2666* 153, 155–6). These resonances of uncertainty recall the tension imagined by the painter Giorgio De Chirico in *Turin, Spring* (figure 6). The objects in De Chirico’s work, most notably the prominent yellow covered book in the foreground, point towards an uncertain future for the uninhabited townscape. The stretching shadows, like makeshift sundials, indicate the ongoing march of time. In this way, the scattered objects and truncated movement of the sun function like *memento mori*, as symbolic reminders of life’s transience.

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De Chirico, Giorgio. *Turin, Spring*. 1914. Oil on canvas, 124 cm x 99.5 cm. Collection Vicomtesse de Noailles, Paris. *The Art History Project*. arthistoryproject.com/artists/giorgio-de-chirico/turin-spring/.

Image description: Painting depicting a yellow book, egg, and artichoke laying on the red earth of a city plaza.

Figure 6 Giorgio De Chirico *Turin, Spring* 1928

The introduction of Turin into Bolaño's text sets the scene for many motifs that appear in *The Part About Amalfitano*, a volume where the phantasmatic presence of Rafael Dieste's geometry book *Testamento geométrico* is brought into the scene. In a desolate yard filled by the dust of the desert, Amalfitano hangs a copy of Dieste's book upon a clothesline, its origins missing from his memory. The professor's act of exposing a personified book of principles to the "facts of life", by leaving it to be corroded by the forces of nature, re-enacts Marcel Duchamp's *Unhappy Readymade* (Bolaño, 2666 191).⁵⁵ The tarnished object acts as a figuration of grief and knowledge that cannot be verbalised. This act resembles the psychical process that Abraham and Torok call objectivation, which occurs when the subject pretends that suffering is not an injury to themselves but instead "a loss sustained by the love object" (*The Shell* 127). The emergence of objectivation parries fears of bodily disintegration in the face of the unspeakable histories and violence depicted throughout *2666* – most notably, the murders of women in the fictional desert city of Santa Teresa. The city's inhabitants are beset by the same ochre dust that falls upon the dead bodies and *Testamento geométrico*. In this sense, the geometry book operates as a phantasm, occupying a place in the visual field that is uncertain, disquieting and ambivalent, hovering between presence and absence.

Art objects may gain their status as idyllic objects, having been purposefully moved or tilted by the hand of another and encrypted with their memories. Yet they are also easily discarded, subject to ruin and left to gather dust. In *The Part About Amalfitano*, the central character Amalfitano bears resemblance to an art object as he projects his suffering, and loses the boundary between his ego and the external world as he is overcome by the dust that indicates the ongoing processes of time. Through a cartographic metaphor, Coppola identifies Amalfitano as a central axis in the composition of the landscape within the narrative (78). In a key scene of this volume of *2666*, Bolaño's narrator details the intrusion of place into the body: "it seemed to him that his teeth were turning brown, as if they were being covered in a thin film of some substance from the underground rivers of Sonora" (Bolaño, 2666 203). In turn, the dust recalls Duchamp's *The Large Glass* (1915–1923), an artwork depicting geometric shapes which incorporated dust as an extra dimension of the forever incomplete work. As first noted in Chapter 1, the threat to history by disintegration acts as a cultural signifier that, as a phantasm, links to and combines with history. In light of Bolaño's description of dust infiltrating his characters,

⁵⁵ *Unhappy Readymade* (or *Readymade Malheureux*) was an artwork conceptualised by Duchamp in Buenos Aires in 1919, entailing the suspension of a geometry book in mid-air over an outdoor balcony. The work was mounted by his sister Suzanne in Paris, following his instructions by correspondence.

Dylan Trigg's observation is once again pertinent: "*the places in which we live, live in us*" ("The Memory" 33, original emphasis). As a site of history that is "visible and invisible, present and absent", the infiltrated body is haunted by its own sense of embodiment (Trigg, "The Memory" 33). Thus, the symbolic exchange between Bolaño's character's body and place situates the body as a site of history and memory, where the visible and invisible commune.

The principles and precision of geometry stand in stark contrast to the impossibility of rendering coherent the immeasurable melancholy of an abyss at the heart of a novel or nation. The introduction of Dieste's *Testamento geométrico* onto the scene in *2666* in particular marks a moment in which the chaos and unease of the city are mirrored by the book's plight. Amalfitano reflects:

Why did I bring my daughter to this cursed city? [...] And then he looked at Dieste's book, the *Testamento geométrico*, hanging impassively from the line, held there by two clothespins, and he felt the urge to take it down and wipe off the ochre dust that had begun to cling to it here and there, but he didn't dare. (Bolaño, *2666* 196)

The introduction of a phantasmatic object into the novel coincides with the emergence of anxiety on the part of the character. Reminiscent of the crisis of the object, as proposed by André Breton in his "Crise de l'objet" (1936), the book displays the condition in which external agents leave it, its ruination retained as a sign of the ambiguous past from which it arose (Olalquiaga, "Lost Object"). The geometry book reflects the state of the cursed city and its anxious inhabitant: as Celeste Olalquiaga notes: "objects incorporate emotions as readily as people, providing the basis for what psychoanalysis was articulating during Breton's time as 'object relation,' or the infinite ability of human beings to make others – creatures or things – the vehicles of fantasies" ("Lost Object"). *Testamento geométrico*, then, can be figured as such a vehicle, one that incorporates and carries human experience. Its inclusion within *2666* is further read as a sign of the functions of the haunted novel operating within the text.

Through the mechanism of objectivation, the autonomous, phantasmatic object makes a shelter for an unspeakable scene of emotion and fantasy. The enigmatic *Testamento geométrico* belongs to the order of things that come back to life irrepressibly, as a sign of an unfulfilled mourning. As a phantasmatic figure, the book points to a buried memory, in a manner consistent with what Abraham and Torok describe as "the memory of an idyll

experienced with a prestigious object that for some reason has become unspeakable, a memory thus entombed in a fast and secure place, awaiting its resurrection” (“A Poetics” 4). The character Amalfitano reflects, as he struggles to recall the book’s origins, that his memory may have been lost due to the effects of “something terrible or upsetting [...] maybe a car accident, maybe a mugging, maybe a suicide in the subway” (Bolaño, *2666* 188). Amalfitano’s story installs an “epiphany of dissolution” and absolute disorientation of the doomed, ostracised subject (Coppola 82). The book’s return into his life during a time of already heightened unease suggests the power of the object to symbolise the agitation of the subject’s consciousness. The figures of madness and absurdity which pervade *The Part About Amalfitano* disrupt the semantic boundaries between things – the volume becomes a territory of memory, concretised onto a literary screen (Coppola 81, 82).

The symbolism of an unresolvable gap in the psyche also serves to indicate the repression of shameful secrets. Unable to access the memory of the geometry book’s origins, Amalfitano considers the insurmountable block as the result of a rupture in time or as the effect of jet lag. As Bolaño’s narrator recounts: “he believed [...] that when a person was in Barcelona, the people living and present in Buenos Aires and Mexico City didn’t exist [...] jet lag [...] arose not from your exhaustion but from the exhaustion of the people who would still have been asleep if you hadn’t travelled” (Bolaño, *2666* 188). The unfamiliar topography and the disruptive effect of travel troubles Amalfitano’s mind. The enduring presence of the geometry book on the scene serves as a sign of “the lost hours of temporal travellers”, wanderers or daydreamers who experience long lapses of time as only intervals between fantasies (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 5). When Bolaño writes of jet lag, he likens it to exile and describes it as being “full of inconveniences, of skips and breaks” that help to “abolish fate” (*2666* 117). Symbolically, exile acts as a mechanism of defence, which “consists in isolating thoughts or behaviour so that their links with other thoughts or with the remainder of the subject’s life are broken” (Laplanche and Pontalis 232). The fracturing effects of uncertain temporality, compounded by the theme of travel amid descriptions of shifting light and shadow, are felt throughout *2666*. Amalfitano’s idea of jet-lag as an effect of the exhaustion of others continues the theme of experience as a transferable, phantasmatic entity that can move from city to city, from culture to culture, recurring insistently.

In the novel both objects and characters suffer disconnection and are troubled by the effects of time. Passing shadows prompt reflection on the fragmentary experience of temporality in Bolaño’s fictional city of Santa Teresa during a time of crisis. Amalfitano’s

artistic intervention in the field of vision is situated symbolically against the landscape. We read in *2666*: “The shadow of Dieste’s book hanging on the clothesline was clearer, steadier, more reasonable [...] than anything they’d seen on the outskirts of Santa Teresa or in the city itself, images with no handhold, images freighted with all the orphanhood in the world, fragments, fragments” (Bolaño *2666* 206). Abraham and Torok note the relationship between lingering shadows and the inhabitants of their environment. They suggest that the “‘shadow of the object’ strays endlessly about the crypt until it is finally reincarnated in the person of the subject” (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 141). Bolaño’s text may then be inspected for the reappearance of the object-shadow within the character who first casts it, that is, the character Amalfitano who hears a mysterious voice from inside his mind soon after the re-creation of the *Unhappy Readymade* and the appearance of the “long, coffinlike [sic] shadow, cast by Dieste’s book hanging in the yard” (Bolaño, *2666* 207). In this way, the arrival of the readymade into the field of vision marks a split within the subject, resulting in his representation as being torn by a crisis of temporality. In fact, psychical ailments, such as melancholy, have been symbolically conceptualised as ailments of temporality. As Jo Law explains: “mourning and melancholy are tied with the incompleteness of time” (172). A parasitic voice begins to torment Amalfitano “like the attack of a local virus” (Bolaño, *2666* 203). Both the book’s disquieting ailing and the events unfolding within *2666*’s narrative, namely, *The Crimes*, are connected by the uncertainty of the visual field, which is evoked through narrative visual devices.

Emphasis on the disembodied voice inside Amalfitano and his position as a fractured subject coincides with the operations of the geometry book that has been cut loose and exposed to the elements. Amalfitano is caught by the object’s gaze and forced to adjust to it. These events are intelligible through Lacan’s proposition that: “the interest the subject takes in his own split is bound up with that which determines it – namely, a privileged object, which has emerged from some primal separation, from some self-mutilation induced by the very approach of the real” (*The Four* 83). Bolaño’s text makes visible the annihilation of the subject by creating a trap for the gaze. The geometry book is a phantasmatic object of fascination, suspended in the air, accumulating filth. The floating object that captures the observer may be considered an example of an object remainder that represents an impossible voice, which infiltrates and disrupts Amalfitano’s body. Anxiety arises from the gaze from which the threshold between interior and exterior is displaced, in the sense that the subject is troubled by the intrusion of the object-voice onto the scene. Significantly, the representation of the voice that cries out impossibly from an

object coheres with the interpretation of the wound that cries out, as discussed in Chapter 2's interrogation of Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* (2). In this sense, the impossible voice encountered in *2666* exemplifies a phantasm that enacts a fateful reencounter with unassimilated memory.

Amalfitano's gesture of placing the book into the field of vision causes it to gain both an uncanny autonomous life and a connection to the concealed shame of Santa Teresa, which is imagined as a desert littered with murdered women's bodies left behind. The placement of the object into a position where it faces its immanent destruction by the desert indicates its new position "within the cycle of life and death, that is, within the materiality of history" (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 128). The poetic ruination of the object emblemises an encounter with history. Bolaño locates the human subject within a space of transition. The Part About Amalfitano takes place in the context of a fictional city beset by a succession of murders, correlative to the real-world context of the Mexican city of Ciudad Juárez, which is notorious for ongoing murders of women. The Part About The Crimes later adopts a convention where paragraphs commence by noting the passing of time as the bodies surface: "two weeks after", "In October", "In the middle of November", "Before the end of the year", "Around this time, too" (Bolaño, *2666* 390, 391, 392, 394, 405). Inscribed by time, the desert setting would appear to hold the kind of "deadly stillness of a landscape made up of objects" that, as Olalquiaga suggests, time takes in modernity (*The Artificial* 290). The bodies are found in a landscape of objects: "a little valley dotted with rocks that seemed to have fallen from the sky. Chunks of granite with no origin or context [...] orphan rocks" (Bolaño, *2666* 204).⁵⁶ If these mineral objects are relics of the natural world, gaining a life of their own, the *Testamento geométrico* is instead a cultural relic, a remnant that is emblematic of the ruin of modern society and the slippage between an uncertain future and a fragmentary past. The propensity for the real to accumulate as debris means that when "psychic loss and social loss, or 'wreckage,' intersect [...] [t]he social actually gets into the flesh" (Brennan 156). The geometry book is an example of an object that is situated amid a "*phase* of incremental transformations between seed and dust", containing both its past and future as one (Bryson 97, original emphasis). In silent abeyance, the object communes with the desert's life cycles, which is positioned as a landscape of the psyche.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the way in which remnants serve as a prompt for memory, see Benjamin's ruminations on Baudelaire in *Illuminations* (317).

The desert that consumes and gives birth to the bodies of murdered women appears to reflect the mechanisms of introjection and projection. The central setting of *2666* communicates an accidental, phantasmatic encounter with an unspoken crime through the use of the impossible voice of the ancestor and a collection of natural objects:

The voice said: be careful, but it said it as if it were very far away, at the bottom of a ravine revealing glimpses of volcanic rock, rhyolites, andesites, streaks of silver and gold, petrified puddles covered with tiny little eggs, white red-tailed hawks soared above in the sky, which was purple like the skin of an Indian woman beaten to death. (Bolaño 210)

The above scene is representative of three recurring motifs within the narrative of *2666*, namely, the repetition of the phrase “said the voice” as well as evocations of nameless voices; the repeated description of encyclopaedic details (which often notes their visuality by describing their colour and light conditions); and, finally, the sudden shift in the sentence’s tone from pastoral description to an air of abject violence. Like Ariadne’s thread, as de Los Ríos puts it, the melancholy colour of the sky hints at the foreclosed possibility of solving the crimes even as their clues are placed on Bolaño’s map (125). The scene communicates its visuals at the same time as it evokes the ancestral voice and shameful violence beyond the objects described. Through this combination, the scene takes on a phantasmatic quality consistent with the definition of the phantasm as an image whose meaning contains both a haunting and an evocative element of visualisation, as formerly discussed in Chapter 1. Blending interior and exterior, the voice, which is hidden in the rock formations and the *Unhappy Readymade*, memorialises the effects of transitoriness upon the body. The phantom objects persist as a souvenir that speaks of an experience lost in time, which, in keeping with Caruth’s theory of trauma, remains outside the reach of narrative representation. The speaking object, therefore, evokes the vestiges of a violent past that may never be symbolised in words.⁵⁷

The perception of objects in Bolaño’s novel establishes a troubled relation between inside and outside, which has the effect of representing disrupted distances. In *The Part About The Critics*, the critic Norton flies to Turin after watching a film that she cannot remember. She walks through a garden in Turin, which is filled with benches and stone

⁵⁷ Naomi Mandel’s *Against the Unspeakable* (2006) theorises a “speaking corpse” as she seeks to work past the impasse of the “unspeakable”. She defines it as “the literary embodiment of a literal impossibility” (Mandel 105).

statues, some “mythological figures, but others were simple peasants lost in the night”, and strolls the park crossing the path of other people, sometimes only their shadows (Bolaño, 2666 153). In the next paragraph, a different critic, Espinoza, wakes from a dream and “for a fraction of a second the shadows retreated” (153). For Bryson, the presence of a kind of primordial object-gaze is evoked in settings that are beheld by a hypothetical viewer at its centre and unfolds around them, in which they are initially unthreatened by the setting they survey until they are interrupted (88). The other induces in the viewer the sense of their own object-ness, their own spectacle, which unsettles their unitary position in the visual field by introducing a vanishing point (Bryson 89). When the other enters onto the scene, it acts as a kind of black hole that absorbs everything in the scene. Everything rushes towards it and is swallowed, subsumed by vision. Jean Paul Sartre describes the experience of walking in a park as a way to understand the effect of intersecting looks (253). When walking alone in a park, the sense of being central is strong. When someone else intrudes onto the scene they introduce their vision. This provokes a decentralisation of the original viewing subject. In the description of vision originally proposed by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, the menace of the other stops short of decentring the subject for both are objectified by each other’s gaze (Bryson 96). The text registers the object-like qualities of the other (Sartre 253). As both objectify each other, neither is safe from the experience of being seen. Sartre’s ideas on vision, as grounded in philosophical phenomenology, give insight into structures of experience relevant to the understanding of some of the descriptions found in 2666, even though this approach is structurally different to the chapter’s main psychoanalytic method of looking for repressed meaning in the text. When applied to the analysis of 2666, these philosophical concepts draw attention to the text’s invocation of an unsettled visuality – both permeated and disrupted by sight. Thus, everything contained in the described narrative situation is both object-like and eye-like.⁵⁸ The geometry-book object, like an eye, swallows and consumes the subject, exposing them to the destabilising experience of being seen. In other words, the drama of incorporation inscribed in 2666 unambiguously takes place in the field of vision.

Visuality plays a significant role in decentring and fragmenting representations of the body, ushering in the haunted novel as this disruption in the visual field coincides with the narration of national memory. As first noted in Chapter 1, subjectivity and history are connected. The automaton discussed in that chapter and identified as evoking a sense of

⁵⁸ “The empire has eyes almost everywhere” (427), writes Amanda du Preez in “Through the Empire’s Eyes” (2008) – there are links between visuality and political power, which Chapter 5 returns to.

concealment beneath appearances may be observed in *2666* in the way Bolaño constructs a scene of vision in his narrative. In line with Merleau-Ponty's claim in *The Visible and the Invisible* that "there is a preexisting gaze, a kind of staring at us by the outside world", the scopic field then can be imaged as already containing a gaze, to which the seeing subject is exposed (Feldstein et al. 139). Similarly, for Lacan "there is the pre-existence of a given-to-be-seen" and "what exists is the split between what one sees and the gaze [...] it is exactly in this way that the drive manifests itself in the scopic order" (cited in Feldstein et al. 139). The gaze takes the form of strange emergent phenomena (Lacan, *The Four* 72). As Norman Bryson explains: "the result of that residual centring upon the standpoint of the subject is that vision is portrayed as menaced at the vestigial centre, threatened from without, and in some sense *persecuted*, in the visual domain, by the *regard* or Gaze" (88, original emphasis). The threat of "the annihilation of the subject as centre is a condition of the very moment of the look" (Bryson 91), which, as this chapter suggests, is repeated and maintained in *2666* through scenes constructed upon a sense of autonomous sight.⁵⁹

The object's gaze disturbs the sense of safe distances and mappable space; it is key in the construction of ungraspable landscape found in *2666*, which as this thesis suggests is the paradigmatic setting of the haunted novel. Such an unsettling gaze and confusion of space is observable in *The Part About The Critics*. The scene of the night in Turin features a dream sequence where the intrusion of a thunderclap wakes the character Norton, a literary critic, who sees another character, Morini, a critic who has a wheelchair, watching her in the hallway. Norton states: "I thought I saw Morini and his wheelchair silhouetted at the end of the hallway [...] I'd seen: to one side the outline of the wheelchair in the hallway and to the other side the figure of Morini, not in the hallway but in the sitting room, with his back to me" (Bolaño, *2666* 155). In this scene, the object is a trap for the gaze which is itself an object. The confusion of the hallway and interplay of the silhouette compound the inability of the individual subject to locate themselves perceptually. The propensity for sight to produce a misrecognition in the dreamscape would appear to reflect symbolically on the difficulty of mapping or making sense of one's national space, and the inherited memories that inhabit it. The body's representation and its relation to space also work symbolically to produce a sense of uncertain, distraught and persecuted space. The gaze as a visual device subsumes its subjects into the fantasy world of phantasms. The landscape,

⁵⁹ Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Bryson use phenomenology to describe vision as an experience, as opposed to Lacan's psychoanalytic approach to theorise the observer. Feldstein et al. highlight the affinities between these authors as they reflect on visuality.

body, and subject that are indeterminate and caught in an uncertain space constitute a representation of ungraspable memory.

Recalling that this section began with a discussion of the geometry book arising from inaccessible memory, the discussion has approached the encryption of uncertainty in *2666* by identifying the text's use of visual devices. The next section further scrutinises *2666*, connecting this analysis to the relationship between narration and nationhood, as discussed in Chapter 1, and the theory of encryption, as discussed in Chapter 2, in order to demonstrate the correlation between visuality and encryption within the haunted novel.

3.4 Endocryptic Identification in The Part About The Critics

This chapter has thus far noted the presence of a gaze in *2666*, which has been identified as an element of the haunted novel seemingly at work within Bolaño's text. This analysis extends to include the encryption of memory as a key feature of the proposed concept of the haunted novel, as first theorised in Chapter 2. This section demonstrates a resonance of the theory of the phantasm in *The Part About Amalfitano*, which in Chapter 2 was defined as a site of encryption. It also analyses a further scene from *The Part About The Critics*, which serves as an additional illustration of the phantasm. Overall, this section focuses on objects in the field of vision as they relate to memory in order to describe how their inclusion in *2666* acts as an encryption of haunting. As noted above, the creation of art objects enables the subject to pretend that it is the object rather than themselves that has suffered a loss. *2666*'s invocation of the *Unhappy Readymade* entails Amalfitano's passing off his geocultural displacement, loss of family and exile as losses suffered by another. The geometry book stands in for the character's body by performing overt suffering in the place of Amalfitano and achieving the work of mourning in his place. In *The Part About Amalfitano*, the body of the titular character is also affected by the introduction of death into society. In fact, the text informs that Santa Teresa is beset by the invasion of dust into the bodies of its inhabitants. The volume disrupts the boundary between inside and outside through the disappearance and incorporation of the bodies of women into the desert, a process that resembles the subsumption of the other into the unconscious. For Amalfitano, the disembodied voice of a father has been subsumed into his mind, which has become a crypt housing something both intimate and other. He houses an "internal foreign" voice, in an act of concealment similar to what Ganteau and Onega call "cryptophoria", namely, the establishment of a secret tomb inside the "suffering subject" that may be shared transgenerationally between family members (21). Significantly, the

concurrent exposure of bodies to the elements in *The Part About Amalfitano* appears to represent suffering and secrecy as a shared yet invasive psychological experience. Activity in the field of vision can be subsequently analysed from a psychoanalytic perspective for signs of an unconscious repression in the text.

The introduction of the *Testamento geométrico* is suggestive of a mnemonic or substitute object that is being kept alive so as to deny recognition of a loss. This figuration leads into the idea of endocryptic identification as explained by Abraham and Torok in *The Shell and the Kernel*. Endocryptic identification is defined as the fantasy of an object identifying with a subject who in turn identifies with the object's mourning. It is also the mechanism by which the subject exchanges their identity for a phantasmatic identification with "an object of love, lost as a result of some metapsychological traumatism" (Chang 142). In an analysis of the processes of identification apparent in Bolaño's literature, Adolfo Cacheiro illustrates the application of psychoanalytic theory about vision and the body in the following terms:

According to Jacques Lacan, imaginary identification is initiated in the "mirror stage," in which the infant recognises her specular image as herself, in this way forming a primary identification with her body. Thus at the core of imaginary identification is the assumption of the other by the self as mirror image of the self. (132)

Identification, in this sense, relates to vision as it arises when the subject encounters their own image. Thus, the notion that the act of visual recognition between specular image and body constitutes an act of encryption of loss is key to understand the figure of the hanging book in *The Part About Amalfitano*. The object, in the case of the geometry book, is encrypted as an absence, like a vanishing point that "threatens to engulf the visual field" (Straumann 79).

By foregrounding the appearance of a foreign voice within the body of the main character, *The Part About Amalfitano* indicates a failure of introjection and the denial of the traumatic kernel of lack at the heart of the subject. As related above, Amalfitano begins to hear a mysterious voice that addresses him, which first claims to be the spirit of his father, and later the spirit of his grandfather (Bolaño, 2666 210). Thus, the intrusion of the voice corrupts and disturbs the scene. Citing Freud, Abraham and Torok stress that "the trauma of objectal loss leads to a response: incorporation of the object in the ego" (*The*

Shell 111). Therefore, in so far as incorporation is a response to loss, the particular fantasy of this volume of *2666* appears to be directed at what Abraham and Torok name as the metaphor of introjection (*The Shell* 128). For Abraham and Torok, fantasies of incorporation serve to reveal a “gap within the psyche” by pointing to “something that is missing just where introjection should have occurred” (*The Shell* 127). In other words, something has disappeared into the unconscious and, in failing to find its proper place on the inside, the subsumed other disrupts the harmony of the body.

The suspended geometry book in *2666* is not the only example within the novel of an object that is caught disquietingly in the field of vision. An even more overt expression of the disruption and phantasmatic fracturing of the human body is that of the events surrounding the character Edwin Johns. In *The Part About The Critics*, there is a short story about a painter, whose central masterpiece in his exhibition is his own severed painting hand (Bolaño, *2666* 53). This fictional painter’s career began, as the novel’s narrator relates, with him reflecting the pain and memory of his neighbourhood:

He ushered in something that would later be known as the *new decadence* or *English animalism*. The paintings in the inaugural show of this school were big, ten feet by seven, and they portrayed the remains of the shipwreck of his neighbourhood, awash in a mingling of grays. It was as if painter and neighbourhood had achieved total symbiosis. As if, in other words, the painter were painting the neighbourhood or the neighbourhood were painting the painter, in savage, gloomy strokes. [...] the central painting, much smaller than the rest, the masterpiece [...] viewed properly (although one could never be sure of viewing it properly), was an ellipsis of self-portraits, sometimes a spiral of self-portraits (depending on the angle from which it was seen), seven feet by three and a half feet, in the centre of which hung the painter’s mummified right hand. (*2666* 52)

The self-portrait of Edwin Johns is thus clearly identifiable as a phantasm hovering in the centre of the viewing field (in a manner reminiscent of figure 5). As both a symbol and evocative element of visualisation, it stands as an example of *2666*’s use of liminal visuality. Bolaño constructs in this passage the sense of a three-dimensional gallery space, which is worryingly familiar. Significantly, this space’s disembodied groundlessness connects visually with the broader context of pained cultural memory.

The fractured body of Edwin Johns functions as a phantasm principally in the sense that it is haunted by the painter's body's prior unity. In *2666*'s passage about the painter's hand, the literary scene metonymically brings visibility to an unvoiced wound. This description is in keeping with the assertion, previously examined in Chapter 1, that the space of narrative relates to the narration of national space, on both a historical and psychological level (Soto-Crespo 461). Accordingly, the manifestation of the mummified hand can be interpreted as a symbol of the groundless being brought forth into prominence. Beyond the object is a space of national signification communicated by the novel's use of spatiality. After all, the gallery's presentation of the mummified hand evokes the idea of vision's location within the human body by making note of the way in which the object's appearance would change when viewed in three-dimensional space. Therefore, the phantasm emerges within the context of a search to locate a lost or truncated national space. In spatial terms, the gallery occupied by the severed hand serves as an expression of an "unfinished, distraught, and betrayed" space, in mourning for a prior connectedness that never existed (Soto-Crespo 451).

Refused integration of historical knowledge gives rise to the incorporation of the lost object which is sustained like a living dead. In *The Self and It*, Julie Park notes that "books and body parts" operate "as the very constituents of selfhood" (xxii). Therefore, Edwin Johns's disembodied hand in *2666* serves as an example of an inanimate object beyond the familiar boundaries of the subject. The severed hand's power is that of the uncanny, which indicates that the "process of making strange the objects of everyday life [...] has become registered as infinitely repeated" (Park xxviii). The mummified hand can subsequently be figured as a symbol of death-in-life that disturbs. The character of Edwin Johns falls into the disassembling terror of objecthood, yielding "not a cadaver but an undead" (Maleuvre 243). As first discussed in Chapter 2, the crypt acts as a site of buried memory that has been passed along. Bodies serve as sites upon which public concerns are signified (Hinrichsen 115). In consequence, in *2666* the severed hand is an example of a destabilising site of signification.

