'Dwelling' in Contemporary British and American Fiction:

Zadie Smith,

Tom McCarthy,

Don DeLillo

Oliver Paynel

Royal Holloway, University of London

PhD

October 2018

Declaration of Authorship

I, Oliver Paynel, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely

my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Abstract

This thesis argues that the pursuit of dwelling has become a key imperative for life in the spaces of contemporary literary fiction. Heidegger characterised dwelling as a form of life-building stemming from attachment to, and immersion in, a particular environment. This project explores dwelling in what Lauren Berlant has called the continually 'overwhelming' present of late modernity, in contexts where subjects navigate the persistent threat of existential dereliction or homelessness posed by historical trauma, loss or cultural alienation in an ongoing process once described by Heidegger as the 'plight of dwelling'.

Extending what Tim Ingold has subsequently called the 'dwelling perspective' into the field of novel theory, the thesis develops current research into the 'persistence of dwelling' in the novel form (Farred and López) through comparative study of novels by Zadie Smith, Tom McCarthy and Don DeLillo. It examines dwelling as an embodied mode of navigating and living within a world of diverse afflictions, attachments and involvements in these writers' works, to show how the relations between human, non-human and narrative elements build the lifeworlds of contemporary fiction.

The thesis examines Zadie Smith's London fiction to show how modes of dwelling are cultivated through encounters between subjects and the narrative elements that shape their social environments, with a particular focus on mood, ethical attunement, empathy, worldliness and cosmopolitanism. Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* is explored to demonstrate that the novel orients around the possibility that technological destruction will engender new modes of dwelling and retrieve a 'proper' relation to the technology of writing. Don DeLillo's later fiction, especially *The Body Artist*, is discussed to show that, in this work, dwelling is always a negotiation between the meaningful gathering of memory, the non-human and the

human in the focal points of narrative, and the loss, trauma and dispersion that make meaning possible.

By conceptualising new uses for Heidegger's work in literary criticism, the thesis offers a framework for thinking the condition of being in the contemporary that parts ways with humanist and poststructuralist ethical criticism. It also extends criticism on trauma and the contemporary novel, and demonstrates the renewed relevance of Heidegger's work to contemporary novel theory and criticism.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Bob Eaglestone, for his tireless encouragement and positivity, and for his continued willingness to read, consider and discuss my work and ideas over the past years. Thank you to Poppy Eaglestone, too, for contributing so generously to my viva preparations. Thanks go to my advisor, Adam Roberts, and Director of Graduate Studies, Will Montgomery, for their thoughtful support and input, and to Royal Holloway for the studentship that funded this PhD project.

I would like to thank all those who offered questions and comments at conferences, amongst whom Thomas Docherty was particularly helpful; colleagues and past teachers, in particular James Smith, Jane Elliott, Seb Franklin, Peter Boxall and Matthew Dimmock; friends and fellow doctoral students Josh Burraway, James Cutler, Ahmed Honeini, Miriam Burke, Btissam Aboubichr and Peter Hambrecht for their for their support and companionship; and the staff at 11 Bedford Square, especially Mohamed Traore.

My heartfelt thanks to my mum, dad and my brother Tom for all their support, and for their unwavering confidence in me. Above all I owe my thanks and gratitude to Nina, whose love and support made it possible for me to complete this project.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations for works by Martin Heidegger

BDT   'Building Dwelling Thinking'

OWA   'The Origin of the Work of Art'

PMD   '…Poetically Man Dwells…'

T   'The Thing'

WPF   'What Are Poets For?'

               all in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971)

AWP   'The Age of the World Picture' in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

BT   *Being and Time* trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).

CPE   *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

EGT   *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, trans. by David Farrell Krell and Frank Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984)

EHF   *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. by Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2005)

EHP   *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. by Keith Hoeller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000).

HHGR   *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'The Rhine'*, trans. by William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014)

IM   *Introduction to Metaphysìcs*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)

P   *Parmenides*, trans. by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992)

QCT   'The Question Concerning Technology' in *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays,* trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Garland, 1977)

WCT   *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. by Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968)

Introduction

In her article 'Aesthetics and the New Ethics: Theorizing the Novel in the Twenty-First Century', Dorothy Hale makes an important claim about the ethical and political foundations of the novel's aesthetic dimensions:

> This is the ethico-political basis of novelistic aesthetics. The representation of character in the novel is never free of the threat of instrumentality, either from the subjective source of narration or from an objectification posed by literary design. Fictional characters are produced as 'human' precisely by the perceived limitation from both sources that novelistic form places on their autonomy. Fictional characters can be felt to be no different from real human beings to the degree that their functional positionality seems like a restriction of their subjective potentiality, a limit to the full freedom that they have the right to enjoy beyond their representation by and in a novel.[1]

The value of Hale's statement for this thesis lies in the way it positions the question of the 'human' as the locus and foundation of novelistic creation. This view understands the novel form to be in a double bind, where its promise of mimetic representation creates a reader for whom narrative artistry itself is an imposition and limitation on the 'human' it produces. The understanding of the novel as a form that succeeds through its representation of otherness, which emerges in part from the recent history of ethical criticism, also provides an important background for critics and novelists who now respond to and adapt these concerns in the twenty-first century.

If this quotation suggests that novels should regulate the colonising force of readerly identification, it also suggests a desire for a form that might free characters by reflexively negotiating the restrictive tendencies of narration on novelistic

---

[1] Dorothy J. Hale, 'Aesthetics and the New Ethics: Theorizing the Novel in the Twenty-First Century', *PMLA*, 124.3 (2009), 896–905 (p. 903).

subjects. It points towards an enduring critical and popular investment in the novel as a space which revolves around the accommodation, inhabitation, belonging, and dwelling, of human life; a view, ascribed by Hale to general novel readers, cultural critics, new ethical theories of the novel, and creative writing pedagogy, which has wide reaching implications for our relationship with the novel form.[2]

Judith Butler, one of the key figures of the ethical criticism that Hale discusses in this article, reflects on these concerns about the carceral dimensions of form in her 2011 work *Frames of War*: 'The "being" of life', Butler argues, 'is itself constituted through selective means; as a result, we cannot refer to this "being" outside of the operations of power, and we must make more precise the specific mechanisms of power through which life is produced'.[3] Butler theorises the capacity for literature to cultivate awareness of indissoluble human attachment to others that exist outside the normative frames of social recognition, calling us into an ethics of originary non-violence. This argument, which reflects the understanding of form as an encroachment on freedom mentioned by Hale, imagines literary forms as spaces for encounters that function in opposition to the violence of news media that frames distant others as less than 'life' and so as ungrievable. As such, Butler's argument is underpinned by an investment in literary forms which allow subjects to break the frames that these structures impose, even whilst this framing proliferates through the process of breaking from its own context: 'The frame, in this sense, permits —even requires — this breaking out'.[4]

Butler's new ethicist tying of literature into an ethics of non-violence continues the tendency to locate ethical value in the encounter between reader and textual other. As Rosalyn Diprose has observed, Butler's focus on the interdependence of human actors risks overlooking human attachments to lived

---

[2] Hale, 'New Ethics', pp. 903-904.
[3] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2010), p. 2.
[4] Butler, *Frames*, p. 11.

environments and non-human entities. To address this problem, Diprose turns to Heidegger's notion of human existence as 'dwelling', rather than 'life', to demonstrate how vulnerability to destruction caused by environmental disasters and totalising politics might elude Butlerian ethics of non-violence.[5] Whilst my approach to the issue of dwelling is different to that proposed by Diprose, I take as instructive her suggestion that the freedom of human actors — real or fictional — rests on their indissoluble attachment, or what I will provisionally call their *binding*, to an environing world of human and non-human entities.

This thesis is underpinned, indeed motivated by, an interest in particular dimensions of these issues: firstly, the ways in which novelists are currently responding to, and exploring, the status of the novel form as an unfolding of 'dwelling'; and, secondly, how Heidegger's interpretation of dwelling as the 'basic character of human being' (BDT, p. 146) can serve to expand critical understandings of 'life' as it appears in the contemporary novel. My thesis approaches these issues by examining particular aesthetic and formal dimensions of the novel, attending to the way that they shape possibilities of dwelling in fiction by Zadie Smith, Tom McCarthy and Don DeLillo. By connecting key aesthetic and formal dimensions of the novel — its diffuse moods and atmospheres, its status as a technology of writing, and its basic narrative nature — with theoretical discussions of these issues as they relate to human dwelling, I seek to develop new insights into dwelling as a problem that is generative for contemporary literary fiction. By tracing the way that these novelists interpret, mobilise and exploit their implied duty to accommodate human life in their work, the thesis positions the contemporary novel as a form which

---

[5] Rosalyn Diprose, 'Corporeal Interdependence: From Vulnerability to Dwelling in Ethical Community', *SubStance*, 42.3 (2013), 185–204 (p. 190) <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2013.0035>. This move to broaden the view of human attachment beyond human interdependence is also evident in the work of Lauren Berlant, whose notion of 'cruel optimism' foregrounds political attachments to possibilities for life that run counter to the interests of subjects that hold them.

continues to find creative currency in its perceived obligation to accommodate human life.

In its focus on the theoretical question of dwelling in the novel form, the thesis departs from recent discussions of dwelling in literary criticism which have productively drawn out issues of dwelling as a persistent human longing for home that is also irreducibly political. Amongst critics who have raised the question of dwelling in literature from a political standpoint, Herman Rapaport suggests that dwelling is, in part, a question of sovereignty and settlement. For Rapaport, 'the word "settlement" implies a decided intention to dwell somewhere permanently, usually arrived at by a group'.[6] Rapaport argues, furthermore, that in Heidegger is it essential to be settled for a period of time in order to dwell: 'Nomads for Heidegger, from what we can deduce, are merely an arbitrary population with no essential vicinity, since vicinity implies the establishment of a permanent infrastructure, such as the Roman aqueducts or Greek temples'.[7]

From a different perspective, reading W.G. Sebald's *Rings of Saturn*, Sinha Roy argues that, in modernity, 'everyday practices of dwelling have come to inhere in the act of wandering, so much so that movement (both literal as well as figurative)—not fixation or localization—has, to a formidable extent, come to underlie Being'.[8] For Roy, 'the provenance of dwelling can be traced to the primordial desire of man to wander—to discover anew a common ground for existence in nature'.[9] As this recent criticism demonstrates, the persistent search for dwelling in a globalised world is both political and inseparable from global histories of dispossession and exile.

---

[6] Rapaport, Herman, 'Fantasies of Settlement: Heidegger, Tocqueville, Fichte, Faulkner', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63.1 (2017), 9–28 (p. 9) <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0002>.
[7] Rapaport, p. 15.
[8] Satarupa Sinha Roy, 'Wandering to Dwell: Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Dwelling in Sebald's The Rings of Saturn', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63.1 (2017), 29–49 (p. 30) <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0003>.
[9] Roy, pp. 41-42.

The approach taken in this thesis is more provisional and concerned with the aesthetic and formal dimensions of dwelling in the novel. Whilst I aim to retain a focus on the human contexts of the fiction discussed here, I am more concerned with connecting these issues to the experimental aspects of contemporary fiction than with addressing how novels treat the *character* of dwelling in current national, regional and global contexts.

Many of the perspectives brought to bear on issues addressed in these chapters emerge from Heidegger's writings directly, from writers in the fields of anthropology and philosophy that address issues related to his work, and from the three authors whose novels form the focus of this study. It is through their synthesis that I intend to generate new theoretical insights that characterise a distinctive relationship and approach to the novel form. By means of an inroad into these discussions, and to further introduce the theoretical orientation of this thesis, I return to the long passage from Dorothy Hale quoted above, and to the question of the relevance of Heidegger's claim that 'human being consists in dwelling' (BDT, p. 147) to the contemporary novel. The theoretical orientation of the thesis means that I intend not only to employ the insights of Heidegger's writings on dwelling to open new readings of the novels under discussion, but also, in the totality of these discussions, to "cash out" on theoretical and conceptual insights that broadly emerge from, and can be attributed to, this approach.

Theories of ethical binding and dwelling as binding

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Hale's formulation is that the author arrives at it through analyses of the experience of reading, as theorised by critics writing on the ethical value of literature. As a number of commentators have recognised, two broadly oppositional poles have emerged in recent decades from the wide range of arguments about ethical reading. The first of these schools of thought, associated with Martha Nussbaum's influential proposal of the novel as a from that

cultivates 'love' for the other, proposes the ethical value of empathy, care and identification in the process of reading.[10] The other pole of ethical criticism, broadly associated with poststructuralist thought, has sought to foreground the important ethical value of encountering alterity *as* alterity — otherwise describable as the felt experience of otherness.[11] Dorothy Hale has likewise observed the continuities between these two camps, arguing that 'the ethical value of literature lies in the felt encounter with alterity that it brings to the reader', for 'the poststructuralist ethicists' and liberal humanists alike.[12] Summing up the insights of these two 'camps', what Hale collectively terms the 'new ethics', about which I will have more to say below, the author writes that 'the new ethics helps us to recognise novelistic aesthetics as inherently politicized by showing how the novel form positions the reader as "free" through the experience of being socially bound'.[13]

Whilst this experience of freedom unfolds through the reader's care for fictional characters, the true ethical value of novel reading, however, emerges only with the reader's recognition of the limit of this identificatory binding. At the point of recognition of the other's irreducible alterity, the reader experiences unfreedom equal to the freedom of the other 'who, in turn, now binds her'.[14] The reader's 'private, emotional' encounter with 'the lives represented by a novel and with the literary text itself as a life' constitutes a model ethical relationship between readerly self and life in the novel, which affords both parties a socially mediated freedom 'that is not

---

[10] See Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*.

[11] For a history of ethical criticism of the novel, see Andrew Gibson, *Postmodernity, Ethics, and the Novel* (London: Routledge, 1999); on the Levinasian roots of ethical criticism see Robert Eaglestone, *Ethical Criticism: Reading after Levinas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997); on the text as otherness, see Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, New edn (New York: Routledge, 2017); on the 'turn' to literature in moral philosophy, and the 'turn' to ethics in literature, see Michael Eskin, 'Introduction: The Double "Turn" to Ethics and Literature?', *Poetics Today*, 25 (2004), 557–72 <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-25-4-557>; on the role of deconstruction in ethical thought, see Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

[12] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 899.

[13] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 902.

[14] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 902.

simply compensatory for social positionality but outside systematic discipline'.[15] As such in the 'new ethics' that Hale theorises here, 'reading produces not false ideology but a true experience of how possibility is produced in and through the operation of social constraint'.[16]

Where lies the connection between Heidegger's claim that 'human being consists in dwelling' (BDT, p. 147) and a conception of ethics as freedom through binding, as 'a true experience of how possibility is produced in and through the operation of social constraint'?[17] I will suggest, here, that Heidegger's thought and the new ethical theory Hale describes share a proto-ethical investment in the freeing of life through certain configurations of boundedness and movements of binding. Whilst Hale locates this freedom in the constitution of an ethical relationship between reader and life in the novel that liberates both parties from 'systematic discipline' and 'the threat of instrumentality', Heidegger's formulation of human being as dwelling envisages a form of entanglement (or binding together) of the human being and the world they inhabit which frees both human and non-human entities into their 'essential being' (BDT, p. 148).

Two brief examples will demonstrate that a play between binding *into* the world and freeing *of* the world is brought into productive tension in Heidegger's thought. Firstly, in the essay 'The Thing', Heidegger describes our mortal dwelling in the fourfold gathering of earth, sky, divinities and mortals: 'The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another' (T, p. 179). Elsewhere, and in ways highly significant for this thesis, Heidegger turns to expositions of artworks in order to reveal the particular entanglement of human being and world which unfolds in dwelling. As Paul Harrison observes with regard to Van Gogh's painting 'A Pair of

---

[15] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.
[16] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.
[17] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.

Shoes', discussed by Heidegger in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', 'dwelling names the *binding* and the *manner of this binding* of such shoes and world'.[18]

Approaching this issue from the perspective of Heidegger's writings on dwelling, however, risks overlooking the ambivalent role that such being bound into the world has in Heidegger's earlier work. In *The Essence of Human Freedom*, published from a lecture course delivered in the summer of 1930, Heidegger is keen to observe limits on human freedom that binding to beings entails. Here Heidegger argues that 'the understanding of being, has the character of letting-standing-over-against as something given' when we acknowledge the 'binding character' of beings:

> [T]he manifestness of beings in the binding character of their so- and that-being, is only possible where the comportment to beings, whether in theoretical or practical knowledge, already acknowledges this binding character. But the latter amounts to an originary self-binding. (EHF, p. 207)

The originary self-binding that Heidegger describes here is the limit of our freedom, because the practical knowledge that this binding produces gives over to practical and theoretical knowledge, and so to a conception of freedom as 'practical', where 'freedom as autonomy is self-responsibility' created by the self's binding into a world of objects (EHF, p. 207).

The task of philosophy, as conceived in this text, is to recall this constitutive freedom which a relation to Being, and entities in the world as standing-over-against us, betrays. In this sense Heidegger suggests that philosophy should realise a more

---

[18] It is uncertain which painting is being discussed by Heidegger, as he mentions only 'a well-known painting by Van Gogh, who painted such shoes several times' (OWA, p. 32). This ambiguity itself fed into a controversy over Heidegger's purported (mis)interpretation of Van Gogh's work, led by the art critic Meyer Schapiro and centring on both the identity of the work and Heidegger's suggestion that the shoes in the painting are 'peasant shoes' (OWA, p. 33). Shapiro notes that Van Gogh painted the works in Paris in 1886-87. Paul Harrison, 'The Space between Us: Opening Remarks on the Concept of Dwelling', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25.4 (2007), 625–47 (p. 628) <https://doi.org/10.1068/d365t>; Meyer Schapiro, 'The Still Life as a Personal Object - A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh', in *The Reach of Mind: Essays in Memory of Kurt Goldstein*, ed. by Marianne L. Simmel (New York: Springer, 1968).

constitutive freedom on which this binding that allows things to stand over and against us is grounded. As Heidegger goes on to state immediately after this, 'the letting-be-encountered of beings, comportment to beings in each and every mode of manifestness, is only possible where freedom exists' (EHF, p. 207). As Susan Meld Shell notes, Heidegger's questioning of autonomy here as a limit to 'our freedom to will authentically' appears to demand that 'we give up on […] ordinary (moral) notions of "responsibility"'.[19] The author points out that Heidegger presented this critique of autonomy and self-binding at lectures in 1930, 'midway between *Being and Time* and the Rectoral Address that he delivered as a newly minted member of the Nazi Party', in turn implicating Heidegger's appeal to philosophical freedom in the context of his deplorable political associations: 'no one, perhaps, has shown more clearly what freedom without the *Grenzgott* of morality might mean than Martin Heidegger'.[20]

Whilst Heidegger's notion of freedom as limited by self-responsibility appears deeply problematic, it is also possible to discern, here, a search for a mode of relationality (dwelling) where beings show themselves in their essential nature; in particular, this is evident in Heidegger's complaint that beings 'can only show themselves as *objects'* when human beings let them 'stand-over-against' us as 'something given' (EHF, p. 207). As such, I propose to suggest in my introduction that Heidegger's writings on dwelling, and the early concerns about forms of self-binding they contain, can help form a relation to contemporary critical work on the aesthetics of the novel.

It is possible, firstly, to connect Heidegger's concerns about the limitations that 'originary self-binding' (EHF, p. 207) has for human freedom with Judith Butler's poststructuralist appeal to the ethical value that emerges in reading when

---

[19] Susan Meld Shell, *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 340.
[20] Shell, p. 340.

characters resist, for instance, revealing their interiority to readers. In Judith Butler's reading of Henry James' *Washington Square*, Catherine Sloper's refusal to explain herself threatens to rupture the smooth functioning of narrative progress itself: 'Catherine has taken herself out of the circuit, and there is no future if this enigma stays intact, if no fresh explanation can incite more plot'.[21] In this key passage of criticism for Hale's conception of reading as a process of self-binding, Butler argues that Catherine 'mark[s] the limits of all speaking that seeks to bind her, that offers itself to her as a way of binding herself'.[22] Butler proposes that Catherine's refusal of readerly knowledge demands of the reader that we 'cease judging', and that this 'suspension of judgement brings us closer to a different conception of ethics, one that honors what cannot be fully known or captured about the Other'.[23] A comparable movement of freedom emerging from sparing, a movement of freedom that unfolds through the 'care' of 'staying with', 'saving', 'sparing' and 'preserving' (BDT, p. 149) is at the heart of Heidegger's notion of human dwelling; as Heidegger proposes:

> To free really means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something *positive* and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own nature, when we return it specifically to its being, when we "free" it in the real sense of the word. (BDT, p. 147).

As such, this conception of dwelling as a movement of care that sets 'something free into its own presencing' (BDT, p. 148) contains within it an interest in preserving alterity comparable with Butler's argument. As Nicholas Dungey observes, 'dwelling

---

[21] Judith Butler, 'Values of Difficulty', in *Just Being Difficult? Academic Writing in the Public Arena*, ed. by Jonathan D. Culler and Kevin Lamb (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 199–216 (p. 207).
[22] Butler, 'Difficulty', p. 208. Qtd in Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 900. See also Dorothy J. Hale, 'Fiction as Restriction: Self-Binding in New Ethical Theories of the Novel', *Narrative*, 15.2 (2007), 187–206 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2007.0010>.
[23] Butler, p. 208.

entails recognizing the coming and passing of others, a letting-be of their essential natures'.[24]

Yet, surely the mention of an essential nature makes clear an obvious point of incompatibility between Butler's notion of alterity and Heidegger's? Whilst the poststructuralist interpretation of alterity foregrounds what Hale calls alterity's 'endless potential to resist comprehension, to trouble certainty', Heidegger's thinking of dwelling proceeds on the basis of a 'simple oneness' (BDT, p. 147) that unfolds when things are freed into their essence.[25] At this point, it is perhaps possible to see how a Heideggerian approach to questions of autonomy and self-restriction begins to depart from the new ethics. The distinction between Heidegger's thinking of the play between freeing and binding in dwelling, and that which unfolds in Hale's reading of the new ethics, rests (amongst other things) on the indivisibility of this freeing-binding in Heidegger's dwelling. In Hale's view, the ethical value of reading unfolds 'in new ethical theory generally' through the 'psychological necessity of oscillating' between the experience of being bound and unbound to a relationship with the social other.[26] An approach that attends to dwelling, by contrast, would necessarily attend to the effects, and negotiate the conditions, of aesthetic binding as they unfold in the aesthetic dimensions of novels themselves.

In this sense I seek to distinguish the approach that I am formulating in this thesis from that of Hale's 'new ethics', even whilst I take this issue of binding and the aesthetics of the novel as a point of departure for my own work. I will also seek to establish this point of departure by connecting my thesis with recent work by Namwali Serpell and Arne De Boever; giving a brief literary historical overview of dwelling and literature; and, by discussing my methodology and the selection of

---

[24] Nicholas Dungey, 'The Ethics and Politics of Dwelling', *Polity*, 39.2 (2007), 234–58 (p. 258).
[25] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 901.
[26] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 902.

authors for this study, before turning in more detail to the question of dwelling in the novel in the next chapter.[27]

Aesthetics and form: beyond the 'new ethics'

Responding critically to the way that texts bind together human and non-human entities through their formal and aesthetic dimensions necessarily begins with recognising that ethical critics are, of course, already responding to the aesthetic dimensions of texts. In fact, the poststructuralist move to theorise the ethical value of the novel in recent years has partly emerged in response to Foucauldian critiques of the novel as a form that interiorises the universalising expectations of liberal society. In this view Nussbaum's readerly 'love', for instance, appears as a means of continuous and insistent coddling of the subject inseparable, finally, from a mechanism of control.[28] At the same time, the attempt to theorise the ethical value of the experience of identification, care, defamiliarisation or difficulty necessarily entails a certain uncoupling of ethics from the aesthetic. As Robert Eaglestone has observed in this regard, conceiving that 'ethics and aesthetics are one and the same' remains a somewhat intractable task for ethical critics.[29] Hale's theorisation of reading as an oscillation between aesthetic experience and ethical reflection reduces this division between ethics and aesthetics to a fine point, but the distinction clearly remains necessary, as the following passage suggests:

> Ethical knowledge is the experience of irresistible encounter with what once
> does not try to know, what one cannot but know. It is knowledge that is
> beyond reason, that is of the emotions, and that is so intuitive as to seem a
> bodily knowing. To formulate this knowledge as epistemology, as we must

---

[27] C. Namwali Serpell, *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Arne De Boever, *Narrative Care: Biopolitics and the Novel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[28] Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[29] Robert Eaglestone, 'One and the Same? Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', *Poetics Today*, 25.4 (2004), 595–608 <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-25-4-595>.

do, is to register the moment when we move from being bound to binding and back again. But the process of converting knowing into knowledge is what enables the process to continue and to be felt as a progress.[30]

If this need to formulate intuitive ethical knowing into epistemological ethical knowledge partly underpins new ethical theories of the novel, the desire to counter Foucauldian conceptions of novel reading as a process of interiorising liberal universal values also remains significant.[31]

These propositions suggest an ongoing privileging of ethical knowledge over the aesthetic form of the novel that generates it, even whilst the novel form remains privileged within ethical theories of literature more broadly. In this thesis I take these key propositions — regarding the division between the ethical and the aesthetic, and the privileging of detached readerly reflection as a route to ethical knowledge — as an invitation to explore what Hale calls the 'ethico-political basis of novelistic aesthetics'.[32] This entails examining how the various modes of binding characters into worlds, and constituting worlds through the binding of characters, operate as effects and elements of aesthetic form in ways that are implicitly intentional in texts themselves and not conveyed through moments of detached ethical reflection.