Didier Maleuvre's thoughts on the living dead in *Museum Memories* (1999) seem particularly pertinent for making sense of the phantasm figured through the mummified hand in *2666*, as he describes the abject fall of the subject into object. Drawing on terms related to the notion of the uncanny, as defined in Chapter 1, the tale of Edwin Johns can be identified as a story where "the excess of subjectivity is the subject's undoing", that is, the act of the artist to put himself into the world leads to his death (Maleuvre 222). In

2666, Edwin Johns dies falling into a ravine due to the loss of his hand, while the mummified hand persists in the gallery. The hybrid artwork links together the subject and object. Recalling that “abjection is the limit between subject and object” that “evokes the primitive terror of relapsing into animality” (Maleuvre 243), the scene of the artist’s severed hand presented as artwork evokes fears of an atavistic regress. Ultimately, the “work of art is a site of extreme struggle”, a site for which cultural struggles are played out (Maleuvre 254). The mummified hand’s autonomy in the landscape places it within “the ossuary of civilisation” for it “contains the subject’s death even when the latter is still living” (Maleuvre 266). As first noted in Chapter 2, the role of the figure of the living dead and its relation to culture can assist in the theorisation of the haunted novel, for phantasmatic representations of the body are always tied to a grappling with memory.

Incorporation, as symbolised in cannibalistic regression, emerges in the story of Edwin Johns and the mummified hand. Within this discussion, the use of body parts can be identified as a symbol and metaphor that shuttles between civilisation and barbarity as the homely space of an art gallery becomes a site of abjection. The novel’s compulsive repetition of bodily fragmentation signifies the irruption of a “repressed instinct” into the viewing field (Kilgour, *The Function* 245). The scene describes an act of cannibalistic desire within the logic of incorporation. A failure of words, that is, an inability to express the pains of memory in language, is represented visually and metaphorically within the narrative of 2666. As first argued in Chapter 2, a subject’s incorporation turns to metaphoric cannibalism as a result of “the words that cannot be uttered, the scenes that cannot be recalled, the tears that cannot be shed”. And so, “everything will be swallowed along with the trauma that led to the loss” (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 130). Within Edwin Johns’s story, it is possible to observe the operation of the haunted novel, in which the passage’s symbolic tableaux absorbs life and refused mourning into a work of metaphoric incorporation.

By applying the theory of the haunted novel as a text of phantasms that encrypt, as firstly discussed in Chapter 2, this section has noted that the textual analysis of certain passages of 2666 demonstrates a work of haunting that manifests in the form of an emergence that crosses a boundary between interior and exterior. This section has also foregrounded the way in which scattered vestiges, passed between one unique observer to the next, communicate emotion in a visual way. The art object is caught in the line of sight, hovering phantasmatically between the seen and the unseen, subsequently standing as a representative of the text’s uncertain location between trauma and fantasy. Recalling the

idea that a crypt is established in violence (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* XV), as put forth in Chapter 2, the violence behind the creation of Edwin Johns's artwork is presented here as a cryptic inclusion that, in the place of failed speech, symbolises loss visually. This section has suggested that within *2666*'s scene of Edwin Johns's art exhibition the haunted novel can be conceptualised. The written art objects swallow that which cannot be put in words, putting forth symbols that haunt through their indeterminate status between foreign and familiar.

3.5 Visions of Disintegration in the Landscape

The textual act of calling forth ancestral voices and intertextual hauntings is explicitly uncanny (Royle, *The Uncanny* 147). A name given to this practice is *Apophrades*, a concept the literary critic Harold Bloom uses to allegorically name a function of the literary text. *Apophrades* is certainly applicable to *2666*, where the return of the dead to reinhabit the home of the living and figures of burial are integral. A catacomb of ancestral voices can indeed be traced throughout Bolaño's haunted novel, where the origin of the voices is uncertain and unfamiliar. Royle elaborates that figures of "premature burial" include bodily affects such as rigidity, incapacitation, schizophrenia or hypnosis (148). Applying Royle's proposition to the analysis of *2666*, it becomes apparent that the novel is populated by characters that suffer such afflictions. These afflictions evoke the sense of a burial of some original secret wounding, and its uncanny return to inhabit a new locale. Therefore, incapacitations, fragmentations, burials and disintegrations are the focus of this section, which analyses examples in *2666* of generational and intertextual hauntings in order to demonstrate how the deployment of visual devices activate the functions of the haunted novel at work within Bolaño's text.

Home to a continual interplay between acts of concealment and the return of buried things, the desert setting of *2666* engenders an oscillation between death and rebirth, through which the impact of loss is reiterated. The fictional city of Santa Teresa and its surrounding Sonoran Desert are the settings where the bodies of the murdered women are swallowed and resurfaced. By functioning as a grave and womb, *2666*'s Santa Teresa enacts a melancholic conception of time. Olalquiaga argues that melancholy is productive of environments of submersion and temporal suspension, that is, environments that register a logic of ongoing loss (*The Artificial* 122). The desert, in this sense, exists only as if it were a three-dimensional image inside a souvenir water globe. For Olalquiaga, cut loose from their history, souvenirs disintegrate and are reintegrated from the fragments of

their original forms (*The Artificial* 123). If a souvenir snow globe is an environmental image that arose from the temporality of modernity, the desert in Bolaño's novel is likewise a spatial, visual dimension that owes itself to the transitoriness of the novel's internal narrative time. Therefore, the very passage of time in *2666* is fundamental, for it is the temporal dimension which gives shape to the spatial. The desert in Bolaño's novel is emblematic of the "transitoriness of all things, the continual flight of life into death" (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 122). The Sonoran Desert, with its sky and craters, is a scenery brought forth from the effects of time. This environment brings form to both cultural and psychic ruination through the dust that literally coats the city and invades its inhabitants. For example, the *Unhappy Readymade* makes visible the psychological wreckage of a nation through use of a visible object. This artistic intervention performs the work of demetaphorisation, a process in which something meant figuratively is taken literally. In *2666*'s Santa Teresa's fantasy space of debris, based upon the real Ciudad Juárez, demetaphorisation discloses social anxieties about disappearance, fragmentation and disembodiment.

Incorporation, as first addressed in Chapter 2 in view of conceptualising literature as a site of encryption, is constituted by two interrelated procedures. The first is defined through Abraham and Torok's concept of demetaphorisation, which is useful to address the paradigms of loss that arise from fractured processes of nation formation. In addition, incorporation includes objectivation, which, as defined earlier, is a process where the subject pretends that suffering is not an injury to themselves, but instead "a loss sustained by the love object" (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 127). Abraham and Torok suggest that incorporation enacts a refusal. In their words:

To reclaim as our own the part of ourselves that we placed in what we lost; incorporation is the refusal to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognised as such, would effectively transform us. In fine, incorporation is the refusal to introject loss. The fantasy of incorporation reveals a gap within the psyche; it points to something that is missing just where introjection should have occurred. (*The Shell* 127)

As Ranjana Khanna explains in *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (2004), for Abraham and Torok melancholy arises from a secret that is passed from generation to generation, preventing the successful resolution of loss and resulting in the persistence of

haunting (25). Khanna relates this process to post-colonial nation-states still haunted by the spectres of their turbulent formation. For Khanna, melancholy manifests itself in demetaphorisation, as it surfaces in the forms of burials and remainders, and responds to the work of incorporation (25).

Bolaño's staging of the suffering of the melancholy city of Santa Teresa in relation to the body entails demetaphorisation. Olalquiaga notes that dust has previously been conceived as a signifier of time by Benjamin, who draws upon dust "to describe the rundown state of dreams in modernity [...] the disintegration which befalls dreams when they cease being imaginary and enter the polluted atmosphere of everyday life" (*The Artificial* 87). Notably, dust as debris entails "the transformation of reality from unitary to fragmented, from continuous to chaotic" resulting in distorted and phantasmatic copies of the real (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 94). In this way, the dust recalls a former idyllic state, like that of an imaginary homeland prior to the subject's separation, which haunts the foreign topography of the present. Both act as fragmentary reminders of the absence that continues to work upon the psyche. Dust connects time periods, as the "aftermath of the collapse of illusions" that gradually falls upon and infiltrates the city, transmuting exterior into interior (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 94). It "makes the outside inside by calling attention to the surface of things" and "turns things inside out by exposing their bodies as more than mere shells" (Olalquiaga, *The Artificial* 94). By troubling the distinction between interior and exterior, the mnemonic traces of a past upheaval are displayed.

The devouring desert – symbolically tomb and womb – annihilates the subject. In the final scene of *The Part About Amalfitano*, the character Amalfitano dreams of the "last communist philosopher" who is swallowed up by a crater streaked with red, enacting a fall into the abyss (Bolaño, 2666 228). This figure of a devouring crater is notably doubled with other key abysses throughout *2666*, such as the "malevolent black hole" of Santa Teresa itself that threatens to draw in the character Archimboldi, who is likewise "doomed as darkness and desolation descend on a broken city" (Birns 81). Recalling that the self is explained as a system of introjections into which the previous generations are incorporated (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* XV), the philosopher may be figured as a lost body that has fallen into Amalfitano's dream, as an introjection. According to Khanna "the phantom constitutes a transgenerationally transmitted signifier of repression" (255). In the case of Amalfitano, who is haunted by the voice of the grandfather, haunting arises from the inability to recall or speak about aspects of his past. In the absence of Amalfitano's words, a substitute voice emerges and, as Abraham and Torok would put it, comes to occupy the

space of the mouth, filling it with illusory nourishment (*The Shell* 128–9). Thus, the crater that consumes the philosopher in the scene above is like a mouth that words failed to fill. In this scene of the novel, the question of the dreamer’s identity also serves to hint at the incorporation of generations that precedes the establishment of the crypt.

The analysis of the figure of the desert as described in *2666* recalls the contention, as first expressed in Chapter 2, that fantasies of incorporation are regressive, in the sense that they entail a return to a cannibalistic relation with the world. In the *Shell and the Kernel*, Abraham and Torok write that introjection begins when the infant’s mouth is first filled with words (XV). In the absence of words, there is a regress into the cannibalistic fantasy of incorporation, from where fantasy fills the place of speech. Kaleidoscopic introjections demonstrate how the crypt is built by violence (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* XV). Such is the case of Amalfitano’s psyche’s housing the voice that may have once belonged to his father or grandfather, and housing the dream of the philosopher who disappears into the earth. *2666*’s narrative traverses the carnivorous landscape of the unconscious. Indeed, it is written of the four scholar characters that “the deeper they went into his work, the more it devoured its explorers” (Bolaño, *2666* 29). The oppressiveness of the desert topography, and its interiority, become apparent along with the inextricable association of its quality of depth with that of sleep and dreams (Sedgwick 38). As Eve Sedgwick notes, live burial (or vivisepulture) is a prevailing theme that emerged in the Gothic mode, within which images of submergence in subterranean spaces act as prisons without either inside or outside, as the “demarcation between interior and exterior falls” (26). For Bolaño, the engagement with work itself is like a descent into a dream, a fall into a tomb or even an atavistic return to the womb. In the story of Amalfitano, the crack in the psyche that swallows a loved thing acts as “a cleft in space [...] a *safe*” that “hides as it holds” (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* XIV, original emphasis). When burial works to prevent or prolong a loss and preserve an undead, a crypt is formed. As a kind of black hole, the crypt is an architecture and an artificial place where the loved thing both takes shelter and is concealed. Thus, this thesis’ analysis of *2666* serves to highlight the manner in which a crypt is established in narrative, forwarding that this function is itself constitutive of the proposed genre of the haunted novel.

The disappearance of bodies into the landscape, initially a metaphor for their subsumption into the unconscious, is given a concrete form in *2666*. The logic of “incorporation implements the metaphor of introjection literally” (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 128). The relation between body and place, as first noted in Chapter 1, is part of

the conceptualisation of the haunted novel. While bodies both disappear and resurface continually in *The Part About The Crimes*, there are also disappearances earlier in *2666*, such as the death of the artist Edwin Johns, whose fall into the abyss was acknowledged above (Bolaño, *2666* 151). The plunge into the abyss is echoed by many similar disappearances of characters who fall into the earth in Bolaño's novel. On the same page the text describes the concurrent event of the kidnapping of women whose dead bodies are then dumped in the desert. Such losses, which cannot be spoken about, are, in the words of Abraham and Torok: "[s]wallowed and preserved. Inexpressible mourning erects a secret tomb inside the subject. Reconstituted from the memories of words, scenes, and affects, the objectal correlative of the loss is buried alive in the crypt as a full-fledged person, complete with its own topography" (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 130). The desert setting in which this part of the narration of *2666* centres upon signifies a realm of the unconscious, a topography of the mind and a crypt inhabited by the loss and displacement of its own formation. These secrets that cannot be brought into language are instead incorporated and concealed within the body.

The function of The Sonoran Desert to call back the dead is notably twinned in *2666*'s final volume *The Part About Archimboldi* by the context of WW2, as darkness reverberates across the epochs in an ongoing storm (Birns 82). In this volume, the German soldier character Reiter finds the notebook of a Jewish man named Ansky – an object correlative to the person – which he reads with guilt and gladness. Its ink is one day washed away, in frightful symbolism of its former owner's effacement. As Reiter journeys, he subsequently encounters his own death mask:

One night he dreamed he was back in Crimea [...] he set off walking and came upon a dead Red Army soldier, facedown [...] he feared, as he had so often feared, that the corpse would have Ansky's face [...] with more relief than surprise, he discovered that the corpse had his own face. (Bolaño, *2666* 738)

Reiter's discovery of his corpse sits inside the logic of the crypt. The phantasmatic apparition of the face, as an example of a "signifier of repression" (Khanna255) brings psychological pain into view. Reiter's death is crouched within a dream, concealing his shame and building a tomb in the place of mourning. The demarcation between subject and object is violated atavistically by the undead. As such, death masks of this kind contain an

anxiety too taut for vocalisation (Žižek, “Grimaces” 48). In the final line of the novel, Reiter ultimately departs for Mexico, journeying into another abyss (Birns 80).

The next section of this chapter elaborates on the role of bodily fragmentation within *2666*'s description of landscape, locating the novel's scattered object metaphors within the broader field of haunted narrative.

3.6 The Seen and Unseen: Bodily Fragmentation in Phantasmatic Space

Liminal space complicates the relation between subject and object, and their relation to social place. As expressed through *2666*'s depictions of bodily fragmentation, visibility and embodiment are linked. In the novel, their association causes the perceived wholeness of the social body to be broken down as an effect of the textual emergence of the discontinuous phantasm of the body in pieces. As first noted in Chapter 1, there is a relation between body and place, which Trigg defines as entailing an oscillation between the two: “the body activates place. But the same is true in reverse: *Place activates the body*” (“The Memory” 11, original emphasis). As such, this notion of oscillation leads the discussion of *2666* in this section to identify the representation of bodies within the novel as examples of phantasms. This section also categorises the encryption of a place's indeterminate memory as an element of the haunted novel working within Bolaño's text, where the unsettled emerges in a dispersed uprising of phantasms. The haunted novel's narrative landscape may be conceptualised as a site of debris in which the disruptions of turbulent national formations converge. Tram Nguyen refers to this process as it manifests in *2666* as “travelling sovereignty”, as the novel represents an uncontainable sprawl of disappearances, displacements and mutations of time, space and identity (24). Disruptions in the diegetic narrative can be contextualised within issues of visibility in the after-effects of modernity. As discussed earlier, Lacan, Sartre, and Bonitzer address the horrors that surround the specific modern experience of absence and visibility, which in turn assists in addressing the cultural anxieties surrounding loss within the national space. The dilemma of the displacement of the subject comes to light throughout *2666*, where gaps in space and threatening looks emerge from a failure of introjection and are indicative of a loss that cannot be put into words.

Moreover, Jorge Luis Borges's textual representations of fragmentation and spaces of infinite replication introduce several key phantasmatic figures into literature relevant for the analysis of *2666*. In Borges's *Labyrinths*, the representation of mirrors and encyclopaedias both point towards a loss of unity emblematic of incomplete nationhood.

As noted by Jeremy Adelman, labyrinths, as a familiar figure in Latin American literature, represent the dilemma of a passage to freedom and democracy (1). In this way, confusing narrative spaces and perspectives may give expression to cultural anxieties. In fact, Borges seems interested in the idea of constructing a fictional space through which literature becomes the foundation of a nation. In the opening of *Labyrinths*, he writes of a mirror that troubles the depths of a domestic corridor, bringing forth a banal yet terrible realisation:

From the remote depths of the corridor, the mirror spied upon us. We discovered (such a discovery is inevitable in the later hours of the night) that mirrors have something monstrous about them [...] mirrors and copulation are abominable, because they increase the number of men. (27)

Borges's text goes on to describe a doctrine inside an encyclopaedia which reads: "*For one of those gnostics, the visible universe was an illusion or (more precisely) a sophism. Mirrors and fatherhood are abominable because they multiply and disseminate that universe*" (*Labyrinths* 27, original emphasis). Common to both passages is the idea of a body that regresses from a unified whole into pieces upon its encounter with the mirror. The multiplication and division that is inflicted upon the subject during their dynamic encounter with the mirror invokes the experience of loss pertinent to that of a displaced subject. Plurality, as it occurs in the works of Bolaño, can subsequently be seen to produce an air of disquiet; as it is for Borges, Bolaño's pluralities can be linked to the writing of Chilean dictatorship, its legacies, and ghostly returns (O'Bryen 31).

The mirror's power in Borges's text is the look of an other that introduces both visibility and anxiety onto the scene at the same time as fracturing the fictional world around it. Borges's mirror, with its ability to spy, is itself an eye that hides an implied unknown onlooker. Surveilling and mimicking in the darkness of night, mirrors also provoke the anxiety of seeing one's face and form disfigured (Jay 281). The depth of space in a room of mirrors is not unlike the claustrophobic depths of a dream inside of which a dreamer may likewise chance upon their own distorted double. This apparition takes place in a world that is itself "one of images whose geometry is given by the mirror" where the occupant is constituted in relation to its semblables (Feldstein et al. 140). Likewise, a passage of *2666*, which this section subsequently analyses, also illustrates the mirror's function as a troubling visual device.

The fragmentation that is bestowed upon the subject by the geometry of the mirror constructs a relation between the seen and unseen. Sartre's reflections on "The Existence of Others" is particularly instructive on the matter of reading visuality, as he addresses modern theories about how the disruptive encounter with a look relates to an experience of disintegration brought on by the arrival of the body of the other (255). An example of disintegration in the face of the look, which, as this thesis suggests, signifies a phantasm of unsettled memory operating within a text, is found in *The Part About The Critics*, where the character Norton dreams of herself in the Hotel México. In her dream, Norton is being watched by two mirrors, one in front of her and the other behind her:

In Norton's dream she saw herself reflected in both mirrors. From the front in one and from the back in the other. Her body was slightly aslant. It was impossible to say for sure whether she was about to move forward or backward. The light in the room was dim and uncertain, like the light of an English dusk. No lamp was lit. [...] She was probably wearing black pumps, although they weren't visible. The stillness of her body, reminiscent of inertia and also of defencelessness, made her wonder, nevertheless, what she was waiting for to leave, what signal she was waiting for before she stepped out of the field between the watching mirrors and opened the door and disappeared. (Bolaño, 2666 115)

Bolaño's description emphasises that the second mirror is a superfluous intrusion: "Hung in such a way that if one stood in a certain spot, the two mirrors reflected each other" (Bolaño, 2666 111). The multiplication in the hotel room troubles the scene through the construction of an uncanny *mise-en-abyme*. Asleep in the room, Norton questions whether she has heard a noise from the hallway, perhaps from a passing stranger or hotel worker stopping by her door. In the dream, Norton is described as encircled by a series of intersecting gazes, from the watching mirrors to the woman reflected in the mirror. These gazes, when inspected with consideration of Sartre's theory, may be thought of as arising from Bolaño's concern with the interplay of the visible and invisible.⁶⁰ Even the hotel door, like the mirror, represents an eye and, as Sartre puts it, an object acts as an eye by

⁶⁰ Martin Jay's chapter on Sartre in *Downcast Eyes* (1994) identifies that mirrors are posited as a danger by Sartre, where regarding one's reflection leads into witnessing an obscene, primordial flesh that he describes as "aquatic", reminiscent of the womb (281). This imagery is significant within this analysis of 2666's images, which include the repeatedly mistaken recognition of a boy for seaweed in *The Part About Archimboldi*; for their resulting "plunge into the depths of an abyss" (Jay 281) can be figured as the expression of the haunted novel contained within visually stimulating narrative procedures.

virtue of its potential to conceal a watcher (268). Additionally, Norton is unable to locate the double spatially: “she scanned the room, trying to pinpoint the exact spot where the woman was, but it was impossible to see her” (Bolaño, 2666 115). Objects often operate as mirrors: a silent television had earlier mirrored its room and the occupant like a haunting performance (Bolaño, 2666 96). Suffice it to say that Norton apprehends a look that generates a reference to the vulnerable and cornered self (Sartre 259). In the scene of Norton with the mirrors, the phantasmatic other disturbs the continuity of Norton’s body. Multiplication of the visible introduce disorientation and the threat of the subject’s disappearance.

A threat to the comprehensibility of being is posed by and communicated by the spectral other represented in *The Part About The Critics*. As cited in Chapter 1, María Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren suggest that phantoms are “bodies rendered optically strange” (213), as if manifesting themselves from a different dimension. Thus, as already explained, phantasms are taken by this thesis as representational signs of the haunted novel. For example, the character Morini sees his own image dissolve into something entirely other: “like a river that stops being a river or a tree that burns on the horizon, not knowing that it’s burning” (Bolaño, 2666 107). This estrangement of the familiar responds to the definition of the uncanny first introduced in Chapter 1. In the case of Norton’s mirror scene, she notices that the reflection she sees in the mirror is not herself, but instead a double that is looking at her. The other is just like Norton in appearance, but “dead”. This encounter with a haunting death-mask introduces fright into the text. Norton apprehends herself in the universe from the universe’s standpoint, caught with nowhere to hide. This scenario within 2666 is, notably, also a scene of entrapment and shock, creating a scene akin to a function of the look. Of the moment of apprehension, Sartre remarks:

I ‘am caught.’ [...] Both the obscurity of the dark corner and my possibility of hiding there are surpassed by the Other when, before I have been able to make a move to take refuge there, he throws the light in the corner. This in the shock which seizes me when I apprehend the Other’s look. (Sartre 264)

Norton must struggle against the other who mirrors her every move; when she clenches her fists, the other clenches her fists too. The possibilities of the self are seized by the other, bringing forth a sense of danger, which in Sartre’s terms represents a permanent structure of the experience of being present to oneself and the world, in the sense that the

look introduces the subject into a fixed state of apprehension (Sartre 268). By treating everyday objects as eyes, the text generates scenes in which the sense of heightened foreboding about identity seems interminable. The haunting image of the other depicted by the false appearance of the mirror's reflection is indicative of an unresolved remainder that disrupts embodiment (Furlong 1091). The passage of Norton's dream entails a division and multiplication of self that reflects the distortion and melancholy of the novel's internal landscape.

What requires particular emphasis at this point is the notion that the figure of the double in *2666* constitutes an incorporation. Precisely, the mirror's doubling of Norton can be conceived as an act of the imagination giving body to an un-dead, where refused integration of history yields an apparition (Schwab, *Haunting* 1–2). The double, according to Cixous, produces a “ghostly figure of nonfulfillment and repression, and not the double as counterpart or reflection, but rather the doll that is neither dead nor alive” (*Fiction*, 539). The distinction is blurred between death and life, and also inside and outside – the dream signifies an interior space that is both invaded and closed off. A sense of the uncanny communes with the repressed, which is an example of the contention, formerly addressed in Chapter 2, that the swallowing of loss produces a fully-fledged person, where something othered by the ego disappears into the unconscious and returns as the disruption of the body's harmony (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell*, 130, 26). In this manner, the literary phantasm in the scene of Norton's dreamed double in *2666* arises as an encryption and, as this chapter suggests, it signals to the haunted novel's emergence.

The potential for the look of the mirror to fragment the subject introduces haunting onto the scene. Haunting in hotel scenes, which are reminiscent of Borges's writing, persists in *2666*: a gallery is described as containing “mirrors where there never used to be mirrors”, inside of which the dead appears in “an old full-length Victorian looking glass” (Bolaño 98). In this passage, the look occasions a transformation of both the space and its participants. On the matter of the subject's encounter with the look, Sartre notes that “when the look is given, the Other's look touches the subject from a distance, transforming both the self and the situation to bring about ‘a total metamorphosis of the world’” (269, original emphasis). The mirror, then, emerges as a disfiguring and potentially transformative object. In Bolaño's novel, the other Norton, who has encountered the mirror's look, is made into a monstrous source of horror and fascination: “she looked at the woman's neck: a vein swollen as if bursting, ran down from her ear and vanished at the shoulder blade. A vein that didn't seem real, that seemed drawn on” (Bolaño, *2666* 115).

The hideous distension of the vein indicates fragmentation, as the body part escapes from the whole body. The body and the self are threatened by disintegration upon their encounter with the mirror. Significantly, Norton's dream occurs within a narrative context – correlative to a national context – of a period of ongoing trauma related to transition and disappearance. The space of Norton's dream is haunted by the symptomatic traces of strange irruptions that symbolise some unspoken past. The woman's vein highlights a crisis of representation at the core of an emerging identity. Recalling de Los Ríos's argument quoted in this chapter's introduction, Norton's position as the observant and observed is notably not that of a victim but an accomplice; a critic haunted by her place in the violence of history, whose bodily disruptions signify a silent repression (114).

Misrecognitions and spectral appearances bring the traumas of forming nationhood into the physical body. The other Norton as an emergent spectre imitates the original Norton and refuses to vanish from sight. Notably, the figure of the double has featured with similar effect in other entries in Bolaño's oeuvre – in *Distant Star*, disquiet and anxiety is induced when the character Romero kills his double Wieder, for he has killed only a part and Weider “in part remains at large”: “He returns, like so many other spectres to haunt all efforts to repress him” (O'Bryen 31). The persistence “gnaws away at him inside like the introjected lost object of melancholy that cannot be dislodged through mourning” (O'Bryen 31). These representations of spectre suggest the loss of distance between the phantasm's appearance and the reality in which the psychological traumas of the dream world are brought into the body proper (Schneider 99). This idea is related to the concept of the vanishing point, as the body seem to escape beyond representation, entering into “the obsessive terrain of representation fantasy” (Schneider 6). Norton's encounter with the mirror is a scene of disembodiment, as the character's body vanishes into fantasy. The other Norton occupies the position of an object with a gaze, which is akin to automation. As Schneider contends: “The very idea that the unseen might suddenly be seen to see, or that the eye in the socket of a body might belong to a disembodied being as much as to the socially marked body it inhabits smacks of horror, of the uncanny, of body-snatching, of voodoo, of possession” (100). In other words, the look that is secreted from an object may expose specific terrors to do with cultural disembodiments by literalising them in the female body (Schneider 100). The depiction of Norton's body in *2666*, which is similar to depictions of women's bodies in the novel general, can be seen to re-enact a drama of national fragmentation as its symptoms are those of a text that reflects on historical memory. Nguyen, for example, links the symbolic violence done to women in *2666* to the

unsettled economic and social context of Mexico, where the “sense of unreality [in the diegesis] is markedly not of the real morphing into simulacra, but of one simulacrum enfolded by another” (36). The novel is subject to a “nebulous rhizomatic flow” of “places, things, cultures, [and] regimes” between text and context (Nguyen 36). Thus, the spectre of the uncanny body emerges as a visual sign of incompleteness and ongoing suffering.

Thus, the haunted novel stages the tension between the subject and their encounter with the phantasm, in which the discontinuities in the composition of the subject reflect the breaks in an identity that is still emerging. Sartre’s ideas on vision may be supplemented by Lacan’s observation that a gaze is present in anxiety. The encounter with the mirror that Lacan describes as the “mirror phase” generates a “threatening and regressive phantasy of the ‘body-in-pieces’” in which anxiety about disintegration comes to the fore (*The Four*, xviii). This fantasy entails an imagined return to the child’s first experience of their body that Lacan argues is perceived as disparate parts, before it is finally comprehended as a whole. This theory suggests that duplication within dreams expresses the atavistic reappearance of the body in pieces in the form of an anxious encounter with the mirror. For example, attention is drawn to the face of the double: “The woman’s eyes were just like her eyes. The cheekbones, the lips, the forehead, the nose” (Bolaño, *2666* 116). The woman’s body parts are noted separately until they form the whole of a face like a gestalt that come into view as a horrifying semblance of the original. As Norman Brown has similarly argued, “the essence of dreaming is duplication, division; as in schizophrenia” in those instances where “the dreamer sees himself, a double of himself” (51). The loss of the safety provided by a unified sense of self contributes to the emergence of a narrative that is without certain ground. Comprised of scattered, duplicated parts, in its very structure *2666* is haunted by the phantasm of impossible unity.

By interrogating *2666*’s narrative procedure of exposing bodies to danger through disruptions in the realm of visibility, this section’s discussion of Bolaño’s text has conceptualised the haunted novel’s figuration of the division and multiplication of the self that occurs in fantasy spaces, where the search for identity is an ongoing crisis. Continuing this chapter’s investigation of Bolaño’s distinctly ungraspable and disquieting spaces, towards a conceptualisation of the elements of the haunted novel within, the final section discusses the manner in which spatial fragmentation, excess and distortion generate a scene of haunting in *2666*.

3.7 Deframing Vision: The Phantasm of Fractured Space

The description of extreme close-ups and truncated vantage points discernible throughout *2666*, which disrupt the representation of the bodies of characters and space within the text, reveals an unsettled, fragmented scopic field correlative to a discontinuous space of uncertain nationhood⁶¹. As put forth in Chapter 1, images of fragmentation constitute phantasms, for they are haunted by the totality of an impossible unified body (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 82). As such, these fragmentary visualisations act as allegories that reflect on the absent space of the nation. Notably, the substitutions and multiplications associated with fragmentation constitute a continuing infiltration of the text of *2666* by phantasmatic, uncanny figures. This section analyses passages of *2666* in which the visual field is overwhelmed and fragmented by excess, thus marking the narrative space of the novel with uncertainty. It addresses the manner in which a text can be “overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in the excess of our frames of reference” (Felman and Laub 5). Therefore, by considering the fractured space and truncated bodies figured in *2666* as phantasms that encrypt haunting through the liminality of the familiar and unfamiliar, the seen and unseen, this section’s analysis of Bolaño’s novel seeks to envision the function of haunted narrative at work within the text.

The deployment of visual devices in the haunted novel can be better understood in reference to the concept of deframing as found in film theory. Bonitzer’s “Deframings” (2000) foregrounds the interplay of the visible and invisible in the context of cinema, a discussion that resonates in Caruth’s reflection about the immediacy and literality of shock and trauma (*Unclaimed* 62). Film theory has in fact addressed the horrors that arise from the look, which are foregrounded by the cinematic technique of deframing, where a filmmaker truncates angles to conjure a sense of the hidden. In film, horror is representative of “the agony of awakening – to the body, and to history” (Lowenstein 44.) As observed in Chapter 1, the phantasmic body lacking in corporeality represents “a contradictory experience of presence” that signifies a disquieting return of the past (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 232). This analysis of phantasmatic space in film is applicable to the haunted novel as it highlights an anxiety about psychical wreckage through the active introduction of fragmentation into the text.

⁶¹ Confusing literary spaces and perspectives may be examined for the expression of cultural anxieties, following Adelman’s analysis that labyrinths in Latin American literature serves to represent the dilemma of a passage to nationhood (1).

Deframing, as defined by Bonitzer, refers to the pictorial device through which angles and reflections are used to truncate the visibility of bodies to produce haunting, nightmarish images to take hold of the spectator (199). Bonitzer notes that tension arises when “angles, framings, choices of objects and temporal durations [...] highlight the insistence of a look”, which is a disembodied gaze from a “ghostly existence” (200). Bonitzer addresses the issue of the seen and the unseen, particularly the matter of missing frames or apparent off-screen space in a work. The technique of deframing asks the viewer to fill in the missing frames by imagining the completed scene. Deframing of interior scenes acts to draw in the spectator. Bonitzer writes of the ability of portraiture to not only evoke the visible but also conjure the hidden (198). In film, the deployment of deframing achieves the effect of emptiness. Significantly, this mutilation of the body through framing disrupts the visible space of the scene and diegetic space of the narrative (Bonitzer 200). A response of horror from the viewer is provoked by deliberately truncating scenes, which would bring forth an encounter with the repressed.

Painting in Western art has traditionally implied an onlooker that is outside the scene, who is seduced into the artwork’s interior through the reduction of the distance between the spectator and the scene (Bonitzer 197). René Magritte’s painting *The Voice of Silence* serves as an example of an intimate interior scene that supposes a spectator, and achieves a sense of apprehension through the use of a composition in which the scene is cut in half by a wall (figure 7). In *The Voice of Silence*, the wall blocks the light on the right hand side of the painting, generating a blind spot on the left that appears as a fearful abyss. The way in which a painting is able to evoke an unknown zone through the imagination of a spectator is also found in *2666*, through the presence of scenes that guide the reader into the space, such as the scenes that describe the angles of a hotel room. Bonitzer, advancing his notion of deframing, proposes that enticing scenes, such as the intimate interiors of hotel rooms, corridors and bathrooms, are suited to the task of drawing in the spectator precisely because they depict cramped spaces with angles and mirrors that truncate the limbs of the bodies that occupy them (198). Dimly lit interiors are occupied by blind spots, missed encounters and failed alignments, and invisible hauntings ready to grip the spectator with fear and fascination. The depiction of missing frames and figure of the phantasm invites a “psychosis of the overly real” that threatens comprehensibility (Schneider 6). Such opacity within the narrative space of *2666* metonymically connotes an apprehension in relation to the broader Latin American social context to which the novel allegedly refers. Renée Bergland links Freud’s concept of the uncanny, particularly its

associated feeling of horror, to the repressed returning to haunt. In Bergland words: “To avoid horror, civilised people must avoid being reminded of what has been buried, and [...] conquered” (11). As such, deframed space, with an interiority and emptiness that recalls burial, may bring forth that which the collective memory represses. As part of the conceptualisation of the haunted novel, the literary examples of truncated visibility in *2666* are subsequently read as vehicles for forms of societal or national unease to re-emerge into public recognition.

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Magritte, René. *The Voice of Silence*. 1928. Oil on canvas, 57 cm x 73 cm. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA. *Art History Reference*.

www.arthistoryreference.com/cgi-bin/hd.exe?art2=a3806.

Image description: Painting depicts two rooms, one a cosy living room and the other pitch black, divided by a column in the centre of the painting.

Figure 7 René Magritte *The Voice of Silence* 1928

The fracturing of Norton’s face in the mirror, as analysed in the scene of *2666* presented above, produces the effect of disorientation. Indeed, fragmentary images of the spectral woman in this scene of Bolaño’s novel actively confuse comprehensibility. As an example of a spectre caught in a deframed cinema space, Bonitzer describes a film scene in which “a woman stares wide-eyed with horror at a sight that she alone sees” (199). Within *2666*, in comparison, the expression on the reflected woman’s face is reframed through a diachronic sequence of descriptions:

The woman smiled at her again. This time the smile grew not out of a grimace but out of a look of despair. And then the woman smiled at her again and her face became anxious, then blank, then nervous, then resigned, and then all the expressions of madness passed over it and after each she always smiled. (Bolaño, *2666* 116)

The fragmented succession of images in this segment of the novel produces a sense of horror, for the text testifies to a discontinuity that begs to be repaired. Therefore, the phantasm of the smiling woman in *2666* evokes the unseen, because in the breaks between facial expressions, she emotes to a sight that she alone sees. The missing pieces in between, which Bonitzer refers to as “holes”, that is, the “*terra incognita*” or “unknown land”, are the hidden parts of representation that call for elucidation (199). Likewise, Bolaño’s description of the woman in the mirror, which can be conceived as a literary form of cinematic deframing, breaks apart her body. Thus, this scene of *2666* creates an image of disintegration and mutilation of both body and space. In fact, Norton herself is imagined as a *Gestaltist* in the sense that in spite of her bodily disintegration, she seeks to capture the scene in its totality. For Bonitzer, the gaps that cinema leaves unfilled are important for enticing the spectator, this dialectic of appearance and disappearance asserts the logic of *horror vacui*, asking the viewer to confront the empty spaces. The text is troubled by the incomplete space that cannot be apprehended in its totality. In this sense, the missing frames reiterate the experiences of absent space, like gaps in the psyche, or the splitting of a nation, or a regressive fantasy that troubles the body.

Furthermore, as Bonitzer suggests, the peculiar and capricious cinematic gaze highlights the signs of death and desolation in the world it disfigures (200). Similarly, the setting of Santa Teresa and the characters in *2666* are written as bleak and melancholy. The city is sprawling and terrible, and Amalfitano is “a castaway, a carelessly dressed man [...] put out to pasture in his own field” (Bolaño, *2666* 114). The desert-city is distorted by light: “it was as if the light were buried in the Pacific Ocean, producing an enormous curvature of space” (Bolaño, *2666* 110). Bolaño often represents jarring close-ups of desolate details. For example, he describes a broken toilet bowl on the fourth floor of the Hotel México in the following terms: “the missing piece suddenly leapt into sight, almost like a bark [...] it looked like someone had ripped it off with a hammer” (Bolaño, *2666* 111).⁶² In keeping with the motif of distortions of sight, another room is home to a giant painting of the desert: the character Espinoza sees the painting in his dream, “such a solar yellow it hurt his eyes”, causing the figures represented within to be imperceptible (Bolaño, *2666* 111). The intrusion of sound, a whip crack, subsequently provides the shock that disturbs the otherwise visual experience. By collapsing symbolic space via the mechanism

⁶² This description could potentially be a reference to Duchamp’s *Fountain*, a readymade like the geometry book.

of demetaphorisation, a direct threat is posed to the comprehensibility of the world, which invites a kind of “psychosis of the overly real” (Schneider 6). These fantasy spaces expose the symptomatic displacements of the melancholy city.

Alluringly unpleasant snapshots, which draw in the spectator, may hint at something sinister about the unseen. Significantly, *2666*'s close-ups are “the closest the reader gets to the commission of the crimes [which] are stripped of their context in such a way as to suggest that getting to the bottom of things would be to leap into the void” (Piccini “A Nightmare” 75). Descriptions of objects in *2666* often produce an effect resembling that of *cadavérité* or cadaverous truth, a term used by Bonitzer in his theory of film to denote “coldly telling the deathly truth” through disturbing and intrusive close-ups (201).⁶³ The hotel settings host an over-proximity of the real, by housing specular and auditory hauntings through which “uncanny details stick out and perturb the pacifying effect of the overall picture” (Feldstein et al. 207). For example, the unexplained appearance of a fist-sized bruise on the leg of a character becomes the central focus of one passage. In another scene, stray words such as “freedom” are heard by the character Espinoza, “like the crack of a whip in an empty classroom” (Bolaño, *2666* 115).⁶⁴ Similarly, attention is drawn to a teacup inside of which “a few leaves floated in the liquid, leaves that struck Pelletier as strange and suspicious” (Bolaño, *2666* 83). Such instances of what Bonitzer calls “cadaverous truth” hint at the irrepressibility of a threatened and anxious memory, as the overly close details entice the viewer into the site of disappearance (201). Additionally, like the disruption of Norton’s reflection by the close-up of a vein, the use of uncanny details within a scene brings fragmentation into the text by disrupting the continuity of what could otherwise be a unified picture. Thus, Bolaño’s figuration of a kind of *cadavérité* consistently produces an effect of separation and decentralisation of the narrative through visual disruptions. As Rory O’Byrne writes (originally in relation to Bolaño’s *Distant Star*) representations of this kind direct us to heed “Bolaño’s final disquiet: a gunshot fired in the night might just hit a distant star, but it certainly won’t give rest to the ghosts of Latin America’s doomed revolutions” (31). To be sure, *2666*'s *cadavérité* forces recognition of disquiet, and directs attention to the repressed, without offering mastery over it.

⁶³ An example of this figure in cinema is found in the opening scene of David Lynch’s *Blue Velvet* (1986), where the camera pans from an idyllic scene of white-picket fenced houses to an unexpected close-up of beetles crawling beneath their manicured lawns, suggesting a disturbing truth behind appearances.

⁶⁴ Chapter 5 returns to an analysis of this scene of *2666*.

In its final section, this chapter has approached the deframings in the visual field of *2666* as signifiers of the regressive fantasy of incorporation encouraged by the aspects of the haunted novel within. The off-screen space that Bolaño's narration evokes points to an absence within the psyche where introjection has failed, which, as noted earlier in the chapter, can be figured as an empty mouth that has failed to be filled with words (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 129). The empty spaces that are revealed by fantasy spaces are indicative of an inability to voice and acknowledge a loss. Indeed, the demetaphorisation discussed in this chapter entails a failure of the task to bring actions into language (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 129). In the passages of *2666* analysed above, the source of the disturbing hauntings, uncanny details and specular horrors remains unspoken and are instead played out visually. These displacements introduce an oscillation between the body's interior and the landscape's exterior that reiterates the sense of an ungraspable space and identity.

3.8 Conclusion

Chapter 3 has centred on a textual analysis of Bolaño's *2666*, in seeking to demonstrate the central proposition mobilised in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 that the haunted novel is a literary form that constructs a narration of silences and absences through a system of visual figurations or phantasms that encrypt meaning. This chapter has argued that the study of visual devices in *2666* shows the operation of the phantasms that define the thesis' concept of the haunted novel. The chapter has found that observations of literary description and their relation to visibility are a means through which memory re-emerges within a haunted text. Indeed, cultural and psychological memory are shown to re-emerge in visible manifestations, such as phantasmatic objects and fragmentations.

To discuss the way in which haunted history is re-membered, this chapter turned to the topic of depictions of bodily fragmentation as a means through which the haunted novel communicates the fragmentary nature of memory connected to body and place. Through examples of bodily disintegration, the chapter also addressed how visual devices communicate cultural anxiety, to show how objects that trouble the body are used to represent unfinished history. The chapter has applied ideas from theorists such as Pascal Bonitzer, Teresa Brennan, Jacques Lacan, and Rebecca Schneider to support its claim that troubled bodies in *2666* represent anxieties about unfinished history. In this way, *2666*'s excesses and fascination at absences, be it absent bodies, lost memory or unfinished remembering, may be thought of as a depiction of loss. The chapter also sought to address

the manner in which depictions of gazes and looks in *2666* express disintegration and disrupt ideas about the wholeness of memory and remembrance. Additionally, this chapter discussed the idea of the foreign getting into the familiar, that is, what Caruth calls unclaimed experience might be contained in the body and depicted as a body invaded by a foreign voice. Finally, the chapter demonstrated how visual description in the form of deframing generates a heightened sense of the visual into *2666* to emblematises social wreckage. Overall, these ideas about the depiction of excess as a symptom of loss relate the literary visualisations of the horrors of being seen to those of collective apprehension about the return of the buried.⁶⁵ Thus, from *2666*'s textual landscape of narrative disquiet, the concept of the haunted novel emerges as the phantasmatic figuration of unsettled memory.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, conducts close analysis of Murnane's *The Plains*, a literary text that similarly emerges from a context of nation formation, but also from the modernist context of the rise of film and photography. Thus, Chapter 4 seeks to illustrate the concept of the haunted novel by discussing disruptions in the field of vision in Murnane's novel.

⁶⁵ Chapter 5 will return to this topic, as part of its linking of literature to the cultural realm.

CHAPTER 4

Fantasies of Incorporation: Envisioning the Haunted Novel in Gerald Murnane's *The Plains*

4.1 Introduction

Following the proposition in Chapters 1 and 2 of the haunted novel as a genre of uncertain oscillation between fantasy and trauma that narrates the ungraspable space between the visible and invisible, Chapter 3 analysed the operation of the haunted novel's elements within Bolaño's *2666*. Chapter 4 now demonstrates the applicability of the haunted novel theory through an analysis of Gerald Murnane's novel *The Plains*. Using the key conceptual tools of the phantasm and the crypt, this chapter identifies key aspects of the haunted novel in *The Plains*, by foregrounding Murnane's text's evocations of vision and its connection to memory. The chapter puts forth that the phantasms of cultural memory that emerge and remerge in the narrative are characteristics of the haunted novel. The text of *The Plains* responds to the history of colonisation, specifically of Australia's Aboriginal people's struggle for land rights, in which the narrative functions as a site that visualises the unspeakable wound left by European colonisation and settlement in a literary representation of "unclaimed experience" (Caruth, *Unclaimed*). Thus, this chapter's sections analyse passages of Murnane's *The Plains* to highlight the emergence of the phantasm within the text, trace the novel's crypt, and, in doing so, map the text's space of signification for the function of the haunted novel. The characteristics of the haunted novel are, therefore, envisioned in *The Plains* by tracing how Murnane's text's phantasmatic visual devices encrypt cultural memory.

The chapter's textual analysis is focused on revealing the ways in which Murnane's visual devices in the novel express, through non-verbal means, the underlying or encrypted figure of a wound as found within cultural expressions of Australian identity. Drawing on existing scholarship, such as Harriet L. McInerney's analysis of the uncanny in Murnane's work, *The Plains* can be historically situated in the wake of former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's government's symbolic return of ancestral land to the Gurindji people in the Northern Territory in 1975, marking a new era of national attention in the movement of Indigenous recognition and land rights in Australia.⁶⁶ *The Plains* subsequently occupies a position where the land it depicts has a disputed and uncertain character. This chapter's discussion, therefore, seeks to demonstrate how the phantasm as a literary device serves to

⁶⁶ See Charlie Ward's *A Handful of Sand* (2006) for the history of land rights in the region.

encrypt a “feeling of disquiet” (McInerney 143) and restless uncertainty within Murnane’s text. In addition, the discussion of the notion of the uncanny first introduced in Chapter 1 as part of the conceptualisation of the theory of the haunted novel informs this chapter’s tracing of *The Plains*’ phantasms. Freud’s concept of the uncanny is applicable to the “unsettledness” of modern Australia, in which the land hovers between the familiarity and strangeness of an irreconcilable ‘ours and theirs’ binary; Murnane’s text is haunted by the dispossessed Indigenous land as an ambivalent site of “uncertainty and disquiet” (McInerney 134, 140). As Renée Bergland notes, the concept of the uncanny in the Freudian sense evokes and refers to the unsettledness of land amid colonisation and decolonisation attempts (11, cited in Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 493). As the construction of phantasmatic space is the ground where haunted narration emerges, Murnane’s text’s visuality brings forth representations that can be defined as phantasmatic. In this sense, land in *The Plains* is caught between its associations with the historical context and the ungrounded, imagined place of the plains.

The author’s biographical situation involves him living in a single place in country Australia, a town called Goroke, which is the word for “magpie” that the Wotjobaluk people also called the district before European occupation.⁶⁷ The extended period of time spent in this single place is interpreted as stimulating his semi-autobiographical writing, as his narrators spend time similarly contemplating the landscape. The narrator’s attempts to understand the plains are evocative of images of colonialist pursuits to attain mastery over the land such as those colonialists’ confrontation with the land depicted in Figure 8. The rhetorical performance of the narrator’s failure to capture the plains on film articulates an inability to witness and place trauma within history that dissolves into bodily fragmentation and the subject’s dissolution: the novel ends with the description of a photograph of the narrator’s disembodied eye.⁶⁸ The many symbolic manifestations of darkness beneath the

⁶⁷ Harriet L. McInerney’s (2017) discussion of the uncanny involved in Australian place names is key here – she notes that “settler-invader history created a landscape where regions were named by explorers who barely had words to describe what they encountered”, resulting in a postcolonial landscape with “two owners” and names. McInerney also notes that *The Plains* avoids place names altogether to create a sense of ungraspable landscape and uncertainty, which, as this chapter argues, is a central quality of Murnane’s novel (142).

⁶⁸ In light of Chapter 3’s analysis of *2666*, it seems pertinent to recall here that chapter’s citation of Valeria de Los Ríos, who notes that photography, or its absence, contains an unfulfilled promise of epiphany in *2666* – it could be used to locate missing persons, she says, but does not succeed (119). Marianne Hirsch (1997) similarly identifies points of resistance to political power in photographic strategies. See Karina Eileraas’s “Reframing the Colonial Gaze” (2003) for a discussion of the crisis of ownership provoked by photography since the mid-nineteenth century, and the political implications of the death of the author for marginalised groups (809). See also Amanda du Preez’s “Through the Empire’s Eyes” (2008), which discusses how empire relates to visuality, as an entity without an ‘outside’ (428).

surface of the plains converge upon the personal body as a site of public signification of the forbidden, disavowed, or taboo.



Figure 8 Samuel Thomas Gill *Country NW of tableland, Aug. 22 1846*

In *The Plains* phantasmatic visual devices encrypt cultural memory. As demonstrated in this chapter, these devices include cryponyms related to vision, gazes and vanishing points, anamorphic devices, references to mapping and the task of creating visual representation, false appearances, and deframed and negative space, all of which contribute to the emergence of the haunted novel. The combined effect of these devices produces within Murnane’s novel a mood of an uncertain hovering between fantasy and trauma, seen and unseen, foreign and familiar, as well as the sense of an ungraspable memory lying within a disquieting landscape. A principal phantasm in *The Plains* is that of the uncanny place, which is figured as an impossible territory, as an imaginary landscape caught between materiality and immateriality, visibility and invisibility, presence and absence. As McInerney puts it, the interplay of “familiar and foreign, interior and exterior, and seen and unseen” is in fact the ground where the narration emerges (143). This chapter works through scenes from *The Plains* in which the novel’s narrator searches for “meaning behind appearances” in “a zone of mystery enclosed by the known and the all-too-accessible” that is the landscape of “The Interior”, one of the names the narrator gives to the land within the diegesis (Murnane 3, 117).⁶⁹ In the narration, common reality arrives unexpectedly in uncertain images: skin turns into a map, a mannequin crudely resembles the narrator, an

⁶⁹ Murnane’s turn of phrase “The Interior” evokes – on many levels – colonial discourse ranging from Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness* (1996) and its narrator’s journey to the interior of Africa, to Freud’s phrase “dark continent”, as interrogated by Ranjana Khanna in *Dark Continents* (2004). Khanna notably puts forth the merits of psychoanalysis as a tool for postcolonial critique.

eye transforms into a marble and a library into a labyrinth. The novel, as a phantasmatic literary site, narrates haunted memory through re-emerging symbols and motifs.

4.2 Swallowing the Landscape: Murnane's Cryptonyms

Cryptonymy provides a tool for interrogating the noticeable repetition of motifs within *The Plains*. Analysis of cryptonyms – key words that are freighted with symbolism and links to experience beyond them – informs this chapter's conceptualisation of the haunted novel's function in Murnane's text. As theorised in Chapter 2, symbols intrude and disrupt the text as they integrate meaning beyond the text's perceptible boundaries. Subsequently key words and motifs are regarded by this thesis as "expressive traces", which are concealed references to trauma (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf 1xix*). Moreover, a cryptonym indicates that "an individual haunted by a phantom" lies "beyond the scope" of the text (Rashkin 32, 40). As such, Murnane's cryptonyms may be pinpointed as signs of the resistance of unspeakable secrets to intelligibility.

Cryptonyms litter Murnane's work, not just *The Plains* – and not just his fiction either. A later collection of semi-autobiographical essays – *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* (2005) – contains perhaps the most overt example of a cryptonym couched within an experience of visuality, for it describes what may be considered a process of incorporation. One of the essays introduces its narrator as an Australian reminiscing on his post-war childhood, and describes his experience of going to the theatre in the years between 1946 and 1948.⁷⁰ Murnane writes:

The films I watched made me discontented. Scene after scene disappeared from the screen before I had properly appreciated it [...] what I looked for in films was what I called pure scenery [...] places safely behind the action: the places where nothing seemed to happen [...] when I saw any such banal arrangement of grassy middle distance and hilly background, I tried to do to it something for which the simplest word I could have found was *swallow*. I wanted to feel the waving grass and that line of hills somewhere inside me. I wanted grass and hills fixed inside the space that began, as I thought, behind my eyes. (*Invisible* 9–10, original emphasis)

⁷⁰ This story is semi-autobiographical in style; yet it is unclear to what extent it is Murnane or a fictional character who relates the story.

Murnane highlights the key word “swallow” with italics, and it is subsequently repeated over the following pages. The narrator describes an “image of a greedy boy with his cheeks swollen by a segment of landscape-pie”, using bodily effort to get “the scenery from outside to inside”, through which he attains: a “piece of plain with a rim of hills floating inside my private space” (Murnane, *Invisible* 10). Murnane describes an image in the mind that directs “focus away from named Australian landscape and into an imagined interior”, inside which nothing may be grasped in certainty (McInerney 142). The narrator is left discontented even after he has “absorbed a slab of pure scenery” (Murnane, *Invisible* 11); the process of incorporation is, after all, both melancholy and unsatisfied.

In the above scene, vision is overtly the conduit through which literature swallows, burying a fully-fledged topography correlative of a loss. Such an act of literary consumption is first defined in Chapter 2 as the symbolic process of bringing inexpressible mourning into “a secret tomb inside the subject” (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 130), through which literature addresses national narratives. As such, the figure of filling a mouth with landscape instead of speech plays out precisely what can be described as a drama of incorporation. Within this scene, Murnane’s character’s mouth, “unable to say certain words and unable to formulate certain sentences”, regresses into a “food-craving mouth” that takes in and absorbs a fantasy of land in the place of words (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 128). By interpreting this scene through cryponymy, the character’s metaphoric eating can be understood as signifying a national refusal to mourn. Structured around the silence of the character’s inability to voice the source of their discontentment, this scene transforms a refused mourning into a phantasmatic scene of metaphoric incorporation.