I take this path through Hale's work on the new ethics to introduce some of the starting points of this project, but not to introduce this thesis as a work of ethical criticism. Turning away from readerly experiences of identification and care, or defamiliarisation and difficulty, means that this thesis does not seek to contribute to ethical theories of the novel per se. Instead, I intend to explore the ways in which contemporary novels knowingly and provocatively respond to their own positioning

---

[30] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.
[31] For Foucauldian criticism on the power of the novel as a form that produces uniform, liberal subjects see D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[32] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.

as forms that are at once the spaces of an 'all too visible incarceration of subjectivity by aesthetic form' and a privileged 'achievement of alterity'.[33] As Hale notes, 'both ethical camps not only take for granted the achievement of alterity as the novel's generic purpose but also understand it to be accomplished through novelistic form'.[34]

This project of critically addressing what Hale calls the 'ethico-political basis of novelistic aesthetics' has been taken up by Arne De Boever, who situates the negotiation between incarceration and possibility not in the movement of reading but in the novel's aesthetic dimensions themselves.[35] In *Narrative Care: Biopolitics and the Novel* De Boever proposes to read the novel as a *pharmakon* with both potentially destructive and curative dimensions, describing the novel '*as a form of life-writing, a kind of aesthetic care of the self and of others*' that has necessarily biopolitical dimensions relating to the management of characters' aesthetic existence.[36] In this vein De Boever proposes reading the novel 'as a work of bioart that is traversed by both biopolitical concerns and by concerns with the care for the self and the care for others. Although the novel might be complicit with biopower, it is also — and for this very reason — a site where experimentation with care takes place'.[37]

If De Boever's observation that, in contemporary fiction, 'care's imagination exists in a perpetual struggle with the novel's biopolitical origins' is instructive for this thesis, another important instance of recent criticism is Namwali Serpell's *Seven Modes of Uncertainty*.[38] In this critical response to the new ethics, Serpell turns away from encounters with social others in novels to develop a theory of the novel form as an environment which readers navigate, and where they encounter narrative structures

---

[33] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903, p. 900.
[34] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 900.
[35] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.
[36] De Boever, p. 8, emphasis in original.
[37] De Boever, p. 13.
[38] De Boever, p. 13; Serpell.

and patterns which afford readers certain ethical perturbances.[39] Seeking to draw out an ethics of reading made possible by the 'structural intentionality' of the text which readers explore, Serpell suggests that 'the better conceit for reading might be architecture'.[40]

My approach in this thesis broadly shares in formulations of the novel as a space for inhabitation: readerly, as in Serpell's discussion of the affordances of phenomenological movement through the structure of the novel; and characterological, as demonstrated in Hale's evocation of the narrative as a carceral formation, an 'encroachment on the existential freedom of those characters'.[41] In respect to the latter, it is possible to approach the question of dwelling in the novel, as Alfred López has recently suggested, 'through the individual's struggle to achieve within the world that has produced her the status of a conscious and contented being' (p. 3). This attention to the way that possibility and progress emerge from and through social constraint suggests the literary bildungsroman as the paradigmatic genre of literary dwelling for López, who contends that 'every bildungsroman may thus be read as a narrative of dwelling, an anatomy of the space within which Being as the fulfilment (or not) of dwelling occurs'.[42]

This suggestive formulation raises a number of questions regarding the very possibility of dwelling in the novel. These considerations are taken up in detail in the next chapter of the thesis, which places Heidegger's writings in the context of recent literary criticism and anthropological theory focusing on dwelling. I begin from the position here though, that the discussion of dwelling in the novel will be always indivisible, first and foremost, from the concerns of a particular work. The small

---

[39] Namwali Serpell, *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 24.
[40] Serpell, p. 22.
[41] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.
[42] Alfred J. López, 'Dwelling in a Global Age: An Introduction', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63.1 (2017), 2–8 (p. 3) <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0001>.

selection of contemporary writers I have chosen for this thesis each offer nuanced navigations of the possibility of dwelling in the novel form, yet these possibilities are never reducible to the fulfilment of dwelling or a valorisation of the novel form as a space where dwelling unfolds. Even in instances where what Heidegger calls the 'search […] for the nature of dwelling' (BDT, p. 159) plays a central role in a novel's events, the search for belonging or what López terms 'contented being' remain secondary to questions about the implication of aesthetic elements, narrative forms and the technology of writing itself in the flourishing of human existence.

The self-conscious navigation of the question of dwelling and the novel's entanglement in this takes on specific dimensions in the contemporary, and my theoretical framing of this discussion necessarily responds to the dominant social conceptualisation of the novel form as an 'aesthetics of alterity' discussed above.[43] At the same time, contemporary writers inherit the novel as a form that has always responded to shifts in modes of human inhabitation, or dwelling, brought on by social and technological transformations, which I will now briefly introduce.

Dwelling: a literary inheritance

Shortly before his death in 1940, and so some time before the appearance of Heidegger's first discussion of dwelling in 1951's 'Building Dwelling Thinking', Walter Benjamin argued that dwelling was a specific obsession of 19th century European life, and had emerged as a symptom of the alienation engendered by the Industrial Revolution. In his writings on the culture and environment of 19th century Paris, Benjamin argued that '[t]he nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its

---

[43] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 904.

accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet […] The twentieth century, with its porosity and transparency, its tendency toward the well-lit and airy, has put an end to dwelling in the old sense'.[44]

The pursuit of dwelling in the private sphere of the nineteenth-century bourgeois home was, for Benjamin, a failed response to a crisis of belonging unfolding with the arrival of technological and architectural modernity. As David Spurr, whose study *Architecture and Modern Literature* is indispensable to the brief literary historical framing of dwelling I offer here, notes, this inward-looking attempt to shape the home as a private receptacle for the subject was bound to failure: 'far from satisfying the individual's desire for an authentic subjectivity, [it] merely increased a sense of alienation from the real conditions of existence'.[45] In architectural terms, as Benjamin had suggested, the emergence of outward-looking, neatly organised modernist architecture presaged the end of the 'nineteenth-century womblike interior'.[46] This investment in the ability of private property, objects, decoration, ornaments and belongings to represent a fully-fledged subject and their existence in a material world bears comparison with the nineteenth-century realist novel. As Peter Brooks has argued, attending in particular to the ornamental accumulation of possessions that underpins the representation of character in the realist novel, 'things that people use and acquire in order to define themselves — their tools, their furniture, their accessories. These things are indeed part of the very definition of "character", of who one is and what one claims to be'.[47]

If this comparison suggests a related formulation of dwelling in nineteenth-century realist fiction and architecture, the departure from traditional notions of

---

[44] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Kevin McLaughlin and Howard Eiland (London: Belknap Press, 1999), pp. 220–21.
[45] David Spurr, *Architecture and Modern Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), p. 58.
[46] Spurr, p. 58.
[47] Peter Brooks, *Realist Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 14.

dwelling in modernist architecture was to an extent reflected in modernist literature's departure from literary realism. As David Spurr writes of modernism's departure from the privileged spaces of nineteenth-century literature:

> In one work after another, from Proust to Beckett, the subject is opened up and exposed to the elements of modernity. What is revealed in this process, however, is not the inner Xanadu of romantic poetry but rather a space essentially continuous with the outside, itself composed of the elements of a symbolic universe that exists independent of any subject. The inner space of the subject turns out to be a constituent part of the symbolic universe to which the subject is just that—subject and not sovereign.[48]

The emergence of dwelling as a particular issue in modern literature and in philosophy, is reflected in Heidegger's turn to this problematic in 1951 (with his lecture 'Building Dwelling Thinking') in the context of the crises of housing and habitation inflicted by Word War II. The question dwelling, its status as a 'specifically modern concept', provided a means through which to think the emergent crises of modernity, 'a crisis in human habitation, [and a crisis] in the adaptation of human beings to the objective conditions of a world in which the question of what it means to be human is given unprecedented urgency'.[49]

In this essay, Heidegger's famous example of the Black Forest farmhouse, 'built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants' (BDT, p. 158), demonstrates how building emerges from dwelling when humankind is perfectly and harmoniously at home in the world. The essay thinks of the house as emerging from the event of dwelling in the fourfold, whilst the house became a place where the

---

[48] Spurr, p. 60.
[49] Spurr, p. x. At the same time it is important to note that Heidegger's philosophical understanding of dwelling takes it as a human process that is never settled or final but always unfolding. As such, in Heidegger's terms, humankind '*must ever learn to dwell*' (BDT, p. 161).

fourfold is gathered: 'the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things, ordered the house' (BDT, p. 157). Heidegger downplays the labour of construction to emphasise that the house was built by craftspeople who used their tools as 'things' to gather the fourfold: 'a craft which, itself sprung from dwelling, still uses its tools and frames as things, built the farmhouse' (BDT, p. 158). Yet even whilst, for Heidegger, this house 'represents the ideal of human dwelling in complete harmony with its surroundings',[50] he also recognised both the anachronism and impossibility of such a reconstruction or return to this way of life: 'Our reference to the Black Forest farm in no way means that we should or could go back to building such houses; rather, it illustrates by a dwelling that *has been* how *it* was able to build' (BDT, p. 158, emphasis in original). Heidegger emphasises the architectural character of the farmhouse only to demonstrate the way that the fourfold of earth, sky, divinities and mortals are gathered in that place, so that the farmhouse emerges as the taking-place of dwelling.

As such, the example of the farmhouse reminds Heidegger's reader that such harmonious dwelling is impossible in modernity, whilst also suggesting that dwelling cannot simply be abandoned in favour of building. In this way Heidegger argued, at a time of national reconstruction, that the 'real plight of dwelling' will not be resolved by rebuilding (BDT, p. 159). Amidst the destruction, upheaval and new possibilities ushered in by modernity, Heidegger argues that, 'mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*' (BDT, p. 159, emphasis in original). By recalling the issue of dwelling, Heidegger saw the possibility for people to move beyond the essential homelessness of modernity: 'mortals answer this summons […] when they build out of dwelling, and think for the sake of dwelling' (BDT, p. 159). As Heidegger's discussion of dwelling here suggests, the plight of dwelling presents in modernity both literally in the experience of exile, destitution

---

[50] Spurr, p. 53.

and displacement that increasingly characterised life in modernity, and existentially as a particularly modern condition of homelessness, which entailed, in Spurr's terms, 'not just lacking shelter but not being at home in the world, including the world of language. Modern literature and architecture are the consequences of this condition, in both their formal freedoms and their respective engagements with the question of the way we live now'.[51]

The attempt to reinvent dwelling in order to overcome the essential homelessness of modernity also necessarily characterises Heidegger's writings on dwelling as late-modern or postmodern. As David Spurr argues, in the discussion of the Black Forest farmhouse in 'Building Dwelling Thinking', Heidegger's 'lesson is not one of nostalgia for that life but of the search for a form of dwelling willing to abandon the ideals of fullness and presence that dominate our cultural memory of that life, and prepared to find consolation in the freedom granted by the displacements of the contemporary world. Heidegger called for an awareness of the essential homelessness of the modern, industrialized world in order to relieve the misery of that condition'.[52] Where Benjamin had rightly seen the bourgeois nineteenth-century home as a doomed attempt at dwelling through insulation from the alienating effects of modernity, and where modernist writers departed from the similarly questionable attempt to construct the authentic self through accumulation of possessions, often centred in the home, that Peter Brooks locates in the nineteenth-century realist tradition, Heidegger finds in the home of the pre-modern peasant a form of poetic dwelling that, paradoxically, reveals new possibilities for meaningful existence beyond the crises of modernity.

Perhaps the key point of consideration in regard to Heidegger's invocation of the Black Forest farmhouse is the focus on language, and not architecture itself, as a

---

[51] Spurr, p. x.
[52] Spurr, p. 247.

mode for beginning to attend to the problem of dwelling. In other words, Heidegger is not interested in the architecture of the farmhouse itself, so much as he is interested in the experience of dwelling as it unfolds in the relationship between the dweller and their lived environment. The consideration of dwelling in the farmhouse reflects an investment in the capacity for language, indeed storytelling itself, to reflect on the nature of worldly dwelling — the particular formation of human binding into worldly environs — as it unfolds in different times and places. This return to storytelling and to narratives of experience presents itself as particularly important in the context of industrialism, social fragmentation, commodification of and mechanisation of experience that Heidegger associates with modernity. In modernity, Walter Benjamin claimed that 'experience has fallen in value',[53] industrialism, social fragmentation, commodification of and mechanisation of experience meant that the traditional human relations that made storytelling meaningful were subverted — contradicted by these civilisational developments. Dwelling is, in this sense, not necessarily architectural but still always concerned with the character of the relationship between the human and the environing world. As perhaps the most familiar means by which humans shape their dwelling in the world, architecture lends itself here to Heidegger, and to novelists, as a form for thinking through the changing nature of our worldly existence.

Whilst I have suggested that Heidegger views architecture as a means for recalling our existence as essentially characterised by an unfolding of dwelling, it is also the case that his essay responds to the essential forgetting of our entanglement with things and lived environments in the industrial and technological modern era. In this regard Spurr rightly points to the architectural emergence of what Rem Koolhas and Marc Augé have both influentially termed the 'junkspaces' of postmodern

[53] Spurr, p. 51.

architecture and the 'non-places' of transient contemporary experience.[54] In this respect, architecture becomes a less important part of constructing identity, in the face of 'the ceaselessly shifting and impermanent nature of junkspace, which abandons the logic of the monument, leaving no architectural structure of lasting value'.[55] Junkspaces and non-places are conceivable in relation to literature in these terms; as Spurr demonstrates:

> [In these environments] individuals are made transparent, as it were, by being systematically reduced in terms of consumer transactions, transportation objectives, or security risks. As conceived in such terms, the contemporary constructed environment poses a special problem for imaginative literature, and in particular narrative fiction. Architectural forms of the past are more conducive to narrative form, partly because of the richness of their symbolic associations and partly because each of these forms, as well as each concrete instance of it, has a history of its own. The building mediates between the present and the past, and this mediation itself serves as a kind of larger narrative to the narrative proper of a novel or short story. In the case of junkspace or the *non-lieu,* however, there is no mediation, no history to which the fictional narrative can adhere.[56]

In the space of the present, as Spurr rightly notes, dwelling has to be learned and invented anew, in part due to the growing 'absence of any necessary relation between the human subject and the built environment'.[57]

Zadie Smith, Tom McCarthy, Don DeLillo

Each of the writers addressed in this thesis demonstrates a complex relationship both to the reimagining of dwelling that unfolds in modernist fiction, and to the 'architectural disaffection' Spurr identifies in contemporary literature. [58] Apart

---

[54] Rem Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', *October*, 100 (2002), 175–90
<https://doi.org/10.1162/016228702320218457>; Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, ed. & trans. by John Howe (London: Verso, 1995).
[55] Spurr, p. 224.
[56] Spurr, p. 224.
[57] Spurr, p. xi.
[58] See Spurr, pp. 221-248.

from the junkspaces and non-places which Spurr draws attention to, the writers

addressed here all questioningly return to, and find creative potential in, characters'

attachments to particular lived environments and architectural spaces. They each

interact, for instance, with the question of the novel, and the bourgeois home, as

womblike structures for dwelling, as signalled above in my discussion of Benjamin

and Brooks. This problematic is most clearly invoked in Tom McCarthy's *Remainder*

(2005), when the unnamed narrator toys with the prospect of rebirth through the

construction of a house where he will feel 'authentic' again.[59] In Don DeLillo's *The*

Body Artist (2001), the appearance of an unknown figure in a remote seaside home is

likewise imagined as an embryonic process.[60] Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), too,

imagines the novel as a space for the gestation of new forms of community. That this

novel was famously charged with hysteria, a condition historically attributed to a

malfunctioning or 'wandering' womb, is in turn suggestive of continuing critical

expectations that novels will nurture traditional, and so fully 'human', forms of life.

Whilst the relation of these writers' work to modernism is not a central issue

in this thesis, it goes some way to explaining their suitability for this study. The

inheritance of modernism is particularly evident in McCarthy's work, as the novelist

and numerous commentators on his writing has observed.[61] DeLillo's work *The Body*

Artist, set in a remote seaside home, arguably marked a transition from postmodern

---

[59] '"You been giving birth in there?"' interrupts a partygoer as the novel's unnamed narrator stares into the fissure that promises his rebirth. Tom McCarthy, *Remainder* (Richmond: Alma Books, 2011), p. 63.

[60] 'That night they sat in the panelled room and she read to him from a book about the human body. There were photographs of blood cells magnified many thousands of times and there was a section of text on the biology of childbirth and this is what she was reading to him, slowly, inserting comments of her own, and asking questions, and drinking tea, and about forty minutes into the session, reading a passage about the embryo, half an inch long, afloat in body fluid, she realized he was talking to her'. Don DeLillo, *The Body Artist* (London: Picador, 2001), p. 25.

[61] For two diverse approaches to this question see Justus Nieland, 'Dirty Media: Tom McCarthy and the Afterlife of Modernism', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 58.3 (2012), 569–99 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2012.0058>; 'Restricted Action: McCarthy's Modernist Legacy?', in *Tom McCarthy: Critical Essays*, ed. by Dennis Duncan (Canterbury: Gylphi, 2016).

epic to a Woolfian modernist poetics.[62] Smith's *White Teeth* has been situated between modernism and postmodernism by a number of critics, whilst *NW* prominently reinterprets modernism's fragmentary depictions of the subject.[63] This novel likewise explores dwelling through the experience of its loss, evoked in part by setting its characters' strong experiences of place against the continuous threat of material homelessness in contemporary British society. In each case, like their modernist forebears, Smith's, McCarthy's and DeLillo's explorations of dwelling in local environments and architectural spaces are not reducible to investments in place or the built environment as the foundations of worldly dwelling.

As discussed above, in Heidegger's discussion of the farmhouse in 'Building Dwelling Thinking', the farmhouse itself remains a locus for thinking the relational aspects of worldly dwelling, revealed above all not in built environments but in poetic language itself. I argue that for the novelists addressed in this thesis, the built environments of houses, estates, neighbourhoods and towns that characters navigate similarly remain indivisible from concerns with the novel's linguistic structuring – in aesthetic forms, technologies of writing or interpretative models – supports and shape possibilities for worldly belonging. As such I have selected these writers in part for the way they reflect certain concerns in Heidegger's thinking about the challenges and threats to dwelling in modernity, but also for the way their writing makes it possible to begin focusing on the way that ethical questions about dwelling are folded into the aesthetic, as addressed in my discussion of the new ethics above.

---

[62] See Philip Nel, 'Don DeLillo's Return to Form: The Modernist Poetics of "The Body Artist"', *Contemporary Literature*, 43.4 (2002), 736–59 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1209040>.

[63] Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (London: Penguin Books, 2001); Zadie Smith, *NW* (London: Penguin Books, 2013). On modernism in Smith, see Vanessa Guignery, 'Zadie Smith's NW or the art of line-crossing', *E-rea*, 2014 <https://doi.org/10.4000/erea.3892>; Matthew Paproth, 'The Flipping Coin: The Modernist and Postmodernist Zadie Smith', in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. by Tracey Lorraine Walters (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

Thesis structure

Following this introduction, Chapter 1 addresses the possibilities for dwelling afforded by narrative and literary forms, as conceived in recent scholarship and in Heidegger's thought. This discussion serves to bridge the divide between Heidegger's writings on dwelling, art and poetry and the novel form. To the extent that this is achieved, the chapter draws out some elements that characterise and delineate the possibilities of human dwelling – attunement and mood; technology; narrative mediation and interpretation – each of which are particularly pertinent to the formal and aesthetic dimensions of the novel. The remaining chapters take up each of these issues individually as the critical focus for analysing the explorations of dwelling in the novels selected for discussion. In each chapter that follows I foreground a particular novelistic investment in one of these elements of human dwelling.

In Chapter 2, I address the work of Zadie Smith, whose fiction and essays have been central to critical discussions of aesthetics and ethics in the contemporary Anglo-American novel. In this chapter I seek to demonstrate the relevance of Heidegger's work on dwelling to the 'new ethics', discussed briefly in this introduction. I explore the importance of attunement and mood in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and *NW* to suggest that this fundamental dimension of human worldliness is more primary in these novels than the representation of different social perspectives, and that Smith's fiction aims at attending to these dimensions of human experience in order to allow the aesthetic dimensions of her work to reveal the affective conditions of dwelling in contemporary Britain. Just as Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* begins with a transformative suicide attempt, Chapters 3 and 4 each respond to a rhetorical strategy employed in the two novels they address, which open with the loss or rupture of a particular mode *of* dwelling mobilised as the occasion for a search *for* dwelling that unfolds in the novel.

In Chapter 3 I address Tom McCarthy's *Remainder*, a novel at the heart of recent criticism that highlights how aesthetic and formal experimentation in contemporary fiction is reinterpreting the ethics and politics of the novel form. In this text, the loss of dwelling mentioned above is figured through the memory of an authentic relation to the surrounding world that occasions a search for a narrative form which can respond to the technological transformation of human life and return the human figure to its proper relation to writing and technology more generally.

In Chapter 4 Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist* is read as a contemporary meditation on the possibilities for narrative belonging in contemporary lived environments. Bringing together the capacity for narrative to mediate the concerns with technology and attunement raised in the previous chapters alongside the primary concern with narrative as a mode of human dwelling, this novel is presented as an artistic meditation on, and a parable of, the aesthetics of dwelling in our time.

Chapter 1:   Theorising Dwelling in the Novel

This chapter draws out the dimensions of dwelling that are at issue in this thesis, and in doing so offers a conceptualisation of dwelling as a category for novel criticism. In developing my approach to reading with a concern for dwelling, I examine Heidegger's own exegeses on literary works and their different modes of revealing alongside current discussions of dwelling in novel studies. My theoretical approach to the issue of dwelling is supported by current anthropological conceptions of dwelling, where the term applies to the flourishing of life in specific relational and ethnographic contexts. These discussions lead into an exposition on narrativity and dwelling, and the challenges involved in positioning the novel in this dialogue. Extending the discussion of dwelling from narrativity to narrative forms in an attempt to grasp conceptually at the novel's place in dwelling, involves a shift from (epistemological) considerations about narrative as a means of knowing, or (ontological) questions about narrative as a mode of human being, to considerations about the ontology of the novel itself, its simultaneous existence as physical object, technology, environment, situation and world.

Whilst Heidegger's writings offer many of the richest and most original insights into the question of dwelling, they actively work against presenting it as a theoretical or analytic tool. In particular, Heidegger's notion of human being as dwelling makes manifest his opposition to ideas of human understanding as fundamentally a process of detached, rational and calculative interpretation that, Heidegger argues, permeates the Western philosophical tradition.[64] As such, the purpose of this chapter is to bridge the conceptual gap between Heidegger's thinking of dwelling and contemporary theories of the novel, and to develop a working

---

[64] For a detailed introduction to Heidegger's critique of theoreticism see Timothy Clark, *Martin Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 9–26.

understanding of dwelling that is responsive to the formal specificities of the novel. Doing so does not mean simply demonstrating connections between novel theory and philosophical conceptions of dwelling, however, nor does it mean overriding or effacing the elusive and illusory nature of Heidegger's writing in order that it accommodates and supports a theoretical framework. Instead, it entails asking questions about which aspects of Heidegger's writing on dwelling are amenable to the study of the contemporary novel, and in what ways his work, which never discussed the novel directly, requires adapting for this purpose. It also entails responding to literary criticism and anthropology that have taken up dwelling as a concern, allowing the stories that these fields trace to reveal the issue of dwelling as it is negotiated in contemporary environments, and in the narrative artworks they produce.

'Worlding' and the novel

The interest in 'binding' to a world introduced in the previous chapter is grounded in Heidegger's interest in human worldliness, an understanding of human being that begins with the conception, in *Being and Time*, of being-in-the-world, *In-der-Welt-sein*, as a fundamental 'existential determination of *Dasein*' (BT, p. 64). *Dasein* is unique amongst beings, for Heidegger, by virtue of its worldliness. As Heidegger argues in *Being and Time*, when introducing his discussion of world, '"World" is ontologically not a determination of those beings which *Dasein* essentially is *not*, but rather a characteristic of *Dasein* itself' (BT, p. 64). *Dasein*'s constitutive worldliness emerges not through its standing over and against the world, or vice versa. Instead, as Sean Gaston notes, '*Dasein* is always alongside or amidst the world: both inside and outside the world at once' (p. 72).[65] This complex being-alongside the world means that the world is never self-evident to *Dasein*.

---

[65] Sean Gaston, *The Concept of World from Kant to Derrida* (London ; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2013), p. 72. For a detailed discussion of the concept of world in Heidegger see Chapter 4 in this volume (pp. 67-98).

In other writings, however, Heidegger extended these concerns to consider in more detail specific human activities (such as artistic production) and their capacities for the 'opening up of a world' (OWA, p. 44). Perhaps due to his perception, in evidence in *Being and Time*, that *Dasein* normally turns away from its world, the artwork became significant for Heidegger for its capacity to reveal the world of a historical community, founding that world by revealing and inaugurating a mode of dwelling.

The role that artworks play in presenting possibilities for Being for historically specific linguistic communities is particularly clear in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', where Heidegger argues that '[t]he linguistic work, originating in the speech of the people […] transforms the people's saying so that now every living word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flighty, what master and what slave' (OWA, p. 42). Here Heidegger conceived of the artwork as a site for the fraught, discordant negotiation of the mode of belonging or dwelling proper to a particular community. The importance of language is evident in Heidegger's proposal that the work 'originat[es] in the speech of the people' that make up that world and so, contemplating and opening to questioning the values of that place, putting 'every living word' into battle to reveal what is 'holy and unholy' (OWA, p. 42). Revealing a world to a historical community, the artwork does not make propositional statements about possibilities that already exist in the world. Instead, it reveals the world, as 'the opening up of that into which human being, as historical, is already cast […] everything that already is […] for an historical people […] though still hidden from itself' (OWA, p. 75). Yet we are not so interested in pursuing what Heidegger held to be the great work of art here: as James Magrini has noted, novels and artworks do not hold the same potential for mass gathering as, for

instance, a Greek temple or the Nuremberg rally, and so are less likely to fit the designation of great art Heidegger proposed at the time of 'The Origin'.[66]

At the same time, it is an equally problematic and conflicted move to attribute a kind of weaker version of worlding to the novel, even insofar as this is a necessary move. The first complication is the possibility of denying the gravity of the worlding that unfolds in cultural formations such as the novel.[67] Addressing the worlding of narrative forms such as the novel also risks introducing an understanding of the novel as a proliferation of different possible life narratives that the reader can choose freely from, which is unfaithful to the notion of worlding that I am pursuing here. Robert Eaglestone makes clear this distinction between the world-opening of artworks and the interpretation of possible narratives discussed above when he writes that '[a]rtworks in the broadest sense, then, disclose or give us that world in which we live as a concrete, determinate, and specific place, revealed and enframed by those artworks […] Because we (now) inhabit multiple and often conflicting worlds, it is the artworks that reveal to us who and how we are, what these worlds are, and to some extent, what our potentialities for Being are'.[68] Our belonging to, and inhabiting of, many different worlds mentioned by Eaglestone makes explicit the problems inherent in Heidegger's conception of the vigorous world-founding of a community in 'The Origin'. Nonetheless, Heidegger's formulation of the artwork as a world-opening event of language, rather than a propositional statement about the worlds they represent, is significant. As Eaglestone notes in this regard, '[n]ovels about the less-developed world by writers often called "postcolonial" are not simply reports by what Gayatri C. Spivak names (while critiquing the concept) "native informants"'.[69]

---

[66] James Magrini, Elias Schwieler, *Heidegger on Literature, Poetry, and Education after the "Turn"* (New York, NY: Routledge)

[67] See Pheng Cheah, *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985), 243–61.

[68] Eaglestone, 'Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', pp. 600–601.

[69] Eaglestone, 'Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', p. 604.

Globalisation, colonialism, global war, mass migration and the emergence of world literature mean that if literature speaks to a world, it is a plurality of worlds or the dimensions of a shared, global world. Both formulations are far removed from the distinct cultural worlds elaborated on in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In recent years, as such, the possibility of revealing dwelling through art has led recent critics to consider the world-opening capacity of art both in relation to more local contexts and, more often, in terms of considering our worldly dwelling on a global scale.

Madigan Haley's essay, 'Marginal Figures and the Ethos of the Global Novel' argues that the global novel now seeks to give voice to the emergent traces of a mode of dwelling that transcends particular national or regional contexts to pursue 'an ethical language beyond the individual self and the particular world of the work'.[70] In doing so, for Haley, the global novel evinces a sense of a changing relationship to narrative in the globalised world. Haley negotiates the relationship between the individual text and its global context by arguing that the global novel expresses this loss of distinct worlds whilst forming a constellation of texts that can begin to be thought of collectively as a world at a global scale. In this context Haley argues that the global novel invites us to think of *ethos* differently, as an emergent global *ethos* which lies not at the centre of localised communities but at their margins, margins which themselves reveal global interdependence. This global *ethos* is

> a common, if incomplete, horizon of being and acting that rescues the meaning of events from the merely personal and particular. Suggesting that global literature figures such a horizon does not entail a facile universalism. Nor does it imagine fiction's relation to a "common life" in terms of standardization. Rather, it recognizes that the work of […] fiction is not simply to describe historical events but to allow them to refer beyond themselves, becoming in some sense "our" history.[71]

---

[70] Madigan Haley, 'Marginal Figures and the Ethos of the Global Novel', *Novel*, 48.1 (2015), 103–21 (p. 115) <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-2860373>.
[71] Haley, p. 118.

As the approach taken in Haley's work suggests, the collectivism of a historical community that Heidegger imagines in 'The Origin' might exclude more nascent forms of community, seeming to offer little help for thinking the situation of those whose dwelling is threatened by marginality and precisely the kind of hierarchy and domination that Heidegger here accepts as integral to *ethos* and the proper working of community itself. If Haley's work further demonstrates the insufficiency of thinking ethos in relation to the customs and hierarchies of a particular place in a contemporary, globalised world, one of the unanswered questions that emerges from the discussion is: to what extent do such formulations alleviate or modify the attachments that dwelling in a particular place entails?

As my discussion here suggests, the opening of worlds in artworks does not occur simply through mimetic narratives that function as other possible narratives for life. This view risks equating, as I have suggested, narrativity with narrative artworks — what Eaglestone calls the 'strong mimeticist position, suggesting that "we" and art are, in deep ways, the same'.[72] By turns, Heidegger's conception of truth revealed in the artwork is non-mimetic, an act by which a world is opened or uncovered. In the case of Van Gogh's painting that Heidegger discusses in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', the painting allows the shoe to 'emerge into the unconcealedness of its being' (OWA, p. 35), to show in an essential sense *what* and *how* it is and so too to reveal the world of the peasant woman who wears it. This form of truth, involves, as Eaglestone notes, 'being knowingly in relation to what grounds the sense of a proposition',[73] a form of knowledge to which we arrive by means of a revelation: we now recognise the world of the work.

For Heidegger the very notion of world is irreducible: we always already find ourselves in and in relation to a world, rather than coming to piece together a sense of

---

[72] Eaglestone, 'Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', p. 602.
[73] Eaglestone, 'Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', p. 600.

the world. For this reason Heidegger introduces the world in *Being and Time* in terms of its 'worldliness' (BT, pp. 63–86). However, I will approach this world-opening in the novel by highlighting here the way it is shaped through writing as something that emerges from a world; through the specific formal and material dimensions of the novel (as an object or thing which readers engage with); and, through the readerly processes of attunement and interpretation which respond and give meaning to the novel's worldly qualities. In 'The Thing', Heidegger is at pains to stress this point:

> This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That means: the world's worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else […] The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding. The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another. (T, p. 177-8)

Whilst Heidegger insists upon these points, it is nonetheless the case that the character of this worlding, the 'mirror-play' of the fourfold is *revealed* in Hölderlin's poetry. Van Gogh's work similarly reveals the world of the peasant woman to Heidegger, and through Heidegger's phenomenological evocation of the artwork's revealing, the character of this world is communicated to Heidegger's reader. This is significant because I am interested, in what follows, in the role of dwelling *in* and *as* worlding in the novel form, in how modes of inhabitation that unfold in the narrative spaces of the novel, and their relation to the aesthetic and formal dimensions of literary texts, serve to reveal the worlds. First, however I seek to address the question of the relationship between the novel form and dwelling as a mode of worldly inhabitation.

Writing belongs to dwelling

Placing dwelling at the centre of a theoretical discussion of the novel implies not only a particular viewpoint on narrative creativity, but also on the character of human being itself. In 'Building Dwelling Thinking', perhaps the foundational essay on dwelling for the fields of anthropology, architecture and sociology, Heidegger claims that 'the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling' (BDT, p. 145). Heidegger explains that this 'Old English and High German word for building, *Buan*, means to dwell' (BDT, p. 144). In this way, Heidegger seeks to reverse the relationship of primacy between building and dwelling. Where we commonly assume that 'we attain to dwelling […] only by means of building' (BDT p. 143), Heidegger asks his reader to allow this etymological discovery to lead into thinking building as belonging, instead, to dwelling. Whether building is conceived in terms of cultivating, which 'tends the growth that ripens into its fruit of its own accord' by 'cherish[ing]', 'preserv[ing]', 'protect[ing]' and 'car[ing] for' — Heidegger's examples are 'till[ing] the soil' and 'cultivat[ing] the vine' — or in terms of constructing, the kind of activities that, 'in a certain way, make their own works' — here 'shipbuilding and temple-building' are given as examples — Heidegger says that 'both modes of building […] are comprised within genuine building, that is, dwelling' (BDT, p. 145).

The key point that Heidegger raises here, that, fundamentally, 'building belong[s] to dwelling' (BDT, p. 143), has been elaborated from a historical perspective by anthropologist Tim Ingold. In his seminal work *The Perception of the Environment* (2000), Ingold proposed what he then called 'the dwelling

perspective',[74] the founding statement of which is drawn from Heidegger's essay.[75] In

Ingold's anthropological register, adopting this perspective means 'that the forms

people build, whether in the imagination or on the ground, arise within the current of

their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagement

with their surroundings'.[76] It follows from this statement that building of any kind

cannot take place apart from an embodied engagement with a lived environment. As

Ingold goes on to propose, 'Building, then, cannot be understood as a simple process

of transcription, of a pre-existing design of the final product onto a raw material

substrate'.[77] To acknowledge the human capacity for envisioning (or for projection, in

Heidegger's terms) necessitates stating that 'envisioning is itself an activity carried on

by real people in a real-world environment […] Only because they already dwell

therein can they think the thoughts they do'.[78] Drawing comparatively on

archaeological anthropology of ancient human built environments and studies of

modern and contemporary built environments, Ingold rejects the idea of a moment in

cultural and technological development when humans stopped 'dwelling' and started

'building'.[79]

   To take another example, I will briefly introduce Ingold's discussion of

writing. As with building, which cannot, as discussed above, 'be understood as a

simple process of transcription, of a pre-existing design of the final product onto a

raw material substrate', the written word is likewise 'not prefigured as a mental

---

[74] Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 186. I describe this in the past tense because, as noted in the preface to the most recent edition of *The Perception of the Environment*, Ingold has since replaced dwelling with 'the more neutral notion of "inhabitation", and prefer[s] to speak of "inhabiting" rather than "dwelling"' (p. xviii).

[75] The founding statement mentioned is as follows: 'We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is because we are dwellers […] To build is in itself already to dwell […] *Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build*' (BDT p. 146, p. 144, p. 156, emphasis in original; qtd in Ingold, *Perception*, p. 186).

[76] Ingold, *Perception*, p. 186.

[77] Ingold, p. 186.

[78] Ingold, p. 186.

[79] Ingold, p. 181.

construction which the writing hand merely serves to transcribe onto a surface'.[80]

Ingold, in this way, emphasises the process of writing as an embodied and emplaced skill: 'there can be no inscription without incorporation – without, in other words, the building of habitual patterns of posture and gesture into the bodily *modus operandi* of the skilled practitioner […] writing is an achievement of the whole human organism-person in his or her environment'.[81] For Ingold, writing remains an artistic process comparable with other creative practices such as weaving. It is, in the first place, 'a kind of dextrous movement […] the patterning or weave of the text emerges as the crystallisation of this movement'.[82] Reflecting on the importance of embodied, skilled engagement and the importance of dwelling as the font of human creativity and so of building itself, Ingold proposes that 'meaning is immanent in the relational contexts of people's practical engagement with their lived-in environments'.[83] Ingold writes that 'humans are brought into existence as organism-persons within a world that is inhabited by beings of manifold kinds, both human and non-human. Therefore relations amongst humans, which we are accustomed to calling "social", are but a sub-set of ecological relations'.[84]

Ingold's conception of writing as an art that emerges from the movement of dwelling seeks to counter conceptions of writing as 'operation of a technology' which 'divorces the author from the immediate context of sensuous engagement with his or her surroundings' and 'involves a more or less mechanical execution of a preconceived verbal composition'.[85] Ingold has in mind here, in particular, Walter Ong's argument that 'writing (and especially alphabetic writing) is a technology […] it initiated what print and computers only continue […] the separation of the word

---

[80] Ingold, *Perception*, p. 186, p. 403.
[81] Ingold, p. 403.
[82] Ingold, p. 403.
[83] Ingold, p. 168.
[84] Ingold, p. 5.
[85] Ingold, p. 401.

from the living present'.[86] For Ingold, viewing writing, weaving, or playing an instrument as a technology, as Ong does here, 'recast[s] the skilled activity of artisans as the behavioural or mechanical output of a formal system of rules and principles […] that practitioners are bound to put into effect, regardless of their personal experience and sensibilities'. Ingold proposes that '[t]here is far more to playing the violin, however, than the mechanical execution of a pre-prepared series of instructions. And if there is a certain analogy between violin-playing and writing, it must point to a conclusion […] that the activity of the writer, like that of the violinist, is an *art in itself*'.[87]

The question of the author as an artisan introduced by Ingold might suggest the implausibility of this conception of authorship in post-industrial societies. As Bradley Deane notes, 'the image of the "hand-made" novel is no less an ideological fiction than that of the novel-writing machine'.[88] Instead, I turn to Ingold's discussion of writing for the particular perspective that it brings to the question of writing as a technology, a question that concerns Ong, as mentioned, but also both Heidegger and, as Ingold's discussion suggests, all those who take time to reflect on the practice of writing.

At issue in this thesis, in particular, is the relationship between the novel's appearance as a technology and its other manifestations as a thing and a world. At issue when considering dwelling in the novel, too, is a negotiation of the author's relation to their craft, and a related negotiation of the capacity for writing to reveal meaning which is, to cite Ingold, 'immanent in the relational contexts of people's practical engagement with their lived-in environments'.[89] This might involve the

---

[86] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 80–81.

[87] Ingold, p. 402, emphasis in original.

[88] Bradley Deane, *Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market.* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 97.

[89] Ingold, p. 168.

ability of writing to translate the meaningful content of dwelling into narrative, to trace a path through the relational contexts of inhabitation that ends in the coherent form of a novel which can open this world to a readership. Ingold's appeal to the idea of the author as artisan clearly involves questions of agency in the play between writer and craft, which of course in my discussion is the contemporary novel. This could involve, in relation to Ong's work on orality and literacy, a negotiation 'between the oral storyteller and the novelist, between oral storytelling and written literary practices', discerned by Areti Dragas as part of the return of the storyteller in contemporary fiction.[90] Considering the authors I address in this thesis, this issue of agency presents itself in terms closer to Ingold's than Ong's, as a negotiation between writing-narrating as an artistic process that emerges from dwelling, on the one hand, and the writing technologies and narrative forms this narrating-writing is built into, on the other.

The text: between technology and thing

In the view traced here, writing is never reducible to a technology in the sense of a mechanical operation, but rather is a technological and artistic process always negotiating with its own technicity. Such an awareness of technicity is evident in Ingold's writing, when he switches to a more personal register, lamenting that, whilst 'handwriting flows from the moving point of contact between pen and paper […] [t]he keyboard ruptures this connection […] Typing on the computer, I find, is joyless and soul-destroying. It rips the heart out of writing'.[91] It is notable that the elaboration of a dwelling perspective on human activity in Ingold's writing does not assuage his concern that the tools of his craft threaten to reduce his writing to the mechanised operation of a technology, in particular now that typing on the computer has all but replaced writing by hand with pen and paper. Ingold's comments here suggest, once

---

[90] Areti Dragas, *The Return of the Storyteller in Contemporary Fiction*, Literary Studies (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 143.
[91] Ingold, p. 169.

again, that adopting a dwelling perspective does not entail a naïve rejection of technology, but rather suggests a fundamentally Heideggerian sensitivity to the depersonalising character of modernity, and of modern technology in particular. Put differently, Ingold's heightened awareness of the rupturing effect of technology is a reflection of the proto-ethical perspective on human life as dwelling encountered in Heidegger's thought.

If writing was considered here as both a technology and an art, how to conceive of the novel, and the contemporary novel in particular, in this perspective? How to distinguish this entity from any other in the lived environment — the pen, the computer, the table, the basket, etc. — from the perspective of Heidegger's thought? To address this question I will note, first, Heidegger's mention of books as things in his essay 'The Thing'. Here Heidegger describes things that are 'unpretentious' and modest:

> Inconspicuously compliant is the thing: the jug and the bench, the footbridge and the plow […] Things, each thinging from time to time in its own way, are heron and roe, deer, horse and bull. Things, each thinging and staying in its own way, are mirror and clasp, book and picture, crown and cross. (T, p. 180)

The position of the book amidst this catalogue of common, everyday objects and animals suggests perhaps its marginality in contemporary technological society, whilst also belying the special role of things in Heidegger's thought. Things, in spite of their seeming marginality here, at the centre of the event of dwelling for Heidegger, inaugurating and make possible dwelling by opening a world in their *thinging*. For Heidegger, dwelling is not conceivable in terms of human action alone, but emerges through our engagement with things.

Heidegger takes the example, in particular, of the jug as a thing that gathers together and reveals (or outpours) a world. The jug is a thing, for Heidegger, rather than a tool or object, when it brings humankind, in their existence as earthbound,

mortal beings, into unity with a world of plurality of environmental and relational ties, what Heidegger in his later thought calls the fourfold of earth, sky, mortals and divinities. In Heidegger's terms, '[i]n the gift of the outpouring earth and sky, divinities and mortals dwell *together all at once*. These four, at once because of what they themselves are, belong together. Preceding everything that is present, they are enfolded into a single fourfold' (T, p. 171).

In order to demonstrates how the fourfold is gathered and revealed by the thing, I will first draw on Heidegger's description of this process. Heidegger emphasises the way that the jug gathers together each element of the fourfold in its contents, in its form and materiality, in its capacity for outpouring and in its cultural meaningfulness. The jug's outpouring wine and water points back to the spring and the vine, which in turn points towards the sky:

> The outpouring gives water, it gives wine to drink. In the spring the rock dwells, and in the rock dwells the dark slumber of the earth, which receives the rain and dew of the sky. In the water of the spring dwells the marriage of sky and earth. It stays in the wine given by the fruit of the vine, the fruit in which the earth's nourishment and the sky's sun are betrothed to one another. But the gift of the outpouring is what makes the jug a jug. In the jugness of the jug, sky and earth dwell. (T, p. 170)

The connection of the human to this movement of water, and to the growth and harvest of grapes, connects to their essential mortality. As Heidegger goes on, '[t]he gift of the pouring out is a drink for mortals. It refreshes their leisure. It enlivens their conviviality' (T, p. 170). The outpouring also has cultural importance, and the act of outpouring reveals a world of human relations, traditions and values: 'at the jug's gift is at times also given for consecration, then it does not still a thirst. It stills and elevates the celebration of the feast. The gift of the pouring now is neither given in an inn nor is the poured gift a drink for mortals. The outpouring is the libation poured out for the immortal gods' (T, p. 170).

The difference between this kind of thing and the tools and equipment that we encounter in everyday use is evident in the way that one *opens* a world, and the other appears *in* the world. As Malpas notes, 'to think of the thing as itself having a certain location presupposes that one has already stepped back from the thing as "thinging," and so as gathering a world, in order to view it simply as one "thing" located with respect to other similarly located "things" within a larger order of such locations'.[92] Unlike an object or tool which appears in the environment and with which we interact in our dwelling, then, the thing reveals and places us in the very world of meaningful relationality and engagement in which that dwelling unfolds. For Heidegger, the jug is a thing because it revealed the world of the fourfold, the world in which humankind dwell as mortals. Heidegger values the jug as an example because it is a thing that makes possible a certain kind of thinking, a thinking on human mortality, on human involvement in and connection to a meaningful environing world.

If there is something about the jug — in particular its capacity for containing and outpouring — that makes it a thing, can this example help develop an understanding of the literary text (and the 'book' that Heidegger mentions (T, p. 180)) as a thing? On the one hand, it is important not to efface the particular character of the thing. As Jeff Malpas notes, 'the revealing that occurs through the gathering that occurs in relation to the thing is such that it reveals the character of the thing itself, but in doing so it also reveals a particular configuration of the world and so reveals other things in a particular light also'. Taking the example of the jug quite literally, Malpas explains that '[w]hen the jug opens up the world through its "outpouring," what is opened up is the entirety of that to which the jug belongs: the kitchen in which the jug is kept, the shop from which it was bought, the character of its making, the mode of decoration that it bears, the cups and glasses into which it pours, the

---

[92] Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Boston: MIT Press, 2006), p. 241.

wine, the milk, the water that are poured from it, the occasions of its use, the needs to which it responds, the people that make use of it or who are served by it… and so on'.[93]

In this sense the comparison of the novel with the jug seems incongruous. Yet, is there not an implicit connection between the jug, as a container that outpours a world, and a literary form? Cleanth Brooks' famous dictum that '[t]he poem itself is the well-wrought urn' is one clear association.[94] For Barbara Johnson, '[u]rns are containers. They contain the ashes of the dead. They can also contain water, wine, nourishment. As containers or vehicles, they lend themselves as metaphors for form itself, or language itself, as in Francis Ponge's poem about a jug, which ends, "Couldn't everything I have just said about the jug be said equally well of words?" Urns can be metaphors for the relation between form and content, but also between body and soul, expression and intention. […] The thing, the human, the poem, and indeed language itself all become metaphors for each other through the urn.'[95]

The idea that the jug has the character of a thing that reveals the world poetically is evident, of course, in Heidegger's poetic description of the world that the thinging jug opens, discussed above. Indeed, Heidegger's conception of dwelling is arguably revealed by the poetic language as fundamentally as it is by the thinging of the jug that is the event for the advent of the essay I have been discussing.

So far I have considered writing as an artistic process and a technology, and suggested that the novel, as a particular expression of that intersection between art and technology might reveal a world through its status as a thing. I also noted that it is the language of the fourfold, which Heidegger encounters in Hölderlin's poetry,

---

[93] Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World*, p. 240.
[94] Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2006 [1947]), p. 16.
[95] Barbara Johnson, *The Feminist Difference: Literature, Psychoanalysis, Race, and Gender* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 130.

which attunes him to the thinging of the thing, and makes possible its expression in language. Heidegger's discussion of Hölderlin's poetry, to which I now turn, develops further an understanding of the privileged status of poetry — and so too, I suggest, of literature — amongst things. In both Heidegger's earlier writings on artwork, and his later work on poetry, dwelling and the thing, it is clear that belonging and dwelling is always at issue. It is clear, too, that specific things reveal particular modes of dwelling and belonging to the world, and that, under different circumstances, individuals will differentially respond, attune, and react to the exploration or characterisation of dwelling that particular things reveal, to the worlds that things (whether a jug, poem, Greek tragedy or temple) open to them.

Poetry, reading, writing and attunement

Considering literature in relation to dwelling might begin with Heidegger's discussion of dwelling and poetic language in 'Poetically Man Dwells'. Heidegger begins this essay, however, by contending that dwelling cannot rest on literature. He asks, 'if the sole form in which poetry exists is literary to start with, then how can human dwelling be understood as based on the poetic?' (PMD, p. 215). In doing so, Heidegger intends to establish a more fundamental relationship between the poetic and our dwelling which is not limited to thinking of either dwelling or the poetic as something merely built or made by human hand. Heidegger gives voice to this objection as follows: 'things of imagination are merely made. Making is, in Greek, *poeisis*. And man's dwelling is supposed to be poetry and poetic? This can be assumed surely, only by someone who stands aside from actuality' (PMD, p. 214). Heidegger does not suggest that we dwell in poetry but rather asks us to attend to Hölderlin's statement more carefully to understand that, to say that dwelling is poetic, is to say that dwelling is a form of human existence in which things show up poetically: 'When Hölderlin speaks of dwelling, he has before his eyes the basic character of human existence' (PMD, p. 215).

For Hölderlin, Heidegger argues, '[p]oetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling' (PMD, p. 218). Hölderlin does not speak of poetry as a special form of building that makes dwelling possible but, Heidegger contends, it is nonetheless the case that Heidegger's thinking emerges from the language of Hölderlin's poetry. Hölderlin 'does not speak of building, either in the sense of cultivating and erecting, or in such a way as even to represent poetry as a special kind of building […] Despite all this, we are thinking the same thing that Hölderlin is saying poetically' (PMD, p. 218). As discussed above, the dwelling that Heidegger conceives through Hölderlin's poetry is a dwelling amongst the fourfold, an inhabiting of the world in these poetic terms, as earth, sky, divinities and mortals. In the fourfold, things shine and the world is revealed as the dynamic unity of the dance of the neighbouring fourfold elements, each relating to each other and presencing in a dynamic mirror-play which passes from one element of the fourfold to another.

If Heidegger found in the poetry of Hölderlin and Rilke the means to convey the character of dwelling, its poetic mode of revealing and disclosure, this was arguably largely due to the liberation of things in this mode of disclosure from their presencing as resources in the mode of disclosedness associated with modern technology which Heidegger called *Gestell*, translating as 'enframing' or 'the framework'. It is worth mentioning here that the free coming to presence of things in the fourfold, their essencing, is entirely oppositional to the technological mode of disclosure that Heidegger describes as *Gestell*.[96] Following from this I interpret Heidegger's conception of poetic dwelling, firstly, as mentioned above, as a process of attunement to the world as disclosed in the poetic language of Hölderlin's poetry; and, secondly, as the antinomy of the experience of the world as disclosed under technological *Gestell*. As such, the poetic dwelling that Heidegger develops in these

---

[96] On this, see Heidegger's 'The Question Concerning Technology' (QCT).

later writings represents a vision of a certain, idealised form of dwelling in which things are expressed in their essence and in their proper relation to Being.

This notion of poetic dwelling does not fully address the novel form, nor the technological landscape the novel emerges from and is bound up in, but it is heuristically useful to consider poetic dwelling as demonstrating one mode of disclosure made possible in language: a mode of disclosure which reveals a world utterly different to that revealed under *Gestell*, precisely by enacting a liberation from this mode of disclosure. Whilst the poetic dwelling realised, for Heidegger, in the poetry of Hölderlin, and considered proper to humankind in Heidegger's work, might represent a certain idealised form of dwelling and its transformational potential, it is the technological disclosure of the world under *Gestell* which Heidegger argues is dominant in modern society and which will be most familiar to contemporary readers of his work. In Julian Young's terms, the highly poetic nature of Heidegger's discussion of the fourfold is intended 'to evoke the *Grundstimmung*, the "fundamental mood"', of dwelling, an atmosphere which is notably absent from contemporary life.[97] For Heidegger, then, the language of the poetry offers a means by which we are able to meditate on our proper relation to Being in a time of destitution, to consider our proximity to Being through experience of the visible world in the poetic terms of the fourfold.

Hölderlin's poetry revealed to Heidegger not only a world to which humankind belongs, the world of the fourfold, but also the specific dynamic of that worldly belonging. As Jeff Malpas notes, artworks such as Hölderlin's poetry are distinct from more simple things like the jug in that, in some cases, they bring 'not merely the elements of the fourfold, but the gathering of the fourfold itself, and its very mode of gathering, at least partially into view'.[98] Through its poetic formulations

---

[97] Julian Young, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), p. 112.
[98] Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World*, pp. 240–41.

of human inhabiting, Hölderlin's poetry reveals a poetic, romantic, character of dwelling, giving expression to a worldly belonging to which Heidegger was particularly responsive, and which, for Heidegger, expressed linguistically the fundamental character of human dwelling.

Dwelling, in particular the form of poetic dwelling discussed above in relation to Heidegger's work on Hölderlin, can be understood as a particular attunement to the world in which things show up in their poetic radiance. In fact, that Hölderlin's poetry opens a thinking of the fourfold for Heidegger demonstrates precisely how literary attunement takes place. That Hölderlin's poetry reveals this process of essencing for Heidegger, which in turn allows Heidegger to articulate the process by which other things *thing*, establishes literature as a particularly important element in attunement.

For Heidegger, the very fact of our receptivity is describable in terms of attunement or affectedness. For Heidegger, attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) is a basic ontological structure of human existence which makes it possible for human beings to find themselves situated in and responsive to the world in a way that is meaningful to them. *Befindlichkeit* has also been translated by William Richardson as 'already-having-found-oneself-there-ness',[99] a translation which rightly suggests that attunement is not something that we experience but is the apriori condition of the everyday experience I have already been discussing: 'all immanent reflection can find "experiences" only because the there is already disclosed in attunement' (BT, p. 133). As such, attunement is a 'fundamental existential mode of the equiprimordial disclosedness of world, *Dasein*-with and existence because this disclosure itself is essentially being-in-the-world' (BT, p. 133). Heidegger means here that, to all intents and purposes, being-in-the-world is attunement, for attunement discloses the there, the world and others that share *Dasein*'s world. Attunement has three essential

---

[99] William. J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishing, 1963).

determinations: the 'disclosedness of the world which belongs to being-in' (BT, p. 133), 'the disclosure of throwness' (BT, p. 133), and 'the actual disclosure of the whole of being-in-the-world' (BT, p. 133).

As such, attunement makes us aware of the world, of our being-there in the world, and in turn of everything that we experience there. Through attunement, then, things show up to *Dasein* 'in such a way that what it encounters in the world can *matter* to it' (BT, p. 133). In this way attunement reveals, for instance, the world 'as something by which it can be threatened', and making affective responses possible, allowing us to be 'touched' by the world (BT, p. 134). At the same time, In *Being and Time*, worldly attunement is conceived *experientially* through moods (*Stimmungen*). Andrea Elpidorou and Lauren Freeman explain this relation as follows: 'As the ontic manifestation of *Befindlichkeit*, *Stimmungen* are the various and specific ways in which *Dasein* can relate to and disclose the world, all of which occur against the backdrop of the structure of *Befindlichkeit*'.[100] Heidegger describes this condition of encountering the world, following his discussion of attunement, mood as follows: 'we must ontologically in principle leave the primary discovery of the world to "mere mood"' (BT, p. 134).

Heidegger's insight that the world is disclosed through attunement, and secondly, that our knowledge of the world is always coloured by, even made possible by, our being in a mood have been taken up by literary scholars in recent years, which have seen an explosion of critical interest in dwelling, mood and attunement.

Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, who has played a large part in reviving mood as a category of literary analysis in recent years, expands on this difficulty by explaining that the term *Stimmung* is very difficult to translate, often being rendered in English

---

[100] Andreas Elpidorou and Lauren Freeman, 'Affectivity in Heidegger I: Moods and Emotions in *Being and Time*: Affectivity in Heidegger I', *Philosophy Compass*, 10.10 (2015), 661–71 (p. 663) <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12236>.

as both as 'mood' and 'climate'; furthermore, where a mood is often a private, inner feeling, so deeply cloistered within the self as to evade others' understanding, *Stimmung* implies something that surrounds and even assails us, exerting a physical influence. The *Stimmung* of a literary text then suggests its tone, its atmosphere or mood, and the way that these stem from the tone, rhythm or other distinctive qualities of the novel's voice. Gumbrecht explicates the play between mood and attunement existing in *Stimmung*, observing that the word is a linguistic cousin of the words *Stimme*, meaning 'voice', and *Stimmen*, which refers to 'tuning a musical instrument'. By rejecting the mimetic basis of literary accounts of alterity, Gumbrecht's work approaches a discussion of literary attunement, focused through his primary argument that literary atmospheres and moods afford a sensuous experience of the historical past, allowing readers to 'encounter past realities' and creating 'effects of immediacy' routinely overlooked in current scholarship.[101]

In spite of the relation Gumbrecht draws between mood and attunement, research that jointly considers mood and attunement in literary studies is currently underdeveloped. This is a complex issue in literary scholarship because, whilst the distinction between mood and attunement in Heidegger's writings can be reduced to a distinction – albeit not insignificant – between ontological attunements and their ontic manifestations in moods, the mood of a work of art or literature and the attunement of a reader of viewer appear quite separate. In common usage, attunement usually has an object — for instance we might speak of a person being attuned to a particular

---

[101] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung: On a Hidden Potential of Literature*, trans. by Erik Butler (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 14. For other recent attentions to mood in literary criticism, see Jonathan Flatley, 'How A Revolutionary Counter-Mood Is Made', *New Literary History*, 43.3 (2012), 503–25 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0028>; Clare Hemmings, 'In the Mood for Revolution: Emma Goldman's Passion', *New Literary History*, 43.3 (2012), 527–45 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0030>; John Rhym, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Cinematic Mood: Boredom and the Affect of Time in Antonioni's *L'eclisse*', *New Literary History*, 43.3 (2012), 477–501 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0027>; Lars Svendsen, 'Moods and the Meaning of Philosophy', *New Literary History*, 43.3 (2012), 419–31 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0033>.

situation or an artwork — whereas mood is more dispersed and generalised, designating a general disposition towards others and things in the surrounding world. Whilst being in a mood can certainly relate to a particular thing — you might be in the mood for dancing, or a particular film, for instance — this still perhaps suggests an underlying attitude or emotion. Attunement, by contrast, usually implies a more active engagement with a thing or context, a strong feeling of understanding, or lack of such understanding.

In this vein, it is important to distinguish between the analysis of literary mood and atmosphere that Gumbrecht develops and the more originary movement of attunement which Heidegger argues unfolds in the language of Hölderlin's poetry. In these writings, Heidegger affords to poetry a similar capacity for world-opening in his later writings on Hölderlin's works. In *Hölderlin's Hymns:"Germania" and "The Rhine"*, Heidegger writes that:

> The voice [*Stimme*] of the telling must be attuned [*gestimmt*], that the poet speaks from out of an attunement [*Stimmung*], an attunement that determines and attunes [*be-stimmt*] the ground and soil and that permeates [*durchstimmt*] the space upon which and within which the poetic telling founds a way of being. This attunement we name the fundamental attunement of poetizing. This attunement we name the fundamental attunement of the poetizing. By fundamental attunement, we do not mean some vague emotional state that merely attends the telling. Rather, the fundamental attunement opens up the world that in the poetic telling receives the stamp of beyng' (HHGR, p. 73).

Here, the voice (*Stimme*), of the poet speaks of their attunement, rendered here as *Stimmung*, productively allowing thought of attunement as world disclosure *alongside* the term's more everyday connotations.

This is productive for my purposes because, if the novel is to be considered a space for dwelling to unfold, it is necessary to consider the *Stimmung* of the text not only as a mood but as a fundamental attunement to which the novelist's voice, and

perhaps also the life that inhabit that space, are attuned. Insofar as dwelling is shaped through attunement and connection with things, our dwelling can be understood as entailing and expressing the various permutations of attunement and responsiveness to the world, its situations and possibilities, as they change through time. Such ongoing shifts in attachments, affinities, relations and interpretations constitute the very dwelling which I address here. As such the contention that such varying attunements, responses, attachments and interpretations take place narratively follows from the way that they occur through time but also in place, in the negotiation of opened spaces and lived environments in response to which attachments and responses are formed. This is especially the case in the novel form, a bounded space which reader and character negotiate.

Novels as 'environing worlds'

Despite the primacy that Heidegger gives to *Dasein* over other entities, which as many commentators have noticed certainly includes animals, *Dasein*'s worldliness – characterised by immersed, entangled involvement with human non-human entities – has much in common, as Jeff Malpas notes, with twentieth-century thinking on animal behaviour. Explaining this connection, Jeff Malpas writes:

> The idea of the 'environing world' that appears in twentieth-century ethological thought looks to understand the way in which different creatures always live within a certain configuration of salient features and affordances. Similarly, the 'world,' as Heidegger uses it, is understood as a particular configuration of meaning—a context of meaning we might say (*Bedeutsamkeit*) or of meaningful involvements (*Bewandtnis*). The world as first encountered is thus not a world of mere causes, of ideas or impressions, or even of states of affairs, but a world of self, of others, of concrete things.[102]

As Malpas does not mention specific criticism in this regard, I recall here Namwali Serpell's recent conceptualisation of ethical criticism, mentioned in my introduction,

---

[102] Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, p. 124.

as the 'phenomenological evocation of the aesthetic, affective and ethical affordances of moving through [a narrative] structure'.[103] Serpell, like Malpas, draws the term 'affordances' from the work of ethological thought, in particular the work of James J. Gibson, where it originally designated, in Serpell's terms, 'how animals relate to an environment'.[104]

If these implicit affinities between Heidegger's notion of the world and Serpell's approach to the novel suggest the possibility of approaching the novel as an 'environing world' which affords certain possibilities for dwelling, there are also significant distinctions to be made between our approaches. Firstly, as I have been suggesting throughout the thesis so far, my approach is concerned with the possibilities for dwelling of characterological life in the 'environing world' of the novel, and the way that this dwelling might be shaped by a text's formal and aesthetic dimensions. Second, as stressed above, approaching the novel from a dwelling perspective would necessitate attending to the world-building movement of (human) dwelling itself.[105]

Both of these considerations are in fact borne out in Tim Ingold's 'dwelling perspective', discussed above, which itself responds to Gibson's work on affordances. As Ingold notes, Gibson's model does not attend to the social dimension of human life. Whilst Gibson suggests that humans share mutual affordances, interaction is given little consideration beyond this. Instead, other humans in the environment are also seen as giving affordances, acting back as they are acted on; as Gibson concludes, 'behaviour affords behaviour'.[106] On the one hand, Gibson's suggestion

---

[103] Serpell, p. 21.
[104] Serpell, p. 21.
[105] For a discussion of dwelling as a form of world-building in recent anthropological literature, see Jarrett Zigon, 'An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics: An Ethics of Dwelling', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 20.4 (2014), 746–64 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.12133>.
[106] James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Psychology Press, 2015), p. 135.

that human activity is interpreted through a more primary relation with the environment appears conducive to thinking through the problematic of life in the novel form — what Dorothy Hale terms the 'double nature' of character as 'full psychology' and 'as an element of aesthetic form'.[107] On the other hand, a theory of affordances appears to overlook, as Ingold notes, that each 'environment'— in my study, each narrative environment —'is […] in reality constituted in *relation* to the beings whose environment it is'.[108] As Ingold points out, 'for all his emphasis on perception as a process that is continually going on, Gibson assumed that the world which the perceiver moves around in and explores is relatively fixed and permanent, somehow pre-prepared with all its affordances ready and waiting to be taken up by whatever creatures arrive to inhabit it'.[109] To view the novel as an event of dwelling, by contrast, would mean to think characterological life as generative of the 'environing world', or narrative environment, itself. As Ingold writes in an anthropological register, 'life is not the revelation of pre-existent form but the very process wherein form is generated and held in place'.[110]

Narrativity and narratives: reading and logos

How far, it seems equally necessary to ask, does Heidegger's thought suggest an originary human connection to narrative? Whilst I take up the issue of narrative dwelling as it is negotiated in a novel, DeLillo's *The Body Artist*, in Chapter 4, it nonetheless bears questioning here whether it is possible to take this thinking of the relationship between dwelling, building and narrative beyond analogy or conceit. Do humans dwell narratively? Or, to what extent can we think of the human process of

---

[107] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 903.
[108] Ingold, p. 168, emphasis in original.
[109] Ingold, p. 168. If Serpell's evocation of the novel as architecture largely reflects this position, it is of course because of the reader-based approach that her work develops. What appears a pitfall from a dwelling perspective has the clear and distinct advantage, for a reader-focused approach like Serpell's, of downplaying the encounter between readers and social others they encounter in novels in favour of a focus on narrative structures and patterns which shape the environment the reader navigates.
[110] Ingold, p. 173.

dwelling in narrative terms? Notably, Heidegger argued in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' that dwelling is not a form of building identical with artistry, opening this essay with the clarification that 'this venture in thought does not view building as an art or as a technique of construction' (BDT, p. 347). Nonetheless, Heidegger's work does suggest ways of thinking about the human relationship to the lived environment as unfolding through narrative processes of interpretation, an issue I will discuss here.

Narrative and dwelling in Heidegger

Whilst, for Heidegger, poetic language opened thinking of dwelling, this does not mean that narrative was not of importance in Heidegger's thought.[111] Laura Bieger has recently argued that humans do indeed dwell in narrative, citing the need to shape worldly 'belonging as an anthropological premise of narration'.[112] This premise is anthropological, for Bieger, and can be discussed in terms of human 'dwelling in narrative', in part at least because our conceptions of narrativity and narrative identity rest on assumptions about human beings these thinkers inherited from Heidegger. For Bieger, whilst literary critical notions of interpretation and narrative as constituent dimensions of human being primarily enter literary scholarship through the work of Paul Ricoeur and, relatedly, Hans-Georg Gadamer, their debt to Heidegger's fundamental anthropology requires further attention. Furthermore, Bieger contends, Ricoeur's 'work on the [the entanglement of life and narrative] is so deeply invested in matters of human temporality that its spatial correlative is simply ignored'.[113] Glossing Heidegger's notion of our originary thrownness as an impetus for narration, Bieger writes that 'human beings experience themselves (especially in the early stages of gaining consciousness) as having been

---

[111] In this respect it is worth noting the narrative elements of Holderlin's poetry itself. For a discussion of narrative in Holderlin's poetry, see Eric L. Santner, *Friedrich Holderlin : Narrative Vigilance and the Poetic Imagination* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986).

[112] Laura Bieger, 'No Place Like Home; or, Dwelling in Narrative', *New Literary History*, 46.1 (2015), 17–39 (p. 18) <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2015.0004>.

[113] Bieger, p. 34.

involuntarily thrust (*geworfen*) into a world that must have preceded their own existence, and that, upon realizing their primary disjunction from this world, seems infinite and senseless. It is the realization of this fundamental lack of meaning and connectivity that imposes onto human beings the existential task of interpretation, to which the unknowability of death poses the greatest challenge'.[114]

Taking such an anthropological approach to narrative is partly a process of acknowledging, as Bieger notes, that 'assumptions about human being are at the bottom of any theorization of literature or culture' and attempting to attend to these assumptions.[115] In this view, Heidegger's writings make it possible to think of narration, and so writing, as a basic constituent of human being, giving literary critical support to the understanding of writing as a practice which belongs to dwelling as outlined in my discussion of Ingold's work, above.

The question of narrative as constitutive of human being in Heidegger's thought lies primarily, as Bieger's discussion of human throwness suggests, in Heidegger's earlier work, and in *Being and Time* in particular. Whilst the issue — what Bieger and other commentators term the question of our 'ontological narrativity' — remains unresolved with regards to Heidegger's thought,[116] it is clear that *Dasein*'s temporal projection *can* be understood as a narrative process. Ben Roth, in particular, has developed a 'Heideggerian theory of the narrative self' based on an interpretation of *Dasein*'s temporal projection as a narrative arc, described as follows:

> [I]n their most fundamental terms—throwness and projection—the two sides
> of our situated-being come together as two parts of a whole. *Geworfenheit*
> and *Entwurf*, throwness and throwing forward, both play on the same root,
> the verb *werfen*. I am always in the middle of an arc […] thrown into the
> world and now projecting where I am going. Yet due to, as always, the more

---

[114] Bieger, p. 32.

[115] Laura Bieger, 'No Place Like Home; or, Dwelling in Narrative', *New Literary History*, 46.1 (2015), 17–39 (p. 29).

[116] See Tony Fisher, 'Heidegger and the Narrativity Debate', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 43.2 (2010), 241–65 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-010-9141-x>.

important place of projection and possibility in Heidegger's account, the notion that I enact *one* story is implausible. Rather, each of us finds ourselves amidst a whole network of possible narratives. These stories are not merely possible, various optional accounts we might offer of our situations. Rather, by Heidegger's analysis of thrown projection, we necessarily find ourselves on an arc from givens to possibilities. […] We are the *readers* of our own existence. This claim is not merely a metaphor, however, and it says more than that we have a capacity for self-interpretation. We understand who we are now by casting larger hypothetical arcs of plot in the same way that readers, when in the middle of a story, project where that story is going in order to understand the identity and situation of its characters.[117]

Roth's interpretation of narrativity in terms of a fundamental readerliness, and so of 'selves [as] readers (in the middle)' is intriguing, in particular for the way it conceives of possibilities for being in which human actors are already embedded: '[t]his set of possibilities is constantly evolving, constituting a network of narratives, possible arcs of plot we might play out in our existence. The self is to be found where these various plotlines intersect'.[118]

At the same time, even the literal interpretation of lived existence as reading here cannot account fully for the role that narrative language plays in phenomenological navigation of the lived environment in Heidegger's later thought, nor can it account for the special way in which poetry, art and literature open the world to their readers or spectators. This is, in part, because in Heidegger's later thought language becomes less a possession of *Dasein* and more a possession of being itself. As James Magrini and Elias Schwieler note, in *Being and Time* 'Heidegger philosophises language in terms of the *ontological difference*, making the distinction between language as *Sprache* and Discourse as *Rede*'. The authors continue, 'language conveys meaning, but it is Discourse, in *Being and Time*, that

---

[117] Ben Roth, 'Reading From the Middle: Heidegger and the Narrative Self', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 26 (2018), 746–762 (pp. 751, 747) <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12314>.
[118] Roth, pp. 758, 752.

provides the initial ontologico-existential structure for the possibility of language'.[119] In Heidegger's later writings, however, 'reference to the *ontological difference* drops from his philosophy, and the understanding of language as a unique *ontologico-existential* possibility of *Dasein*'s *Being-in* as Discourse, changes dramatically [...] reveal[ing] to Heidegger that language properly belongs to Being and *not Dasein*'.[120]

Two repercussions of this shift in language (from *Dasein* to Being) are important to my argument here. The first is a shift in the conception of narrative to become more spatially oriented — something that establishes a different orientation between narrative and human existence which is more appropriate to the question of dwelling. This conception of narrative interpretation, of reading in fact, as a means of navigating the environment was not applicable in the same way when viewed from the perspective of *Being and Time*, where spatiality was secondary to temporal movement, suggested in Roth's comment that '[b]ecause I am concerned with our temporal, ultimately narrative, self-understanding, Heidegger's analysis of our spatiality can be left aside'.[121] The second consequence of this shift is that language now sits alongside discursiveness, and so is imbued with the same capacities for shaping being-in-the-world that were previously only afforded to discursiveness. This means that artworks, narratives and poetic language are able to open worlds and shape possibilities for Being in ways that were not thinkable in Heidegger's earlier thought, when language was the possession of *Dasein*. The spatial dimensions of the entanglement between human beings and narratives, which are particularly important for considering the novel as an environment shaped through dwelling, can be drawn

---

[119] James M. Magrini and Elias Schwieler, *Heidegger on Literature, Poetry, and Education after the Turn: At the Limits of Metaphysics*, Routledge International Studies in the Philosophy of Education (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018). British Library ebook
[120] Magrini and Schwieler. British Library ebook.
[121] Roth, p. 758.

out through further reference both to Heidegger's writings, but also by turning to Hayden White's work on narrativity.

Narrative and dwelling in the lived environment

Firstly, looking to Heidegger, in a discussion of Heraclitus' fragment B50, Heidegger argues that, because early Greeks did not conceive of their language as a culturally and historically specific instance of the human capacity for discourse or discursiveness, for the early Greeks, *logos* (discourse or reason) was, as Jussi Backman notes, '*inherently* linguistic'.[122] As such, 'language was conceptualized "logocentrically" as a derivative material and vocal representation of λόγος [*logos*], as its culturally specific expression'.[123] In this way Heidegger dislodges the 'hierarchy between discursiveness and language' evident in his earlier thought, and instead positions meaningful existence as fundamentally grounded in the language of different historical communities.[124] As Backman notes, although the Greeks, and so Heraclitus, interpreted the *logos* as universal, 'there is no universal language; there are only particular languages that constitute particular historical communities and the particular ways in which they experience meaningfulness'.[125] Whilst the global influence of certain languages, English above all, and the emergence of world literature will give us pause, here, there are also insights, into the relation between the Being of a people, and the language in which they dwell, that bears further consideration here.

For Heidegger, Heraclitus conceived of the narrative, linguistic, process of worldly existence as a manifestation of Being itself through human experience:

---

[122] Jussi Backman, 'Logocentrism and the Gathering Λόγος: Heidegger, Derrida, and the Contextual Centers of Meaning', *Research in Phenomenology*, 42.1 (2012), 67–91 (p. 84) <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916412X628757>. Emphasis in original.
[123] Backman, p. 84.
[124] Backman, p. 84.
[125] Backman, p. 84.

> The word *logos* names that which gathers all present beings into presencing and lets them lie before us in it. *Logos* names that in which the presencing of what is present comes to pass […] The laying that gathers assembles in itself all destiny by bringing things and letting them lie before us, keeping each absent and present being in its place and on its way; and by its assembling it secures everything in the totality. Thus each being can be secured and sent into its own. (EGT, p. 68)

Heidegger goes on to argue, here, that reading (*lesen*), is a 'predominant' instance of this more originary capacity for discourse as a form of gathering: '[t]he *lesen* better known to us, namely, the *reading* of something written, remains but one sort of gathering, in the sense of bringing-together-into-lying-before, although it is indeed the predominant sort' (EGT, p. 68). If Heidegger discusses reading as an example here, it is also the case, as the discussion above suggests, that this process of laying-gathering is a more general principle of human experience that begins with bringing things into the protection of human dwelling. Immediately after the example of reading as a laying-gathering, Heidegger takes the example of the harvest, which 'gathers fruit from the soil' (EGT, p. 61) and 'grapes from the vine' (EGT, p. 61). In this process Heidegger signals quite explicitly the connection between this process of laying-gathering and human dwelling and building:

> Picking and gleaning are followed by the bringing together of the fruit. So long as we persist in the usual appearances we are inclined to take this bringing together as the gathering itself or even its termination. But gathering is more than mere amassing. To gathering belongs a collecting which brings under shelter. Accommodation governs the sheltering: accommodation is in turn governed by safekeeping. (EGT, p. 61)

Taking these examples together makes is possible to conceive of reading, when thought of in terms of dwelling, as a process of the phenomenological navigation and deliberation of narrative environments. Reading and dwelling are both positioned, here, as processes that gather entities together interpretatively to form meaningful associations. Thinking of narrative as an environment negotiated by a reader who

cultivates meaning somewhat repeats the tendency, discussed above, towards approaching narrative environments through readerly affordances. As I have suggested here, however, human dwelling unfolds in part through processes of 'cultivating' and 'gathering' that are comparable with reading. In the perspective I am proposing here it would be necessary, to the extent of the parallel drawn above at least, to move a step beyond this and attend to the way that novels position their characters as likewise 'readerly', at least to the extent they too are positioned as responsive to the aesthetic dimensions of the text they inhabit.

If Heidegger's writings suggest a narrative dimension to our processes of navigating, interpreting and constituting centres of meaning in an environment, Hayden White's work offer insights to develop an understanding of our relationship to the centres of meaning that narratives produce. White famously draws attention, as Laura Bieger succinctly puts it, to the way that 'historical storytelling […] absorbed […] the basic modes and conventions of literary storytelling' in its meteoric rise that dethroned theology and established history as the key social discourse in the early modern period: 'a powerful token of narrative's altered function in the modern world'. At the same time, White also argued that what he called the 'historical imagination' reached a point of crisis in the nineteenth century regarding the legitimacy and representative capacities of its own proliferating narrative methodologies.

Highlighting that the Ironic 'frame of mind is merely one on a number of possible postures that one may assume before the historical record', White sought to provide 'some of the grounds for a rejection of Irony itself' which in turn would make possible a return to a productive plurality of different modes of historical thought.[126] Even whilst White was concerned about the loss of a meaningful relation to history in

---

[126] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014) p. xi.

an entrenched Ironic mode, his thought also evinces a deeper concern about the loss of a narrative centre which, in White's view, would render human life devoid of value. Taking the example of the annalist from the middle ages in an essay titled 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', White asks the question: 'what notion of reality' does the annalist have? Without 'a social center by which to locate […] events with respect to one another and to charge them with ethical or moral significance', the experience of the annalist is devoid of texture or meaning.[127]

As this quotation makes clear, White equally viewed events themselves as, in themselves, non-narrative. As Hanna Meretjoa has demonstrated in this regard, White felt that 'narratives project a false order on the disorder of human existence'.[128] White's work reveals our dynamic, often problematic and unresolved dependence on narrative forms, forms which have to be negotiated differently across historical periods and social contexts, and always from a position of emplacement – whether at the centre or the margins – of society, what White calls 'social or physical space'. In this reading, our attachment to particular narrative modes – is a dynamic process of relation to a social space that can be both existentially supportive, and the source of a crisis when that narrativity becomes a problem and in turn threatens the 'space' of discourse itself. If belonging to narrative is uneasy but unavoidable, as White's work suggests, this intimation provides some ground for addressing novelistic explorations of attachment to, and possibilities for dwelling in, narrative.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined coordinates for conceptualising dwelling in the novel, attending in particular to the proximity between dwelling and attunement, and

---

[127] Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1, (1980), 5–27 (p. 11)

[128] For Meretoja White's work 'suggest[s] that there is a deeper level at which human, lived experience as immediately given, and human existence in general—as part of the flux of the real—is nonnarrative in character'. Hanna Meretoja, 'Narrative and Human Existence: Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics', *New Literary History*, 45.1 (2014), 89–109 (p. 91) <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2014.0001>.

between dwelling and human beings' entanglement in narrative — specifically, the interpretive processes of reading and writing. This discussion has aimed to demonstrate both the importance of narrative interpretation in the spatial navigation of environments, but also to draw out a fundamental connection between reading and dwelling. Heidegger's writings on dwelling in language equally reveal, of course, a vision of dwelling as proximity to Being (as with early Greek *logos*) and as being-amongst the fourfold (as with the attunement of the German people to Hölderlin's poetry) which is alien to modern life. To rehearse this point is, of course, partly to rehearse part of the movement of Heidegger's argument about dwelling itself. In modernity, our conception of human being as building, not dwelling; our relationship to technology as a framework, and to the world as a resource; our understanding of artworks as objects of experience, all divorce us from our essential nature.

At the same time, as Hayden White's writings on human narrativity powerfully suggest, it is perhaps equally the case that there is no way 'out' of our possession, and belonging to, narrative for human beings. The stories we tell, in this view, would be an expression of the condition of our dwelling, or more accurately an expression of our attempts at self-interpretation, and at negotiating the relationship of attachment to the particular forms in which we reflect on our changing condition. It is from this standpoint that I turn to the writers addressed in the remaining chapters of the thesis.

I take up this question of our uneasy belonging in narrative, and its relationship to the modern technology of writing, in Chapters 3 and 4, which address most directly Heidegger's suggestion that we '*must ever learn to dwell*' (BDT, p. 159). In Chapter 2, I first expand on other questions raised here about the aesthetic dimensions of dwelling in the novel. Addressing Zadie's Smith London fictions, *White Teeth* and *NW*, I consider the issue of attunement as it presents in the world of Smith's novels. This raises questions, firstly, about how the capacity for literature and art to shape our

worldly attunement might affect the condition of life in the novel, in ways often overlooked in literary criticism; and, secondly about how (attuned) characterological dwelling may be actively involved in processes of novelistic world-building. In doing so, I narrow the focus of my discussion of dwelling in the novel by addressing specific ways in which the contemporary novel both reflexively navigates its own worldliness (always at play with human worldliness), and interprets the possibilities of attunement for shaping the disposition and point of view of readers and characters alike.

Chapter 2:   Mood, World and Ethics in Zadie Smith's London Fiction

'Of the Old and New People of Willesden I speak; I have been chosen to speak for them, though they did not choose me and must wonder what gives me the right. I could say, "Because I was born at the crossroads of Willesden, Kilburn, and Queen's Park!" But the reply would be swift and damning: "Oh, don't be foolish, many people were born right there; it doesn't mean anything at all. We are not one people and no one can speak for us'.

<div style="text-align: right;">

– Zadie Smith, *The Embassy of Cambodia*

</div>

In an essay from 2012 titled 'Some Notes on Attunement', Zadie Smith reflects on her 'sudden, unexpected attunement' to Joni Mitchell's music: 'I hated Joni Mitchell — and then I loved her. Her voice did nothing for me — until the day it undid me completely'.[129] For Smith it is important not 'to confuse this phenomenon with a progressive change in taste', which 'usually follows a conscious act of will' through a concerted effort of engagement and an active cultivation of appreciation. Instead, what the author describes here is the revelatory experience of aesthetic attunement. On the day when Smith first truly hears Mitchell's music, as if for the first time, she emerges from her car, 'hardly aware that she was humming Joni, not yet conscious of the transformation she had already undergone', and walks into the ruins of Tintern Abbey in the south of Wales.

> Something had happened to me. In all the mess of memories we make each day and lose, I knew that this one would not be lost. I had Wordsworth's sensation exactly: "That in this moment there is life and food / For future years."