Throughout Murnane’s oeuvre the landscape serves as a site of oneness and subsumption. The way the nameless narrator of *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* makes conspicuous note of his attempt to swallow the land introduces a succession of motifs. Firstly, the narration draws attention to the colour of the place as “orange-gold gravel” (14). Then, it introduces sight into the scene as the character describes his eyes adjusting to the dimness of a theatre. Finally, the narration introduces a blurring of the boundary between sight and landscape:

I was somehow *within* the city, equidistant from every point in it, as though each place I had admired or guessed at when I saw it in the sunlight was now pressing against the outer wall of the theatre; or as though the map I had lately thought of as

outspreed was now shaped like the rings of Saturn encircling me in the darkness.
(*Invisible* 14, original emphasis)

In this scene, a theatre within the landscape holds a quality of interiority and disquieting insideness. Such a construction may represent the operation of the haunted novel's function within *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs*, as the body of the narrator is placed within a symbolic vault through an act of collation. As discussed in Chapter 2, boundary distinctions between the inside and outside within psychoanalytic theory are evocative of a "nostalgia for total insideness", steeped in an envisioning of an original "cosmic body" (Kilgour, *From* 10). In other words, scenes within Murnane's work that are based within interiors serve to evoke phantasms of prior interiority. The atavistic darkness within the above scene from *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* subsequently communes with memory.

The theory of cryptonymy pertains to the readability of secret spaces; as such, one way to approach a text is to look at how it constructs space. In reading the figure of the theatre in the above scene from the perspective of cryptonymy, phantasmatic space, as Murnane uses it, can be interpreted as space that inscribes or encrypts with the motifs of colour, vantage point, and interiority that catches the subject in the visual field. These motifs are readable as symbols that are ultimately traceable throughout Murnane's oeuvre, and are particularly evident as they re-emerge through scenes in *The Plains*. The plains are an indeterminate place "where invisible and visible world are simultaneously present" and the oppositional meanings between interior and exterior break down (McInerney 140, 143). The scene from *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* cited above is a compact, paradigmatic example of Murnane's symbolism, which brings together sight and place in terms of discontinuity, disruption, disintegration, and bodily and spatial incoherency. These disruptions, as identified in Chapter 2 through Gabrielle Schwab's discussion on how to trace the crypt, establish a link between deformations of coherency on the level of signification, and the connotation of trauma's secret space ("Writing" 107). Schwab's suggestions can therefore be applied here to approach the phantasms in the abovementioned scene of *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs*, and in subsequent scenes of the same kind in *The Plains*, as examples of the haunted novel's characteristics within the text. As such, these scenes are identifiable not simply as expressions of the imagery of the phantasm, but as scenes in which haunting re-emerges in narrative related to a traumatic core.

In conceptualising the haunted novel, the above example of troubled visuality and bodily disruption as interpreted in the scene from *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* is informed by

a view that phantasmatic space bears a past in “historical profundity (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 399). Following on from Chapter 2’s theorisation, it can then be claimed that Murnane’s novel becomes a place of incorporation through its literary expression of tropes of disintegration, in which external place affects the interior of the subject. The novel is to be considered a container that incorporates the body and its experience by creating a sense of interiority, thus generating a crypt that is passed along in the repetition and reiteration of its symbols across the oeuvre.

The crypt evokes images of burial, which is a key symbol within *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* and *The Plains*. As discussed in Chapter 2, burial serves as a metaphor for the act of remembering, as a kind of excavation of memory (Lazzara 131). It bears significant relation to the memory of violent history as it is transmitted over generations because, as Schwab contends in *Haunting Legacies*, unspeakable legacies remain buried in memory (1). In Murnane’s work, the symbols of interiority and metaphorical burial signify the enduring presence of the past. Therefore, the crypt as a site of buried memory is identified as a space where unspeakable events and disavowed history are kept alive. Therein, the above cited image of the theatre and disrupted body within serves as an example of how the haunting quality of visual-spatial phantasms connects with a broader kind of transmission between sources, and between Murnane’s texts and beyond. In the following sections, this chapter analyses passages from *The Plains* in order to trace its phantasmatic interior.

4.3 Fragmentation and Disembodiment in Phantasmatic Vision

The conceptualisation of the haunted novel in this thesis involves tracing the textual relation between body and spatiality found in *2666* and *The Plains*. As put forth in Chapter 3, vision holds utility in the text as a means through which an uncertain and indeterminate sense of spatiality is rendered. Additionally, the relation between body and place, as theorised in Chapter 1, becomes crucial again in this chapter’s task of envisioning the haunted novel. As emphasised by Trigg, “the body activates place. But the same is true in reverse: *Place activates the body*” (“The Memory” 11, original emphasis). In fact, it is in the troubled relationship between body and place within haunted literature’s phantasmatic space that cultural anxieties surrounding colonial land, memory and identity are reflected. In *The Plains*, the filmmaker-narrator’s attempts to locate and represent himself visually and spatially serve to play out a national drama of incorporation in the sense that it manifests an inner-tomb as bodily affects. Following the theorisation of disquieting space and bodies

conducted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, failures of introjection in *The Plains* are interpreted in this chapter as indicative of a loss that cannot be put into words.

The disintegration of bodily and spatial coherence through the disruption of visuality is particularly apparent within *The Plains*, as it constructs an underlying air of haunting. *The Plains*, like *2666*, is home to depictions of fragmentary experience and disjunction between the mental representation of the body as a unity within spatial schemata, and the experience of the body as a disintegrated, decentred sensorial realm. This section conducts textual analysis of a series of passages from *The Plains* in order to demonstrate how the novel signifies a phantasm-generating realm, in which the diegesis activates a symbolic space. Indeed, Murnane's description of landscape troubles the boundary between interior and exterior: even in a scene in which the earth's dust troubles a character's body, as identified in Chapter 3, the core element that invades the bodies of Murnane's characters is not earth but light, as their faces are likened to camera shutters. Characters in *The Plains* become self-conscious crypts of memory-images, as they are aware of their status as enclaves of light.

There is a scene at the conclusion of *The Plains* in which an unnamed man inspects a set of photographs. As he questions the difference between the work of the camera and the work of the eye, asking where the visible world lies, he demands the photographer's knowledge:

But did they know that all the while the great tide of daylight was ebbing away from all they looked at and pouring through the holes in their faces into a profound darkness? If the visible world was anywhere, it was somewhere in that darkness—an island lapped by the boundless ocean of the invisible. (Murnane, *The Plains* 154)

There are two things to note about this scene as an illustration of elements of the haunted novel that are at work within *The Plains*. Firstly, the metaphor of a tide pouring and lapping at a placeless, phantasmatic ocean produces an image of spilling and is indeed an illustration of the kind of spilling first discussed in Chapter 1. Secondly, and more pertinently for this section's discussion of disembodiment, this scene contains an overt description of the eye, not just as a vanishing point, black hole, and an entry point into a total interiority, but as a fragmentation of the body proper. "Pouring through the holes in their faces" is the description of light entering the eye as it does the camera lens (Murnane,

The Plains 154). This is not a phallic entering, like the beam of light that is traditionally imagined to penetrate the eye or camera. This entering is, rather, fluid and oceanic. Light and vision pour like water and, therefore, like a tide they can move both ways, thus obscuring any clear boundaries between inside and outside. It is also an image of profound disquiet as the description of vision as a pouring-into the holes, rather than eyes, evokes not a familiar human face, but rather an abyss.⁷¹ Invasion by sight itself exemplifies the uncanny, which inhabits and blurs the boundaries of the narrative.

The equivalency that Murnane draws between the eyes of the narrator and his camera constructs a spectral body as a signifier of discontinuous, ungraspable space. According to Schneider, as first cited in Chapter 3 in relation to *2666*, the figure of a disembodied eye evokes the uncanny. In Schneider's words: "The very idea that the unseen might suddenly be seen to see, or that the eye in the socket of a body might belong to a disembodied being as much as to the socially marked body it inhabits smacks of horror, of the uncanny, of body-snatching, of voodoo, of possession" (Schneider 100). Vision and visibility introduce anxiety about bodily disintegration and its effects into the text. The above cited scene from *The Plains* deals precisely in the disembodiment that unsettles, for its representation of the faces that light pours into presents a "threatening and regressive phantasy of the 'body-in-pieces'", in which anxiety about disintegration is stimulated by the encounter with the face as an abyss (Lacan, *The Four* xviii). Haunted by their foreclosed counterpart, the familiar unified faces, the disarticulated faces of *The Plains* represent frightfulness. The image of fluid entering the faces denotes the failure of the nation of Australia to arrive into a coherent vision. It exemplifies an ongoing feedback between the hypothetical viewer behind the camera, and the land in front of them.

As this scene from *The Plains* continues, the human subject and vision itself are reduced to objects: the human face is described as merely a hole for light to enter, no different from the object of the camera. Such a description disembodies vision, by reducing the human subject to a total interior. A character describes the incorporation of the landscape into the subject: "I stare at this land now, and every glowing acre of it sinks into my own private darkness" (Murnane, *The Plains* 155). As an effect of the gaze, the character laments, "we're disappearing through the dark hole of an eye that we're not even

⁷¹ The phantasm of the face as abyss and disruption to the eyes themselves are all the more meaningful in light of the history of the eye in relation to imperialism, where ocularcentricism was instrumental in pursuits of mastery (Du Preez 430). Given the "intimate relation" between eye and the "ethnographic treatment of colonised subjects" who were not afforded proper portraits (Du Preez 431), the image of Murnane's photographers' uncontrolled reception of and entry into the spectral domain confronts colonial regimes of sight. The image is then, in effect, haunted by these politics.

aware of?’ (Murnane, *The Plains* 156). The geometry of Murnane’s camera absorbs the reader, as nothing more than light in relation to vision. While *2666* centres on Santa Teresa as its abyss, the central abyss of *The Plains* is undoubtedly an imaginary inside realm lying beyond the eye. Thematically, the symbolic encounter with the eye signals the beginning of a journey into an inner-crypt, leaving the body behind.

Significant about these motifs in *The Plains* is the ongoing threat of bodily disappearance and regress into darkness. The camera-eye enables an “expedition into the unseen world” as the eye as vanishing point swallows the light of the external world, absorbing everything in the visual field (Murnane, *The Plains* 156). Fears are evoked that the familiar plains may be “lost to sight forever” (156). An even greater fear is of false appearance and misrecognition: “Don’t be deceived. Nothing we saw today exists apart from the darkness” (Murnane, *The Plains* 156). The threatening gaze, as first analysed in Chapter 3 in relation to *2666*, is also a factor in Murnane’s representations. *The Plains’* narrative appears as a quest to locate this gaze, as it centres upon inspecting the visual standpoint of the filmmaker-narrator, who remarks: “I lifted my own camera to my face and stood with my eye pressed against the lens and my finger poised as if to expose to the film in its dark chamber the darkness that was the only visible sign of whatever I saw beyond myself” (Murnane, *The Plains* 174). The narrator, who throughout *The Plains* is centrally concerned with the power of images, ends his journey at the point of his annihilation. The scene’s solipsistic gesture – which Imre Salusinszky likens to the speeches of Satan in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667) – compounds the overall narrative’s sense of “unsettling interiority”, where we are left to wonder whether the events of the novel were simply “a reverie – perhaps taking up no more than a few seconds – in that man’s mind” (57).

Images of disembodiment and bodily fragmentation are identifiable motifs in Murnane’s work. Indeed, a scene from *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* describes a face broken down into pieces as a phantasmatic apparition in the landscape. It contains direct references to the land of Australia, naming the familiar place of Bendigo, made strange with a bodily apparition. As Murnane’s narrator puts it: “I had failed to notice that the glass I peered through for signs of my first poet was part of the same symmetry that always appeared to me in the streets of Bendigo as a pair of eyes and a nose under a frowning forehead” (Murnane, *Invisible* 2). This description of disembodiment details the semblance of a face, broken down into its parts, and so is freighted with the connotations that bodily fragmentation holds in relation to the function of encryption. As discussed in Chapter 2,

encryption is when meaning (most notably a forbidden thought) is embedded in a thing. In Murnane's *Bendigo*, the phantasm constitutes the breaking forth of some unknown prohibition in the mind of the unnamed narrator into the diegesis, which a psychoanalytic reading sees as a sign of repression behind the surface of things.

Within *The Plains*, however, the key scene of disembodiment demonstrating the haunted novel's construction is one in which the filmmaker-narrator plays out his own bodily construction and deconstruction by virtue of a metaphor through which he attempts to construct a likeness of himself by placing objects in a window:

I needed a head for my dummy. I taped a feather duster to the chair in the correct position. But I guessed that the dull tail-feathers of a bustard would be barely visible, whereas my own face was noticeably pale [...] I took a handful of crisp white sheets, moulded them loosely around the fronds of the duster, and then fixed them in place with tape. (*The Plains* 99–100)

The character's construction both bears resemblance to *The Librarian*, a 1566 painting of Giuseppe Arcimboldo (figure 2 in the thesis' introduction, p. x), and functions within the iconography of Surrealism in which unsettling copies of humanity abound. Significantly, the dummy may be identified as a figure of the uncanny as first addressed in Chapter 1, in accordance with Freud's interpretation of artificial dolls as manifestations of the uncanny insofar as some mechanical process is concealed beneath their appearance ("The Uncanny" 4).

In the above cited passage of *The Plains*, the dummy operates as a phantasm of the narrator; it simultaneously holds the semblance of the missing subject and threatens the narrator's subjectivity. Yet, not a page later, the narrator dismantles the "crude likeness" of himself (Murnane, *The Plains* 101). In the process:

The sheets of paper that had passed for my face were wrinkled and creased [...] I sat down and tried to smooth the paper [...] I stared for a long time at the pages [...] I even wrote on them—a few hesitant sentences—before I swept them to the floor and went on with my work. (Murnane, *The Plains* 101)

Mimesis entails violence, for the acts of crude making and unmaking, wrinkling and sweeping, do not do justice to the subject, who is symbolically undone and discarded. The

character's actions resemble the tearing apart of the introjected object that may only be "atoned for through the reassembling of those pieces in the self", restoring an original wholeness, the type of action that in Chapter 2 was used to illustrate the generation of a textual scene of uncertainty (Kilgour, *From* 169). The reconstruction and then deconstruction of the body plays out "a nostalgia for total insideness", prior to the "breaking of the originally cosmic body of one man" (Kilgour, *From* 10). Additionally, the character's actions resemble the process of endocryptic identification that was discussed in relation to *2666* in Chapter 3, for it also details the suffering of an object in the line of sight that plays out their distress or loss in the character's place.

Significant about the above scenes from *The Plains* is the way in which they represent through phantasms bodies regressing into the disassembling terror of objecthood, yielding "not a cadaver but an un-dead" (Maleuvre 243). Recalling that bodies serve as the site upon which public concerns are signified (Hinrichsen 115), the visual devices of these scenes may be understood as sites of signification. As conceptualised in Chapter 1, a groundless figure as a site of concealment ultimately functions as a point of national recognition. Within the filmmaker-narrator's creative work, photographing his own eye and constructing his own crude likeness, we may find "a defining moment of national aesthetic consciousness" (Soto-Crespo 451). As Foord notes (and chapter 5 shall elaborate), such "foundational" moments of national fantasy appear as part of the narrator's journey (274). As this thesis proposes, this moment of recognition is identified as the emergence of the haunted novel.

4.4 The Coloured Glass: Anamorphic vision

Insofar as vision, negative space, and emptiness are core themes in Murnane's work, functioning within phantasmatic devices that signify the uncertain space between trauma and fantasy, *The Plains'* structural linking of image and meaning renders the text as a haunted novel. As cited in Chapter 1 in reference to the concept of the phantasm, Anthony Uhlmann notes that in Murnane's work, images, particularly those that occur in fragmentary patterns, offer glimpses into meaning.⁷² The example Uhlmann discusses is the iconography of marbles and coloured glass, highlighting a scene in Murnane's *Border Districts* (2017) that likens a woman's eye to a marble, with sight and object intersected uncannily. The key concept in Uhlmann's analysis, for the purposes of this chapter's

⁷² Uhlmann is speaking at the "Another World in this One: Gerald Murnane's Fiction" conference held in Murnane's hometown of Goroke, with the author present (2017).

discussion, is his likening of Murnane's use of colour to the operation of a kaleidoscope, as a device that draws together fragments. Therein, Uhlmann notes that the references to the changing colours and light conditions found throughout the novel are suggestive of a greater search for meaning from fragments. As the uncertainty of memory is central to the envisioning of the haunted novel, this chapter's fourth section discusses passages in *The Plains* that reference the vantage point of vision as it relates to the broader matter of coherency of meaning.

There is an interplay in *The Plains* of different plains of existence, which can be identified via the application of the concept of anamorphosis, which in visual arts is a visual device that presupposes two plains of existence. In fact, according to Kate Foord's analysis of the gaze in *The Plains*, Murnane's novel would be a "project of anamorphosis at its heart", which grounds meaning in its representation of the colonised land (273). Foord emphasises that anamorphosis is a technique that makes an absence or void noticeable, both impossibly present and absent at the same time (Foord 275). The paradigmatic example of its representation in art history occurs in Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* (figure 9), in which the skull in the foreground may only be seen when the viewer tilts their viewing perspective to a different angle. This technique is significant for consideration as its indeterminate presence can be understood as signifying both an impasse of speech or representation – something that in Chapter 2 was highlighted as meaningful – and an ungraspable landscape.



Figure 9 Hans Holbein *The Ambassadors* 1533

The Plains is centrally interested in the impossible task of locating or bringing forth the unseen into the visual field by looking at the world from a different angle, as part of its seeming reminiscence on Australia and its literature as intangible entities (as suggested by Wayne Macauley in the 2012 edition's introduction). For example, in the following passage one notes a division of the land into two domains: "anyone surrounded from childhood by an abundance of level land must dream alternately of exploring two landscapes—one continually visible but never accessible and the other always invisible even though one crossed and recrossed it daily" (Murnane, *The Plains* 45). This discussion continues throughout the novel, for example, in a later scene the narrator details a man and young man who fail to comprehend their individual place:

The two are often compared with dwellers in neighbouring regions who try to map all the plains they might find necessary or all they would be content to know, and who agree that each may include parts of the other's border in his own map, but who find at last that their two charts cannot be brought together neatly. (Murnane, *The Plains* 115)

In the above passage the two representations cannot be seen together from a single perspective, in a manner reminiscent of the pictorial space of Holbein's painting, where the skull in the foreground cannot be seen from the same angle of perception as the rest of the work. The narrative searches for the vantage point from which the nation shall become visible. As Foord notes, Murnane "satirises the Australian fantasy of nation" (2) and, in doing so, emblematises the dilemma of an intangible national identity.

Likewise, Foord notes that Murnane's tarrying with images is part of an attempt to understand a context from a different point of view. This context, Foord goes on, is more of a psychical space pertaining to cultural memory than a physical space pertaining to Australia as a real location. Of the filmmaker-narrator, Foord points out:

As he embarks on his journey of exploration, he believes that he can make a film that will reveal an image of the constitutive element of the plains, the principle of coherence that makes sense of all the disparate and inchoate elements of this grand country he has made it his task to explore. (277)

Foord's analysis highlights the role of the filmmaker-narrator as analogous to that of a detective or seer, a narrative figure who seeks to reveal truth.

Moreover, the following scene of *The Plains* highlights a spatial sense as it evokes and involves distance. In it, only by stepping back or standing in the right location will insight into some grander meaning be attained. This diegetic spatiality suggests that the vantage point of the gaze itself is, in the novel, a device that is deployed consciously. The narrator explains:

I heard of a scheme for building a system of indoor aquaria and stocking each tank with fish of one species only but arranging the whole so that viewers might see, through numerous thicknesses of pellucid glass and intervals of clouded water and images of clouded water in the faintly clouded glass, multiform patterns of two colours that mattered. (Murnane, *The Plains* 52)

Objects such as the fish tanks in the scene above take on a new life as objects that may activate sight and in-sight, and ironically offer the viewer the prospect of a coherent vision by looking through fragments. The characters in *The Plains* (typically referred to as "plainsmen") are particularly attuned to vision: their scheme here presupposes a gaze and offers to it the perfect alignment of objects through which it will see into further plains.

As Murnane's narrator looks for new vantage points through the use of fragments of glass, the novel makes use of the visual field and the notion of the vantage point as sites where the artist may activate memory, insight or revelation through visual intervention. The narrator laments: "I had sometimes thought of *The Interior* as a few scenes from a much longer film that could only be seen from a vantage point that I knew nothing of" (Murnane, *The Plains* 86). This writing, which is informed by the gaze, utilises the embodiment of the reader and disembodiment of vision as a part of its narration, in the sense that the writing evokes the experiences of both three-dimensional space and viewership. As a result, objects such as coloured glass may be conceptualised as a means through which the elements of the haunted novel guide the reader towards an encounter with an unknown memory. A key idea at work here is that depictions of objects and vision are a figuration of grief, which occur as the narrator searches to locate himself and his community within the visual field.

4.5 Horizonites and Haremen: Colour as Cryptonym

This section performs a study of the persistence and repetition of significant colours in *The Plains*, putting forth that motifs of colour stand as cryptonyms of an unspoken wounding experience. In approaching this element of Murnane's work from a psychoanalytic standpoint, attention is drawn to the emergence of the haunted novel from aspects of visuality. Leading into this interrogation of colour in *The Plains*, it is important to recall the idea that a beloved object, such as a photograph, can act as a cover for something else that is unspeakable. In this way, the act of taking photographs can be identified as a pervading narrative procedure in *The Plains* that indicates the existence of an unspoken wound. As Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok note, the strange and idyllic afterlife of the object arises as a survivor from some form of trauma or catastrophe ("A Poetics" 142). Indeed, *The Plains'* filmmaker-narrator's action of photographing his own eye in search of the lost object is akin to the mechanism of identification formerly discussed in the analysis of *Testamento geométrico* in Chapter 3, where the encounter of a character of 2666 with his double both decentres him and communicates his alienation. An unresolved crisis is thus signified by the persistence of a beloved object in the haunted novel, which paradoxically becomes both an emblem and symptom that gestures towards a cover or repression that veils and silences a painful separation or loss.

The concept of encryption as it relates to objects, vision and fantasy indicates that all subjects are implicated in each other's traumas. Following the analysis of encryption as a cross-contextual haunting of vestiges passed between places, as conducted in Chapter 3, many scenes in Murnane's novel can be identified as examples of meta-textual narration that reflect on the matter of memory's movement from place to place, constituting a shared participation on memory. For example, at one point the narrator of *The Plains* ponders how "some unique perception of a private terrain might suggest in another light that the artist had failed to see the scattered vestiges of what passed for another country with another observer" (Murnane 124). The plains are, after all, a dreamscape of familiar colours and shapes that turn strange on Murnane's canvas: "The painter said that a man could dream of nothing stranger than the simplest image that occurred to another dreamer" (*The Plains* 88). Following on from this note on collective dreaming, the paragraphs that follow address the role of spatial metaphor in the writing of haunting re-emergences, conceptualising it as key to the narration of memory as it relates to place.

At one point the narrator of *The Plains* tells the story of a painter who sets out to paint "the landscape of dreams" (Murnane 87). This scene of *The Plains* is reminiscent of

the passage in *2666*, as detailed in Chapter 3, in which the colours of Edwin Johns's paintings are described in a way that relates them to both the landscape and the character's suffering. In *The Plains*, the narrator states: "Viewers and critics saw his layers of gold and white as a reduction of the plains to their essential elements and his swirls of grey and pale green as hints of what the plains might yet become. For him, of course, they were unmistakable landmarks of his private territory" (Murnane, *The Plains* 86). Murnane's notion of private territory, as envisioned in the above passage, involves colours that stand as cryptonyms, that is, as signs holding private meaning. Indeed, as Murnane's text elaborates, the artist puts into his work "symbols—close approximations of forms common to both the plains and his own land" (Murnane, *The Plains* 88). The nameless narrator of *The Plains* can only guess, as is also the case in *2666*, at the meaning that lies behind appearances; the landscapes evoked in the artwork of the painter are unmistakably strange and unsettled.

As the haunted novel is envisioned in the phantasmatic oscillation between fantasy and trauma that encrypts a forbidden remembering, this theory can be illustrated by the narrative device of a story-within-a-story that occurs in *The Plain's* first chapter. In a key scene, the narration establishes a lasting phantasmatic connection between colour and the fictional history of the plains. The narrator begins to recount the plains' history of conflict between "the Horizonites and the Haremen", whom the narrator describes as rival plainsmen with factional colours, who: "might comment on my wearing of two colours and ask me what traces of the famous dispute still survived in my remote homeland" (Murnane, *The Plains* 16).⁷³ Colour within Murnane's text indicates a lingering quarrel, in which the argument between plainsmen is emblematised in the duality of "blue-green and faded gold" (*The Plains* 16). As Murnane's narrator bluntly specifies: "the colours [is] the modern name for all the complex rivalries of the past century" (*The Plains* 17). Colour is therefore an overtly stated mnemonic device within the fictional place of the plains.

Colour, henceforth, gains within Murnane's text the quality of a cryptonym, which in Chapter 2 was defined as a "magic word" that contains and preserves a secret or "undiscoverable place" (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf xi*). Murnane's writing is cryptographic in the way it suggests that foundational phantasms are contained and

⁷³ An echo of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) occurs in Murnane's story of the political conflict among the plainsmen, specifically in relation to Swift's narration of the history of conflict between Lilliput and Blefuscu. As a result, *The Plains* appears to hold a similar textual status as both travelogue (the outsider-insider perspective in travel writing) and social satire (literary fiction as allegorical commentary of the socio-historical realm).

brought forth in the subsequent descriptions of colour throughout the novel. Colours attain the character of “expressive traces” that bear concealed references to trauma (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf* lxix). By approaching the scene by reading it through the lens of cryptonymy, colour in this example may be pinpointed as an area within the work of literature in which silence is both denoted and granted the possibility of expression (Abraham and Torok, *The Wolf*, lxvi). Within Murnane’s narrative, the history of the plains, as well as the plains themselves, are constructed as resistant to interpretation and intelligibility. This resistance is key to the connotation of unspeakable secrets lying beneath the surface of the diegesis. In turn, the colours of Murnane’s text come to stand as phantasmatic symptoms, as if an individual character were being haunted by ghosts that “lie beyond the scope” of the narrative itself (Rashkin 32, 40).

In addition, the metaphor of the crypt provides a prompt for the interpretation of literature. Working with the theory that trauma’s secrets are readable in their symptoms, among literature’s signifying silences and gaps, colour as a visual symbol becomes identifiable as a site of incorporation. In other words, memory is buried within the cryptonym, which, when deployed, inscribes the creative work with the air of that which “we do not yet know of our lived historical relation to events of our times” (Felman and Laub xx). In *The Plains*’ deployment of colour as a cryptonym, a silence beyond the scope of the narrative’s surface is being evoked. Therefore, the drama of inscription identified in *The Plains*, which involves the colours of the competing factions of the Horizonites and Haremen, can be understood as the narrator’s condition of being troubled by unspeakable secrets, which turn from “the external world of lost desires to the internal world of pathological identifications” (Eng 1276). In this sense, the character becomes haunted by their own failed attempts at a coherent interpretation or vision.

The story of the Horizonites conjures a phantasm of colour just as the land itself does, in the sense that the phantasm is an image of the mind and an evocative element of visualisation that exists both within and beyond the confines of Murnane’s text (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 5). The Horizonites explain their philosophy as an imaginary realm: “the blue-green haze as though it was itself a land—a plain of the future” (Murnane, *The Plains* 29). Meanwhile, a competing group presents paintings of a rival philosophy, one of them titled “*Decline and Fall of the Empire of Grass*”, in this manner seeking to represent the landscape in “shapes of things quite unconnected with the plains”, things specified as imprecise artefacts or ruins (Murnane, *The Plains* 30). Furthermore, vision’s vantage point is evoked in Murnane’s text repeatedly, for example, when the narrator describes

“commentators [who] could point to a score of details that seemed to comprise a scene of grandiose desolation – and then, stepping back, could see once again a painting of plants and soil” (*The Plains* 30). Significantly, this scene of *The Plains* evokes the visual device of anamorphosis. In the context of this discussion of encryption and the phantasm, the anamorphic manifestation of a phantasm from another plain, which becomes apparent by tilting the viewer’s relation to it, describes a relationship between the reader and the resistance of the text to convey meaning. Thus, the anamorphic vision is precisely a phantasm in the sense that it belongs to a different plain caught between the visible and invisible.

Within Murnane’s narration, the colours function kaleidoscopically to bring together fragmented appearances. The colours re-emerge overtly on buttonholes, gaudy silk banners, tiny enamelled pins and silken flags (Murnane, *The Plains* 35–6). For example, Murnane’s narrator describes a polo game in which “the dual colours of the horsemen hinted every moment at some pattern about to appear out of the dusty field” amid disturbing quietness (*The Plains* 37). Yet soon the scene changes into an interior as the narrator begins to imagine an isolated landowner in “his book-lined rooms [...] dreaming of a plain that ought to have been” (*The Plains* 41). The shift towards a labyrinthine interior and dual atmosphere of enclosure signified by both the rooms and the dream is evocative of a site of encryption: within the dreaming of “a plain that ought to have been”, a greater, deeper melancholic lament is literally directed towards the very foundation of the Australian nation (Murnane, *The Plains* 41). As the narrator of *The Plains* continues: “they had talked of separating the plains from Australia when they themselves were already marooned on their great grassy islands impossibly far from the mainland” (Murnane, *The Plains* 41). In this description the division between the blue-green and the golds presents an image of melancholic fragmentation that reflects on space as an evolving, truncated and incomplete nation. This is an unfettered illustration of the “unborn” nation’s formlessness in the haunted novel (Soto-Crespo 461), as formerly theorised in Chapter 1, as a ripe figuration for the painting of memory.

From the perspective of cryptographic reading, colour serves as a cryptonym in the sense that it stands in the place of a silence or void. This cryptographic use of colour becomes manifest as the narration of *The Plains* continues: “Inner Australians proposed that the whole continent should be one nation with one culture” (Murnane 42). As such, what began as a short anecdote about colours emerges as a story-within-a-story that reflects indirectly on the actual history of land rights in Australia. These imagined groups

are described as disappeared and collapsed; the plainsmen choose to appear as “citizens of a non-existent nation” (Murnane, *The Plains* 44). Behind the symbols of the secret societies of the plainsmen is the absence of a nation that never arrived. Foord notes that in relation to a fantasy called the “Great Australian Emptiness”, Murnane directs us to confront a nameless void, a fantasy and foundational void upon which national myths are built (281). Subsequent descriptions of colour in Murnane’s text, which would normally be familiar, are perceived as estranged, doubled and repeated, and as leading back to an unseen history. As a phantasm of the past, the blue-greens and golds can then be read as manifestations of the haunted novel working within *The Plains*. Their symbolism stands for the unresolved experience of forming nationhood and truncated history in its melancholy incompleteness, as it is communicated through a visual device.

4.6 Mapping Semblances: Phantasms of Absent Nationhood

The Plains is a novel that is meta-textually concerned with the beguiling nature of images, semblances and false appearances as they relate to the landscape, which is in turn connected to the matter of the coherency of meaning, imagination, and memory of colonial land. As discussed in Chapter 2, memory may indeed cry out unexpectedly from images and it is in this sense that the haunted novel’s elements, as put forth in this thesis, can express what Cathy Caruth calls “unclaimed experience” (*Unclaimed*), that is, memory that is still in transit and unclaimed, yet evoked, by *The Plains*. As also noted in Chapter 2, *The Plains* is populated by branching side stories (a characteristic that relates to the motif of the labyrinth and its cryptic connotations). This attribute is acknowledged in the novel meta-textually, for example, in Murnane saying that “glosses and footnotes surround the trickles of actual text” (*The Plains* 138). As previously cited, *The Plains* opens with a statement of the narrator’s mission to search “for anything in the landscape that seemed to hint at some elaborate meaning behind appearances”, an opening that branches off into a discussion of the history of the plains (Murnane 3). Narrative concealments, such as branching side stories and fragmentary visual oscillations between object and body, write and voice the unspoken crypt of post-colonial Australia. Insofar as this thesis’ theory of the haunted novel seeks to recognise how literature conceals forbidden knowledge, this section’s textual analysis of *The Plains* attempts to interrogate the way in which meaning cries out unexpectedly from behind the novel’s images.

Not unlike the manner in which *2666* represents incomprehensible space through bodily distortions, as examined in the previous chapter, a reading of *The Plains* similarly

shows that when a familiar landscape becomes estranged, it communicates an underlying resistance to intelligibility. Indeed, the topography of Murnane's writing brings spatial expression to "unclaimed experience" (Caruth, *Unclaimed*). An example from *The Plains* that evokes latent phantasms is found in the following passage, in which one of the characters named in the novel as a "landowner" speaks in the following terms:

We're all plainsmen, always claiming that everything in sight is a landmark of something beyond it. But do we know what our bodies are leading us towards? If I made maps of all your skins. I mean, of course, projections like Mercator's. If I showed them all to you, would you recognise your own? I might even point out to you marks like tiny scattered towns or clumps of timber on plains you've never thought of, but what could you tell me about those places? (Murnane 63)

In this landowner's speech, the metaphor of the body turned into map, that is to say, into a visual and spatial figure, is an image that encourages the reading of the body in the novel as indeed related to space. A phrase such as "the boundaries of true nations were fixed in the souls of men" (Murnane, *The Plains* 44) suggests that the crypt may wander from place to place, moved along, concealed in the body. The narrator aspires to reveal the landscape, a photographic metaphor, which contemplates the body's interiority at the same time as contemplating vision's disembodiment. Recurring instances of uncanny body metaphors increasingly seem entangled with the novels' grander reflection on the resistance to meaning.

In another passage of *The Plains*, a young man explains his theory of how landowners of the plains prefer their houses decorated with greater detail the further they are located from the centre of the plains. A landowner concurs with this theory, speaking of his experience late at night inside the "longest galleries [...] of the vast halls of his mansion" (Murnane, *The Plains* 21). The narrator describes the landowner's observing objects in the house:

At such times he felt obscurely that the appearance and the exact position of every painting and statue and chest and the arrangement of collections of silverware and porcelain and even of the butterflies and shells and pressed flowers under their dusty glass had been determined by forces of great moment. He saw the countless objects in his home as a few visible points on some invisible graph of stupendous

complexity [...] he peered at the repeated motifs in a tapestry [...] he stared at the intricate brilliance of a chandelier and guessed at the presence of sunlight in the memories of people he himself scarcely remembered. (Murnane, *The Plains* 21–22)

This vision of the sprawling, encyclopaedic collection of objects as motifs upon an impossible graph generates an atmosphere of confusing vastness of space and transference of memory. Notably, collection, classification and display are each specifically tropes of empire that are typically explored in colonial discourse. Indeed, the objects recall the contents of a cabinet of curiosity, a reminder of colonialism (Olalquiaga “Transitional Object”) with the scene appearing to reflect on the broken dreams of mastery.⁷⁴ The reference to the phantasmatic visual device of an invisible graph creates a feeling of excess and incomprehensibility of space. It is precisely the narration’s description of visual and spatial attributes as linked to memory that lends itself towards a demonstration of the function of the haunted novel working within Murnane’s text. Indeed, *The Plains* communicates through visible signs of ungrasped, second hand memory, which, rather than received in words, can only be guessed as it is glimpsed within disruptions of light.

Scenes of labyrinthine sprawling and complexity, such as the one above, construct an air of ungraspable space and unmappable visuality, as a feeling of the phantasmatic emerges. As emphasised earlier in this chapter, scenes in which a character’s body is buried, and their ability to perceptually locate themselves within space is truncated, are interpreted as freighted with the geometry of the crypt, which is, as defined in Chapter 2, a transmitted figure of collated experience. As such, the function of mirrors and dreams, as highlighted within a citation of Borges’s *Labyrinths* in Chapter 3, relates to vision insofar as it is representative of cultural anxieties about indeterminate national space. Threatening absences and ominous looks in the narrative function as signifiers of a concealment that occurs where words have failed. To the extent that Borges and Murnane share an interest in time and the interior-external divide, *Labyrinths* employs phantasms of fictional space, where depth, interiority and multiplications play out a symbolic division and concealment of the subject, inasmuch as *The Plains* deploys a confusing spatiality that reflects failed memory and the uncertainty of the future.

⁷⁴ As Olalquiaga notes, “European curiosity cabinets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” where the goods of colonial expansion were exhibited, “mark[ed] the onset of a desire to grasp and control” (“Transitional Object”). The objects, presented by Murnane in a way that the subject cannot visually or spatially comprehend, are haunted by these associations producing a sense of a thwarted colonial gaze.

In *The Plains*, Murnane repeatedly describes places of claustrophobic and indeterminate depth. In fact, the novel opens onto a scene overtly set “among the labyrinths of saloon bars”, inside which the narrator sits in a deep leather armchair in a “cavernous” hotel sealed by venetian blinds (Murnane, *The Plains* 6). As the text continues, the imagery of depth descends further into dreams and visualisations. In a key scene, the narrator says:

The same landowner began to describe other influences that he felt late at night in the more remote wings of his house. He sensed sometimes the lingering persistence of forces that had failed—of a history that had almost come into being. He found himself looking into corners for the favourite pieces of the unborn children of marriages that were never made. (Murnane, *The Plains* 22)

The nocturnal setting and the corners filled with impossible contents establish a depth that manifests the claustrophobic enclosure of persistent history. The lingering of forces that are indicative of a failed history of some kind, communicated here in a phantasmatic scene of interiority, serves as an example of the kind of latent encounter that in Chapter 2 was fathomed as a sign of the haunted novel. Within this scene there is a form of “missed experience”, the kind that Caruth associates with trauma, that comes back later in its full immediacy, often in the form of fateful visualisation (*Unclaimed* 62). As it was also demonstrated in Chapter 2, the basis for phantasmatic visions is a missed, unexperienced and unknown event (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 62). In the above scene of *The Plains*, the aspects of the haunted novel lying within the text may be understood as a configuration of “metaphors for a wounded historical experience” (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 12, 14), which are signified by Murnane’s narrator’s vision of lingering presences buried in the corners of the house.

The Plains serves in this way as an example of a text in which the characters seek to depict, record, piece together, or otherwise bring to representation that which evades interpretation, playing out an unsatisfied search for meaning through visual devices. In another scene of *The Plains* the landowners try to make a graph, working with pencils and paper: “They soon agreed that every colour should denote the same cultural vector in each of their charts” (Murnane, *The Plains* 23). Map making is particularly relevant to consider here in light of the abovementioned discussion of the activity of tracing latent

representations.⁷⁵ As previously put forth in Chapter 2, one identifiable element of the haunted novel is the narrative strategy of instructing the reader about the abyss of repetition, thus communicating the idea of an ungraspable landscape through the complexity and incoherency of scattered symbolic semblances. To the extent that such symbols indicate uncontained and uncharted history that cannot be put into words, the activity of the characters of *The Plains*, as they create visual charts of signifying colours to communicate ungrasped meaning, function as a sign of the haunted novel working within Murnane's text. As Caruth argues, when it comes to unclaimed experience, history and memory are "never simply one's own" as "we are implicated in each other's traumas" (*Unclaimed* 24). It is relevant to consider in relation to the depiction of Murnane's characters working to relay individual experience to one another. As part of this thesis' ongoing conceptualisation of the haunted novel, this section has conceived *The Plains* as informed by the unseen history of the time period in which it is written (such as the unsettled, colonial uncanny noted by McInerney) bringing representation to it in the form of phantasms. As such, trauma's latency is encrypted in narrative as the memory of others.

4.7 Multiplication as Concealment: Phantasms of Off-Screen Space

How can the unknown be written? This question, as formulated in the theorisation of the crypt conducted in Chapter 2, positions the haunted novel within genres of writing of uncontainable and uncertain memory. In *The Plains*, it is the fragmentary signification procedures of the haunted novel's narrative devices that draw meaning together. Following Chapter 2's description of *The Plains* as a novel haunted by the tension between out-of-frame and unseen events, the filmmaker-narrator's truncated and unfulfilled contemplation of the landscape's deceptiveness, darkness and concealments can be analysed as an example of phantasmatic visuality. In this section, the textual analysis of *The Plains* addresses the emergence of unresolved melancholy within the novel, thus envisioning the haunted novel by tracing a space of incompleteness.

There are passages throughout *The Plains* that visually signify the haunting of the plainsmen by their own unfulfilled searches for meaning. As the novel's central plot revolves around Murnane's narrator's grappling with the deceptiveness of images, struggling to piece together a coherent whole, he is portrayed in the midst of an endeavour haunted by the colonial history of visuality (Du Preez 430). Indeed, the narrator's recurring

⁷⁵ See Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (1987), a novel that also charts the experience of a journey through inner Australia, while linking map making to the preservation of personal and cultural memory.

attempts to make sense of the landscape reflects the elusiveness of memory to intelligibility. His journey is indicative of the way creative writing that involves memory as a theme often entails a process of “working through” (Lazzara 124). A key scene of *The Plains* that employs such elements of the haunted novel is the following, which describes a discussion between several landowners. One landowner begins to remember lines from a fictional poem: “‘A Parasol at Noon’—a neglected masterpiece; one of the greatest romantic poems to come out of the plains” (Murnane, *The Plains* 64). The poem is said to contain a scene in which a young woman is seen distorted “swimming in heat haze” in the distance of the plains (Murnane, *The Plains* 65). The landowner remarks:

That scene is the *only* scene as I recall the poem. Two hundred stanzas on a woman seen from a distance. But of course she’s hardly mentioned. It’s the strange twilight around her that matters—the other atmosphere under the parasol. (Murnane, *The Plains* 65, original emphasis)

In the tale about “A Parasol at Noon”, encryption and concealment occur amid the multiplication of stanzas, and the negative space that frames the human subject. The distorted image of the woman in the above scene presents a phantasm of an ongoing process of loss within a “dismembered” landscape of memory, the stanzas resembling a “field of citations” as noted earlier in Chapter 1 (Richard, “The Insubordination” 1, 2). The woman’s solipsistic presence – alone in the distance, far away from the landowner, surrounded by stanzas – somewhat resembles the image of the crypt previously shown in Figure 5. The landowner’s ability to locate the woman buried in the poem is foreclosed; the disrupted gaze cannot focus on her. The description of the scene as dim, hazed, and in twilight emphasises the unclear visibility that frustrates the plainsmen.

The importance of the empty space around the woman’s figure is noted by Kate Foord (275), who, in a psychoanalytic discussion of women in *The Plains*, inspects the text for “masculinist fantasies of nation” (273). She identifies that, while the novel’s nationals (the plainsmen) “live in a hermetically sealed world” in which “any woman is merely one of several types of objects”, the fantasy is ruptured when the narrator “comes into proximity to his own [...] constitutive emptiness” as a modern subject (Foord 273). That is, when the narrator finally turns the lens on himself in the novel’s final lines. Notably, the landowners remark that their thoughts about the woman emerge in the “dim alcoves of libraries” (Murnane, *The Plains* 65). Their sight is “mediated and contaminated”, words used by

Andreas Huyssen in theorising the representation of burial chambers of the past (15). Their visualisations of the woman and parasol are like magic lanterns that float across a backcloth (Castle 30). The parasol, which holds a strange atmosphere around the young woman's body, serves as the image of a crypt, that is, it functions as a phantasmatic surround, caught between visibility and invisibility, both housing and concealing a body, a ghostly figure brimming with taboo connotations about the cultural memory of the colonised territory.

Furthermore, the discussions of colour and light by the landowners in Murnane's novel evoke questions about the seen and unseen, the visible and invisible, which compound the sense of uncertain landscape in *The Plains*. The landowner's description of the fictional poem continues:

And as he walks slowly towards her he sees this aura, this globe of luminous air, under the parasol, which was silk, of course, and a pale yellow or green, and translucent. He never quite distinguishes her features in the glow. And he asks impossible questions: which light is more real—the harsh sunlight outside or the mild light around the woman? isn't the sky itself a sort of parasol? (Murnane, *The Plains* 65)

The image of the woman that emerges is phantasmatic in the construction of its unclear visibility and substance, a representation that furthers an overall mood of concealment and mystery. Another landowner theorises: "The parasol is the screen that each of us wants to keep between the real world and the object of his love" (Murnane, *The Plains* 67). As such, the expansion of the metaphor of the parasol heightens the feeling of a landscape that is ungraspable. The interplay of colour and light produces an image of concealment with cryptonymic connotations. The plains of the Interior are imagined as insulated and surrounded within the sky that is also a parasol and a cover. *The Plains*, as suggested in Chapter 2, is haunted by the tension of space that hovers between the seen and the unseen. The atmospheric haze, similar to the lingering particulate of a disaster, bears the impact of an unclaimed scene that has returned in an aftermath of scattered vestiges and deceptive signifiers.

Murnane's library passageways in *The Plains* evoke the enclosure of a labyrinth and the replication of mirrors, producing a feeling of disorientating and ungraspable spatiality. In one scene, the narrator describes a room in which carpets become like deep sand and

mirrors, in which the walker is enclosed by darkness: “What did such poets discover in those palatial houses each night, walking ankle-deep in those gold carpets the colour of unlikely sand beneath mirrors prolonging the unsubtle hue of framed landscapes?” (Murnane 73). In the heightened atmosphere of uncertain space in *The Plains*, the character’s description or recollection of the house interior is indistinguishable from something imagined in a dream.⁷⁶ Indeed, it would appear as another metaphor for the phantasmagoria; the dark room is reminiscent of the backcloth upon which magic lanterns would project their illusions (Castle 30). In both the depths of the mirror and the depths of dreaming the look of the other precipitates the fall into division, multiplication and dismemberment that troubles the body of the viewing subject. Recalling the analysis of labyrinthine multiplications of mirrors and claustrophobic spaces in *2666*, as conducted in Chapter 3, this scene from *The Plains* similarly illustrates the concept of the haunted novel, as a textual, narrative site where vision brings forth the spaces and meanings of uncertain memory.

Moreover, at points *The Plains* turns in on itself kaleidoscopically. The narrator who fears being “beguiled by images” contemplates time in a circuitous library of the novels of plainmen whose volumes contain chapters in parenthesis and footnotes, which he suspects will describe: “a man not unlike myself speculating endlessly about the plains but never setting foot on them” (Murnane, *The Plains* 137, 138). This scene has connotations of multiplication but also the fear of burial and of the double. As the library’s lights dim and the titles of the volumes lengthen, the afternoon ends and all that is left is images taken from of a single, unknown vantage point until nothing remains but the narrator’s face in wavering light. The seen and the unseen feature together as the scene’s central elements. In this way, *The Plains* appears to demonstrate the haunted novel’s space of signification, in which the seen and unseen are related together within the evocation of an indeterminate national space.

Forms of spilling in *The Plains* signify a memory that has been overwhelmed. Figures of the labyrinth, for example, may be taken as a sign of the haunted novel, emerging from the uncanny’s telling of a narrative. The labyrinth signifies memory that is not yet settled, understood, known, “nor assimilated into full cognition, events in the

⁷⁶ *The Plains*’ oneiric imagery of deep sand in corridors late at night bears a strong resemblance to Borges’s description of a prisoner’s dreamscape: “I dreamt there was a grain of sand on the floor of the prison. Indifferent, I slept again; I dreamt I awoke and that on the floor there were two grains of sand. I slept again; I dreamt that the grains of sand were three. They went on multiplying in this way until they filled the prison and I lay dying beneath that hemisphere of sand” (*Labyrinths* 206).

excess of our frames of reference” (Felman and Laub 5 cited in López Sánchez 47). A section of *The Plains*, about “Time, the Opposite Plain”, describes a patron’s theory of time that is described as incomplete, vague and ambiguous, without agreed meaning. It notes how the more zealous patrons “have made their private labyrinths of Time the settings for their poetry and prose and for those newer works (some hopelessly fragmented, others almost unbearably repetitive) that still await acceptable names” (Murnane, *The Plains* 119). This failure to find a proper name would indicate a melancholic truncation of the works, not quite born yet already hypertrophied. As cited in Chapter 1: “the great works on Time spilled out from the ranks of shelves once thought ample to accommodate them” (Murnane, *The Plains* 121). This image, in which time spills from library shelves, appears as the phantasm of incomplete and unfulfilled nation formation. Not unlike the Borgesian labyrinth’s status as a metaphor for the passage to nationhood, as Jeremy Adelman notes (1), Murnane’s spilling library shelves similarly play out the dilemma of an Australian journey to nationhood.

A scene that illustrates the meaning of this spilling-outwards image – as the overwhelming of the individual’s ability to make coherent sense of their position within physical and cultural space – is found in the novel in a description of men who are in the process of interpreting the world around them as an act of passing along knowledge:

The man calmly studying the tints and textures of his simply decorated tiles allows that the full meaning of what lies seemingly within reach of his hands or within range of his eyes rests with another man who runs his fingers over the surfaces of tiled walls warm from the afternoon sun of still another man who comes near to interpreting a conjunction of fading sunlight and glowing colours but suspects that the truth of such a moment must lie with a man beyond him who sees and feels and wonders further. (Murnane, *The Plains* 117–118)

In this scene, the number of men multiply in a sentence that itself runs long. Their actions are performances through which they trace the appearances of the world around them. This depiction of tracing recalls the idea that finding “the associations between things” involves tracing of “their lost or hidden histories” (Pile 6), as formerly cited in Chapter 1. Thus, the characters’ tracing of their setting in the above scene from *The Plains* directs attention to shifting space, fragments, and “angles of perception” (Pile 14). *The Plains’* narration connects the body and its perception with the haunting of place.

The phantasm functions as a point of tension, where the haunted novel's reader's encounter with vision and threatening fantasies of bodily disintegration communicates an uncertain anxiety, which is suggestive of the encounter with a collective, national dream that haunts. The filmmaker-narrator of *The Plains*, too, is broken into pieces, as he describes himself as only able to see the otherwise invisible due to his status as a "scattered kind" (Murnane 78). Elsewhere in the novel, the narration speaks of "a plainsman who was compelled to multiply the appearance of his monogram or some novel choice of colours [...] marking the limits of the territory that he recognised" (Murnane, *The Plains* 49). Attention is once again drawn to the indeterminate space around the fragmented subject. Murnane's *The Plains*, not unlike Borges's *Labyrinths*, duplicates its subjects, thus multiplying the number of plainsmen in a manner that recalls the procedure of multiplication experienced in dreaming. The wholeness of the social body is disrupted by the duplication of selves in dreams, introducing psychosis as parts of the face, such as the eye, are closed in. As the crisis of the scattered narrator sits within the description of an uncertain narrative space, which appears to oscillate between fantasy and trauma, the novel's active disruption of identity is communicated as an ongoing state of being in the world. In the following and final section of this chapter, the multiplication and fragmentation of the self, as represented in *The Plains*, is discussed in terms of spatial angles of perception in order to illustrate how the construction of fractured space contributes in the haunted novel to establish an uncertain ground for cultural memory.

4.8 Deframing Vision: The Phantasm of Murnane's Fractured Space

Extreme close-ups and impossible vantage points generate an air of ghostly truncation and troubled visibility in *The Plains*. The visual device of deframing and its resulting fragmentary visualisations, which Chapter 3 discussed as a characteristic of the haunted novel evident in *2666*, again serves in this chapter as an allegory for the absence of a coherent national identity and collective memory. Through the textual analysis of several scenes of *The Plains*, this section demonstrates the phantasmatic fracturing of space within the novel, identifying these visual interventions as sites in which uncertainty is being encrypted. As defined in Chapter 3, the concept of deframing refers to the visual device by virtue of which truncations are made to the visibility of an interior space through angles, objects, reflections and temporal duration, with the effect of inducing a disembodied visuality (Bonitzer 199–200). Particularly noteworthy in relation to *The Plains*, as a novel centrally concerned about the representation of contested land, is Bonitzer's discussion of missing pieces or gaps

located in between representations, which he refers to as the *terra incognita* or unknown land, and which calls for illumination (199). Evocations of the hidden and disruptions to our familiar perception of distances produce apprehension, in which the incomplete space is freighted with meaning.

A scene of *The Plains* that utilises disturbed spatiality arises when the narrator constructs a dummy in crude likeness of himself. In a kind of deframing, the interior space is blocked from sight by a reflection of sky. The image responds to the spatial movement of the narrator:

The window, enclosing only a sort of twilight, showed nothing of the room behind it—only an image of the sky above me [...] the image of the sky around it changed with every step I took. I had been watching the blurred whiteness that stood for my own face—the blank paper I had fastened to the dummy of myself. (Murnane 100–101)

In this scene, the objects the narrator uses to construct the dummy in his likeness – the crinkled sheets of paper – are reflected phantasmatically. A misrecognition between sky and face results from the vantage point of a cramped interior. By communicating the experiences of disembodiment and displacement, the scene reflects on nationhood, something that becomes visible when a phantasm of twilight or “blurred whiteness” takes the place of words.

The Plains is particularly cognizant of angles of perception, and how playfulness with the three-dimensionality of space can reflect on the task of recouping lost memory or locating the space of the ungraspable nation. In a scene in which the novel’s narrator describes workmen in the plains, he introduces the idea of the object-fragment as providing a new means of seeing:

Workmen on many-storeyed scaffolding prised fragments of glass from leaded windows and, for all the urgency of their task, paused to look out on some quarter of the plains through the formless chip of colour that might once have completed a symbol of fame. (Murnane, *The Plains* 54–55)

Similarly, in another scene, the narrator describes his own artistic interventions:

I would stand at the window, holding up against the glass a painting [...] trying to see some detail of the land outside as though it was suspended in the translucent swathes of faded paint. Sometimes I cut a piece from the paper so that a distant view of actual plains appeared at a significant point of a painting. (Murnane, *The Plains* 96)

In the above examples, object-fragments are utilised as makeshift framing devices by the characters in order to attain a new way of seeing. In seeking to find a coherent vision within truncated space, *The Plains* carries with the notion of unseen space as something that may make a new view possible, drawing in and directing the reader or spectator in the process.

Deframing is apparent, too, in *The Plains*' descriptions of women. In a passage where the narrator describes a woman looking at a garden receding into the plains that only she sees, he states in parenthesis that "(Her body came between the camera and whatever she looked at)" (*The Plains* 98). In other words, it is her body's relation to the camera that complicates our ability to see clearly. *The Plains*' narrator goes on:

Her figure was never quite distinct from the shadowy after-images of whatever I had been reading. Alone in the distance she might have been the woman of three generations before who had been addressed each day for fifteen years in a long letter that was never delivered. (Murnane, *The Plains* 95)

The narrator describes the act of watching the elusive woman. Most significant about this scene, for the purpose of this chapter's analysis, is the way it morphs into an instance of the gaze being returned back onto the viewer: "the woman turned her face fully to the camera [...] She was looking at whoever observed her as though the thing she sought might lie in that direction" (Murnane, *The Plains* 98–99). There is here a reminiscence of Bonitzer's description of a woman staring "wide-eyed with horror at a sight that she alone sees" (199), which was formerly cited in Chapter 3 to interrogate *2666*'s construction of a scene of uncertainty. As such, the figure of this shadowy woman in *The Plains*, indistinguishable from an after-image, represents an emergent phantasm whose presence compounds a narrative of unease about an address from the past that has never arrived.