The version of attunement Smith describes here is primarily one of personal transformation, but it also contains a complex allusion to the relationship between

---

[129] Zadie Smith, 'Some Notes on Attunement: A Voyage around Joni Mitchell', *The New Yorker*, 17 December 2012 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/12/17/some-notes-on-attunement> [accessed 8 January 2018].

attunement and place. This is evident, firstly, in the way that Smith becomes aware of her attunement to Mitchell's music not in the car where she is listening to it, but in the open spaces of the Abbey's ruins, '[r]oofless, floorless, glassless, forced to accept the holiness that is everywhere in everything'. That Smith should feel she had the very experience she remembered from William Wordsworth's poem, 'Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey' (1798) — what she calls Wordsworth's 'ecstasy' — further foregrounds the influence of place in her unexpected aesthetic attunement.[130]

Whilst Smith's essay mostly focuses on musical attunement, another literary reference is the Exordium to Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. Smith's comments on this short story offer another view of literary attunement: 'When I read the "Exordium"', the author reflects, 'I feel that Kierkegaard is trying to get me into a state of readiness for a consideration of the actual Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, which is essentially inexplicable'. If such a transformation of readerly disposition and perspective is intended by Kierkegaard's Exordium, this effect is secondary to, and seems to proceed from, the Exordium's reflections on human attunement at the narrative, diegetic level. The Exordium is narrative of and about attunement, as it follows, in Smith's words, the story of a 'simple, faithful man [...] who is obsessed with the Biblical tale of Abraham and Isaac but finds he cannot understand it'.[131] After much rational deliberation, to which I will return later in this chapter, the man submits to his incomprehension, reflecting that '[n]o one was as great as Abraham. Who is able to understand him?' (Kierkegaard). Yet, this submission is the necessary preparation for a different kind of knowledge, one that can emerge only through attunement; as Smith puts it, 'the paradoxical truth: God

---

[130] Smith also mentions Allen Ginsberg's 'Wales Visitation' (1967), a poem which describes a visit to Tintern Abbey and conveys worldly experience transformed by psychedelic drugs, what Smith calls Ginsberg's 'examining the manner of the seeing [...] the structural difference between how he normally sees and how he saw that day, attuned, on acid'.
[131] Zadie Smith, 'Some Notes on Attunement: A Voyage around Joni Mitchell', *The New Yorker*, 17th December 2012. Web.

told me I would be fruitful through my son, and yet God is telling me to kill my son'
is beyond objective, rational explication; 'no one can understand him [Abraham] —
at least, not rationally. Faith involves an acceptance of absurdity'.[132] In this chapter I
attend to a comparable navigation of questions of human attunement in the narratives
of Smith's London novels *White Teeth* (2000) and *NW* (2012).

Smith's novels are key texts in discussions about the aesthetics and ethics of
the contemporary novel, not least for Dorothy Hale, who has influentially recognised
a nuanced exploration of the ethics of representation in Smith's novel *On Beauty*
(2005). For Hale, 'the Anglo-American novel in the twentieth century is grounded in
an ethical belief that the novel realizes its generic potential best when it has
maximized the representation of social identities other to the author's own'.[133]
Smith's writing pursues this aesthetics of alterity even whilst, as Hale notes, Smith is
an outspoken proponent of the singular presence of the author in the text, what Smith
calls the 'way of being in the world that an author can't help tell if [she] writes
well'.[134] For Hale, the ethical achievement of Smith's twenty first century novel is a
relativising of the representation of otherness in novelistic aesthetics. In this view, *On
Beauty* situates the novelist's identity, their way of being, in the midst of a range of
perspectives that differ from their own, and 'stages the encounter between points of
view […] as an event that can itself be known only from a particular point of view'.[135]

---

[132] Smith's characterisation of attunement has not gone unnoticed in English departments;
Rita Felski recently argued that Smith's description of aesthetic attunement is better than
many existing philosophical approaches to this issue. Rita Felski, *'Art and Attunement'*
<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/art-and-attunement-professor-rita-felski-university-virginia-and-
southern-denmark> [accessed 27 June 2018].

[133] Dorothy J. Hale, '*On Beauty* as Beautiful?: The Problem of Novelistic Aesthetics by Way
of Zadie Smith', *Contemporary Literature*, 53.4 (2012), 814–44 (pp. 816–17)
<https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2012.0033>.
[134] Zadie Smith, 'Fail Better', *The Guardian*, 13 January 2007. Qtd in Hale, '*On Beauty* as
Beautiful?', p. 828.
[135] Hale, '*On Beauty*', p. 832.

In this chapter I read *White Teeth* and *NW* against the grain of this perspectivalism, exploring the neglected role of human attunements and moods, which in any case precede perspectival autonomy itself. The role of attunement is particularly influential in *White Teeth*, where characters' individual perspectives are always secondary to their aesthetically mediated moods and dispositions. Whilst acknowledging the renewed attention to the autonomy of different identities and perspectives in *NW*, I extend the consideration of attunement to this novel to demonstrate the persistent influence of individual and social moods in shaping these others and their worldly dispositions. I examine the way that moods, dispositions and attunements unfold in the world of Smith's London fiction, suggesting that these novels consciously feature populations attuned by the aesthetic dimensions of the works themselves. In doing so, I foreground the role of such diffuse social atmospheres and pre-reflective dispositions in shaping the restriction and expansion of autonomy which defines the ethics and aesthetics of the contemporary novel.

I speak of the world, *not* worlds, of these two novels partly because of the continuity between the setting of the two works and their shared depiction of different generations of lived experience, in global, postcolonial London. Whilst *NW* is more localised in north west London than *White Teeth*, brief reappearances of figures from 2000's *White Teeth* in 2012's *NW* suggest, as Michael Perfect has perceptively noted, 'that the fictionalised North West London in which NW's characters live is in fact the very same one as that of White Teeth'.[136] Individually, the two novels respond to the contemporary moments they respectively depict, but taken together they reflect the changing landscape of social and cultural relations in the global city of London across the time of their publications. They quite literally bookend a period of history that saw the arrival of a new millennium, the spectacular violence of the 9/11 attacks and

---

[136] As the author notes, 'Alsana and Irie are referred to [but] no more than in passing'. Michael Perfect, *Contemporary Fictions of Multiculturalism: Diversity and the Millennial London Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Google ebook.

the subsequent US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, an intensification of global terrorism, the global financial crash of 2007 that sparked the Great Recession, and the rise of a global refugee crisis, with growing global conflict causing a vast and unprecedented increase in displacement and forced migration.[137] Without wishing to elide the differences between these two works, which are many, I take the changing mood or climate of these two novels as the starting point for considering their continuities and differences.

The first of these, *White Teeth*, was initially interpreted by critics and journalists as a celebratory account of intercultural relations, a view later brought under scrutiny by critics who questioned whether Smith's debut really portrays what the novel itself had called a 'Happy Multicultural Land'.[138] As commentators have increasingly recognised, a critical scrutiny of multiculturalism is intrinsic to *White Teeth*, at least when the novel is approached from the historical vantage that the years since its publication provide. Part of my task in this chapter will be to demonstrate that *White Teeth* can be interpreted not as rejecting or embracing multiculturalism, but as making available to its reader the changing mood of multicultural life in London at the end of the last century. *White Teeth* traces both the emergence of multiculturalism, and its possibilities, permutations and transmutations as it makes contact with the historical threshold of the millennium. In the time between *White Teeth* and *NW*'s publications, the 7/7 bombings frayed cultural relations and made permissible a discourse that challenged the tenets of multiculturalism, epitomised in David Cameron's 'war on multiculturalism',[139] which condemned a 'failed approach

---

[137] Whilst Zadie Smith's *The Embassy of Cambodia* (2013) is directly concerned with the recent forced migration, *White Teeth* and *NW* depict the wider currents of migration and global mobility that run through London's population.

[138] On this reception, see Katarzyna Jakubiak, 'Simulated Optimism: The International Marketing of *White Teeth*', in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. by Tracey Lorraine Walters (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 201–18; Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 128. Further references to this work will be given in parentheses in the text.

[139] Oliver Wright and Jerome Taylor, 'Cameron: My War On Multiculturalism', *The Independent*, 2011. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-my-war-on-multiculturalism-2205074.html> [accessed 19 October 2017].

[…] that stood neutral between different values'.[140] London was also at the centre of the global financial crash, which saw the imposition of a policy of economic austerity and an incremental erosion of the welfare state. In 2011, there was rioting in a number of London's boroughs and across the country, attributable in part to social tensions, increased unemployment and rising inequality. In the years following *NW*'s publication another essential context has emerged in the form of Brexit.

Changes in the shifting landscape of social relations depicted across the novels produces two strikingly different narrative forms. In *White Teeth*, cross-cultural encounters constitute a web of relations that support a multicultural society. In *NW*, by contrast, the foundations of social identity are continuously challenged as the relationships and places of belonging that constitute social identity fail to cohere and support the novel's characters. Encounters that cross boundaries of race or class are fraught with misunderstanding, or lingering distrust, that appears increasingly insurmountable and is broadly reflective of the novel's socially pessimistic atmosphere. Yet in themselves, these reflections on the changing nature of social experience in Smith's London will attest only to the novel's anthropological understanding of the historically particular realities of identity and belonging in London across these periods. To speak of these novels' differing attunements to the nature of social reality would be to use the term in a way that still thinks of attunement in the sense of a correspondence to, or understanding of, that reality. Instead, as discussed above, my aim in this chapter is to attend to the more fundamental way that aesthetic elements affectively attune Smith's characters to the world of her London novels, extending the ethical-critical focus on perspectivalism to include dispositions, moods and attunements.

---

[140] Home Office, *Counter-Extremism Bill — National Security Council Meeting*, 2015. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/counter-extremism-bill-national-security-council-meeting>.

As I approach the ethical dimensions of mood in Smith's London fiction, which come to the fore in *NW*, empathy becomes important in my analysis as a particular mood. In this regard, I draw on Lawrence Hatab's intimation that empathy presents itself as a 'moral mood' in Heidegger's writings.[141] In developing this argument I consider the aesthetically mediated revealing of a world in concert with Heidegger's more originary considerations about how human beings come to find themselves in, and (so to speak) of, their world in the first place. In this respect, I draw on two of Heidegger's fundamental insights: first, that the world is disclosed through attunement and, second, that our knowledge of the world is always coloured by, even made possible by, our being-in a mood. To prepare my analysis of the novels I first offer a reading of these issues as they are presented in *Being and Time*, to which I now turn.

Attunement and being-in, being-with and empathy

In Division 1, Chapter 4 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger asks 'who' *Dasein* is in its everyday dealings. This section precedes a discussion of the fundamental structures of *Dasein* which constitute everyday being-in-the-world in Division 1, Chapter 5. Reading these two chapters affords an understanding of the roles that attunement and being-with play in *Dasein*'s everyday being-in-the-world, an understanding which will support my reading of Zadie Smith's two novels. I will begin with Division 1, Chapter 4, in order to discuss *Dasein*'s quotidian being-with, before turning to Division 1, Chapter 5, and Heidegger's understanding of being-in-the-world as comprised fundamentally by attunement.

---

[141] Lawrence Hatab, *Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contributions to Moral Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 140. Hatab ultimately interprets the phenomenon as 'a primal existential condition that makes ethical life possible' (p. 138), a position that usefully foregrounds the point that empathy is a starting point for ethics, and not a moral principle in and of itself. Whilst I draw on Hatab's insights in what follows, I do not appropriate this definition of empathy as, deployed apart from its context in Hatab's writing, it risks distracting from Heidegger's point that '"empathy" is not an original existential phenomenon' (BT, p. 121).

In Chapter 4 of *Being and Time* Heidegger tackles 'the Existential Question of the Who of *Dasein*' (BT, p. 112), arguing that *Dasein* is fundamentally characterised by its being-with others. Heidegger begins this analysis by stating that '*Dasein* is a being which I myself am, its being is in each case mine' (BT, p. 112). Heidegger warns, though, against the 'miserable egotism' (BT, p. 112), what we might call the logical fallacy, of deducing that since '*Dasein* is a being which I myself am', an enquiry into the 'who' of *Dasein* can proceed through an introspective analysis of the 'I'. 'Starting with the givenness of the I for *Dasein* itself and its obvious self-interpretation' (BT, p. 113) risks producing an understanding of *Dasein* that is 'abstract[ed] from everything else that is "given"' (BT, p. 112). As Heidegger will go on to argue, if 'I' in itself does not describe *Dasein*, the 'being which I myself am', this is because *Dasein* is always already both in the world and with others.

Understanding *Dasein*, then, means considering other entities, seemingly also 'givens', such as 'an existing "world"' and 'the being of the other "I"s' (BT, p. 112). There is no 'I', then, without the world of the 'I' and the other 'I's in that world: '"the others" *are* always already *there with us* in being-in-the-world' (BT, p. 113, emphasis in original). Heidegger warns again, though, against falling into the trap of enquiring into the 'who' of *Dasein* through an analysis of the ontic conditions of these 'givens' — self, others and world: this analysis 'must not mislead us into thinking that the ontological structure of what is thus "given" is self-evident and not in need of an investigation' (BT, pp. 113–114). In order to overcome this logical focus on the 'ontic, self-evident character' of *Dasein*, it is necessary to overcome what Heidegger calls 'the distorted presumption that the being in question really has, at bottom, the kind of being of something objectively present' (BT, p. 114). This is to say that the temptation to understand the 'I' as a 'given' also entails a tendency to think of *Dasein* as an object in an environment populated with other objects, including the world itself and the others that *Dasein* recognises as fundamentally the same as itself. Heidegger

argues that *Dasein* is not an objectively present entity, but rather a *way* of being-in-the-world. The '*core*' or '*substance*' of *Dasein*'s 'being is not the spirit as the synthesis of body and soul, it is rather *existence*' (BT, p. 114, emphasis in original). To understand *Dasein* is to understand, Heidegger suggests, its way of being-in-the-world, and this necessarily involves a description of the world as *Dasein* relates to it in the everyday. The worldliness of *Dasein* is characterised by being-with others, and being-with others through things, which *Dasein* encounters through its care (*Fursorge*).

As this discussion suggests, the world is never simply a collection of given objects. As the world is of *Dasein*, it reaches us bearing the mark of involvement and experience of others: 'the world is always already the one that I share with others' (BT, pp. 115–6). This discussion also has significant implications for understanding the others that *Dasein* encounters in the world. By stating that the world of *Dasein* is a '*with-world*' (*Mitwelt*), Heidegger thinks of others in terms of an ontological sameness that is more fundamental than the alterity we prescribe to others in our lived experience: '"Others" does not mean everybody else but me — those from who the I distinguishes itself. Others are, rather, those from whom one mostly does *not* distinguish oneself, those among whom one also is' (BT, p. 115). Encountering others through a shared world means that *Dasein* understands others through a shared horizon of experience: 'they are not encountered by first looking at one-self and then ascertaining the opposite pole of a distinction. They are encountered from out of the *world* in which *Dasein* […] essentially dwells' (BT, p. 116, emphasis in original). Ontologically, then, our being is always and irrevocably '*being-with*' (*Mitsein*) others: we are never cut off from others, we are always in relation with them through being-in-the-world.

We have seen that the world, the 'I' and the others there are normally taken as 'givens' by *Dasein* in its everyday being-in-the-world. We have also seen that the

world is a with-world ('the world is always already the one I share with others' [BT, pp. 115–116]) and that others are those that share this absorption in the world. This being-with is ineluctable for *Dasein*, and is not dependent on being-with a particular other in a particular place and time: 'Being-with existentially determines *Dasein* even when an other is not factically present and perceived. The being alone of *Dasein*, too, is being-with in the world' (BT, p. 117). Heidegger goes on to propose that *Dasein*'s being-with is grounded in a disposedness or attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) towards others and the world — a disposedness or attunement which discloses the world to *Dasein*.

As discussed in my previous chapter, this attunement that fundamentally discloses the there to *Dasein*, and grounds its everyday self-understanding and relation to the world, is for Heidegger closely related to the more 'familiar', 'everyday' phenomenon of 'mood' (BT, p. 130). According to Heidegger, mood can be understood as an expression of the way the world is encountered through attunement. For instance, fear is a mood that indicates an attunement which 'discover[s] things at hand in the surrounding world as being threatening' (BT, p. 134). As such, mood precedes cognition by disclosing *Dasein* to itself, establishing the context, 'the there' (BT, p. 133) where *Dasein* finds itself and from which it thinks and acts. As a component of attunement, mood is '*before* all cognition and willing [...] mood has always already disclosed being-in-the-world as a whole and first makes possible directing oneself toward something' (BT, p. 132). Whilst not being a cognitive state, mood is neither something entirely external. Rather, 'mood assails' *Dasein*, 'it neither comes from "without" nor from "within", but rises from being-in-the-world itself as a mode of that being' (BT, p. 133).

Dasein is mostly ignorant of its unique relation to world, and understands world to be something given and pre-existing. Even in this forgetfulness, *Dasein* is always still in a mood, as attunement is fundamental to the disclosure of *Dasein*'s

world. *Dasein* always acts then from within a mood, as Heidegger demonstrates when he cites the way in which the public — 'the they' — 'needs mood and "makes" it for itself' (BT, p. 135). Heidegger takes the example of a public speaker, who 'speaks to [the prevailing mood] and from out of it. He needs an understanding of the possibilities of mood in order to arouse and direct it in the right way' (BT, p. 135). Whilst Heidegger acknowledges here that an already-existing mood can be 'aroused' or 'directed', moods cannot be consciously changed or constructed, arriving as they do prior to cognition or will.

The first point I would like to draw from this discussion is that moods arguably have a social character. Heidegger tells us that moods emerge 'from being-in-the-world as a mode of that being', and my discussion of *Dasein*'s everyday being noted that being-in-the-world is itself always existentially being-with others. As a result of this, we can propose that mood is a social phenomenon, something supported by Heidegger's discussion in *Being and Time*. The second point is more basic: since mood discloses 'being-in-the-world as a whole' to *Dasein*, mood influences *Dasein*'s openness to the world. Being in a mood, *Dasein* discovers things, as in the case of fear, 'as being threatening' (BT, p. 134). In the case of 'bad moods', the world is 'veiled' and *Dasein*'s 'taking care is led astray' (BT, p. 133). Both these examples demonstrate the influence that mood and everyday being-with others have on one another.

When proposing that *Dasein*'s mood is influenced by its being-with, it is important not to overlook that being-with is not dependent on actually being-with others. Rather, it is fundamental to the way of being of *Dasein*, what Heidegger calls *Dasein*-with, and entails an immutable recognition of the being of others that share *Dasein*'s way of being. At the same time, it is also the case that this fundamental constitution means that others are always 'a matter of *concern*' (*Fursorge*) for *Dasein* (BT, p. 118, emphasis in original). In this way an awareness of *Dasein*'s fundamental

nature as *Dasein*-with accrues a proto-ethical quality in Heidegger's analysis, which argues that, for the most part, *Dasein*'s concern for others is 'deficient' and forgetful of its fundamental nature as 'being-with' others. Heidegger cites a number of 'deficient or at least indifferent modes' of concern and being-with, arguing that 'being for-, against-, and without-one-another, passing-one-another-by, not-mattering-to-one-another, are possible ways of concern' (BT, p. 118). These are all deficient modes in the sense that *Dasein* has not come to know its own being as a being-with: 'the basis of being-with often depends on how far one's own *Dasein* has actually understood itself […] upon how far it has made one's essential being with others transparent and not disguised it' (BT, p. 121).

Mood, as we have seen, is a mode of being-in-the-world that discloses world itself to *Dasein*. The understanding of everyday modes of concern as related to *Dasein*'s more fundamental being-with (and hence its fundamental being-in-the-world) suggests that everyday social interaction might in turn influence *Dasein*'s mood, and so the way it directs itself towards the world. This can be demonstrated more clearly by turning to Heidegger's brief discussion of empathy in this same chapter of *Being and Time*. In contrast to the 'deficient' modes of concern cited above, Heidegger argues that empathy is misinterpreted when approached phenomenologically, as a phenomenon that '"initially" presents phenomenally a way of being-with-another that understands' (BT, p. 121). This way of understanding empathy as that which '"originally" and primordially makes possible and constitutes being towards others' (BT, p. 121) is a mistake. As we have already seen, being-with 'already exists with the being of *Dasein*' (BT, p. 121), and as such, for Heidegger, empathy must emerge from this condition: '"Empathy" does not first constitute being-with, but is first possible on its basis' (BT, p. 121).

It is noteworthy that Heidegger develops his interpretation of empathy in relation to 'deficient' modes of being. Empathy is made possible, as noted above, on

the basis of *Dasein*'s constitutional being-with. Empathy arises or occurs, Heidegger suggests, in response to the deficient modes of being-with that are common in everyday life (which include being 'against-, and without-one-another, passing-one-another-by, not-mattering-to-one-another' [BT, p. 118]). Heidegger writes that empathy 'is motivated by the prevailing modes of being-with in their inevitability' (BT, p. 121). As such, empathy is a mode of being-with which carries within it a disposedness towards understanding and caring for others. Heidegger's discussion of empathy as a disposedness towards others that originates in *Dasein*'s constitution (but is expressed or revealed in response to the deficient modes of concern in everyday life) allows me to conceptualise empathy in terms of disposedness, and hence in terms of mood.[142]

Heidegger's definition of moods as modes of being-in-the-world, and of moods as responsive to our prevailing social existence, understood here as modes of being-with, already suggest the significance of moods as things that inflect understandings of social realities. Turning back to Smith's novels now, I consider the possibility that *White Teeth*'s mood is both the narrative ground, and the aesthetic expression, of characters' shared modes of being-in and being-with in the novel. I find that Heidegger's description of mood as a *mode of being* is especially pertinent when reading *White Teeth*, a novel in which mood is established through its distinctive mode of narration.

---

[142] Lawrence Hatab, *Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contributions to Moral Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

White Teeth

Hysterical realism: (narrative) mood as a mode of (characterological) social being

James Wood famously described *White Teeth* as an instance of 'hysterical realism', a term Wood coined to describe a proto-genre of 'big, ambitious' novels published towards the end of the twentieth century by writers including Don DeLillo, Salman Rushdie, Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace and Smith herself. Wood argued that these works could be defined by 'an excess of storytelling', wherein 'stories and sub-stories sprout on every page, as these novels continually flourish their glamorous congestion'.[143] Whilst Smith's *White Teeth* shares an interest in the complexity of reality, amongst other things, with these writers' works, I propose that the hysterical narrative mode of *White Teeth* is the aesthetic expression of a dominant social mood to which its characters are collectively attuned. This aesthetic dimension is not only the expression of their attunement, but also the means by which the narrative reality of the novel is disclosed to its characters, and so it also affectively orients and disposes them towards the world in which they find themselves. Put differently, Smith's characters are at home in this hysteria, for it is the only world they know: the novel's 'hysterical' narrative mode discloses the world to its characters, grounding their way of being-in-the-world and essentially establishing the world of the novel. Before discussing the ethical import of the way the novel mobilises this narrative mode, I briefly consider the aesthetic dimensions of *White Teeth*'s hysterical realism itself, and the way in which it structures characterological subjectivity.

---

[143] James Wood, 'Human, All Too Inhuman', *The New Republic*, 24th July 2000.

White Teeth's hysterical realism is characterised, primarily, by the overt commentary of an omniscient narrator. As Paul Dawson explains — commenting on the 'surprising' return of the omniscient narrator in contemporary fiction — omniscient narration can diminish the subjective coherence of individual characters: 'overt commentary is the chief means of projecting a narratorial self and demonstrating the omniscient narrator's superior knowledge to the characters in terms of his or her moral sagacity, intellectual breadth and psychological and social insight'.[144] Whilst this would correspond with Smith's own declaration that she intends to convey her own way of being in her writing, discussed above, the workings of the hysterical mode also have important results for Smith's characters. I am particularly interested here by the narratorial incursions in chapters of the novel, appropriately titled 'Root Canals', which delve into and reveal the biographical and ancestral histories of Smith's protagonists. In one such instance, the narrator prepares for 'a meticulous inspection that would go beyond the heart of the matter to its marrow, beyond the marrow to the root — but the question is, how far back do you want? How far will *do*? The old American question: what do you want — *blood*? Most probably more than blood is required […] Well, all right then' (p. 83).

The root canal proves an incisive metaphor for the effect of these chapters: as the deep canals of Smith's characters' pasts are travelled into by an unrelenting and exploratory narrator, the pain of that history is eliminated, leaving subjects who appear healthy but are in fact injured, and diminished, by the narrative's exposure of their intimate histories. These incursions limit characterological autonomy in two ways: firstly, their foregrounding of historical connections suggest that the characters are determined by their pasts in ways they have little control over. Secondly, the synechdochic substitution of teeth for the subjects themselves means the root canals

---

[144] Paul Dawson, 'The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction', *Narrative*, 17.2 (2009), 143–61 (p. 149).

render the characters' affective relation to their pasts second hand, depriving them of the interiority needed to reflect on and navigate the possibilities that their past histories present by means of rooting out their private depths. The contingency that the novel celebrates in the present is likewise coloured by these root canals, suffusing the chaotic present with historical baggage that renders contingency identical with determinism. As Clare Squires argues 'history and the past are formative and inescapable for the novel's characters'.[145]

In the main sections of the novel, set in London in the decades leading up to the millennium, the histories that these root canals excavate serve to build a sense of inevitability about new social connections that are forged in the cultural encounter between families from different backgrounds in Smith's postcolonial London. In the novel's 1980s, parents and first-generation Bengali immigrants Alsana and Samad feel isolated within their community, troubled by racist violence and their children's exposure to what Samad views as Western debauchery: 'worrying for themselves and their children, for what the terrible eighties were doing to them […] distance was establishing itself, not simply between *fathersons*, *oldyoung*, *bornthere-bornhere*, but between those who stayed indoors and those who ran riot outside' (pp. 187–190). Yet the arrival of a new generation in the shape of twin sons brings with it social entanglements that establish new relations across previous divides, in particular when the youthful charisma and troublesome antics of their son, Millat, spark the interests of would-be protector Joyce Chalfen, the white middle-class parent of Millat's classmate. The relationship between the two mothers, Alsana and Joyce, is primarily one of mutual mistrust, but Joyce and Alsana gradually recognise the inescapability of their relation as it is continually developed by the narrative voice of the novel. Alsana reflects her awareness of this inevitable drive to entanglement when she reflects: '[being] *involved* happened over a long period of time, pulling you in like

---

[145] Clare Squires, *Zadie Smith's White Teeth* (London: Continuum, 2002).

quicksand. Involved is neither good, nor bad. It is just a consequence of living, a consequence of occupation and immigration, of empires and expansion, of living in each other's pockets…one becomes involved and it is a long trek back to being uninvolved […] something in the way Joyce said it, *involved* — wearied, slightly acid — suggested to Alsana that the word meant the same thing to her. An enormous web you spin to catch yourself' (p. 439). In this sense, the perspectives of Smith's characters again reflect the outcome of the root canals I have discussed above, where the excavation of personal histories makes them shared, public and socially deterministic.

The hysterical realist mode also overrides the ethical reflection and agency evident towards the end of *White Teeth*, when Irie Jones tries to persuade now warring twins Magid and Millat to resolve their differences. When Joyce Chalfen charges Irie with visiting Millat and persuading him to meet with his brother Magid so that they might settle their protracted, destructive conflict, Irie reluctantly makes this journey out of a sense of duty to Joyce, Millat and Magid: 'she didn't want to be involved in the long story of those lives, but she *was*, and she found herself dragged forward by her hair to their denouement' (p. 459). Irie lacks the autonomy to resist the demands of a responsibility that, as with the connections developed throughout the novel, is the result of an accumulation of unavoidable involvements. Joyce Chalfen's retort to Irie's complaints about this visit, 'everybody owes everybody', attests again to the way that an inescapable sense of collective involvement overpowers individual intention and agency in the novel. When Irie arrives at Millat's house, she finds herself having to resist the temptation to succumb to her former hopes that she and Millat would love each other: 'Irie wished she could give herself over to these past-present fictions […] You could drown in memories like these, but she tried to swim free' (p. 459). However, the desire to resist these 'fictions' gives way, again, to the inevitable pull of a history of attraction, the 'touch of memory […]

the touch of a long, long, history' becoming an 'inevitable' physical embrace: 'the result was inevitable […] before long their arms were involved, their legs were involved, their lips were involved' (p. 461).