One of the most significant examples of deframing in *The Plains* is found in a scene in which the narrator observes the wife of his patron as she returns to the library's distant

corners, and sits between the narrator and “the shelves labelled ‘TIME’” (Murnane 132). He tries to devise a scheme to make his presence known to her via the copies of the books on the shelves, yet decides to remain unseen in his separate zone of the library. The truncated space produces a melancholy mood marked by incompleteness in the relation between the two subjects. The shelves and partitions are described as a maze that becomes “the visible embodiment of one or another of those patterns attributed to Time in the volumes standing quietly at the heart of it” (Murnane, *The Plains* 136). The metaphorical morphing of the library to reflect its contents then turns into a narrative close-up: the woman is “so close to the crowded shelves that the pallor of her face is momentarily tinted by a faint multiple glow from the more hectic of the jacketed volumes around her” (Murnane, *The Plains* 137). The interplay of objects and reflections within a space that can be associated with both burial and labyrinthine fragmentation is constructed precisely through the mechanism of the narrator’s truncated line of sight, which is consistently disrupted by the deframing of the visual scene.

In addition, the uncanny and threatening effect of the extreme close-ups of seemingly mundane details described in the narration suggests the presence of an underlying haunting memory within *The Plains*. The narrator’s fears turn inward as he sees the light dimming, imagining himself as nothing more than image: he becomes “a man seeing the plains from an unheard-of vantage point”, reduced to only a “face faintly lit by the wavering colours” from an estranged time (Murnane, *The Plains* 139). As in the previous chapter where the visual device of *cadavérité* was applied to the interpretation of deframing and haunting in *2666*, this chapter identifies perturbing and anxious details as key parts of Murnane’s text’s signifying process. Nowhere is the deathly truth more apparent than in the final section of *The Plains*, which details an encounter between the filmmaker-narrator and a photographer with his camera. A patron asks that the narrator’s head be inspected. He says: “Trepan me. Carve my skull neatly open [...] peer into the pale brain you find pulsating there [...] you’ll see nothing to suggest plains [...] We’re travelling somewhere in a world the shape of an eye. And we still haven’t seen what other countries that eye looks out on” (Murnane, *The Plains* 158). Such a violent bodily description disrupts the narrative continuity of an otherwise pastoral novel.⁷⁷ *The Plains* concludes as the filmmaker-narrator asks his patron at last to “record the moment when I lifted my own camera to my face and stood with my eye pressed against my lens” to photograph the

⁷⁷ Comparatively, *2666* contains a greater density and repetition of scenes involving atavistic close-ups of violent acts. While both texts involve repetition and multiplication of motifs, Murnane primarily reiterates the task of making sense of the appearance of the landscape.

darkness, “the only visible sign of whatever I saw beyond myself” (Murnane 174). The shock encounter with total insideness perturbs the text, capturing a strange moment of desolation.

In consequence, darkness, as a missing element that can be referred to as *terra incognita*, is identified in the context of this discussion precisely as a representation that calls for illumination (Bonitzer 199). This absence, as found in the description of the landscape, is symptomatic of the resistance of the haunted novel’s elements to interpretation and location. The tool of cryptonymy regards this resistance as part of “the symptoms displayed by an individual haunted by a phantom”, where the “‘unsaid’ and ‘unsay-able’ of another” returns to haunt precisely as a “silence, gap, or secret” in an act in which “someone else ‘speaks,’ in the manner of a ventriloquist” (Rashkin 32, 40). Visual devices in *The Plains* can, therefore, be seen as narrative ventriloquists, that is, as visual textual devices that voice that which has remained unsaid and unseen within Australian cultural memory. Ultimately, Murnane’s writing of *terra incognita* through phantasmatic visual devices provides a new vantage point from which to consider the function of the haunted novel.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate the theory of the haunted novel’s applicability to Gerald Murnane’s *The Plains*, as the second primary text studied in this thesis. The chapter analysed the cryptonymic nature of Murnane’s representation of colour, light, bodies, and space, relating these elements in *The Plains*’ narrative procedure to the communication of ungraspable experience. In spaces where words fail to form a representation of experience, phantasmatic images emerge. As in the analysis of *2666* performed in Chapter 3, in this chapter *The Plains* has been shown to utilise elements of the haunted novel in its deployment of phantasmatic visual devices re-emerging throughout the text, establishing an indeterminate and disquieting scene of haunting that communicates the uncertain meaning of the Australian nation. In addition, within the chapter’s reading of Murnane’s novel, its representations have been linked, on the one hand, to the fictional space of the Interior within the diegesis and, on the other, to the novel’s context of emergence within the space of uncertainty of Australian history and cultural memory.

In the next chapter, this thesis’ final, the two primary texts, *2666* and *The Plains*, are discussed alongside each other. Chapter 5 compares how their phantasmatic devices are constructed and thusly relates together the way the theory of the haunted novel functions

in relation to the motifs and symbols that the novels hold in common. While Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 have focused on foregrounding the novels' sense of visuality, the attention of Chapter 5 is placed on relating their operations in the realm of sight to the signification of culture, history, and memory.

CHAPTER 5

“Incorporation in Dispersal”: The Phantasms of Roberto Bolaño’s *2666* and Gerald Murnane’s *The Plains*

5.1 Introduction

This thesis’ final chapter conducts comparative textual analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*, as well as Bolaño’s and Murnane’s oeuvres more broadly, to envision the haunted novel as a cultural expression of the circularity of unsettled memory related to these authors’ respective national histories. The chapter considers the conceptual resonance that places literature in a symptomatic relationship with history, society and culture, interrogating the theoretical basis sustaining such analysis. It draws upon the work of writers such as Avery Gordon, who links ghostly images – specifically the photographs used by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo – to an attempt to “force national confrontation” with the wound of repressed history (110); Lindsay Tuggle, who inspects the theme of tomblessness in relation to national mourning;⁷⁸ Ramón Soto-Crespo, for whom art dramatises social-political relations; and Kate Foord and Harriet L. McInerney who read the literary text against the national and historical context from which it emerges. As discussed in Chapter 2, the formulation of the crypt is regarded throughout this thesis as an expression of collective trauma and cultural memory, which can be considered in relation to the notion of “unclaimed experience” that emerges from Cathy Caruth’s text of the same name.⁷⁹ This chapter’s textual analysis makes apparent the function of visuality that takes the place of words. By highlighting circulations and re-emergences of symbols and narrative procedures, the phantasm as a literary device is posited as the visual sign and carrier of memory. The four sections of this chapter put forth examples of phantasmatic image re-emergences that take the place of language and coherent recollection in Bolaño’s and Murnane’s texts. They then conceptually link the insistent, mnemonic imagery to the movement and persistence of history. As a figure of the crypt, the phantasm is mobile, irrupting into the viewing field automatically and encountered as if by accident, a symbol of that which is yet to settle. The haunted novel can be envisioned by linking the analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*’ literary expression to their respective national histories, as a symptom of unsettled cultural memory.

⁷⁸ Tuggle coins the term “incorporation-in-dispersal” to refer to the idea of “every place [as] a burial place”, where “the unknown and unlocatable” are mourned (71).

⁷⁹ Note that Caruth’s text is focused on the concept of trauma, rather than the notion of the crypt.

The chapter's first section, Latency: Phantasmatic Departures and Misrecognitions, illustrates the mnemonic significance of the return of latent images; the second section, Kaleidoscopic Vision: Apparitions from Changing Hues, connects disruptions in the realm of light and colour to the intrusion of memory; the third section Santa Teresa: "Unburial" in the Landscape connects the overt appearance of the phantasm to a literary attempt at confrontation of the repressed; and the final section, Tunnelling Words: When Vision Fails, addresses excesses and emptiness in the field of vision as indicative of ongoing haunting. Through methods of cryponymy, this chapter reads the phantasm as a visual signifier of trauma's secret spaces (Schwab, *Haunting* 53). Trauma does not simply disturb memory; it disrupts embodiment in the visual field. Trauma produces "not just a crisis in the memory of the traumatised subject but a crisis in representation and narration", as "it is in the very nature of trauma to resist being accounted for in a completely coherent or easily comprehensible way" (Buse 182, 181). Subsequently, this chapter foregrounds the mobility of the crypt and the quality of re-emergence as signifiers of the haunted novel lying within the text. Therefore, by working with *2666* and *The Plains* together, this chapter consolidates the thesis' objective of tracing the re-emergence of visual devices, towards envisioning the concept of the haunted novel.

By highlighting in-text manifestations of "insistently recurring words or figures" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 5) contained within *2666* and *The Plains*, this chapter demonstrates the phantasm's containment and transferal of meaning. As Chapter 2 proposed, the haunted novel's composition of recurring motifs is integral to its ability to symbolise an unassimilated, original wounding. The phantasm, as a narrative product of the tendency for traumatic events to suddenly overwhelm, re-occurs as a "delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 11). Therefore, the traumatised memory is one that "has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in the excess of our frames of reference" (Felman and Laub 5). The chance or accidental return of the image "recodes it as traumatic" (Saltzman and Rosenberg 112). In turn, such recoded images, as discernible throughout *2666* and *The Plains*, are analysed in this chapter in terms of their symptomatic links to history and culture. Thus, the haunted novel, identified as a deep phantasmatic structure at work within these texts, is proposed as their expression of unsettled memory.

5.2 Latency: Phantasmatic Departures and Misrecognitions

As the phantasmatic visual devices of the haunted novel leave from one place to another, they come to symbolise and express an unclaimed memory within an ungraspable landscape, where trauma is experienced in a temporal delay (Caruth, *Trauma* 10). In Schwab's description of cryptonymy, the crypt is located in collective signs, such as phantasmatic images, that conceal. It would appear that these displaced images spill out from a historical wound: refused integration of history yields an apparition (Schwab, *Haunting* 1–2). As theorised within Chapter 2's conceptualisation of the haunted novel, unclaimed, uncertain and ungraspable memory appears and reappears unexpectedly in new contexts, re-emerging in phantasmatic figuration. These images are the traceable remains of history living an uncanny afterlife. In Soto-Crespo's terms, the "grieving memories that lie at the heart of an emerging nationhood" can convert history into "aberrant space", rendering "pains of national memory visible" in representation (461). For example, as McInerney suggests in relation to *The Plains*: "The ulterior reality [of the plains] appears to draw on both the landscape of central Australia and national cultural anxieties to create the society and belief system of the plainsmen. However, nothing is spelled out clearly" (6). The textual analysis in this chapter relates the narrative procedures of delay and departure to the notion of traumatic memory as mobile, within a conceptualisation of phantasms as images that appear and reappear unexpectedly. A drama of departure and connection is subsequently traced in the deferrals, repetitions and transmissions of phantasms in Bolaño's and Murnane's texts. This section interrogates this process by analysing the visual narrative procedure of phantasmatic re-emergence in *The Plains* and *2666*, identifying the way in which insistent return gives expression to the impact of an unassimilated past.

The phantasm of a disintegrating notebook in *2666* exemplifies the kind of uncontrollability of envisioning that bridges together image and remembering, as a symbol of unsettled collective trauma. Visions arise from "unfinished, distraught, and betrayed national reality" and can bring forward a "space of mourning in its relation to the political reality of nation" (Soto-Crespo 451). An example of latency discernible within *2666* can be seen in a passage where the soldier Reiter escapes death many times, then dreams that a notebook he had found, the property of a Jewish man named Ansky, has been destroyed. Reiter dreams that he plunges into a river leading to the Black Sea to escape bullets. After the escape, he discovers in horror that Ansky's notebook "had been reduced to a kind of pulp, the ink blurred forever, half the notebook stuck to his clothes or his skin and the other half reduced to particles washed away by the gentle waves" (Bolaño, *2666* 743). In

this passage, Reiter is troubled belatedly by images that come to him after he has survived; he has not truly escaped a traumatic scene unharmed. The phantasm as literary device speaks of “missed experience” turned into fateful hallucination and dreams (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 62). Trauma is experienced in the delayed and sudden flow of images through the mind’s eye: the phantasm of the notebook’s destruction bears the impact of crisis experience, expressing in a visual way an underlying haunting of the text.

Fantasies of return speak of the ungrasped impact of another time. As such, missed experience returns with full immediacy in the form of a fateful hallucination (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 62). Manifestations of misrecognition in Murnane’s texts illustrate the transmission of a suffering that has left its original site, a movement from place to place that resembles the latency of trauma, as theorised by Caruth (*Trauma* 10). The opening sentences of Murnane’s texts are indeed a site of re-emergence. As cited in Chapter 2, *The Plains* begins with the line: “Twenty years ago, when I first arrived on the plains, I kept my eyes open. I looked for anything in the landscape that seemed to hint at some elaborate meaning behind appearances” (Murnane 3). The lines themselves contain an arrival and deferral of time. Similar lines return 35 years later to the opening of Murnane’s novel *Border Districts* (2017): “Two months ago, when I first arrived in this township just short of the border, I resolved to guard my eyes, and I could not think of going on with this piece of writing unless I were to explain how I came by that odd expression” (1). The unnamed narrator reappears to explain that he guards his eyes to be more alert to the edges of their vision, to look out for signals or winking details (Murnane, *Border* 12). The unnamed narrator is a figure that recurs between the two novels, containing and transferring meaning, as an example of “insistently recurring words or figures”, which Caruth theorises as indicative of unclaimed experience (*Unclaimed* 5). Character reappearance, a device that is also common in Bolaño’s oeuvre, may be seen as connoting the haunted novel precisely in the way the flagrant return of a character exemplifies a refused integration of history.⁸⁰

In *The Plains*, the phantasm of the narrator’s white reflection hovering in the window (analysed in Chapter 4), which oscillates between a face and a piece of parchment, predates another phantasmatic flash of white that emerges as a misrecognition, and expression of an automatic, insistent remembering in Murnane’s *Border Districts*. Murnane’s narrator reminisces about receiving schooling from an order of religious brothers, who wore “a black soutane with a bib of white celluloid [...] called a *rabat* [...] a symbol of chastity” (*Border* 1, original emphasis). He describes “an image as that of the white patch

⁸⁰ See Schwab for a discussion of how history continues to haunt transgenerationally (*Haunting* 1–2).

which appeared just now against a black background at the edge of my mind and will not be easily dislodged” (Murnane, *Border* 2). The *rabat* floating inside the narrator’s mind appears as a phantasm that has come to haunt the crypt of the narrator, whose role appears to be transformed into a “phantom bearer or cryptophore”, a concept theorised in earlier chapters (Ganteau and Omega 21). As cited in Chapter 4, the flash of white in *Border Districts* is reminiscent of an equally white, reflected face in the window described in *The Plains*, which is an aberrant misrecognition and a phantasm. In keeping with this thesis’ theorisation of literary possessions, the image of the *rabat* in the crypt of the narrator may be held as indicative of an unspeakable gap. The crypt of the nameless narrator buries the image and conceals its meaning: the *rabat* holds witness and persists as a mnemonic device and immaterial image of a collective, rather than personal, history.

Images of this kind found within *2666* and *The Plains* can be identified as an expression of a failure of introjection – wherein the floating image in the character’s mind signifies an inscription of incomplete mourning. Drawing upon Foord’s theorisation of *The Plains*’ relation to Australian nationhood, the void of the nameless narrator’s mind itself could be considered a “thing upon which signification is founded [...] a nonsensical element” around which a national cause is built (282). Murnane’s images of the white face and white celluloid floating in a void are also notably reminiscent of the key symbol discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to haunting in the case of the headscarf of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, seen floating disembodied around a tomb (as illustrated in Figure 5, in Chapter 2). According to Gordon in *Ghostly Matters* (108), the white shawls of the Mothers, called *pañuelos* in Spanish, were embroidered with the names and dates of the women’s disappeared children. For the Mothers, disappearance was “an organised system of repression”, which both documentary evidence and symbolic “token[s] of absence” sought to counter (Sontag cited in Gordon 109). The *rabat* in Murnane’s texts may be considered within this “repertoire of counterimages”, as part of a contemporary “movement to punctuate the silence” (Gordon 109). It is unclear in Murnane’s narrative what has been left unsaid, but the phantasm – as counterimage – nevertheless functions to lay claim to a reality beyond the surface of things (Sontag cited in Gordon 109). The compulsive return of images “works like a ventriloquist, like a stranger within the subject’s own mental topography” (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 173), symbolising the reality or lived experience of an other. With respect to these theoretical considerations, Murnane’s narrator’s may be seen as receiving a token of another’s absence, disappearance or repression – a kind of “counterimage” (Gordon 109) that testifies to an unsettled cultural

memory. In this way, the floating phantasm of white celluloid within Murnane's text would express a repressed history, as an element of the haunted novel within his work.

Recalling the observations in the previous chapter about Murnane's cryptonyms as they pertain to key words and colour, further analysis of colour's phantasmatic connection to an unassimilated past can be performed in order to demonstrate its foundational connection with collective memory. In Murnane's *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs* (2005) the unnamed narrator once again returns, in one of the most overt demonstrations of a repetition of key words. Murnane draws attention to repeated phrases in the use of italics or capitalisation throughout his narration. The narrator reminisces:

When I had looked at the outline of the body of pale blue that consisted of the body labelled STREAM and the body labelled SYSTEM and the narrow body of pale blue connecting the two – that is to say, when I had looked at the two larger bodies and the one smaller body that together comprised the body of pale blue labelled STREAM SYSTEM, I had noticed that the outline of the whole body brought to my mind a drooping moustache. (Murnane, *Invisible* 124)

In this essay, Murnane reflects semi-autobiographically about his past, recounting walking around a place called Salt Creek, and seeing the words 'stream' and 'system' on a street directory. There he sees two colourful bodies of water; the word "body" is repeated seven times in the above passage alone. Seeing the steam system provokes him to recall details about his family; the yellow water in heart-like shapes reminds him of a pendant worn by his aunt. His lengthy retelling of the story meanders, like a stream system.⁸¹ The recollection of a disembodied moustache reminds him of his grandfather or another unnamed man from his past. Throughout the essay, different key words ring out repetitively; first STREAM SYSTEM, then *Kinglake*, then *cloud*. This storytelling is reminiscent of Julie Gough's "Hunting Ground (Haunted)" (2017), a video installation where the artist walks through serene rural areas that her film reinscribes with the memory of historical massacre in an "articulation of otherwise usually hidden histories" (Gough cited in Pugliese). Similarly charging the landscape with meaning (Pugliese), Murnane's passage directs focus to the key words to engage memory. The haunted landscape, also apparent in *The Plains*, is absorbed into the narrator's mind in which the disembodied

⁸¹ The image of a stream system is notably labyrinthine; the labyrinth is a figure to which this chapter will return.

images swim. Recalling that the phantom is sustained by false appearances and secret words (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 133), the story of the stream system illustrates the link between symbols and remembering, which underlies this thesis' conceptualisation of the haunted novel.

It is pertinent for this chapter's discussion to consider the phantasm, such as the disembodied dropping moustache in *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs*, not just as an image in the mind of the narrator, but also as cryptonymically connected to memory. Phantasms create an uncanny feeling of something estranged, which continues to haunt the narrative in presences. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, this uncanny presence "helps us to see the object as an outward projection of what is repressed in our own 'interior'" (Schwenger, *The Tears* 8). In relation to Freud's concept of melancholy, "a certain internalisation of the lost object [...] that is part of normal mourning goes awry when the object is the focus of deep and intense ambivalences. That object has now become internalised, identified with one's self" (Schwenger, *The Tears* 9). In *2666*, disembodied (mis)recognitions commune with the collective repressed memory of violence. In The Part About Archimboldi, which charts the journey of a soldier in WW2, we are retold the story of an author named Ivanov, over whom storm clouds hover: "he saw clouds in the shape of a guillotine, he saw clouds in the shape of a shot in the back of the head", a premonition of his death (Bolaño, *2666* 723). In this section of the novel the word danger is repeated several times. In this context, the apparitions of the clouds floating as images of war, may be seen in theoretical terms as externalising an unintegrated loss (Tuggle 71). As noted in Chapter 1, the resurfacing of disturbances, such as overwhelming memories heralding from childhood, are stimulated by their situational contexts (Huyssen 112). A drama of a failed self-recognition, in which jubilant unity is denied, emerges when boundaries are over-stepped (Huyssen 117). The outwardly-projected objects bring literary expression to the haunted novel within *2666*.

Freud and Caruth provide a theoretical basis with which to approach such intrusive and unexpected symbolism. Imagery of burning and awakening hold enduring symbolic significance, stemming from Freud's story of a child burning in his father's dream. In the story, a father awakens to see another burning; his son is indeed burning from a fallen candle, an image which serves the function of awakening attention towards trauma (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 111). In the opening passage of *2666*'s The Part About Archimboldi, a soldier in a military hospital lies next to a mummy, to whom he offers a cigarette: "Suddenly, smoke began to filter out between the bandages. He's boiling, he thought, boiling, boiling" (Bolaño, *2666* 637). The phantasmatic image of the mummy on fire, with

its misrecognition of smoke for steam and subsequent echoing of the key word, may be posited in Hetherington's terms as a representational figure of unmanaged repression (170). Caruth notes that speech "*passes the awakening on to others*" (*Unclaimed* 110, original emphasis). Bolaño's vignette carries with it an otherness – a transmission of a burning – that we awaken to for the first time. Indeed, nightmares of soldiers inform Freud's theory of trauma, which in a Lacanian reworking suggests the generational inheritance of the "traumatic lapse, or absence" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 114). The taboo has only been moved along, spilling across boundaries; apparitions hold association between each other and "their lost or hidden histories" (Pile 6). The sudden appearance of images also signifies uncontrolled remembering, a ventriloquation of the novel by history beyond its pages (Boulter 7). Throughout *The Part About Archimboldi*, subsequent phantasmatic misrecognitions abound; a character is mistaken for seaweed – "more like a strand of seaweed than a human being" (Bolaño, *2666* 718) – and a box is mistaken for a coffin: "the cement box where the sauna was looked like a bunker holding a corpse" (Bolaño, *2666* 158). In theoretical terms, these misrecognitions may be seen as passing on the retelling of survival. We are unaware of the full testimony behind repetitions and misperceptions, yet in these images we are transmitted the "act of awakening" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 115). The phantom, by handing over an impossible seeing, does not hand over a mastery of trauma; its false appearances and secret words pass on "a reality that cannot be grasped" in words (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 115). *2666*'s awakenings – where misrecognition prompts recognition of a repressed trauma – are symbols of the concept of the haunted novel seemingly within the text.

The abyss is an element in the haunted text that wanders and reoccurs, representing a cultural expression of an unmanaged return of memory. Indeed, emptiness may function as a repressed "foundational element" and "fundamental *national* fantasy" with which literature brings expression to the journey of becoming a national subject (Foord 274, original emphasis). In *2666*'s *The Part About Archimboldi*, an old man talks about listening to the lecture of a great German writer with "deep eyes that at the slightest tilt of his head seemed at times like two endless tunnels, two abandoned tunnels on the verge of collapse", who dies before they could ever be acquainted (Bolaño, *2666* 788). The old man, turned crypt-barer, is later plagued by memory. In an underground university morgue, the old man comes to be "startled by a noise from one of the refrigerated rooms", and sees a morgue worker whose "eyes were exactly like the eyes of the great writer" (Bolaño, *2666* 789). During the encounter, the sentence "I don't have much time" rings

out, repeated by both the old man and the morgue worker. The misrecognition, once again, serves as a literary expression of an accidental encounter that prompts an uncontrolled remembering of unsettled memory. As a sign of the haunted novel lying within *2666*, the misrecognition of the morgue worker for the departed German author comes to us an apparition in the visual field, in which a familiar thing has been rendered unfamiliar and uncertain. The scene also instructs us on the disquiet involved in latency; in fact, when the repressed memory of unknown events returns, it does so in an aberrant vision.

Andreas Huyssen theorises that there is familiarity, recognition and fright entailed in the process of recognition itself, as recognition means the image “is at home inside me” (111). Scenes of disembodiment foreground and evoke fears of invasion and lost distances. Imagery that entails violence and disembodiment is common both to *2666* and *The Plains*, which, as described in Chapter 4, contain scenes in which the face and eyes are described as holes, lacking in familiar bodily unity or coherency. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that the “black hole”, as in the case of the holes where familiar eyes should be, represents a “crack in the texture of reality”, where we encounter “the body stripped of its skin” (Feldstein et al. 208). At one point in *2666*, a character asks: “What is a look of absolute fear? [...] hideous skin swollen with water doesn’t arouse fear, doesn’t awaken it, much less isolate it, but the empty skin does” (Bolaño 689). This anecdote appears like a corporeal metaphor for the horror of semblance, where literature is the hollow shell, the envelope of an abyss. Vacated bodies in *2666* and *The Plains* are haunted by shared foundational fears of emptiness and invasion.

In literary passages where words have failed, there are images in their stead; a symbol is a mask that conceals. The unconscious “clothes words with vision” (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 5). Semblance and concealment are reoccurring topics of concern for both Bolaño and Murnane, including matters of false appearance, the hallucination or dream that occurs out of nowhere, and the disembodied presence of absence. In one section of *2666* that stands out, Bolaño writes at length about the topics of semblance and the play between visible and invisible, in which an old man claims that the criminals in the crucifixion are there to conceal the event (790). The misrecognition, then, as signifier of an unspeakable absent presence, bears a scene of overall indeterminacy and uncertainty. It occurs where nothing is familiar, yet everything is connected. The return of the image, as it has been highlighted in this section, is a visible sign through which it becomes possible to recognise the spilling forth of the “unclaimed experience” (Caruth, *Unclaimed*) characteristic of the

haunted novel. Visible signs of dispossession can be seen in the text arising from its national context. Indeed, as McInerney notes in relation to Murnane's work, there is "a history of disquiet[ing] happenings in postcolonial society", and "a feeling of disquiet does seem to exist in *The Plains*" (143). As an imagined genre, the haunted novel functions as a structure of figuration within the literary text that comes into view as missed recognition and accidental encounter with ghostly images.

5.3 Kaleidoscopic Vision: Apparitions from Changing Hues

The crypt communicates the uncertainty of 2666's Latin American social landscape and recent political history; similarly, haunting in the case of *The Plains* communicates the cultural and political unsettledness of post-colonial Australia. As McInerney notes, "[the] plains are a place that cannot be pinpointed and stand unguarded and unmarked by national borders. Yet they are clearly a distinct region" (137). As such, this hesitation between place and placelessness that haunts the Australian national imaginary is symbolised in disruptions to vision in *The Plains*. In keeping with the analysis of colour as a cryptonym, which was proposed as a recognisable sign of the haunted novel in Chapter 4, this section performs a cryptonymy of light and colour in 2666 and *The Plains*, as well as other parts of Murnane's oeuvre. The section puts forth the argument that the vivid colours and their catalogues found in these texts represent a phantasm of kaleidoscopic sight in which fragmentary vision and recollection communicates the unsettledness of a haunted memory through changing hues. Visual fragments, in fact, constitute a phantasm of totality, in the sense that they are haunted by the failure of a unified vision to arrive (Schwenger, *Fantasm* 82). As such, the construction of sprawling lists of colour and light in 2666 and *The Plains*, and their irrepressible irruptions into the narrative, contribute in the haunted novel to establish a ground for the evocation of collective memory.

In 2666, an excess of colour seeps and bleeds, disrupting the visual field with an uncanny light. In The Part About The Critics, as the critics stay at an apartment, they are haunted by the crimes at the centre of the narrative. Colour invades their dreams, which turn nightmarish: "That night a green, sickly light seeped from under the hospital doors, a transparent green swimming pool light [...] amongst the parked cars there was one with its light on, a yellow light as in a nest, though not just any nest but a post nuclear nest, a nest with no room for any certainties" (Bolaño, 2666 68). In this passage of 2666, the details of colour represent the enlivening of the scene with a strange disturbance. Like an uncanny detail that haunts as a *punctum* (as defined in Chapter 1), the brightness of colour in the

abovementioned passage punctuates the novel. The misrecognitions of the green light for a swimming pool and the yellow light for a phantasmatic kind of nest rupture the narrative in an example of a snapshot of disrupted common reality, the kind of rupture that Hirsch relates to the transmission of memory (4). Away from the novel's narrative centre that involves the crimes, *The Part About The Critics* is invaded with arresting visual details, which transmit the signs of an unspeakable experience haunting the text from a place beyond its boundaries.

After *The Part About The Crimes* comes *The Part About Archimboldi*, where disruptions in the field of vision span across several generations and cultural contexts. The volume introduces a character named Ingeborg who is one of a series of women in *2666* who are described as mad. In the following passage, Ingeborg imagines the pyramids of the Aztecs stained red, their inside: "illuminated only by a light from above, light filtered through a great obsidian stone" (Bolaño, *2666* 698). The pyramids are shells and images of interiority filled with sparkling light. Ingeborg describes their colour: "Obsidian is a black of very dark green feldspar, a curious thing in itself because feldspar tends to be white or yellowish. The important kinds of feldspar, for your information, are orthoclase, albite, and labradorite" (Bolaño, *2666* 698). This common device in Bolaño's writing, which involves the hypertrophied cataloguing of information, extends into a kaleidoscopic changing of hues. Ingeborg describes the Aztecs as they watch human sacrifices inside the pyramid:

At first the light was black and gray, a dim light in which only the inscrutable silhouettes of the Aztecs inside the pyramids could be seen, but then, as blood of the new victim spread across the sky light of transparent obsidian, the light turned red and black, a very bright red and very bright black, and then not only where the silhouettes of the Aztecs visible but also their features, features transfigures by the red and black light, as if the light has the power to personalise each man or woman [...] outside time, ruled by other laws. (Bolaño, *2666* 698)

The disruptions of light, colour, and time figured within the above passage recall the manner in which, as previously discussed in Chapter 1, literature is punctured by "time itself", a suspended time of melancholy (Hirsch 5). The *punctum* entails a traumatic breakdown between the distinctions of private and public space, inside and outside (Foster, "Death" 36). As such, the enlivened colours of Ingeborg's story, as literary devices, express a repressed history.

Drifting of freighted details produces absent presences in which narrative effects are received and relived. Within the abovementioned passage itself the repetition of the word “features”, and phrase “red and black”, marks a conduit of unmanaged return (Bolaño, 2666 698). Taboo history is represented in shifting fragments of light and colour in relation to “angles of perception” (Pile 14). Considering its connection of violent history with shifting light and colour, analysis of the above passage from 2666 serves to foreground a kind of substitution of word for image, where, in place of a direct address of the horrors of WW2 or the crimes of Ciudad Juárez, The Part About Archimboldi meanders into a character’s visualisation of yet another history (the Aztecs). Kaleidoscopically, the function of the haunted novel in Bolaño’s text may be envisioned within this passage as the pulling together of disruptive images from several sources, to produce an expression of collective experience.

The changing of hues and the collections of image-fragments are a detectable sign of the haunted novel in 2666, and perform the cultural function of setting a scene of uncertainty on the level of ungraspable space. This form of visibility is described in this section as kaleidoscopic, as in the function of the visual device of the kaleidoscope to produce its representation through fragments of colour. 2666’s connection between image-fragments and memory is shared in *The Plains*, where perception of the landscape is undertaken by the plainsmen. In a notable passage, Murnane describes a man who sets out to paint the “landscapes of dreams” (*The Plains* 87). His works are not described to us holistically, but rather through a trickling of fragments: “Viewers and critics saw his layers of gold and white as a reduction of the plains to their essential elements and his swirls of grey and pale green as hints of what the plains might yet become” (*The Plains* 87). Murnane’s “Inner Australia” as an unborn nation is imagined as broken in pieces (*The Plains* 42); indeed, McInerney describes the plains as “simultaneously neither real nor fabular [...] rendered otherworldly and illogical” (137). Painting can dramatise socio-political relations spatially, imaging nationhood precisely within “the obscure space between the brushstroke and the letter” (Soto-Crespo 453). The painter’s swirls of colour are “unmistakable landmarks of his private country”; and for the sake of his viewers he adds “symbols – close approximations of forms common to both the plains and his own land” (Murnane, *The Plains* 87). The painter character within Murnane’s novel’s diegesis turns personal vision into a space for collective identification, reflecting in this way the proposed function of the haunted novel.

At this point in Murnane's narration, the kind of excessive phantasmatic colour observed in this chapter in relation to *2666* also emerges in *The Plains*. Murnane describes the painter's works as "a waste of orange" and "freakish greenness that emerged from an excess of blue", before concluding that "a man could dream of nothing stranger than the simplest image that occurred to another dreamer" (*The Plains* 87). In this sequence, a drama of incorporation is inscribed in the sense that a landscape has been brought inside and symbolised, in an estrangement of the familiar. The resulting colour and scheme of symbols represents a phantasm of the landscape as seen by another, unknown viewer. As the narrative continues, Murnane meta-textually notes that "each ballad of the plains returns and returns from its interminable paraphrasings and irrelevancies to a few unmistakable motifs" (122). As is the case in *2666*, within *The Plains* the structure of the haunted novel is also identifiable in the excesses of fragments from where visual motifs emerge. Murnane describes a woman, caught in a field of many colours: "As she stood between the uniform glow from the plains and the many-coloured sheen on the commentaries of Time, produced nothing more eloquent than the murals of green glaze and figurines posed ambiguously" (*The Plains* 123). In this scene of *The Plains*, "scant visible evidence" stands as the only sign of "immense processes" in the landscape (123). Murnane posits the "scattered vestiges" as a private terrain suggestive of another country, as if seen by another observer (*The Plains* 123–4). Scattered colours bridge together the private and the collective, the psyche and the land – they express and depict unsettled processes beyond appearances.

In scenes of fragmentary recollection, the evocation of a visual paradox creates a shuttling between the visible and invisible, present and absent content (Schwenger, *Fantasms* 85), setting a stage of uncertain memory. A reference to Murnane's later novel, *Border Districts* (2017), assists in illustrating the connection between the shuttling on the level of imagery and the return of foundational phantasms that occurs in *The Plains* (a connection that incidentally also takes place in *2666*). In *Border Districts*, Murnane describes a photograph of a woman, the author of a biography, standing side-on to a camera on the dust-jacket of a book. The space that she is photographed in is uncertain and ungraspable, for the hypothetical viewer cannot discern if the photograph was taken outside or in an interior, as the background is either of a doorway leading to a bright room or daylight, or light reflected from a window or mirror "beyond the range of the camera" (Murnane, *Border* 55). A source of light above the woman hits her nearer eye "(Her further eye is hidden from view.)" (Murnane, *Border* 56). The nameless narrator stares at the photograph,

as if “meaning might appear to me if only I could turn aside from, or see beyond, all extraneous objects in sight” (Murnane, *Border* 56–7). He continues: “I allowed my eyes to pass again from lighted patch to lighted patch and to rest at last on the most arresting detail of all: the filament of darkness or shade enclosed within two-semi-circles of light, all of which represented the cornea and iris of the right eye of the young woman” (Murnane, *Border* 57). Murnane describes a portrait in pieces, floating in the mind of the unnamed narrator, tracking the movement of his eyes across its “arresting detail[s]” (*Border* 57). As the following paragraph addresses, Murnane’s construction of this scene can be analysed as the evocation of a repressed or unsettled collective memory.

The narrator’s encounter with the arresting detail, upon tracing the face, plays out an encounter with the *punctum*, the “little but heavily freighted thing that sparks the moment of arresting animation”, which Gordon suggests “enlivens the world with ghosts” (108). On a conceptual level, theorists such as Gordon, Barthes and Hirsch (as noted in Chapter 1) relate the *punctum* to cultural memory. Gordon argues that the animated photograph emerges amid a “contest of haunting”, as in the case of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who enter photographs of those disappeared by political violence into public appearance in Argentina (108). In Gordon’s example, the Mothers use photographs to protest things that were uncertain: “to represent just this knowing and not knowing that is characteristic of disappearance, its terror and its political power” and conjure the haunting essence of a lost face into public display (110). Theoretically, the *punctum* bares the traces of a device that confronts societal repression. Murnane’s fragmentary description of the photograph would seem to lay claim to a reality beyond the text, which is also an illustration of what Sontag observes about remembering: “to remember is, more and more, not to recall a story, but to be able to call up a picture” (89). The “arresting detail” in *The Plains*, then, occupies the status of the image that expresses an unsaid, haunting thing.

As the unnamed narrator, often presumed to be the same one in each of Murnane’s novels, writes the phrase: “I think of her as contemplating essences of personages”, the writing prompts him to look at his book again (*Border* 58). This time, he sees something other than a photograph representing the woman’s eye. He instead sees “an image of a whole and perfectly formed glass marble [...] an anatomical impossibility: a young woman holding a glass marble firmly between upper and lower eyelid at the front of a normal eye” (Murnane, *Border* 59). The woman was staring at the glass marble that only she could see. This play of misrecognition between marble and eye involves a hesitant oscillation. Roland Barthes, writing about representation, includes an analysis of a painting called *Autumn* by

Giuseppe Arcimboldo that focuses on the eye (figure 10). Barthes's description of the artwork attends to the wordplay of the French *prunella* and *prunelle*, the prune that has become an eye and the eye that has become a prune – a moment when the imagination absorbs and transforms the word (“Arcimboldo” 130–1). Barthes describes the oscillation of meaning, the hesitating picture, the centrifugal movement of the painting's dual time frames, as the moment we compare the prune to an eye versus the moment in the painting where the prune is the eye. In light of Barthes's theorisation of this centrifugal movement of meaning as transformative, in the perceptions of Murnane's unnamed narrator and the manner in which he communicates his vision, sight is then broken down into pieces, left floating groundless. The ungroundedness and movements in the field of vision would serve to express precisely the quality of unsettledness in the overall narrative.

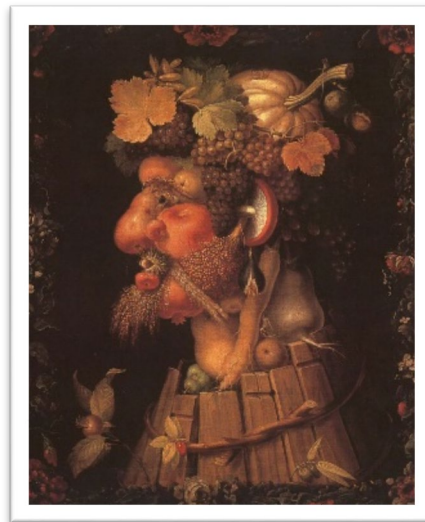


Figure 10 Giuseppe Arcimboldo's *Autumn*

Barthes also notes that Arcimboldo, as a poet of images, flings around synonyms in his paintings when comparing a nose to a pear, for example (“Arcimboldo” 140). The effect that this kind of image-play has in visual culture – and, as this chapter is arguing, in the narratives of Bolaño and Murnane – is one in which “everything signifies and yet everything is surprising [...] the fantastic [is made] out of the familiar” (Barthes, “Arcimboldo” 141). Bolaño's and Murnane's respective operations of image-play (for example, in the scenes of misrecognitions cited above) come into view as they toy with the once familiar. In turn, they produce phantasms of death-in-life that narrate historical crisis, such as the “cultural fear of amnesia” (Tuggle 71). Much like how a “memorial site

attempt[s] to fix the phantom forever in the instant of death” (Tuggle 70), Murnane’s story surrounding the marble-eye may be read as an exercise in categorising and containing an unspoken past. Drawing on Tuggle’s theory, the marble-eye can be posited as a tombless thing fixed in public presence, an “inverted incorporation”, a monument to some loss that has been externalised (70–71). The excluded object, like an unburied body, serves the narrative purpose of expressing cultural unsettledness.

Scenes of kaleidoscopic, unsettled fragments serve as prompts for memory. Murnane’s nameless narrator immediately remembers his childhood upon seeing himself as a child holding a marble as “near as I dared to my open left eye while I peered into the glass” (*Border* 60). As he reminisces on the differences of marble colour, from the translucent to murky, he is prompted to retrieve his six-decade old marble collection: “I wanted to find among the pebs and agates and catseyes and pearlies and realies and other the few of the kind that I now thought of as eyeballs” (Murnane, *Border* 61). He finds his old kaleidoscope from the state of Virginia, the word of which prompts vivid remembering of colour, a mental scenery that is “not an integral landscape but an assortment of image-fragments not unlike those brought into view by means of a kaleidoscope” (Murnane, *Border* 63). This thought in turn prompts the narrator to wonder how much of the act of envisioning is a symbolic practice of bringing up “coloured shapes and fragments” (66). Lists of colours emerge: “*ice-green* [...] *ice-maiden* [...] *Crimson lake*, *burnt umber*, *ultramarine* [...] *Deep cadmium*, *geranium lake*, *imperial purple*, *parchment*” (*Border* 66–67, original emphasis). The succession of colours functions as fragments of the tombless. To apply Tuggle’s terminology, they spill into public presence externalised as an unintegrated loss (70–71). The narrator’s remembering is externalised into a public space of signification. As Murnane’s narrative would suggest, image fragments, as an essential part of their representation of envisioning, connect with an unsettled past.

Fragmentary vision also occurs in *The Plains* as a recognisable sign of the haunted novel. Images that cloak words are identifiable, for example, when the narrator dreams of an arrangement of freckles: “their colour must be a delicate gold, and I want to come across them in what seems an appropriate site. They lie far apart, but I see them as a constellation if I wish. Gold on sheer white” (Murnane, *The Plains* 62). Reduced to a spiral of colours, skin is subsequently imagined by Murnane as a landmark denoting “something beyond it [...] projections like Mercator’s” (*The Plains* 63). The filmmaker-narrator of *The Plains* proceeds to visualise scattered towns from their skin, where the skin belongs to another plain. Within this scene of envisioning, familiar colours and shapes signify

estrangement, disappearing into the horizon: the narrator sees “slopes and flats and timbered watercourses that seem unremarkable to others but yield a hundred meanings” (Murnane, *The Plains* 93). The slippage of the narration from a focus on the colours of skin, to an escalating jumble of objects on an imagined landscape, leads into a question of meaning beyond appearances. In view of this thesis’ conceptualisation of the crypt, the skin can be posited as a phantasmatic cover and voice for the tombless. Murnane writes of a patron brooding over the “intensities of green and gold in the glazes of tiles that resemble only slightly a kind that he saw handled years ago [...] where the very tints that he strives to visualise, reflecting sunlight or the reflected remnants of that light, allow me to admire a conjectural green that may never appear again” (Murnane, *The Plains* 117). The study of the colours and light leads into “a zone of mystery enclosed by the known and all-too-accessible” connected with an unknown past of those beyond (Murnane, *The Plains* 117). Analysis of these passages, as illustrations of Murnane’s correlation between colour and meaning, functions to highlight the manner in which spiralling details (such as the “hundred meanings” behind watercourses) serve as signifiers of the haunting novel and its function to express unsettledness in disparate images.

As highlighted in this section, changing hues and branching lists of colours, as well as the false appearances and apparitions, are proposed as detectible signs of the haunted novel, which perform the function of encrypting a zone of uncertain memory beyond their surface. Tombless and placeless anxieties, which McInerney and Tuggle link to cultural memory and unfinished mourning, are rendered visible in representation; colour in *2666* and *The Plains* expresses, in Soto-Crespo’s terms, “pains of national memory” (461). Characters’ attempts to visualise and regain the past are met with the resistance to cognition that spirals in a kaleidoscope of fragments. The following section analyses the way in which the phantasm, as a looming and irrepressible apparition in the visual field, can be proposed as signifying an underlying haunting function.

5.4 Santa Teresa: “Unburial” in the Landscape

A figure of the tombless, the phantasm overwhelms and flows over life’s boundaries, expressing excess and endlessness. This section returns to Bolaño’s *2666*, focusing particularly on a scene from the novel’s third volume, *The Part About Fate*, in order to inspect a phantasm of the body as a sign of the haunted novel and its proposed function of encrypting cultural memory in the visual field. In view of this analysis, it is important to recall that the “ghost becomes the formal strategy of representing injury”

(Hinrichsen 117), particularly in cultural contexts where art seeks to confront (Gordon 110). As conceptualised in Chapter 4, the haunted novel is proposed as the cultural expression of a troubled, phantasmatic relationship between body and place, which represents cultural anxieties to do with endlessly unresolved national history (Adelman 1). Chapter 4's analysis of *The Plains'* narrator's construction and deconstruction of a dummy in his own likeness served as an example of the manner in which the story of ungraspable space and identity is told in images. At the same time, that chapter reiterated Hinrichsen's contention that bodies act as sites upon which public concerns are signified (115), and Schwab's view that "writing assembles an ungrounded body's fragmented speech" (*Haunting* 60). This section also expands on the analysis of vision that commenced in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, in light of this chapter's focus on the connections between literary fiction to cultural memory. Therefore, this section seeks to link disruptions to bodies and graves within the haunted novel to the uncertainty caused by a fractured national space.

The insistent symbolism of the fragmented body in the landscape can be proposed as signifying the haunted novel, for it transforms embodiment into a public conduit for unsettled memory. Where words have failed on the part of the witness, their traumatised memory is expressed visually. The following Chapter of *2666's* third volume, The Part About Fate, serves as an image of a cannibalistic desire brought forth from the logic of incorporation. In this passage, a journalist named Fate interviews a woman, who gives the following statement:

This morning I drove past the Santa Teresa prison [...] It's like a dream [...] It looks like something alive [...] I don't know how to explain it. More alive than an apartment building, for example. Much more alive. Don't be shocked by what I'm about to say, but it looks like a woman who's been hacked to pieces. Who's been hacked to pieces but is still alive. And the prisoners are living *inside* this woman. (Bolaño, *2666* 299, original emphasis)

In this passage, the equation between body and place, and the identification of the city with the woman's body, marks the emergence of a phantasm oscillating between materiality and immateriality. As in Freud's concept of the uncanny, the Santa Teresa prison combines life and death: the image of the prisoners buried alive in the maternal body is one of confusion. The woman's body, presented in this passage as a metaphor, is embedded within the

discourse of memory. To use Gordon's turn of phrase, the disembodied automaton is transformed into a "public *punctum*" as it is placed into the landscape (Gordon 109). The phrase "hacked to pieces" connotes precisely the kind of "excess of wounds" upon which, as Gordon suggests, "national confrontation" of the repressed cultural wounds can be forced (110). The hallucination, as a figure of the concept of the uncanny's automatic memory, stands as the afterimage of an unseen and unsettled experience.

The phantasm of the Santa Teresa prison, as it re-corporealises the bodies of the dead women into one metaphorical body, hovers as a mirage in the viewing field. Disquietingly alive, like an automaton, its absent presence confronts the incoherency of a nation that is haunted by its secrets and taboos. The excess aliveness of the Thing may indeed serve a cultural purpose: as Gordon notes in her discussion of the Mothers, the visual can teach about disappearance – forcing its recognition – by helping to induce belief that the seen thing is indeed alive (110). The maternal body, "made strange, even repulsive, in repression [...] is the primary site of the abject" (Foster, "Obscene" 8). As such, "the corpse of civilisation [...] contains the subject's death even when the latter is still living" (Maleuvre 266). The phantasm of the prison figured as a woman's body, undead yet brimming with much more life than ordinary life, emerges unexpectedly as if by accident amid a narrative scene of trauma in the form of hundreds of unsolved crimes. The prison-body demonstrates a phantasm born from a "lack of burial", the kind of apparition produced where a fragmented "national body" has yet to be "laid to rest" (Richard, "The Insubordination," 1). Both the interior of the body and selfhood mirror and conceal "fragmented strata built violently on the subordinations and secrets of others" (Hinrichsen 115). Richard notes that "narratives of encounter and disencounter" in contemporary Latin America are characterised by the uncertainty of meaning ("Cultural" 156), wherein the memory or wound they refer to is unnamed, yet overwhelming. The phantasm of the woman as prison expresses, in a literary device, a moment of haunting recognition.

The witness in *The Part About Fate* stands as a second-hand recipient of memory, an empty vessel for terror, secrecy and shameful histories. A communal crypt emerges as the public grave of Santa Teresa is written, into which bodies are repeatedly thrown throughout *The Part About the Crimes*. Characters throughout *2666* are denied a conventional grave: the dust falling on the city is precisely an image of unconventional, disquieting live-burial. As noted in previous chapters, societal failures to manage burial denote an ongoing cultural mourning within a dismembered landscape (Richard, "The Insubordination" 1). The unburied dead are a site of cultural anxiety. The haunting of

(un)burial involves hospitality, renewal and return, positing “corporeal decay as the conduit for incorporation into the ecstatic landscape” (Tuggle 64). The body of Santa Teresa, as phantasm and signifier of the haunted novel, subsequently holds the cultural function of communicating an inherited haunting that is encrypted, that which engenders silence. After all, the violent histories that are cast out, unintegrated, return with the phantasm (Schwab, *Haunting*, 49). The vision of the crypt, an inner space, as the effect of failed mourning or self-cannibalising melancholia, is expressed by the body as a site of narration.

From a cryptonymic perspective, both the words that cannot be spoken and the mourning that is refused are swallowed into the abovementioned image of the woman’s body as a metaphoric incorporation (Abraham and Torok, *The Shell* 130). There is, in addition, a similar example of a phantasm of the ungrave in the visual field in *The Plains*, where the text describes the image of a beheaded female buzzard, its head placed on a pole, which the male buzzard dances around as if it were still alive (Murnane 75). Symbolically, this scene appears to describe a landscape which contains life and death at once, and an image of violence in the place of an integration into memory of the supposed violent history of the fictional plains. As mentioned above, Tuggle coins the phrase “incorporation-in-dispersal” for a discussion of the Derridean notion of “ungrave”, where “every place is a burial place” (71). Within Tuggle’s analysis, a phantasm is interpreted as a “symbol and signifier of the nameless and tombless” (72). The ungrave denotes trauma that exceeds the “absorptive capacity” of the earth; therein, the phantasm as the “broader mechanism of national and cultural memory” functions to “encase, enclose, and contain the exclusion of these absent, unfound bodies” (Tuggle 69, 71). A merged, dubious state is represented by burial. Repeated events and returns are examples of the manner in which the circularity of haunting is represented – unfinished history is dispersed, and made all the more present in its dispersal. Murnane’s beheaded buzzard in the landscape, and Bolaño’s figure of the prison-as-woman, are situated within broader cultural acts of dispersal and unmanaged disposal,⁸² which emblematises the manner in which, in incorporation, every place becomes a place of burial, that is, another expression of the crypt.

History works autonomously throughout *2666* in its secret words and images that connect the individual subject to collective history: “Here the phantom is characterised by its quality of strangeness and unavoidable and reiterated return. The phantom is more alive and embodied than a mere return of the repressed, for it constitutes a literal possession whereby a novel and its characters become ‘ventriloquated by history’” (Boulter 7). Haunted

⁸² See Hetherington (2004) on the topic of disposal.

history is sustained by fragmented encounters, staged in the disarticulated body, and articulated in embodiments and disembodiments. The language of body parts “assembles an ungrounded body’s fragmented speech” (Schwab, *Haunting* 60). Vignettes of excess and fragmentation in literature may indeed be likened to *memento mori*, incorporating and testifying to haunted time. The above example of the prison highlights the way in which *2666* mobilises bodies as part of a narrative procedure where absence, silence, and excess are inscribed. Such visual incoherency, functioning as a sign of the haunted novel, serves the cultural function of indicating, with image, the need to speak.

In an analysis of still life photographs by Joel-Peter Witkin (figure 11), Schwenger notes that images that evoke “the body’s unspeakable interior” (*The Tears* 160) can reduce the corpse into further disconnected parts that reconnect with the site around it.⁸³ Representation comments on the context in which it is viewed: “melancholy attaches itself to everyday objects whenever they slip out of the symbolic system that controls them and so manifest their uncanny otherness” (Schwenger, *The Tears* 33). Debris, such as *The Plains’* female buzzard and *2666’s* bodies of dead women, are reincarnated as “unorganised residue of the physical and metaphysical homes” that their narratives construct (Schwenger, *The Tears* 157). The unmanaged dead body that has become waste breaks the border between subject and object, pure and polluted: “no longer the clear outline of an autonomous body, this border is a disturbing liminal state between subject and object” (Schwenger, *The Tears* 158), associated with “the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Kristeva, *Powers* 4). Unburial troubles both the visual field and the societies in which burial is not yet final.

⁸³ Schwenger’s analysis continues in his article “Corpsing the Image” (2000), which suggests that the ambiguous status of Arcimboldo’s and Witkin’s images results from their attempt to paint visibility itself (405).

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Witkin, Joel-Peter. *Feast of Fools*. 1990. Photograph. 28 cm x 34.5 cm. Ethernton Gallery. *Artnet*. www.artnet.com/artists/joel-peter-witkin/feast-of-fools-a-AaG0yWxMUmqsbt_hwKYECg2

Image description: Black and white photograph depicting a still life of grapes, a pomegranate, a foetus, a hand, and feet.

Figure 11 Joel-Peter Witkin *Feast of Fools* 1990

As such, Bolaño and Murnane tell stories of liminal experience repeatedly through the metaphor of photography. From a psychoanalytic view, the phantasm of the female body, seen from drawing together many separate parts, “reverses the mirror stage’s promise of bodily wholeness, and thus the subject’s wholeness, even as another kind of wholeness is created”; the arranged and composted body represents a “species of thing [that] vibrates with all the restless paradoxes of the gaze and of the subject’s angst-ridden relationship to the object [...] a shuttling like that between life and death in Freud’s death drive” (Schwenger, *The Tears* 163). Like the photographs of Witkin, the literary phantasm forces “us to see a body deprived of its wholeness” (Schwenger, *The Tears* 163). In *The Part About The Critics*, the critic Morini describes a man in photographic terms:

A grotesque double of Archimboldi, his twin, the negative image of a developed photograph that keeps looming larger, becoming more powerful, more oppressive [...] the two images somehow the same: both young men in the years of terror and barbarism under Hitler, both World War II veterans, both writers, both citizens of a bankrupt nation. (Bolaño, 2666 39)

Much like the woman interviewed by Fate, Morini sees a phantasm whose excesses overwhelm the frame. His vision of the looming negative prompts commentary on the passage of time and insecurity of an uncertain national space, the “bankrupt nation”. Bolaño’s image excavates undead memory in the mind’s eye. With reference to Tuggle’s theory, the image that looms large may be posited as one of trauma that exceeds Morini’s

“absorptive capacity”, fixing the “placelessness of mourning” on the image of the two men (69). Images, as ungraves in Tuggle’s terms, “function as locations for a strange, collective haunting [...] deeply encrypted within cultural memory” (69). Moreover, Bolaño’s phantasms – such as the body of Santa Teresa Prison or the double of Archimboldi – may indeed be figured as “a broader mechanism of national and cultural memory” (Tuggle 69), where their visualisation is tied to an impossible mourning of “bankrupt” nationhood.