The foreclosing of individual alterity through the root canals of Smith's characters poses problems for traditional ethical modes of reading, something I will discuss in more detail below with reference to James Wood's articles on *White Teeth*. It is worth making precisely clear, here, how this novel resists traditional appeals to the ethical value of literature. As mentioned in my introduction, there are two seemingly oppositional poles in recent ethical criticism which share underlying affinities. As Robert Eaglestone has argued, both 'wings' share in the positivism of the knowledge they produce through the process of reading; both approaches offer 'a sort of positivist knowledge, which can offer—or be made to offer—axioms or propositions that correspond, even if not in a strict way, to […] reality'.[146]

Christopher Weinberger has similarly recently argued that, although critics differ widely on how we should apprehend and value novelistic representations of alterity, most ethically-minded critics fall on a spectrum dominated by two opposing poles. In Weinberger's terms, these are productively reframed as an 'ethics of identification' and an 'ethics of letting be'. The broad outlines of both these approaches will be familiar from my discussion above. In the humanist 'ethics of identification', the novel is valued for the way it 'fosters sustained identification with narrative point of view and comprises representations of the language, speech, and thoughts of individuals other than the author or speaker'. In this view, the novel can 'present an ideal field of ethical encounter with other perspectives'. The 'ethics of letting be', associated with poststructuralist critics, values 'moments in novels that refuse readerly sympathy, or else confront readers with the radical "unknowability" of characters, as ethical models of resistance to the colonizing force of sympathetic

---

[146] Eaglestone, 'Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', p. 605.

imagination'. In this view, 'identification may produce dangerously colonizing attitudes in readers, insofar as it encourages surmounting rather than respecting the differences that mark others as such'.[147]

It is in Hale's work, discussed in my introduction, that these ethical approaches are conceptualised together in terms of a process of binding and unbinding. As mentioned there, for the poststructuralist this moment of unbinding produces an awareness of self-limit, a registering of the unknowability of otherness and a lesson about our own tendencies to reduce alterity to the familiar. For Hale, however, the poststructuralist focus on the resistance of the other to the colonising of the caring, liberal imagination is itself dependent on a continued movement of binding that precedes the ethical moment of unbinding that the encounter with alterity produces. Conversely, whilst Nussbaum's approach to reading foregrounds readerly love and care for the other, it also entails an experience of self-limit, through the cultivation of a relation that involves being 'truly vulnerable' to 'the experience of social restraint, of binding and being bound to the life of the other'.[148]

In *White Teeth*, as I have been suggesting, an 'ethics of identification' is excluded by characters' lack of interiority: the contingency of the decisions, the pre-reflective involvement of characters and the historical determinism that surrounds their actions all contribute to this effect. Any sense that the reader is confronted by the 'unknowability' of Smith's characters, and that these characters might present as 'models of resistance to the colonizing force of sympathetic imagination', is equally foreclosed by the everyday familiarity of Smith's characters, and above all by the violation of their interiority and personal histories – what Smith will call elsewhere

---

[147] Christopher Weinberger, "Triangulating an Ethos: Ethical Criticism, Novel Alterity, and Mori Ogai's "Stereostopic Vision", *positions* 23.2 (2015): 259-285 (261-262).
[148] Hale, 'New Ethics', p. 902.

their 'right to a secret' – enacted by the novel's 'root canals' which excavate the characters' hidden depths for the reader.[149]

As the examples in this section suggest, the protagonists' embrace of contingent interactions and inevitable social connectedness are best understood as a shared cultural mood or disposition, one that is cultivated by the hysterical narrative that discloses the world they find themselves in. In the context of social division and fraught intercultural relations, the foreclosure of individual decision and reflection serves to reveal a world characterised by a surfeit of inextricable connectedness, what the novel aptly calls being involved. The novel's insistence on involvement and being-with others at the expense of perspectival autonomy suggests again the significance of these modes of being in Smith's writing. At the same time, the novel's conscious foregrounding of a violation of characterological subjectivity discussed above suggests that Smith wants her readers to be aware of these violations and to see them in this light – suggesting again that they form part of the ethical thought at work in the novel.

If *White Teeth* foregrounds its characters' inescapable social entanglements, their 'being with others' (BT p. 121), it is importantly also the case that the novel does not privilege certain forms of connection, as Alsana's comments suggest: 'Involved is neither good, nor bad. It is just a consequence of living' (p. 439). Being with others and being involved can take the form of care, as it does eventually in the case of Alsana and Joyce, or it can take on the form of conflict and collision as between Magid and Millat, without the narrative giving privilege to either mode of connection.[150] With this in mind, and having acknowledged the effects of this

---

[149] Zadie Smith, 'That Crafty Feeling', *Believer Magazine*, 1 June 2008 <https://believermag.com/that-crafty-feeling/> [accessed 16 September 2016].
[150] Lydida Roupakia argues in view of these instances that the novel uses female characters to exemplify possibilities for an ethics of care that are absent from the majority of the novel; Roupakia, 'On Care, Ethics, and Reading Practice: Re-Reading Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*', *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 26.2 (2015), 150–71 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10436928.2015.1029773>.

hysterical narrative mode on characterological subjectivity here, I will now further draw out the proto-ethical dimension of this mode of narration and the connection it creates. In what follows, I suggest that this foreclosure of perspectival autonomy serves the purpose of revealing more originary modes of being that Smith seeks to foreground in her writing.

Human, all too human

A central complaint of James Wood's first article on hysterical realism regards the narrative foreclosing of autonomous subjectivity that I have described above. In this essay, titled 'Human, All Too Inhuman', Wood protests that '[t]he characters in these novels are not really alive, not fully human; their connectedness can only be insisted on. Life is never experienced with such a fervid intensity of connectedness. So these novels find themselves in the paradoxical position of enforcing connections that are finally conceptual rather than human'.[151] Similarly, it is the failure of individual agency which marks the limits of *White Teeth*'s thought for Jonathan Sell, who argues: '[c]hoice is the outcome of deliberation and reflection, and it is in this regard that Smith's characters fall short of humanity and her ethical scheme reaches an impasse'.[152]

These critical observations, that *White Teeth*'s characters fall short of 'humanity', is reflective once again of the humanist 'wing' of the new ethics discussed above. Contrary to Wood and Sell, I suggest that such diminishing of subjective autonomy in Smith's novel paradoxically underpins the novel's revealing, and ethical foregrounding, of the fundamental human conditions of being-in-the-world and being-with others. The 'excess of storytelling' in the novel produces an attunement that renders characters excessively ecstatic, so that they 'stand out' in the

---

[151] James Wood, 'Human, All Too Inhuman', *The New Republic*, 24 July 2000 <https://newrepublic.com/article/61361/human-inhuman> [accessed 8 October 2018].
[152] Jonathan P.A. Sell, 'Chance and Gesture in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and *The Autograph Man*: A Model for Multicultural Identity?', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 41.3 (2006), 27–44 (p. 35) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989406068733>.

world in such a way that forecloses reflective distance and interior consciousness in an exaggeration of sociality and interconnectedness. In these figures the essentially ecstatic structure of human being takes on excessive proportions, exaggerated and extended beyond the dimensions that are found in *Being and Time*'s analysis.

Across different decades and generations, the intensification of characterological *proximity* and *involvement* as the narrative mode advances towards the millennium produces subjects who are excessive in their ecstatic being-in, immersed prior to (and to the point of foreclosing) the reflective distance that all-too-often instigates a bifurcation between minds and world(s), selves and others. Figures like Irie are so greatly characterised by their attunement to this world — which, I recall here, literally means being found in a situation where things already matter — that they have no hope of extricating themselves from these involvements and entanglements. As such, *White Teeth*'s characters display an excess of being-in, of exposure, immersion and involvement that repeats the rhetorical gesture of *Being and Time*, which posited *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world as a challenge to philosophical conceptions of human consciousness as interiority. As I have noted above, what Heidegger calls our 'disclosive submission to world' is overwhelming here, and this is why Smith's figures stand in more as exemplars of the world *White Teeth* is conceptualising, and its mood of involvement and connectedness, than as individual selves.

If the ecstatic excess of *White Teeth's* characters unfolds primarily in terms of their excessively being-in-the-world and being-with others, it is also the case that it is expressed in temporal terms, consistent with the *ecstasies* of temporality; 'the phenomena of future, having-been and present' that underpin our existence in *Being and Time* (BT, p. 314). Throughout the novel's movement from its opening pages in 1975, when central figure Archie Jones survives a suicide attempt, an experience which leaves him feeling 'ecstatic' (p. 240), to the climax at the arrival of the new

millennium, this teleological movement through time is entwined with the emergence of the narratively shaped mood I have been describing in this chapter.[153] Archie's lucky escape from death leaves him in a 'past tense, future perfect kind of mood […] a *maybe this, maybe that* kind of mood' that exemplifies the connection between temporality and attunement in the novel (p. 18, emphasis in original). The phrase 'past tense, future perfect' most literally suggests a belief in the future as a resolution to past traumas, which could be described as feeling of optimism about the future.

When considered grammatically, however, 'past tense, future perfect' suggests an interstitial moment between what has been (past tense) and what will have been (future perfect) which makes space for the contingency of the present moment.[154] As such, it implies a form of projection that brings together past and future to constitute being-in-the-world in the present. For Mark Currie, the future perfect gives name to the temporality of narrative: being the tense that 'refers to something that lies ahead and yet which is already complete, not what will happen, but what will have happened', it is paradigmatic of the way that stories present us with a future which is unknown, but already told. Perhaps, then, Smith's figures are also excessively novelistic, for the way they unite the ecstasies of past, present and future in a manner unique to the storytelling mode.

The phrase, 'maybe this, maybe that', likewise suggests a commitment to contingency, reflected in Archie's newly formed inclination to flip a coin when faced

---

[153] On the broader question of an apocalyptic imagination and its relation to fiction, see Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, new edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[154] Michael Perfect likewise considers this clause, interpreting it somewhat differently. For Perfect the phrase, 'gestures towards past speculations about what will have happened by now and so, by implication, to their failure. It does not refer to unchecked optimism, but rather to an optimism about the future which is aware of mistaken prophecies of the past and thus remains staunchly open-minded. The present, then, acts in this formulation as a tangible demonstration of the impossibility of knowing or controlling the future; even the "known" present demonstrates the "unknowability" of the future'. Michael Perfect, *Contemporary Fictions of Multiculturalism: Diversity and the London Millennial Novel* (London: Palgrave, 2014), p. 80.

with a decision; a trait that, for Jonathan Sell, makes him the 'champion of the random workings of an Epicurean universe […] in which causation takes second place to contingency, and where the present takes priority over the past'. If the embrace of contingent possibility helps with Archie's intention to cut ties with his past, taking decisions at random that lead to new encounters and connections in the present, it is also the case that the embrace of contingency by Smith's characters is always in play with the determinism, described above, that such an appeal to fate or chance inevitably implies.[155] Placing Archie in relation to a future which is contingent but also already determined in the narrative's teleological movement towards the millennium, *White Teeth* figures the unity of the ecstasies of future, having-been and present in terms that further entangle and embed Smith's characters into the narrative mode which grounds their existence.

Importantly, the uncertainty and openness towards an unknowable future that *White Teeth* works to establish through its evocation of a 'past tense, future perfect mood' diminishes the omniscience of the narrator in *White Teeth*. The fate of the characters is left open at the threshold of the millennium which, despite being the centre of the novel, is not represented directly and is instead explored as the teleological destination which all narrative strands build towards and anticipate. Through communal moments at the end of 1975 and 1993, the social mood of the late twentieth century, and the approaching twenty first century, are further brought under scrutiny. As such, an acute sense of global reordering inheres through *White Teeth*'s narrative. The climax of the novel prepares its readers not for specific atrocities but for change itself, posing questions about the rebranding of Britain and who is willing to fight for this cultural reshaping. The optimism for the novel's climax, a New Year's Eve event where genetic engineers, animal rights activists, Jehovah's witnesses and Islamic fundamentalists can cross the threshold into the uncharted

---

[155] Sell, p. 34.

territory of the new year together is symbolic of the millennial threshold that *White Teeth* writes across. Smith works to maintain a plurality of possible futures which her novel seeks to force across the millennial threshold. In violent scenes at the end of the novel, Millat Iqbal (now a fundamental extremist) tries to shoot one of the FutureMouse project team, although Archie intervenes, saving the scientist and accidentally liberating the mouse from its display case, and a determined future. With this comes a growing sense of exposure to a world of conflicting social forces, of which the novel cannot be fully aware but which it anticipates at the national level through a parodic treatment of fundamentalism (KEVIN) that betrays a melancholic attunement to the unresolved problems that extend beyond the novel's close.[156] This is also made clear in the symbolic lab-rat of a future that is the FutureMouse.

In this way, the agency of individuals and groups at this threshold is not valorised by a narrative that has centred the novel's action around the play between contingency and determinism. Paul Dawson similarly argues that '[t]he narrative voice of White Teeth indicates that Smith herself can only imagine a world of random uncertainty, relativising the authority of her commentary'.[157] Even though the voice that we are 'forced to submit to' is Smith's, it is a paradoxically self-effacing, unaggrandising voice, one that finds events inexplicable and contingent, but that sets this contingency against a weight of unavoidable historical baggage. The achievement of the inevitability of connectedness and the absence of individual agency is a narrative eschewal of a certain ideology or cultural perspective. As such, the novel is morally self-effacing despite being one individual's vision. It disperses moral agency across the whole social landscape of multicultural Britain, taking its place within that

---

[156] For Sara Upstone, Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album* and *White Teeth* both 'represent Islam as the most dangerous and current threat to British democracy', in some sense valorising negative perceptions of British Muslims that would intensify after 9/11. Sara Upstone, '9/11, British Muslims, and Popular Literary Fiction' in *Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the 'War on Terror',* eds. Jeff Birkenstein, Anna Froula, Karen Randell (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 35–45 (p. 35).
[157] Dawson, p. 154.

landscape and creating an atmosphere of being-with, of shared responsibility which it valorises, despite anxieties and certain prescient and melancholic insights, as a moral mood. The novel emphasises historicality and connectedness and drives a worldly community with shared multicultural responsibilities into the new millennium. Through the novel's figuring of social connection and relational entanglement which precedes individual ethical deliberation, *White Teeth* depicts the experiential world of a London community at the end of the century through its evocation of a fundamental mood. At the core of its moral thought, this atmosphere is used to interrogate the emergent possibilities of this social world. As such, *White Teeth* conceives of its own narrative as world-opening or world-revealing, in ways comparable with the Heideggerian notions of revealing discussed in my previous chapter.

The problem of ethics in White Teeth: attunement, perspectivalism and experience

The unknowability of the world that Smith opens at the end of the novel through her sustained focus on being-with and being-in-the-world, reflected in the hysterical mood of the novel yet which simultaneously resists privileging, for instance, a particular mode of relating to others, can finally be addressed as an attempt to reveal a different world to her reader. To highlight this world-opening process of attunement I return to the essay 'Some Notes on Attunement' and the 'weird little novel' Smith mentions there, the Exordium to Søren Kierkegaard's philosophical treatise *Fear and Trembling*. As discussed above, it tells the story of a man, 'not a thinker […] not an exegetical scholar', who cannot understand Abraham's decision to kill his son (Kierkegaard) and who, given his situation, resorts to telling himself four different versions of the tale in an attempt to understand Abraham's actions.[158]

---

[158] Smith, 'Some Notes on Attunement'. Web.

Of particular interest is the play between the man's final submission to the logic incomprehensibility of the Biblical story — where true faith trumps reason — and his failed attempt to understand the story, and Abraham, by narrating Abraham's decision from four different perspectives. The play between attunement and perspectivalism in Smith's interpretation of this story, and the eventual winning out of attunement, recalls the play between perspectivalist readings and a focus on attunement that I have been discussing so far. The Exordium, Smith reflects, 'is a rehearsal' which prepares its reader for Kierkegaard's own propositions about the nature of true faith, and creates a 'state of readiness for a consideration of the actual Biblical story', which is 'essentially beyond explication'.[159] Likewise, reading *White Teeth* requires suspension of familiar readerly attempts to comprehend, identify, or submit to the otherness of social others in favour of attuning to the equally familiar, yet unknowable, character of the world itself.

I will recall here, for instance, that Hale writes, in a discussion of Smith's 'On Beauty*'* and the perspectival economy of the novel more broadly, that 'within the novel itself point of view is formally structured as an ongoing negotiation between interpreting subject and interpreted world […] in the novelistic ethics of alterity, one can imagine the author as possessing a unitary and coherent self only in relation to the social other he attempts to depict'.[160] If Hale is acutely aware of the paradoxes of this position, reading a novel like this in terms of attunement makes it possible to move the debate about novelistic aesthetic and ethics beyond the novelist's own 'self conscious awareness about the paradox of perspectivalism'.[161] As I have argued so

---

[159] Smith, 'Some Notes on Attunement'. Web.
[160] Hale, '*On Beauty* as Beautiful?', p. 832.
[161] Hale explains the double bind of perspectivalism here as follows: 'To understand the novel as a whole as the expression of the author's individual point of view is to forget the way the novel itself insists on the social contexts that produce and mediate authorial vision. And to understand authorial identity as point of view from the point of view of the novel's form is, in turn, to forget that the novelist has created the story world that she pretends to recount and to find the objective measure of her perspective in the difference between her valuation of this world and its own autonomous existence'. Hale, '*On Beauty*', p. 830.

far, the disclosive process of aesthetic attunement can serve to reveal to readers essentially ethical truths about the worlds they inhabit. In Smith's *White Teeth*, what is uncovered, in part, is a world in which shared being-with others is more primary than the representation of differences, even whilst these differences are able to flourish and indeed confront each other in the space of a being-with others that is not reducible to a drive towards unity.

At the same time, as my discussion has also suggested, *White Teeth* resists being read as a novel which puts forth the particular *ethos* of a community, or the values held by Smith herself as the narratorial presence in the text.[162] As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, Smith's fiction continues to negotiate with the possibility of giving voice to a community. The move to relativise Smith's own voice in *White Teeth*, discussed above, is perhaps most suggestive of an attempt to allow Smith's attunement to the character of the social context she represents to permeate her writing without foregrounding particular values. Like the short story from Kierkegaard, Smith's novel tends towards an act of attunement that ultimately demands openness in advance of any deliberative or discursive understanding.[163]

As a writer who is both concerned with literary ethics and highly active in the critical reception of her own work, it is not surprising that Smith has explicitly reflected on this perceived problem with *White Teeth* in the years since the novel's publication. In an essay 'That Crafty Feeling', published whilst Smith was writing *NW* (and so relevant for the final section of this chapter which addresses that novel) the author reflects her own growing commitment to a poststructuralist 'ethics of letting-be': 'It's Derrida, and what surprises me is what a different piece of Derrida it

---

[162] On the narrative interpretation of values in culture, see Liesbeth Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

[163] On the notion that *ethos* in Heidegger emerges from this movement from attunement to deliberation (*logos*), see William McNeill, *Time of Life, The: Heidegger and Ethos* (SUNY Press, 2012).

is than I would have chosen two novels ago. The quote is very simple: If a right to a secret is not maintained then we are in a totalitarian space. […] It's awful to me now, that passion for human dissection I had, always entering the brains of characters, cracking them open, rooting every secret out'.[164] Whilst acknowledging this change in the novelist's disposition, I now turn to this novel with the question of attunement still in mind, in order to show how attunement operates in a novel where characters' autonomy and individual perspectives are again at play with each other, rather than as secondary to an aesthetic revealing of a world.

NW

When compared with *White Teeth, NW* is a novel that focuses much more closely on the place of its setting, rarely venturing outside of north west London. *NW* does not trace the global histories of the British public as *White Teeth* did, but instead focuses on relations as they are actually negotiated within the city in day-to-day interactions. Smith's interest in globality is not lost in the local focus of *NW*, however. London's status as a global city means that global relations are negotiated at an increasingly local level. Kristian Shaw and David James have recently proposed, in this vein, using the terms '(g)local' and 'worlded localisms' respectively to describe the local spaces of *NW*.[165] But what exactly does it mean to engage with local others in a global or worldly way? Whilst agreeing with other commentators that Smith aims to develop a localised global scene, I argue that it is necessary to contend with the way that the ethical dimensions of this worldliness, often described as cosmopolitanism, are fostered in the novel. I argue that worldliness and cosmopolitanism are similarly negotiated in the novel as dispositions towards the

---

[164] Smith, 'That Crafty Feeling'.

[165] Kristian Shaw, '"A Passport to Cross the Room": Cosmopolitan Empathy and Transnational Engagement in Zadie Smith's *NW (2012)*', *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings*, 5.1 (2017) <https://doi.org/10.16995/c21.15>; David James, 'Worlded Localisms: Cosmopolitics Writ Small', in *Postmodern Literature and Race*, ed. by Len Platt and Sara Upstone (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 47–64.

world, dispositions opposed to more narrow and parochial visions of the world. When discussing worldliness or cosmopolitanism, it is important to remember that these qualities cannot be contrasted straightforwardly with narrower frames of reference or group identity, be they national or otherwise, primarily because even the most parochial, xenophobic or homogenous cultural configurations have a relationship to the world. This is especially true of the kind of intensely localised world that *NW* depicts. In responding to *NW*'s focus on specific local encounters, engagements and conflicts, I argue that worldliness as an ethical quality must be reckoned as something that is always negotiated in, and often emerges in response to, a social world. In advancing this argument, I aim to bring a different perspective to the discussion of worldliness and cosmopolitanism in *NW* by exploring the novel's stance on the individual human capacity for worldliness. Ultimately, I argue that the individual capacity for worldliness is set up by the novel as the locus for worldly engagement, displacing the focus on local place as the foundation for cosmopolitan ethics.

NW's first chapter, titled 'Visitation', opens with a scene that exemplifies the values of hospitality and openness that are celebrated aspects of cosmopolitanism. In this scene Leah Hanwell opens the door of her flat to help Shar, a desperate young woman who has been left screaming for help in the road by other local residents who refused to acknowledge her pleas. Leah's welcoming Shar is an act of hospitality that can been read in global terms, as an analogy of the opening of closed national borders to global otherness. Kristian Shaw argues that this scene evinces a Derridean 'cosmopolitan hospitality'. Leah's actions can also be understood as stemming from an empathic response to the suffering of another person. Shaw, for instance, uses the terms 'cosmopolitan hospitality' and 'cosmopolitan empathy' to describe the ethical vision of the novel. What, though, provokes this empathic response from Leah, when the rest of her neighbours have ignored Shar and left their doors open? One explanation is proffered by *NW*'s narrators: 'Leah is as faithful in her allegiance to

this two-mile square of city as other people are to their families, or their countries'.[166] Smith's narrator also invites her reader to understand this encounter in relation to familiar representations of the suffering of more distant others. Looking down at Shar, Leah thinks of a '[w]oman begging the public for witnesses. Woman in a war zone standing in the rubble of her home' (p. 5). If Leah's response is grounded in her relationship to a local community, it is also implicitly provoked by her connection of Shar's suffering to familiar figures of suffering from a global context.

Through Leah's encounter with Shar, a localised scene offers a vision of expansive empathic involvement and responsibility that rivals the parochial models of community based around family and national identity. Yet it remains unclear that an allegiance to a local context will provoke the empathic response Leah feels towards Shar, nor inspire the connection Leah makes between the quotidian presence of a destitute, drug-addicted woman, and a woman whose life is destroyed by violent conflict. Neither, it should be added, does this empathic response guarantee Leah's decision to open the door to Shar and welcome her into the house. Smith has spoken in interviews of her intention, in this novel, to humanise the suffering of others which can appear as banal or unreal, taking the example of the distance that a provincial citizen might feel when reading in the newspaper about the murder of a black 'youth' stabbed on a street in London. If Shar's suffering is, as the novel suggests, an experience as distant to Leah as the images of victims beamed into her home from foreign war zones, how do we explain Leah's overcoming this experiential gulf and welcome of Shar into her home?

As other critics have noted, Leah's decision to help Shar rests on her misunderstanding the reality of the situation — the fact that Shar needs money for drugs. This divergence between Leah's understanding of the situation and that of her

---

[166] Zadie Smith, *NW* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 6. Further references to this work will be given in parentheses in the text.

neighbours can be described in terms of a differing attunement to a situation. It is not only Leah's neighbours that understand the situation differently to Leah, but also *NW*'s reader. Smith foregrounds the actualities of the situation for her reader through Leah's observations of Shar, making more apparent the discontinuity between Leah and Smith's implied reader. 'Her clothes are not clean', 'she smells', 'perhaps Shar needs money', thinks Leah, whilst remaining seemingly unaware that Shar's mother's heart attack is a fabrication (p. 15). Where Leah perceives 'the girl's face is dreamy, slow. Touched, the Irish say. Possible that she's touched', Smith's reader already suspects the influence of drugs and addiction as the real cause of Shar's crisis. Leah does not attune to the realities of the situation, and so arguably does not share their access to the reality of Shar's experience or suffering (p. 15). Yet, without understanding the realities of the situation ('it is obvious to everyone except Leah') she establishes a connection with Shar's suffering that exceeds what is possible for her mother, her husband and Smith's implied reader.

I have suggested that Leah's focus on Shar's suffering, as opposed to the particularities of her suffering or veracity of her explanations, emerges from a particular situational attunement. Leah's response is strikingly different to the neighbours who ignored Shar's cries for help, which are established in the novel as a more common, if problematic, disposedness towards others. Leah's identification with Shar's suffering and her disposedness towards helping Shar make it possible to describe Leah's attunement as a form of empathy. Leah's association of Shar with a woman 'in a war zone standing in the rubble of her own home' suggests, furthermore, that distances of a global scale can operate at even the most local of levels, whilst also potentially fostering Leah's empathic response.

Leah's empathic disposition puts her at odds with her husband Michel, who virulently condemns Shar's actions and seeks to confront her and retrieve Leah's £20. Leah's divergence from Michel on this issue pits her not only against her husband,

but also against the dominant social atmosphere of her time. Unlike Leah, Michel is implicitly connected to the rest of society by his aspirational individualism and embrace of market capitalism. Michel is acutely aware of the negative effects of the Great Recession and seeks to embrace the possibilities for material gain that this adverse social and economic situation appears to present: '"You have to work very hard to separate yourself from this drama below!"', he tells Leah. '"Market is so crazy right now […] the smart guys get right back in the game"' (p. 4). Michel takes to gambling the couple's inheritance in an attempt to forge a financial space between themselves and those that are struggling in the contemporary social environment. In his view, '"not everyone can be invited to the party. Not this century. Cruel opinion — she doesn't share it"' (p. 3). As such, Leah has to deal with the consequences of Michel courting financial insecurity by gambling the only money the couple have in their savings. At the same time, her work role distributing lottery money to charities and other social enterprises involves making good 'the nation's bad debts', overseeing the process by which these individual losses 'morph into a semblance of collective good'. Leah's antagonistic position in relation to her husband's management of the couple's finances, and his attempt to profit from financial misfortune, is a microcosm for a fraught relationship she has with the national disposition towards self-interest and pursuit of individual benefit.