Floating and reemerging bodies are, therefore, observed as symbols of absence and silence. Images stand in the place of words: where language fails, the phantasm as a literary device recounts what can therefore be described as a drama encrypted by unmourned and unknown disappearances. In an analysis of Rainer Maria Rilke’s novel *Notebooks*, Andreas Huyssen notices that the novel makes use of:

Haunting imagery of the body [...] the text is obsessively littered with descriptions of body parts [...] Such images of threatening body fragments, which take on a life of their own, are paralleled by descriptions of people [...] that focus almost fetishistically on separate body organs. In every case the imaginary unity of the body surface is disrupted. (Huyssen 109)

Huyssen notes that the main character “perceives in fragments, and this bodily fragmentation causes his anxieties [...] of excess, of flowing over, of unstable bodily boundaries [...] often followed by a sensation of a total dissolution of boundaries, a merging of inside and outside” (109). Similarly, the notion that haunting imagery of the disrupted body can be identified as a sign of the haunted novel is significant in this chapter’s analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*, which functions to communicate cultural anxieties related to an uncertainty of space, where vision is fragmentary and the body’s disruption reflects a fragmentary national recollecting.

The inability to protect oneself against an encounter with the city, on account of fragmentary vision, would take the form of a failure of incorporation. Bolaño’s characters, like Rilke’s main character Malte as analysed by Huyssen, are likewise “defenceless against the shocks of the city, which penetrate right down to the deepest layers of unconscious memory traces, hurling themselves, as it were, like shells into the quarry of Malte’s unconscious childhood memories, breaking loose large chunks that then float up to the surface as fragments in the narrative” (Huyssen 123). In *2666*, the childhood experiences of the character Hans Reiter are similarly fragmented. As a child, Reiter sinks to the

bottom of a bath, “contemplating the black wood and the black water where little particles of his own filth floated, tiny bits of skin that travelled like submarines towards an inlet the size of an eye” (Bolaño, *2666* 639). The scene of the child in the bathwater enacts what Freud would call a “phantasy of inter-uterine existence” (cited in Huyssen 113). It is a phantasm of a “return to a symbolically uterine state, or a loss of subjectivity” that “links with death or decay or with premeditated cruelty” (Pheasant-Kelly 18). The Part About Archimboldi spans the character’s full life cycle from boyhood, to war, and old age. The impact of his childhood experience reverberates throughout the volumes as the character of Reiter repeatedly has close encounters with drowning. Mistaken recognitions abound; the boy that is mistaken for seaweed (Bolaño, *2666* 645, 647, 652) goes on to read novels imagining seaweed aliens appearing on earth. This landscape of dreams is a call to awakening: there the phantasm of the child’s “fragmented body” (Huyssen 112), and body that is misrecognised as seaweed, serve as an identifiable narrative procedure of images born from unsettled memory and impact of the traumatic event – Reiter’s almost-drowning – that eludes cognition. Significantly, it is through these images that Bolaño’s broader narration of cultural memory is performed.

Images of the crypt are repeated in *2666*, beyond the phantasms discussed above. Bolaño notes meta-textually that dreams and madness are contagious (*2666* 177). Moreover, as signifiers of the haunted novel, highlighting their repetition foregrounds the way in which these scenes perform the function of standing cryptographically in the place of unspoken words. In The Part About Archimboldi, a soldier goes mad, experiencing auditory schizophrenia – “hearing voices in the head” (Bolaño, *2666* 674). In the subsequent paragraph, another soldier becomes lost underground in the labyrinthine tunnels of the Maginot Line. Beneath the surface, the sectors multiply as the lone soldier imagines himself “imprisoned forever in those underground passageways” (Bolaño, *2666* 675). The soldier lies down to sleep and dreams of God, whose voice he hears in his sleep. Then, “the soldier awoke and looked at God”, falls asleep again until, within his dream, he hears a noise that is followed by the interruption of his dream by of a company of soldiers. In this passage, both the depths of the labyrinth and the dream stimulate vision: in the place of absence, of words or conventional image, the soldier encounters a phantasm of God in human form, to whom he signs away his soul. “The inhabitant of a crypt is always a living dead” (Winkler 232); the labyrinth’s inhabitant holds a liminal, unburied status. In a piece titled “The Labyrinth of Sovereignty”, Jeremy Adelman establishes the link between the labyrinth and nationhood. He notes: “Tales of wandering in a labyrinth have

been a common parable of Latin American history, depicting the dilemma of a region caught between a traumatic past of conquest and oppression, and a future of freedom and democracy” (Adelman 1). Just as Borges wrote “The Garden of Forking Paths” to narrate the passage to nationhood through the image of the labyrinth, conveying “the sense of the endlessness [...] history remained – and remains – unresolved” (Adelman 1), *2666* draws upon labyrinthine images as part of its narrative procedure of telling the story of its regional dilemmas. The phantasm of God in the labyrinth can, as such, be connected to unsettled national history.

The scenes highlighted above exemplify the haunted novel’s fragmented speech in the form of ungrounded images. Trauma that has exceeded the “absorptive capacity” of the earth (Tuggle 69, 71) is enclosed in *2666*’s narrative space of the phantasm. As formerly theorised in Chapter 2, phantasms as motifs of incorporation, unassimilated into history, float freely and recur insistently in repeated structures. The haunted novel is thus conceptualised here by visiting representations caught between the seen and the unseen. The stories embedded within *2666* can therefore be analysed as representing uncontainable remainders of history, transmitted across contexts. Having illustrated the relationship between excessive images and their confrontation of national recollection, the final section of this chapter will analyse the significance of the broken relation between image and sound, wherein auditory hallucinations in *2666* and *The Plains* establish a landscape of memory characterised by its unsettledness and disruptions.

5.5 Tunnelling Words: When Vision Fails

Disruptions in the field of vision are often accompanied by uncanny, primordial noises. The uncertain oscillation between seen, unseen, heard and unheard reflects on the status of unresolved memory. Excesses and failures of image signify an uncontrolled transference of an event, possessing the novel, carrying an unclaimed history (Caruth, *Trauma* 4). The unsettledness and irrepressible quality of the phantasm as a literary device signifies a continual leaving of site and return. Where vision fails, as noted in Chapter 3, there is the *horror vacui* of an empty, unfulfilled space. The “national subject” of *The Plains* encounters the foundational “Great Australian Emptiness” (Foord 274, original emphasis), while the subjects of *2666* find an “oasis of horror in a desert of boredom” (Bolaño 1). Symbolic faltering of vision communicates a scene of incomplete comprehension; a disappearance of the body that would reflect the failure of the nation to appear. The failure of image becomes a recognisable quality of the haunted novel; therein it performs the function of

communicating an overwhelming uncertainty and unresolved haunting. The cryptic words and sound that accompany disruptions in the visual field serve to encrypt a traumatic scene. This section highlights the connection between the figure of the labyrinth and the emergence of sound where vision fails – identifying the phantasmatic arrival of sound amid disrupted visibility as a detectible signifier of the haunted novel.

A phantasmatic voice both haunts and evokes visualisation, carrying and connoting a shameful scene of secrecy beyond the surface of things.⁸⁴ Words and phrases tunnel throughout the narrative in the form of returns and repetitions, such as *2666*'s repeated phrase "said the voice", which in Chapter 3's analysis was understood as an incorporation of ancestors. Like McInerney's (132) and Salusinszky's (41) suggestions that *The Plains*' namelessness refocuses our attention away from the named landscape and onto an interior, the nameless ancestral voices in *2666* serve to compound a sense that the novel's events take place in an ungraspable landscape of the mind. Likewise, as highlighted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, dreams involve duplication and division. In the case of the critic characters in *The Part About The Critics* dream, a detectable sign of the haunted novel lying within is that of multiplication. In one dream-sequence, "Pelletier dreamed of a page, a page that he tried to read forward and backward [...] faster and faster, unable to decipher it", Norton "dreamed of a tree [...] that she picked up and moved from place to place [...] no spot entirely satisfying her", and Espinoza dreams "he wanted to buy a rug, any rug [...] one after the other, without stopping" (Bolaño, *2666* 130). This sequence is representative of the tunnelling of words into an excess of images – a page, a tree, a rug – reiterated *mise-en-abyme*. The ungraspable, after all, "adds to a sense of disquiet" in a novel (McInerney 142). As noise comes to invade such dream sequences, Bolaño indicates meta-textually: "*Noise* is a simple word that serves just as well to describe what has no name" (Bolaño *2666* 795, original emphasis). That which lacks stability, location, or record, finds expression in troubled visibility.

The significance of the auditory intrusions within the haunted novel can therefore be analysed here in light of the crypt's magic words, which were previously discussed in Chapter 2. In one passage of Bolaño's novel, three characters are dreaming in the city of Santa Teresa. One of these characters, Espinoza, dreams about a painting of the desert. In

⁸⁴ In an analysis of William Faulkner's *Sanctuary* (1931), Hinrichsen notes that the text "articulates trauma through the rhetorical performance of its displacement", noting that violence is represented indirectly by disruptive sounds and images as a means to bring cultural recognition (29, n230). Hinrichsen notices that a character's wounds utters a cryptic, untranslatable language, through injured sounds that "speak in secret whispers" (37). She places Faulkner's text in relation to Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, demonstrating literature's relation to theory more broadly.

this case, the haunted novel functions in the excessive colour and light that turn into cryptonyms, namely, key words freighted with meaning, which function to evoke culture and voices beyond them. In this passage of *2666*, the narrator states:

Espinoza dreamed about the painting of the desert. In the dream Espinoza sat up in bed, and from there, as if watching TV on a screen more than five feet square, he could see the still, bright desert, such a solar yellow it hurt his eyes, and the figures on horseback, whose movements [...] were barely perceptible, as if they were living in a world different from ours, where speed was different, a kind of speed that looked to Espinoza like slowness [...] And then there were the voices. Espinoza listened to them. Barely audible voices, at first only syllables, brief moans shooting like meteorites over the desert and the framed space of the hotel room and the dream. He recognised a few stray words. *Quickness, urgency, speed, agility*. The words tunneled through the rarefied air of the room like virulent roots through dead flesh. Our culture, said the voice. Our freedom. The word freedom sounded to Espinoza like the crack of a whip in an empty classroom. He woke up in a sweat. (Bolaño, *2666* 115, original emphasis)

Rhizomatic, labyrinthine and claustrophobic, this passage evokes a feeling of burial. The evocation of the desert's sands that bury and placement of this scene within a dream create an aberrant interiority. The moans, sweat, rarefied air and synonyms of urgency are suggestive of suffocation especially when set against the word "freedom". These are dreams of an inertia that speaks both of entrapment and circularity, a closed system with no escape. The voices are unconfined to any one setting, character or novel. The circulating voices belonging to a network produce the image of a labyrinth: a system that encloses, of a many-branched enclave, of confusion and circular movement. Where Bolaño's story enacts returns, circulates images, and leads the reader through a network of losses, we are witnessing the writing of a crypt. Within an unburied past that haunts, words and voices circulate and tunnel into the present.

In the above dream sequence, a failure of sight also leads to an excess of vision and noise – disruptions in the realm of visuality that correlate with the intrusions of memory, indicative of the unclaimed and unresolved. Following an unexplained act of violence, a character named Pelletier leaves the country and subsequently dreams he is in a house overlooking a beach filled with people in bathing suits. He dreams that he "watched an

almost unending succession of sunrises and sunsets” (Bolaño, 2666 78). As the sun sets he “tried to stay awake as long as possible, with his eyes fixed on the beach, now a black canvas or the bottom of a well, watching for any light, the trace of a flashlight, the flickering flame of a bonfire. He lost all notion of time” (Bolaño, 2666 78). The bathers leave and “all that was left on the beach was a mass, a dark form projecting from a yellow pit. For an instant Pelletier wondered whether he should go down to the beach and bury the mass at the bottom of the hole” (Bolaño, 2666 79). Bolaño’s narration goes on:

And then he spied a tremor in the sea, as if the water were sweating too, or as if it were about to boil [...] a hum of bees came from outside. And when the hum faded, a silence that was even worse fell over the house [...] the silence has swallowed up his cries for help [...] a statue emerged from the bottom of the metallic sea [...] a forearm. (Bolaño, 2666 79)

The tremors, hums, and silence that “swallow” represent an overwhelmed subject, through disruptions in the visual realm that spill into the realm of auditory phantasms. This kind of overwhelming visualisation is repeated throughout the novel, contagiously. In a passage of 2666 in which a prisoner is being interviewed by a reporter in the Santa Teresa prison, the phrase “do you understand?” is repeated. The prisoner states: “It’s like a noise you hear in a dream. The dream, like everything in enclosed spaces, is contagious. Suddenly someone dreams it and after a while half the prisoners dream it. But the *noise* you hear isn’t part of the dream, it’s real. The noise belongs to a separate order of things” (Bolaño, 2666 490, original emphasis). As such, the noise in the dream gives expression to a contagious public crypt; the haunting of the characters by sounds and images that invade their dreams is narrated as precisely a collective experience.

The haunted novel can be recognised where uncanny sound emerges in the place of vision. This uncanny sonic emergence can be understood through the Lacanian concept of the *lamella* – something that can “render visible the disgusting substance of enjoyment, the crawling and twinkling off indestructible life” (Feldstein et al. 2006). In passages where close-ups of strange details are given, haunting can be recognised. Take for example, the following line: “a few leaves floated in the liquid, leaves that struck Pelletier as strange and suspicious” (Bolaño, 2666 83). In this scene the strangeness of the close-up has the cultural function of suggesting a broader uncertainty and anxiety, reflected in the object. Similarly in *The Plains* we may detect occasions where uncanny details “stick out and perturb the

pacifying effect of the overall picture” like the function of the *lamella* (Feldstein et al. 207). Thus, “primordial noise” can be used as an example of the kind of uncanny details that trouble *2666*.

Uncanny sound where vision fails occurs throughout Bolaño’s novel. Examples of this occurrence include the “hum of bees” (Bolaño, *2666* 79); “through the open windows of her room came a distant buzzing [...] the noise persisted” (Bolaño, *2666* 108); “all the air began to buzz, as if millions of bees were surrounding the hotel” (Bolaño, *2666* 109); “onomatopoeic noises, syllables of rage or of seduction or of seductive rage or maybe just murmurs and whispers” (Bolaño, *2666* 122). The primordial noises invade dreams, accompanied by visual phantasms:

And then Espinoza heard someone [...] whispering Morini ... Morini ... Morini, in a voice that didn’t sound like his but rather like a sorcerer [...] that reached Espinoza like the dripping of a basalt fountain but that soon swelled and overflowed with a deafening roar, with the sound of thousands of voices, a thunder of a great river in flood comprising the shared fate of every voice. (Bolaño, *2666* 93)

An original wounding is voiced in an echo that appears without warning. In psychoanalytic terms, noise “transgresses the borderline that separates interior from exterior” (Feldstein et al. 208). A phantasmatic voice, autonomous and freed from any object and without belonging, can literally cut a hole in visual reality (Salecl and Žižek 92). The emergence of a spectral, primordial voice, separate from a body involves a loss of safe distance. In the relationship between voice and image, according to Salecl and Žižek, “*we hear things because we cannot see everything*” and alternatively we might see an image when a voice fails (93, original emphasis). “To see with our ears” is “to hear the vibrating life substance beyond visual representations, this blind spot in the field of the visible”, and even more horrifying still is “to hear with our eyes” to “see the absolute silence that marks the suspension of life” (Salecl and Žižek 94). That which is “neither dead nor alive” holds the “primordial phenomenological status” of the living dead, the phantasm that survives and reappears beyond its own death (Salecl and Žižek 103). In this way, the convergence of sound and image communicates the undead ontological status of the phantasm, which occupies the narrative position of the only visible sign of an unseen wounding.

Concealed loss is crying out unexpectedly; sudden encounters and unexpected appearances indicate the unknown. The wound that belatedly speaks signifies the traumatic basis of re-emergences. The phantasm of tunnelling words recurs and circulates in Bolaño's oeuvre; the landscape continues to cry out like a wound. In a later novel by Bolaño, *By Night in Chile* (2009), the narrator, a priest, remembers a day when he went to visit an important literary critic in the Chilean countryside. In the solitude of the landscape the narrator feels afraid. He thinks he hears a bird screaming the name of the "forsaken village, Querquén, but they also seemed to be enquiring who: *quién, quién, quién*." (Bolaño, *By Night* 6). As the priest prays the phrase is repeated:

Our Lady, do not abandon your servant, I murmured, while the black birds, about twenty-five centimetres in length, cried *quién, quién, quién*, Our Lady of Lourdes, do not abandon your poor priest, I murmured, while other birds, about ten centimetres long, brown in colour, or brownish, rather, with white breasts, called out, but not as loudly, *quién, quién, quién*, Our Lady of Suffering, Our Lady of Insight, Our Lady of Poetry, do not leave your devoted subject at the mercy of the elements, I murmured, while several tiny birds, magenta, black, fuchsia, yellow and blue in colour wailed *quién, quién, quién*, at which point a cold wind sprung up suddenly, chilling me to the bone. (Bolaño, *By Night* 7)

This passage serves as an example of haunting as it emerges through the combination of diverse attributes that this thesis has discussed so far. It contains the cryptonym, *quién*, as a repeated key word, encyclopaedic lists of bird names, kaleidoscopic lists of the colours, and labyrinthine sentence structure that meanders. Of particular significance is the way Bolaño's usage of the repeated word and scintillating colour describes a situation from which a character finds themselves in another fright, in a manner similar to the escape from an accident and reencounter with a voice from beyond the grave that Caruth describes as constitutive of the experience of trauma (*Unclaimed* 64).

Not unlike Bolaño's writing, Murnane's usage of sound in *The Plains* can subsequently be highlighted as a symbol of the genre of the haunted novel. As conceptualised in Chapter 1, the inside of the haunted novel branches and detours, as a network of encryptions spilling outwards in a sign of overwhelming remembering. The manifestation of the catalogue of birds and their colours signifies an excess of unsettled occurrences, as yet not assimilated into cognition. Where words and image fail as a sign of

overwhelming experience there is the sound *quién, quién, quién*, that haunts as it reverberates. The key word as a cryptonym “infiltrates the interstices of the narrative and points to gaps we need to explain” (Cixous, *Fiction* 536). The listings agitate as they echo against each other (Cixous, *Fiction* 536). The catalogues function as a haunted language that has been vacated, the abstract language of silence. The cryptonym, or staged word, leads back to an unexplained remembering.

In *The Plains*, silence sprawls into excess. As light is refracted and colours dissipate, a “roar sounded” from a distant room (Murnane, 26). There is speed: Murnane likens a polo game to a “hectic clash of colours” where a “blue-green might break loose and dash alone”, pursued by golds as the crowd stands mostly silent, “where even the loudest cry may be followed by a sudden and disturbing quietness” (*The Plains* 37). A composer tries to find the sound of the plains, and arrives at a barely detectible composition of “snatches of melody as subtle as the scraping together of grass-blades or the throbbing of the brittle tissue of insects”, unheard of from a distance (Murnane 85). The sound rises where vision fails:

Crickets chirped intermittently from the obscure lawns. Once, a plover raised its faint, frantic cry in some far paddock. But the immense silence of the plains was scarcely disturbed. I tried to visualise the bright window and the figures against it as they would have appeared from somewhere in the vast darkness before me.
(Murnane, *The Plains* 91)

A failure of the task to see and hear the experience of another observer serves as a prompt for visualisation. As the novel moves towards its close, its empty space is “overwhelmed by the din of crickets and frogs” (Murnane, *The Plains* 164). As crows gather at a house, the space is enclosed as they lock the doors and “seal the gaps between curtains and walls with the rolls of revelation-paper that gave of their unfailingly evocative crackling sound” (Murnane, *The Plains* 165). With a blank screen and empty projector, the filmmaker-narrator talks for “sixteen hours of landscapes” (Murnane, *The Plains* 167). The *horror vacui* of the missing landscape is contrasted with other extremes, such as escalating sound and excess of narration. Indeed, the irrepressible is resistant to comprehension. As Foord suggests, the filmmaker-narrator’s journey to attain a coherent vision of the plains is satirised as he encounters, rather, the “Great Australian Emptiness [...] as a foundational element of Australian culture” (274). The novel has traversed beyond a “fundamental

national fantasy” (Foord 274, original emphasis). This passage from *The Plains* serves to highlight precisely the proposed scene of the haunted novel as marked by unsettled memory and cognition, and as evocative of a wound that is placed beyond the sounds and images of the narrative.

5.6 Conclusion

Chapter 5 has linked its analysis of literary expressions from the texts of Bolaño and Murnane to matters of unsettled cultural memory. Therein, it envisions the haunted novel by interrogating the way in which their phantasmatic visual devices re-emerge insistently, carrying and producing an ungraspable landscape of memory caught between absence and presence. It has investigated this proposition by working with a series of passages from Murnane’s *The Plains* and Bolaño’s *2666*, with additional references to Murnane’s *Border Districts* and *Invisible Yet Enduring Lilacs*, and Bolaño’s *By Night in Chile*. Latent images, fragmentary images, (un)buried bodies, and faltering sight were proposed as the visible signifiers of collective haunting that is shared between – and across – cultural contexts by the narrative procedure of phantasmatic imagery. The chapter relates each of these disruptions of visibility to matters of collective memory, nation formation, and unclaimed history.

This chapter linked the analysis of the two novels in the relationship that their literary and cultural expression has with national history, as a symptom of repressed cultural memory. The chapter’s analysis was based in the centrality of visibility to the theory of the haunted novel demonstrated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The chapter’s tracing of insistent phantasms, phantasmatic departures, false appearance, and key words of Bolaño’s and of Murnane’s crypts, was performed to highlight how they connect to cultural memory. Building on the close analysis of the novels of Bolaño and Murnane performed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, this chapter emphasised the qualities of insistence and re-emergence of images as representative of a circularity of experience and overwhelmed vision. In this chapter’s analysis of phantasms that disrupt the diegetic space, the unsettledness of memory, both personal and collective, and its propensity to haunt were conceptualised.

CONCLUSION

Where the interior world of secrets and public world of signification flow into one another, the site of haunting emerges in ghostly markers of absent-presences. In literature, a site of interior-exterior crossroads can be imagined as narrative that emerges from historical ghosts. This thesis has precisely theorised a literary style of expression, which it has denominated the “haunted novel”, a figure whose conceptualisation establishes a tool for making sense of contemporary narrative’s vital connections to unclaimed collective memories. Working with existing definitions of the phantasm and the uncanny, the thesis has charted examples of phantasmatic passages in literature where haunting emerges, while critically addressing relationships between psychoanalysis, visuality studies, trauma theory, and narrative devices. Utilising the psychoanalytic notion of trauma as a delayed response to catastrophe, the thesis reimagined the concept of cryptographic writing in relation to two works of contemporary fiction. Roberto Bolaño’s *2666* and Gerald Murnane’s *The Plains* were illustrated as brimming with a narrative re-living of collective memories that are animated within the text by phantasms. The method of analysis provided by cryptonymy advanced the thesis’ discussion beyond inspecting the texts purely in terms of the aesthetics of the uncanny, offering textual analysis based on a critical reworking of psychoanalytic concepts, while drawing particular attention towards key, repeated motifs within Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels. Positing these novels as sites of haunted signification correlative to traumatic historical legacies engrained in the text, the thesis’ conceptualisation of the haunted novel has served to make sense of phantasmatic figures within the landscapes of disquiet they so obsessively depict.

Aesthetics of the uncanny, such as the double, were found by this thesis to inform the novels’ representations, while spillings and connections were found to sustain graveless, unburied memory. However, the thesis’ purpose was not to repeat widely practiced interpretations of literature within modes of gothic, uncanny and trauma writing. Rather, it sought to re-imagine literary visuality through reformulations of psychoanalytic concepts of trauma and the crypt. As collective memory is understood as content that is repackaged to return in unfamiliar, encrypted forms, the thesis traced the collation of motifs that embody and sustain the memory of unknown experience outside the field of vision of Bolaño’s and Murnane’s novels. Reconceptualised as a crypt-bearer, the phantasm was therefore imagined as a form through which the haunted novel enables startling recognition.

Where existing scholarship on *The Plains* notes the applicability of concepts of the uncanny to its analysis, this research situates Murnane's novel's unrest in relation to, and as an effect of, the freighted phantasms inside the text. Similarly, while scholarship on *2666* has tended to cite the novel's representations as vehicles for analysis of the economic and social dilemmas of globalisation, this thesis directs the lens of analysis onto the affective investments of the techniques themselves. Analysis of Bolaño's and Murnane's narrative procedures foregrounded the cryptonymic function of their representations, where signs of ungraspable experience were found within the repeated use of visual elements in the text. By seeing phantasmatic images as symbolisations of an unknown wound, the thesis performed the work of charting these symbols and subsequently mapping their enigmatic expression of the unspoken.

While the thesis generated knowledge of the haunted novel as a literary form, along with extending insight into two key works of contemporary literature, in its conclusion it also acknowledges that the representation of silence and absence remains a crucial dilemma in studies of modern literature and visual culture. By highlighting the system of visual figurations or phantasms within the two novels, the thesis foregrounded methods and concepts through which to observe and make sense of the complex relation between narrative visibility and the lived experience of haunting. With its basis in scholarship that connects visibility to memory, this thesis' theory of the haunted novel can subsequently be applied to existing and emerging literature beyond Bolaño's and Murnane's, as well as to explorations into haunted texts other than literary.

The Plains' fantasy of the Interior, which existing scholarship likens to a parable of uncertain space within Australian cultural memory, was interrogated alongside *2666*, directing greater attention towards comparative analysis, and, subsequently, revealing often overlooked devices in Murnane's narrative procedure, such as its fleeting motifs of bodily fragmentation. Similarly, analysis of *2666* beside *The Plains* served to direct attention to Bolaño's writing of colour as a disquieting absent-presence. Read together, a comparable sense of visibility active in these novels' diegeses was posited as a common feature on the level of genre, where phantasms commune with the signification of culture, history, and collective memory. The thesis' bridging between the literary and the historical was enacted in light of the novels' shared connection to the haunting of place; *The Plains* to contemporary Australia, and *2666* to contemporary Chile, Mexico and, more broadly, Latin America.

Throughout the thesis' chapters, the textual analysis and theoretical interrogation persistently revealed that the literary and the cultural dovetail through expressions of the unsettledness of memory. Ungraspable landscape, produced and caught in a state of present absence, appears insistently, with all the connotation of a re-emergence and accidental return of a forbidden or foreclosed remembering. The thesis has envisioned the elements and functions of its proposed notion of the haunted novel working within the texts of Bolaño and Murnane, as an elusive genre of narrative and subsequent tool of textual analysis, whereby the phantasm becomes the foundational mode of communicating unnamed, unburied, and unattributed memory, while repetitions and re-emergences of motifs constitute a calling forth of the unsaid. Through close analysis of *2666* and *The Plains*, the thesis charted latent, fragmentary, unburied and faltering images as visible signs of a cross contextual haunting that turns personal images into public sites of signification.

Visuality, as linked to contested matters of memory, history and nation, takes centre stage in the theorisation of the haunted novel. Phantasms – as they depart, reappear and unsettle – were traced in this thesis and found to circulate throughout Bolaño's and Murnane's crypts in an oceanic overflowing and overwhelming of an unresolved boundary between inside and outside. Floating into a storm's eye, the phantasms of narrative space embody a tidal interchange of meaning between interior and exterior. Captured in an ongoing state of delay, unsettled collective memory is envisioned by and within the haunted novel.

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