At Leah's work in the charity sector, her supervisor claims that the role is about caring for others: 'this work requires empathy and so attracts women, for women are the empathic sex' (p. 34). Yet the conditions of employment, the 'box cramped Victorian damp' office, and relations between the workers, suggest a wider failure of empathic relations in the novel.[167] The office is equally deficient in its care for employees, suggesting a society where moral values such as empathy have lost

---

[167] For another very recent discussion of empathy in *NW* see Tammy Amiel Houser, 'Zadie Smith's *NW*: Unsettling the Promise of Empathy', *Contemporary Literature*, 58.1 (2017), 116–48 <https://doi.org/10.3368/cl.58.1.116>.

their meaning, subsumed within market forces. The threat of 'efficiency savings', 'meaning your job and mine', loom, whilst Leah 'sits on a replacement chair borrowed six years ago from the break room just flooded with empathy'. This insecurity and the prospect of unemployment complicate the presumed distinction between people like Leah that handle charity funds and those in need of them, whilst pointing towards the limits of empathy as a response to social indifference and inequality. Rather than being an inherent trait, empathy emerges in *NW* as a response to deficient social relations. If empathy is defined as the experience of the suffering of others that brings with it the will to help, then the charity workers' exposure to hardship and their role distributing charitable funds would mark them out as empathic individuals. Leah's unhappiness and anger in her workplace as she doodles 'I am so FULL OF EMPATHY' (p. 34) further demonstrates that empathy can inspire a negative response towards others, described by Lawrence Hatab as a 'flight from the suffering of others'.[168] In a social environment where ethical action is frustrated, empathic involvement has become for Leah a socially problematic form of disposedness towards the world.

It is against this social background, significantly, that Leah makes the decision to offer hospitality and assistance to Shar. Leah is able to engage with Shar only by departing from the dominant social mood, even as her response is figured by the novel as emerging from this dominant social atmosphere and the deficient modes of being-with others that surround Leah. Leah's reaction to Shar and their encounter further negotiates the different responses to empathy that are possible, and the way that empathic involvement is always negotiated in the midst of, and in response to, this already-existing social world. Leah's relationship with Shar further exemplifies the ways that empathy can inspire diverse social responses, ranging from the desire to

---

[168] Lawrence Hatab, *Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contributions to Moral Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), p. 140.

help others and to alleviate the suffering to aversive action, a taking flight to alleviate one's own suffering. Whilst these two reactions can be seen as oppositional, *NW* explores the complex ways they are negotiated simultaneously. Leah imagines running away with Shar, "waking up by their long black hair and eyes, in her mouth. Phoning home from fantasy boxes that still take the old 2ps" (p. 76), and imagines Shar taking her hand: 'Shall we run? Are you ready? Shall we run? Leave all this! Let's be outlaws!' (p. 76), even as she finds herself aggressively confronting Shar, calling her a thief and demanding her money back. The narrator's interjection that '[d]esire is never final, desire is imprecise and impractical' (p. 76) further suggests that empathy does necessarily provoke or lead to compassion. Leah has the uncanny experience of opening an envelope of photographs at the pharmacy and finding pictures of Shar, laughing and drinking in one photograph, 'now sat on the floor, looking destroyed' in the next (p. 94). Before the pharmacist takes back the photographs, Leah faces what can only be an apparition of an alternative self, in a life she has not lived, 'a skaggy redhead, skin and bone and track marks, with a fag hanging out her mouth, and if you squinted […] Like a riddle in a dream' (p. 95). Through Leah's relationship with Shar the novel suggests that empathic involvement, and the ethical action that it can give rise to, are not reducible to charity, but rather are a complex form of social entanglement which can act as the starting point for transgression of social and geographical boundaries.

The third section of *NW*, 'Host', focuses on the life of Leah's friend Natalie Blake (black, British and of African parentage), whose childhood name was Keisha. In contrast with Leah, Natalie is an individual who struggles with a sense of belonging to a particular place, presenting a challenge to the rooted cosmopolitan ethics rightly identified, by Shaw, with Leah. Natalie's individual development, building to a middle-aged crisis, is a story of an ever-changing being-in-the-world, an identity navigated through a fraught and changing relationship to her local world. In

this section of the novel, comprised of 148 numbered fragments that relay episodes from the girls' shared adolescence, Smith's reader learns that Leah has always been in the habit of crossing social boundaries, something that resurfaces with Leah's hospitality towards Shar, who also went to Brayton with Leah and Keisha. Leah was a girl bestowed with 'universal good feeling' (p. 180), who 'befriended everyone without distinction or boundary' (p. 180). Unlike Leah, Natalie has never moved freely across cross boundaries of status and identity. Leah's diverse sociality 'did not alienate her from the popular and vice versa and how this was managed Keisha Blake had no understanding' (p. 180). As the girls get older, Leah's ability to move between different groups effortlessly and without judgement from others is revealed to Keisha as a privilege afforded by her whiteness. For Keisha, 'the state of "being Leah Hanwell's friend" constituted a sort of passport, lending Keisha a protected form of access in most situations' (p. 191). Faced with the difficulties of being a young black woman of African parentage living in London, Keisha changes her name to Natalie, one episode in a lifetime spent constructing an appeasing, middle-class identity, to avoid 'giving them a reason'.

For Shaw, *NW*'s Willesden is a 'microcosm of global cross-cultural encounters', representing a shift in cosmopolitan engagement that is local rather than global in its outlook. Leah, as noted, is an individual who feels a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the place she lives. Kristian Shaw argues that Leah's actions are representative of a locally rooted cosmopolitanism, and mark a movement past *White Teeth*'s focus on cultural roots, where legacies of colonialism and national identities circumscribed identity, to a time where characters' sense of rootedness relates primarily to the place they live. This cosmopolitanism, for Shaw, is the domain of 'bounded individuals not subject to transnational mobility and untroubled by questions of geographical or ethnic belonging'.[169] If Leah's sense of local

---

[169] Shaw, p. 9.

rootedness is significant here, her ethical action is also grounded, as I have observed, in an attunement that emerges from a world in which Leah already finds herself.

After university Natalie does not return to the neighbourhood, instead living in a mansion with her children and husband, investment banker Frank. Eventually, becoming a commercial barrister affords Natalie an identity that transcends barriers of race and class. Her law firm's promise of 'the highest standards of legal representation in today's fast-changing world' (p. 256) will protect not only her clients but Natalie herself, securing an identity that escapes vulnerability and judgement, being universally respected and admired by virtue of her success and morally unthreatening commercialism. The successful pursuit of this career transforms Natalie's ethical worldview. As Natalie's career develops and her financial situation changes, she finds herself not speaking to her family, who have lost her childhood savings and are unable to support her career development. Alienated from the place and culture she grew up in, Natalie is equally dislocated in her new middle-class life. Afflicted by a fundamental sense of inauthenticity, Natalie enters a crisis of self-identity that almost leads her to suicide and the annihilation of her being-in-the-world itself.

Towards the close of the novel, Natalie, her marriage in tatters, bedraggled and worn, wanders back near Caldwell, the estate where she grew up. With her 'big T-shirt, leggings and a pair of filthy red slippers', Natalie appears to a policeman 'like a junkie' (p. 299). This physical transformation, and the state of crisis Natalie is experiencing, put her in touch with Nathan Bogle (black, British), a destitute drug addict who went to school with Natalie and Leah, and who helps Natalie connect with her childhood identity. Natalie re-enters Caldwell with Nathan, previously unable to physically cross the boundary wall without him, 'she walked along the wall from one end to the other and back again. She seemed to be seeking some perforation in the brick' (p. 300). Nathan helps Natalie over the wall and back into Caldwell life, urging

her to embrace her former identity as Keisha. This departure from one world into another enables Natalie to see her own problems differently by regrounding her, in another world with its own relations and connections. The Sartrean dictum from *White Teeth* about being 'on the other side of despair' surfaces again here when it 'struck Natalie that […] dread was the hardest emotion in the world to hold onto for more than a moment. She couldn't resist this display of the textures of the world: white stone, green turf, red rust, grey slate, brown shit. It was almost pleasant, strolling to nowhere' (p. 310). In these scenes, Natalie is liberated from her connection to Caldwell's boundary walls and her own home, with its gating and insulated Land Rovers. Whilst walking 'they crossed over, Natalie Blake and Nathan Bogle', across the street but also implicitly across the boundaries that separated them, their names sitting side-by-side for the first time, displaying an unmissable similarity.

As they walk away from Caldwell and Natalie's nearby house, out of their NW postcode and away from local places of belonging, Nathan and Natalie reach Hornsey Lane Bridge in the London borough of Haringey, locally known as the 'Suicide Bridge' for the number of people have their own lives by jumping off. As Peter Boxall has noted, this wandering is figured by Nathan in terms of an approach to nowhere, 'middle of nowhere up here' (p. 318), a denotation repeated by Natalie first when she storms out of the house, and again when she contemplates suicide as 'going nowhere' (p. 318). Boxall argues that the 'annihilation' Natalie contemplates here 'makes of the bridge […] a bottomless void', representative of an 'emptiness at the heart of the geographies and histories that the novel depicts'.[170] The possibility of an escape from place itself, out into nowhere, emerges as the only viable solution to Natalie's troubled relationship with home:

---

[170] Peter Boxall, 'A Bridge to Nowhere: Fictions of the Future in the Twenty-First Century Novel', Conference Paper, University of Cologne, 2014.

> [W]hen it came to the city, she was not mistaken. Here nothing less than a
> break — a sudden and total rupture — would do. She could see the act
> perfectly, it appeared before her like an object in her hand — and then the
> wind shook the trees once more and her feet touched the pavement. The act
> remained just that: an act, a prospect, always possible. (p. 319)

The day after her wandering with Nathan, after peering over the void, Natalie is able
to loose herself from defensiveness and empathise with the suffering of her friend
Michel. Liberated from identities that are bound up in different positions and
ultimately in the defence of these positions, Natalie is able to open up to Michel's
suffering: 'normally all of her energies would be in defence — she was trained in it
— but as he spoke her mind travelled to what felt like open ground, where she was
able to almost imagine something like her friend's pain and, in imagining it, create
some version of it in herself' (p. 328–329). This evocation of 'open ground' suggests
Natalie's temporary transcendence of her fraught relationship to place, something that
is reaffirmed when she reflects on the sense of freedom now experienced through
relinquishing the places she grew up in favour of attachments that are unbound by
physical proximity:

> The Cock Tavern. McDonald's. The old Woolworths. […] Whoever said
> these were fixed coordinates to which she had to be forever faithful? How
> could she play them false? Freedom was absolute and everywhere, constantly
> moving location. You couldn't hope to find it only in the old, familiar places.
> Nor could you force other people to take their clothes off and give it to you
> like a gift. Clarity! (p. 329)

In these scenes, *NW* contemplates the possibility of a cosmopolitanism not grounded
in an untroubled relationship to place, or in a relationship to place at all. Such a
cosmopolitanism would arguably be ungrounded, emerging from the worldliness of
Dasein itself. The abyssal freedom that Natalie experiences here points towards a
world that is not grounded in a relationship to place, but rather in the world-disclosive
capacities of *Dasein*. Mark Wenman has proposed that 'the void of human freedom

represents nothing more than a moment of radical possibility, from which might emerge a new principle or a distinctive set of values, and through an opening up of the world'.[171] This abyssal cosmopolitanism finds its expression in the establishment of embryonic social ties between Nathan and Natalie, ties which emerge through a relinquishment of a relationship to place, rather than through the grounded hospitality that can be attributed to Leah's welcoming of Shar to her home.

At the same time as it holds up this utopian vision of cosmopolitanism, the novel portrays the fleeting nature of this possible world, precisely a result of a return to the exigencies of everyday existence. The sense of abyssal freedom achieved for Natalie through liberation from a search for rootedness and a place to ground herself does not last long. Days later, Natalie meets with Leah and they discuss Shar and Nathan, who they suspect of a murder they have read about in the newspaper. Considering reporting them to the police, Natalie argues that the world is fundamentally just and that people's misfortunes are generally their own responsibility: 'this is one of the things you learn in a courtroom: people generally get what they deserve' (p. 332). Here, Nathan's empathic response to Natalie's suffering is lamented as a naïve mode of being-with in contemporary London. Whilst Nathan saved Natalie by showing her that being honest with her husband Frank about cheating on him, and submitting to his judgement, will not result in any punishment, Natalie and Leah reclaim moral superiority with the provocation that 'people generally get what they deserve'. Leah and Natalie's ability to help more vulnerable members of society — in court as a barrister and with Leah's job distributing charitable funds, will justify their elevated status. Nathan is sacrificed in order that Natalie can avoid Leah's judgement, and in turn that Leah is able to accept her life as

---

[171] Mark Wenman, 'Cosmopolitanism Without Bannisters: Agonism, Humanism and World Disclosure', in *Re-Grounding Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism*, ed. by Tamara Carauș and Elena Paris (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 29–45 (p. 40).

privileged and free from moral scrutiny and judgement by others who she in fact has the right to judge.

Natalie calls the police to report Nathan Bogle. Seemingly disavowing her connections to Nathan, Natalie moves away from her past life and in turn from Keisha as an identity contributing to her self-understanding. Natalie makes the call in Keisha's voice, however, which reveals her investment in Caldwell life if only through her continuing participation in that life as Keisha, something attested to by the nostalgic joy that Leah and Keisha feel as they press their ears to the telephone like they used to do as teenagers when phoning boys they fancied. The fact of Nathan Bogle's importance in Leah's life when she was growing up, his centrality as a romantic figure, reportedly a physical model for Leah's husband Michel — 'the guy she married even looks like you' — also appears significant. We might assume that Leah enjoys judging and punishing a man who can stand in for her own husband, whilst also benefitting from the shared purpose and sense of alliance with Michel and Natalie that the campaign to intervene in the lives of Nathan and Shar provides.

Leah was deeply disturbed by Shar's situation, and due to her attempts to reach out to Shar, was harassed by Nathan. Natalie and Leah suspect Nathan of controlling Shar and acting as her pimp. As such, by reporting Nathan for Felix's murder, Natalie attempts to help Leah by alleviating her concern for Shar.[6] Natalie uses this news to help rebuild her relationship with Leah, and does this by drawing Leah slightly closer to her own, and Leah's husbands, way of viewing the world, once again demonstrating that moral disposedness is social, and emerges from our being-with others. In the midst of all this, *NW*'s narrator urges Natalie to open up to Leah about motherhood and her difficulties with Frank, to see 'that the perfect gift at the moment was an honest account of her own difficulties and ambivalences, clearly stated, without disguise, embellishment or prettification' (p. 331). Natalie's choice to protect herself from judgement and move the conversation away from the issue of

children leads Leah to offer a more abstract problem for consideration: 'I just don't understand why I have this life […] Why that girl and not us. Why that poor bastard on Albert Road. It doesn't make sense to me' (p. 331). In instances like this, the affordance of interiority and individual agency to characters who act against the wishes of an omniscient narrator again suggests that moral dispositions are navigated at a level that is increasingly local and fractured.

Conclusions

Whereas in *White* Teeth social relations are guaranteed by a mode of narration that continually generates new entanglements and connections, in *NW*, social relations are conducted with a degree of individual deliberation and interiority. The individual characters are differently disposed towards the world, something that is most noticeable in characters who transcend the limited horizons of circumspection and concern that the novel suggests currently dominate contemporary being-in-the-world. Reading *NW*, I have allowed Heidegger's insight that we always already find ourselves in a world to elucidate an understanding of local globality that is not an analogy for transnational relations, but is rather grounded in worldliness as a potentially ethical attunement or mode of dwelling. In doing so I have developed an alternative understanding of local cosmopolitanism by demonstrating that empathy does not emerge from a relationship to place in this novel, but from a particular disposedness towards the world that emerges from the navigation of world that exists as a result of *Dasein*'s way of being. This disposedness can be described as a mood or a mode of dwelling, and it emerges out of the involvements and interactions that are part of the everyday experience of being-there.

The movement from *White Teeth* to *NW* traced in this chapter is perhaps best understood as a movement from an attunement to being-in and being-with and the worldly possibilities these open, in *White Teeth,* to the emergence of a particular disposition — empathy — that emerges in *NW* in response to deficient modes of

socially being-with others in the novel. There is perhaps in this way a retreat, in *NW*, from the openness to unqualified being-with and being-in-the-world in *White Teeth*. At the same time, this retreat is one that seeks to build a world again by retaining the positive possibilities inherent in *Dasein*'s worldliness. By tracing the divergent dispositions of its characters, *NW* foregrounds the way that individual social actors can create a world. To adopt Heidegger's words, individuals 'against the overwhelming sway […] throw the counterweight of their work and capture the world […] that is thereby opened up' (IM, p. 65). In this way *NW* reconceives the form's capacity for world-opening, instead focusing on the ethical possibilities of contrasting human dispositions towards the world, dispositions that emerge through local social relationships and struggles. In this reading, the movement of Zadie Smith's aesthetics would not be understandable as the development of an attempt to attain subjective autonomy, or the 'right to a secret' for her characters, and so render coherent their alterity, but rather to attain for them the essential freedom of a social existence that expresses and allows to flourish their fundamental being-with and being-in-the-world.

The next chapter turns to the question of dwelling and technology of writing highlighted in Chapter 1. If dwelling was antithetical to modern technology, then in what form does the search for dwelling reside, and present itself, in a novel which is singularly concerned with the destruction of the technology of writing? In this chapter I turn away from the 'new ethics' to demonstrate the relevance of a 'dwelling perspective' to strands of criticism that respond to the affective, political and ethical dimensions of contemporary novel form.

Chapter 3: Finessing Finitude, and Remains: Unconcealing 'Earth' in the 'Age of the World Picture'

Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* (2005) is narrated by an unnamed British man in his early thirties whose life was transformed by a catastrophic accident.[172] This 'traumatized mind' (p. 5) is primarily afflicted by the sense that his access to the world around him, his own body and interiority, is 'second hand' (p. 50), subject to a fragmentary dissonance between experience and experiencing subject. 'Most of my past had eventually returned', explains the narrator of the past that he cannot remember after the accident, not as the recovery of authentic selfhood, but 'in instalments, like back episodes of some mundane soap opera' (p. 6). The world around the narrator after the accident is not a realm of meaningful involvement, but rather a series of representations that he cannot relate to. Through this breakdown of the subject *Remainder* enacts what Zadie Smith productively describes as a 'nervous breakdown' of realist narrative.[173]

I explore this narrator's breakdown and its relation to human dwelling here by drawing again on one of the insights of Heidegger's fundamental anthropology: in this case, the argument that immersion and immediacy are the essential states of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world. This is evident, in particular, in *Being and Time*'s argument that we fundamentally encounter entities as ready-at-hand equipment, and that we encounter entities only as present-at-hand objects when there is a breakdown in this more originary worldly involvement. This insight provides a starting point both for my discussion and for the novel that I am discussing here, as I will demonstrate below. From this starting point, I go on to discuss how this breakdown in

---

[172] Tom McCarthy, *Remainder* (Richmond: Alma Books, 2011). Further references to this work are given in parentheses in the text.
[173] Zadie Smith, 'Two Paths for the Novel', *The New York Review of Books*, 20 November 2008 <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2008/11/20/two-paths-for-the-novel/> [accessed 9 October 2018].

worldly orientation figures in both Heidegger's writings, and in *Remainder*, as a result of technologies of representation that divorce the human subject from their more originary relation to things in the world. Through comparative readings of two of Heidegger's discussions of worldly representations, in 'The Age of the World Picture' and 'The Origin of the Work of Art' respectively, I explore the possibility that *Remainder* is a novel not so much concerned with the breakdown of the novel, as with possibilities for shaping a new relation to the technology of representation which overcomes the distorted relation to our worldly belonging that Heidegger's writings diagnose in modernity.

Remainder's disruption of the relationship between the novel protagonist and the world that they move within invites us to read the novel as an affront to literary realism. In a landmark essay titled 'Two Paths for the Novel', Zadie Smith set *Remainder* against the 'lyrical realism' of Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland*, arguing *Remainder* succeeded in breaking with novelistic convention by treating the specificities of space as 'a series of physical events rather than emotional symbols'.[174] In the years since Smith's essay, McCarthy has confirmed his own commitment to write against the 'liberal-humanist sensibility [that] has always held the literary work to be a form of self-expression'.[175] I will not be the first to read *Remainder* as a meditation on the conditions of life structured by representation, or as an experimental attempt to dismantle the representational codes of the novel form; the novel has become a central text for critics of contemporary fiction, in part ever since Zadie Smith proclaimed that the novel 'offer[s] an alternative road down which the novel might, with difficulty, travel'.[176]

---

[174] Zadie Smith, 'Two Paths for the Novel'.
[175] Tom McCarthy, 'Technology and the novel, from Blake to Ballard', *The Guardian*, 24th July 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jul/24/tom-mccarthy-futurists-novels-technology>.
[176] Zadie Smith, 'Two Paths for the Novel'.

Namwali Serpell, highlighted in my introduction as a critic writing in response to the new ethics, addresses *Remainder* in detail in her book *Seven Modes of Uncertainty*, as does Arne De Boever, who addresses the novel's self-conscious negotiation of its own inescapable tendency towards incarceration.[177] Alongside De Boever and Serpell, Pieter Vermeulen notably argues that *Remainder* represents McCarthy's 'attempt to embody a clean break' with the commercial novel, 'especially with its most recent incarnation: the trauma novel'.[178] Vermeulen views McCarthy's novel as an attempt to break with the trauma novel by virtue of it being 'conspicuously indifferent to the ethical dimensions of artistic engagements with the extreme violence and the psychological suffering that characterize trauma'.[179] The author demonstrates that, where trauma fiction often deigns to represent trauma through homologous formal and narrative devices, *Remainder* departs from this tradition in its depiction of a narrator devoid of emotional responses, with a blank and affectless subjectivity that rejects the psychological depth inherent in the novel form, leading to an 'unleashing of non-subjective affects that confront the reader with an evacuated subjectivity that, precisely because it does not offer a position to identify with, cannot leave the reader unaffected'.[180]

Nonetheless, for Vermeulen, the re-enactments eventually lead to a return to traumatic subjectivity in the novel, re-introducing a subject whose maniacal obsessions with mundane details increasingly mean that the novel's attempt to excise psychological depth gives way to an identifiable representation of traumatic subjectivity: 'The studied flatness and neutrality of the narrative voice can retroactively be understood as an expression of post-traumatic numbing rather than as

---

[177] De Boever, p. 142.
[178] Pieter Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 21.
[179] Vermeulen, p. 24.
[180] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel*, p. 29.

a radical affront to the novelistic evocation of psychological depth'.[181] Ultimately, then, Vermeulen argues that 'McCarthy performs the deliberately "improper burial" of the novel—a form unable to disappear and surviving itself in the transmission of affects that no longer belong to a proper subject'.[182]

If Vermeulen celebrates the experience of unruly, non-subjective affects released by *Remainder*, Namwali Serpell comparably conceives of the novel in terms of emotional affordances derived from the novel's structuring. Serpell suggests that the novel's deployment of the conventions of trauma narrative, what Vermeulen called 'a narrative grammar of compulsive repetition', creates a temporally synchronic movement through narrative, an experience that produces uninterpreted, yet structurally determined, affective perturbances in its reader.[183] These affective perturbances have certain ethical potentialities when they are codified as emotions by the reader, but importantly they do not arise from identification with a coherent subject or character in the text, rather instead from the structuring form of the novel itself.[184] Read collectively, Serpell's and Vermeulen's writings on *Remainder* offer an account of the emotional perturbances made possible by the novel form, when the distortion of coherent subjectivity produces not identification or readerly binding but defamiliarised affects.

Like Vermeulen, Arne De Boever ties the novel's rejection of realist conventions to new possibilities for characterological life, 'the biopolitical implications of realism's aesthetic collapse'.[185] De Boever suggests reading the narrator's re-enactments as biopolitical projects, 'as the obsessive search for life and for an apparatus that would be able to capture it, as *authentically living*'.[186] In this

---

[181] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel*, p. 36.
[182] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel*, p. 37.
[183] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel*, p. 36.
[184] Serpell, pp. 230–68.
[185] De Boever, p. 142.
[186] De Boever, p. 142.

view, the narrator's project is 'not so much about killing subjects but about keeping them alive, almost until the point of death (for the life they lead can hardly be called a life)'.[187] De Boever develops his biopolitical reading of the novel form by suggesting a homologous relationship between it and the concentration camp, drawing on Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel* to argue that the novel and the camp are joined together by their essential and emblematic modernity.[188] *Remainder* is an instance, in this view, of a strain of novels that 'distance themselves from the dubious politics with which the rise of the novel as a genre is aligned'. In this case, 'paradoxically, *Remainder* achieves this distantiation by its representation of a narrator who creates camps. McCarthy's novel, clearly, can be read as such a camp. And yet it is the narrative's breakdown that makes such a reading impossible'.[189] Moments of trauma and death, when the narrator's biopolitical management of life breaks down, by contrast provide a glimpse of life itself: 'trauma provides the contact with life, the authentic, the real that the narrator desires'.[190] By finding a way into the heart of the novel as a form, for De Boever *Remainder* releases the pharmacological potential of the form, releasing the potential for life that exceeds the biopolitical model of perfect representation and perfectly managed life.

In this chapter I draw on, and respond to, Vermeulen's suggestion that *Remainder* performs an 'improper burial' of the novel form, one that unfolds through McCarthy's 'dismissal of psychological realism' and so the burial of the 'proper subject'.[191] This idea of the emergence of an 'improper subject' is present, as I will explain below, in De Boever's biopolitical reading of the novel as a refusal of the 'biopolitical perfection' of realism.[192] The idea suggested by Vermeulen of

---

[187] De Boever, p. 137.
[188] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, New edn (London: Penguin, 2015).
[189] De Boever, p. 142.
[190] De Boever, p. 137.
[191] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel*, p. 37.
[192] De Boever, p. 142.

Remainder as a form of crypt which paradoxically buries, but sustains, life within its pages, is also at play in De Boever's discussion of Derrida's writings on biopolitics and the novel, *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume II*.[193] Whilst only briefly mentioning Derrida's writing on biopolitics and the novel, De Boever introduces pertinent questions regarding the relation between life and the technicity of the novel form. The questions that De Boever poses ('[d]oes the novel keep the life that it narrates alive? Can it be a "living repetition of the living," to quote from "Plato's Pharmacy"? Or does the novel bury within its pages any life that it tries to represent? Can there be a living work of art?' [De Boever, p. 8]) concern the ontological status of life in the novel, and the conditions under which life survives in the novel form.

In this chapter I expand on these critics' notion of the novel as a crypt, and the implicit suggestion that the emergence of new forms of life and affectivity are achieved in *Remainder* through the novel's instantiation of an 'improper' subject. I seek to explain the trajectory of *Remainder*, centring as it does around the narrator's increasingly violent re-enactments, as the product of the novel's ongoing engagement with the capacities of representation for capturing and transforming the ontological status of human life. McCarthy's *C* (2010) likewise foregrounds its own status as a technological crypt that lifelessly transmits signals and codes, examining the effects of the rise of communications technology at the beginning of the twentieth century on the psyche of its protagonist, Serge Carrefax. *Satin Island* (2015) follows *Remainder*'s explorations on the act of writing, presenting a failed attempt at a grand ethnographic project, the Great Report. Even amongst these two related novels, *Remainder* is unique in its attempt to reformulate a proper relationship, in modernity, with writing *as* technology.

---

[193] I turn to Derrida's writings on the novel form in *The Beast and the Sovereign* later in this chapter, in particular because this text brings discussion of the novel (Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)) in contact with analysis of Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.

Whereas Vermeulen and De Boever attribute the violent nature of the re-enactments to the return of the protagonist's subjective interiority, and to the addictive nature of traumatic opioids respectively, I attribute this violence, and the destruction of life it entails, to a (necessary) intensification of representation that unfolds across the novel. Drawing on Heidegger's understanding of the 'proper' relation to the technology of writing being handwriting, I suggest that the 'improper burial' of the form is best read as the paradoxical liberation of another 'proper subject', an argument which likewise has repercussions for biopolitical readings of the novel. To develop this Heideggerian reading, I locate this pursuit of 'proper' life in *Remainder*'s vexing of the limits of representation, and suggest that the novel intensifies the objectifying exigencies of representation to such an extent that the immaterial ground that supports these objectifications and gives them meaning comes into view as the novel unfolds. Ultimately, this elucidation of the unbridling of representational energies within the conceptual frame of the novel enables a reflection on the indebtedness of McCarthy's novel to a certain thanatopolitical strain in Heidegger's thought, one that likewise permeates the critical reception of the novel and remains to be unearthed as part of that conversation.

Handiness and representation

The disruption to the landscape of the novel mentioned above is evident, at the beginning of *Remainder*, in the narrator's suffering realisation of the disruptive, insistent materiality of the carrot that he attempts to lift as part of his recovery. No longer 'a hollow, carved space for [him] to grasp and move', the carrot exerts its own material presence and become 'more active', reflects the narrator, 'than me' (p. 21). I now turn to a brief discussion of the relationship between representation and the rupture of a more originary relation to the entities in the world in their equipmentality, from the perspective of Heidegger's fundamental anthropology.

As mentioned above, the control that *Remainder*'s narrator seeks to recover after his accident initially presents itself as what Heidegger called the 'handiness' of entities when they are encountered as ready-to-hand equipment (BT, p. 69). Heidegger draws this distinction between the detached contemplation of entities and their encounter the immediacy of 'handiness' as follows: 'The less we just stare at the thing called the hammer, the more we take hold of it and use it, the more original our relation to it becomes […] [t]he act of hammering itself discovers the specific "handiness" ["*Handlichkeit*"] of the hammer. […] No matter how keenly we just *look* at the "outward appearance" of things constituted in one way or another, we cannot discover handiness' (BT, p. 69 emphasis in original).

This loss of handiness is explored in *Remainder*, when, after relearning basic bodily movements that before had seemed entirely natural, 'rerouting' (p. 19) the pathways that control motor function through an undamaged part of the brain, the protagonist cannot extinguish an abiding sense of distance between himself and his actions. This produces a novel, if unwanted, awareness of the complexity of his actions: 'No Doing without Understanding: the accident bequeathed me that for ever, an eternal detour' (p. 22). Understanding proves more difficult than the narrator might have hoped, something he learns when, after imagining the 'simple' action of raising 'more than a thousand imaginary carrots to your mouth, or one imaginary carrot more than a thousand times' (p. 20), he is unable to overcome the awkward materiality of an actual carrot when tasked to pick it up. It was 'gnarled, dirty and irregular in ways that your imaginary carrot never was […] it *felt*: that was enough to start short-circuiting the operation' (p. 20, emphasis in original).

This breakdown in what Heidegger called our 'original […] relation' (BT, p. 69) to entities in the world reveals the things which the narrator encounters in the novel as theoretical objects, insisting on their status as mere representations which, despite their 'outward appearance', are not substitutes for the entities we encounter,

originally, as ready-to-hand equipment in the world (BT, p. 69). In this way *Remainder* likewise disrupts the status of the human in the novel, drawing our attention to the limits that realist representation abuts in any attempt to create and sustain characterological life. In order to further demonstrate the relation between the loss of handiness and the novel form itself, it is necessary to observe that Heidegger's notion of 'handiness' is underpinned by his view that the world and its entities are not 'given' objects, but rather the result of being delivered over to a horizon of involvement, what Heidegger in *Being and Time* calls the 'throwness' that constitutes human worldliness. In the years following his fundamental anthropology of *Dasein*, Heidegger lamented that modern society's tendency towards objectifying the world and its entities ever more increasingly drew *Dasein* away from the circumspective involvement with entities that as ready-to-hand equipment described above. In a 1938 essay 'The Age of the World Picture', published in German with 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger deploys 'world' as a term that 'serves, here, as a name for beings in their entirety' (AWP, p. 54). Heidegger makes the distinction of this everyday understanding of 'the world' from the fundamental worldliness described in *Being and Time* clear when he seeks to distance the fundamental ontology of *Being and Time* from his current concern with 'the world' as a mere totality of beings, writing, in one of the essay's appendices:

> '[T]he conception of the world as developed in *Being and Time* is to be understood only within the perspective of the question about "being-there [*Dasein*]." This question remains […] closely connected with the fundamental question concerning the meaning of being (not of beings).' (AWP, p. 76)

This essay argued that Western modernity, dominated by metaphysics (Heidegger explicitly mentions Americanism in the essay, and describes Americanism as a European phenomenon), is unable to think the proper relation of *Dasein* to its being, and is afflicted by what Heidegger called a 'forgetfulness of being' itself. In the modern age that Heidegger describes, essential phenomena such as science, machine

technology, aesthetics, culture and the loss of the gods contribute to a relation to the world as a totality of knowable entities, a totality which exists only by virtue of the human subject (AWP, pp. 57–58).

In his attempt to recover a relationship to entities in their 'handiness', *Remainder*'s narrator is forced to reflect on his connection to a society in which, as Heidegger argued in 'The Age of the World Picture', objectification and relation to entities in the world as present-at-hand objects has become commonplace. The narrator reflects, 'I'd always been inauthentic. Even before the accident […] I'd still be thinking: *Here I am, walking down the street, smoking a cigarette, like someone in a film*' (p. 24, italics in original). Understanding that authenticity involves a negotiation of representations, the narrator surveys a group of young people hanging out in the streets of Soho and detects a similar 'inauthenticity' in their gestures:

> [They] have the same ad in mind as me. I could tell. In their gestures and their movements they acted out the roles of the ad's characters […] their bodies and faces buzzed with glee, exhilaration − a jubilant awareness that for once, just now […] they didn't have to sit in a cinema or a living room in front of a TV and watch other beautiful young people laughing and hanging out: they could be the beautiful young people themselves. See? Just like me: completely second-hand. (p. 50)

The narrator is confronted by his insurmountable sense of the inauthentic nature of the life around him: the people in the street, like the narrator himself, are inauthentic or 'second-hand' precisely because they relate to the world and themselves through representations of it. Yet, as I will discuss in this chapter, the representations of life that he sees around him, and knows to be inauthentic, still promise themselves as a mode of authentic life that he would like to recover. In the midst of his protestations of their inauthenticity, the narrator betrays his desire to bridge the sense of remove he feels from this gleeful crowd who might, he proposes, be '[j]ust like me' (p. 4).

In order to elucidate the narrator's attempt to change his relationship to representations in the rest of the novel, it is important to foreground, too, that '"world picture" does not mean "picture of the world" but, rather, the world grasped as picture' (AWP, p. 67). Modern society grasps the world through its own representations, understanding these representations not as a copy or picture of the world, but as the world itself: '"[p]icture" means, here, not a mere imitation, but rather that which sounds in the colloquial expression to be "in the picture" about something' (AWP, p. 67). Being 'in the picture' is then a way of knowing the world, a relation to world, which equates the totalising nature of human knowledge with the totality of the world itself: '[b]eings as a whole are now taken in such a way that a being is first and only in being insofar as it is set in place by representing-producing humanity [*vorstellend-herstellenden*] […] [t]he being of beings is sought and found in the representedness of beings' (AWP, pp. 67–68).

What exactly does Heidegger mean by representing and representedness here? The representedness of beings that Heidegger describes here is figured, in the language of *Being and Time*, as the installation of the present-at-hand as the everyday way of relating to beings in the world: '[r]epresentation [*Vor-stellen*] means here: to bring the present-at-hand before one as something standing over-and-against, to relate it to oneself, the representer, and, in this relation, to force it back to oneself as the norm-giving domain' (AWP, p. 69). In this age, for the first time, 'there exists such a thing as the "position" of man' (AWP, p. 69). Man now stands over and against a world which is totally knowable and depictable, and as such becomes a subject through his capacity, Heidegger argues, '"to represent": to put forth and relate to oneself. It is through this that the being comes to stand as an object and so first receives the seal of being. That the world becomes picture is one and the same process whereby, in the midst of beings, man becomes subject' (AWP, p. 69). As much as man becomes subject, for whom the world is a picture, he also becomes

subject to representation himself, becoming an object in the picture by virtue of his 'position', as we saw, 'in the picture'. In Heidegger's words:

> [H]e places himself in the scene; in, that is, the sphere of what is generally and publicly represented […] man sets himself forth as the scene in which, henceforth, beings must set-themselves-before, present themselves – be, that is to say, in the picture. Man becomes the representative [*Repräsentant*] of beings in the sense of the objective. (AWP, p. 69)

In this way Heidegger theorises the relationship between subjectivity and representation in the modern age. The modern subject is constituted in representations, representations of which she becomes 'representative' for the way in which they represent the subject to themselves. The problematic of how to live a life structured by objectified representations in an immediate, authentic way, becomes the organising refrain of the narrator's experience as the novel unfolds. With this understanding in place I now return, in more detail, to a conception of these modes of being as a play between 'proper' and 'improper' forms of life in the novel and Heidegger's thought.

The proper and the improper

Proper and improper life

Implicit in Vermeulen's discussion of McCarthy's intention to perform a total destruction of the novel, which ultimately results for Vermeulen in its improper burial, as discussed above, is a notion of the 'proper' as a form of writing that McCarthy's project aspires to. Conversely, the 'proper' (and an implied 'improper') was foregrounded by Heidegger in his lecture course on the early Greek thinker Parmenides, to describe a changing relationship to being through its mediation by writing. The original encounter of entities in the world in their 'handiness', familiar from *Being and Time*, is extended by Heidegger in *Parmenides* to a consideration of

handwriting as the 'proper' form of writing that allows a relation to being. Heidegger writes:

> [T]he hand in its essence secures the reciprocal relation between "beings" and man. There is a "hand" only where beings as such appear in unconcealedness and man comports himself in a disclosing way towards beings. The hand entrusts to the word the relation of Being to man and, thereby, the relation of man to beings. […] Writing, from its originating source, is hand-writing. […] In handwriting the relation of Being to man, namely the word, is inscribed in beings themselves. (P, pp. 84–85)

The relation to being of man is revealed in the word, and it is the hand — as the origin of writing — that constitutes the essential intermediary between man and being. With the emergence of technological forms of writing, such as the typewriter, the hand withdraws and loses what we might call its 'handiness', and ceases to be a hand that opens the relation of man to being at all: 'when writing was withdrawn from the origin of its essence, i.e., from the hand, and was transferred to the machine, a transformation occurred in the relation of Being to man […] In the typewriter the machine appears, i.e. technology appears' (P, pp. 85–86).

With the emergence of this new technology, man's relation to being is transformed 'in an almost quotidian and hence unnoticed' process (P, p. 86). The word, now rendered as communication, 'no longer comes and goes by means of the writing hand, the properly acting hand, but by means of the mechanical forces it releases' (p. 81). In a line of argument recently traced by Timothy Campbell, Heidegger's writing suggests a degradation of life tied to the arrival of a technology that tears man away from his 'proper' relation to being, establishing a distinction between 'proper' and 'improper' forms of lived existence, positing 'Western man as requiring saving from the pernicious effects of technology on man's proper relation to

being'.[194] As such, the 'proper/improper' distinction which I take up in my reading of *Remainder* binds representation together with biopolitics to form the indivisible problematic pursued in this chapter.

It would make sense, reflexively, to set the novel at a distance from the 'improper' writing that Heidegger argues life is subject to in the modern age. Where Heidegger criticises the depersonalising effect of technology that transforms the 'word' into 'communication', for instance, it is possible to point to the individual style of novel writers, the distinctive modes of narration and the greatly different visions of life as presented in diverse novelistic traditions. Yet, the change in life that technological reproduction elicits is rooted in the very familiarity of writing that circulates amongst mass readerships in the modern age. Through repetition and circulation, life subject to improper writing is transformed: 'the typewriter leads again to the typesetting machine. The press becomes the rotary press. In rotation, the triumph of the machine comes to the fore' (P, p. 85). Man loses his relationship to being through technological mastery, becoming what Heidegger calls a 'kind of man […] alone capable of carrying out the "mastery" of technology' (P, p. 87). The essential change in this kind of man is separated from being, 'the transformed relation of being to man, appearing in technology, is of such a kind that Being has withdrawn itself from man and modern man has been plunged into an eminent oblivion of Being' (P, p. 86).[195]

Proper and improper death

As mentioned above, the notion of the novel as a space of a technologically 'improper' burial of the modern subject can also be found in Jacques Derrida's *The*

---

[194] Timothy Campbell, *Improper Life: Technology and Biopolitics from Heidegger to Agamben* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 9.
[195] It should be noted that the two stages that Heidegger mentions here, typesetting and rotation, literally perform the 'setting in place' of representation highlighted in 'The Age of the World Picture', and the circulation that Heidegger will associate with the standing reserve in his later writings on technological positionality or *Gestell*.

Beast and the Sovereign: Volume II. As Arne De Boever has observed, in this text Derrida develops a connection between biopolitics and the novel in a close reading of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.[196] In an imagined dialogue between a student and professor (whom we take to be Derrida himself), the student compares Crusoe to someone returning to the world, claiming Crusoe 'came back from his island alive and well […] more alive as he returned to the English coast than some astronauts re-entering the atmosphere'.[197] Derrida reminds his student that he cannot, as protagonist, return to the world, because 'there is no Robinson Crusoe outside the book'.[198] Being inseparable from the narrative entitled *Robinson Crusoe*, Robinson the character cannot escape the confines of the text of the book: 'dying a living death can only be a fantasmatic virtuality, a fiction, if you like', but a fiction that can only occur in fiction, 'as dying a living death, in the present, can never really present itself' in life.[199] The book, then, is the place where Robinson Crusoe is buried alive: 'kept alive by millions of inheritors — this survival that is indeed that of the living dead', a 'living narrative' that is also dead by virtue of its technicity. For Derrida 'the machination of this machine' lies in the fact that it entrusts the trace to this capacity for living on, which Derrida will call 'survivance':

> A dead thing that resuscitates each time a breath of living reading, each time the breath of the other or the other breath, each time an intentionality intends it and makes it live again by animating it, like, as the Husserl of the *Origin of Geometry* would say, a "geistige Leiblichkeit", a body, a spiritual corporeality.[200]

---

[196] See Arne de Boever, 'Biopolitics in Deconstruction' and 'Derrida's Theory of the Novel', <http://derridaseminars.org/workshops>

[197] Jacques Derrida, *The Beast & the Sovereign: Volume Two*, ed. by Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 128.

[198] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 129.

[199] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 130.

[200] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 132.

In this sense, the circulation of the form of life that the novel embodies produces it as precisely the 'improper life' that is inevitable under the subjection of modern technology. Reduced from the 'mineness' of Heidegger's writing hand, the novel is opened to the infinite circulation of 'improper writing', Crusoe's life is the production of a form of 'improper life', surviving beyond its initial death, that marks the essential condition of life in the novel form.

Continuing the comparison of the novel with a form of burial, Derrida writes that, in death and mourning, we make a thing of the other: 'it is a question of love, but a love that appropriates what it loves to make of it the thing it loves'.[201] Whilst the sovereignty of the living who make a thing of the dead is the primary example here, such sovereignty also exists, Derrida suggests, in love more broadly. Derrida questions whether loving, like mourning, 'does not mean loving so as to make it one's lovable thing, to the point of having it at one's disposal, to love eating and drinking it alive, keeping it in oneself, burying it or burning it to keep it living-dead in oneself or right up close to oneself, which can also be as far as can be from oneself. Everywhere'.[202] In the case of death and mourning, this loving finds its privileged expression in the 'funeral itself', one of a 'set of technical procedures whereby we […] deliver the corpse over to its future, prepare the future of a corpse and prepare ourselves as one says prepare a corpse'.[203] This transformation presupposes an understanding of death as total exposure to the other, being 'delivered over with no possible defense [sic], once totally disarmed, to the other, to the others […] those who might survive me, survive my decease and then proceed as they wish, sovereignly, and sovereignly have at their disposal the future of my remains'.[204]

---

[201] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 121.
[202] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 121.
[203] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 132.
[204] Derrida, *Beast*, pp. 126–27.

Derrida is keen to emphasise the technicity of survivance achieved through the literal return to earth: we are speaking, he argues, of 'a procedure, and so already of arrangements that are both technical and juridical, which have themselves left the order of what is called in the current and belated sense *nature*' (p. 126, emphasis in original). As such we are 'in the opposition of *nomos, tekne, thesis* to *physis* in the late and derived sense'. Death, in this view, does not come 'naturally' to the modern subject but rather is enacted through technical practices which 'make' the dead. This departure from the 'order of […] *nature*' nonetheless entails an entry into the earth that bears the remains of the dead, something Derrida recognises in his description of the burial as 'a procedure, a path, a movement along a path, a path of departure or return'.[205] Derrida employs Heidegger's language of the fourfold, of earth, sky, divinities and mortals, in order to explore the way in which the technical performance of burial and mourning sustains a relationship with the dead, and in turn prepares their future, what Derrida calls 'death as survivance'.[206] Passing into the fourfold mirror-play of the *thinging* thing, occurs then through a techne, 'the respect or pomp, funereal by vocation, with which he or she will treat that singular thing they call my remains'.[207]

The earth is privileged for Derrida in the schema of Heidegger's fourfold, for its proximity to the remains of the other. Derrida complicates the distinction between the earth and the remains by stating that the earth is 'what, remaining, bears' (p. 126). The earth 'gather[s] them, water and stone, what grows (the plant) and the animal (*Gewasser und Gestein, Gewachs und Getier*)' (p. 126). As such, the earth supports the emergence of new environments and spaces of meaning in the crossing and gathering together of worldly entities: water, stone, plants and animals (and the remains it bears form part of this process). Earth straddles two registers here, existing

---

[205] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 126.
[206] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 132.
[207] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 132.

as the literal ground that bears my remains and supports worldly entities, and as a conceptual ground, an inexhaustible plenitude through which all worldly existence moves in perpetual emerging and receding, 'a path of departure or return'.[208]

Technically mortal

Derrida's adoption of Heidegger's fourfold demands further treatment before I proceed. The focus on earth as privileged element in the technical procedure of preparation for death makes conspicuous another element of the fourfold, that of 'mortals'. Indeed, a key target of Derrida's critique in *The Beast and the Sovereign* is the view he finds in Heidegger that man is the only being who can die meaningfully, through awareness of his own mortality. In Derrida's response to Heidegger, 'men are doubtless rational animals, but if they are to be worthy of their human essence, they must *become* not only rational living beings, animals endowed with reason and that, *qua* animals, do not die, but they must become mortals'.[209] In this way, Derrida prepares an understanding of the human not as a being that will recover its 'proper' relation to being, but as an irreducibly 'improper' form of life that recovers a relation to mortality precisely through technological means.

For Derrida, technical practices of burial, the 'exercise or discipline of preparation for death' provide a certain access or relation to mortality, precisely through the survivance, the future beyond death, that they prepare for. The rational animal retrieves a relation to its 'mortality' through its attempts 'to become immortal, or a-mortal, basically like beasts'.[210] If 'dying remains impossible', Derrida asks (and here I read Derrida as referring to a 'proper' relation to death, impossible for modern humans), is this not 'pretty much the same thing? Living death beyond life, live to death, living death, etc. This is perhaps the same circle', writes Derrida, as that

---

[208] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 126.
[209] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 126.
[210] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 126.

pursued by Heidegger.[211] Derrida's worrying of the distinction he finds in Heidegger, here, between *Dasein* as that being which can die, and other beings (animals) which merely perish, rests on the way that technical procedures establish the relationship of worldly remains with a certain beyond, an ontological plenitude conceived under the everyday heading of 'earth'.[212]

The primacy that Derrida gives to the technical procedure mediating between earth and world points back to Heidegger's treatment of the artwork in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', which I will address in the next section of this chapter. In this essay, the objectification of life in the modern aesthetic relation to art and the possibility of overcoming the representational logic of 'The Age of the World Picture' is pursued in detail. Despite the forgetfulness of a modern society that knows the world as the 'name for beings in their entirety', Heidegger is at pains to make clear that this conception of world is not exhaustive, even in the modern age: 'even nature and history — interpenetrating in their suffusion and exceeding of each other — do not exhaust world. Under this term we include the world-ground [*Weltgrund*], no matter how its relation to world is thought' (AWP, p. 67). Heidegger's ambiguous statement about the 'world-ground' which points to the presence of an unrepresented beyond that supports the knowable world, 'beings in their entirety', will be crucial to understanding Heidegger's challenge to the age of the 'world picture' in this essay and 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In 'The Origin', to which I will now turn, Heidegger demonstrated the way that objectifying representations can themselves reveal the relationship between world and earth — that invisible beyond previously described as 'world-ground'.

---

[211] Derrida, *Beast*, p. 124.

[212] Though Derrida refers to the fourfold in order to trouble the demand that he finds, in Heidegger's later writings, that 'we must become mortals' in order to die, the privileging of the earth which I found in Derrida's discussion points back to an ongoing *twofold* dynamic from Heidegger's earlier work (before the development of the fourfold structure), between *earth* and *world*.

Earth and world in the work of art

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger performs a reading of Van Gogh's 'A Pair of Peasant Shoes' which seeks to overcome an understanding of the artwork as aesthetic representation of an object. Heidegger's attempt to depart from the age of the world picture through recourse to a picture itself informs my reading of *Remainder*, and the narrator's attempt to achieve a more integrated involvement in the world. As such it is necessary to elucidate the argument Heidegger advances about this painting.

Heidegger argues that Van Gogh's 'A Pair of Shoes' does not present the shoes it depicts as objects for aesthetic contemplation, and so is not simply a representation. The work, Heidegger elicits, presents the shoes not as objects, but as equipment that was all but invisible (in their 'handiness') to their wearer, who enjoys a primordial relationship with them based on their use and reliability. Yet, as Iain Thomson rightfully comments, the choice of a picture that presents the shoes not in their use, as equipment, but rather as objects in a 'still life' is clearly paradoxical, functioning as a direct challenge to the aesthetic approach that would claim the pair of shoes as represented objects.[213] Whilst reading the work as evidence of a more primordial relationship to entities in the world, one based in equipmentality, Heidegger also draws our attention to the great difficulty of uncovering 'what equipment in truth is' (OWA, p. 34) through aesthetic experience or phenomenological description. 'As long as we simply look at the empty, unused shoes as they stand there in the picture, (OWA, p. 33), Heidegger observes, we will not capture the work's evocation of the primordial experience of integral involvement with equipment in engaged use. We might ask at this point, then, what it is about the work that Heidegger holds can lead us into this more primordial mode of being-in-

---

[213] Iain Thomson, *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 83.

the-world, and out of entrapment within a relation to the world as a series of objects made available to consciousness as representations?

Heidegger's attempt to overcome the grip of representational logic, a relation to artworks as objects of aesthetic experience, proceeds, as suggested above, through his complicating the apparently obvious fact that Van Gogh's painting is a representation of a pair of shoes. Heidegger does not deny that the painting is a representation of a pair of shoes, making a point of stating that the painting *is* a representation. However, the essay develops by attending to the way in which the shoes bring into view a world of integral involvement that has been overlooked in their aesthetic understanding as an objectified representation. As Heidegger acknowledges, 'there is nothing surrounding this pair of peasant shoes to which and within which they could belong; only an undefined space. Not even clods of earth from the field or from the country path stick to them, which could at least point toward their use' (OWA, p. 33). This quotation introduces one usage of the term 'earth' in Heidegger's essay, earth that — like in Derrida's essay — is the literal ground that supports and guides the farmer and bears the fruits of her labour.

Despite the absence of physical residue on the shoes themselves, Heidegger's phenomenological inspection of the objects finds that the shoe 'accumulates' the trace of the farmer's movements in her earthly environs: 'in the crudely solid heaviness of the shoes accumulates the tenacity of the slow trudge through the […] furrows of the field swept raw by wind. On the leather lies the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls' (OWA, p. 33). In this way the shoes bring into view the relationship the farmer has with the earthly ground: 'the shoes vibrate with the silent call of the earth, its silent gift of the ripening grain, its unexplained self-refusal in the wintry field' (OWA, p. 33). As equipment, the shoes mediate and sustain this relationship between the earth and the world of meaning which the earth grounds, gives itself to and supports. As such the equipment

is also 'pervaded' with the world of meaning that the farmer cultivates from the supporting ground of the earth: 'worry as to the certainty of bread, wordless joy at having once more withstood want, trembling before the impending birth, and shivering at the surrounding menace of death' (OWA, p. 133).[214]

It is important to recognise that the equipmentality the farmer enjoys in the world of the fields, sustained by her shoes, is an everyday mode of being-in-the-world. The relationship between world and earth is not intelligible for the farmer in the same way that, Heidegger proposes, it is made intelligible through the phenomenological approach to Van Gogh's work. As Heidegger comments, 'perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes. The peasant woman, by contrast, merely wears them. If only this simple wearing were that simple' (OWA, p. 33).

Heidegger's argument is not limited to this intimation, however; the farmer's world and her relation to earth depend, too, upon the usefulness and reliability of the equipment: '[i]n virtue of this reliability the peasant woman is admitted into the silent call of the earth; in virtue of the reliability of the equipment she is certain of her world' (OWA, p. 34). Following this quotation, Heidegger gestures to the way that the technological mode of existence in modernity has eroded this form of 'simple' use that is characteristic of equipmental being. Whereas in *Being and Time* the breakdown of equipment revealed equipmental being itself, making visible the relation to the ready-at-hand object that had previously been nearly invisible in its use, Heidegger now explicates a more common situation where '[t]he individual piece of equipment becomes worn out and used up' (OWA, p. 34).

---

[214] As such, Heidegger establishes the shoes as a means of relation between the earth that supports the world and the world that emerges from it: 'this equipment belongs to the earth and finds protection in the world of the peasant woman' (OWA, p. 33).

With the using up of the piece of equipment comes a loss of the reliability that sustained the relationship to earth and world enjoyed by the farmer. The shoes come to be understood once again merely as useful objects, but not as that which makes possible the relation to world itself for their user. With the erosion of the equipment comes the disruption of equipmental being. Attention is returned to the fabrication of equipment, to utility as a property of the shoes themselves, rather than to equipmentality as the mode of being and an openness to the world sustained by equipment. As Heidegger explains, 'the worn-out usualness of the equipment then obtrudes as the sole kind of being that is (it seems) exclusively its own. Now nothing but sheer utility remains visible. It creates the appearance that the origin of equipment lies in a mere fabrication which gives form to some bit of matter' (OWA, p. 34).

As such, Van Gogh's painting allows Heidegger (and potentially any viewer) to understand equipmentality not primarily a property of certain objects, 'mere equipment' resulting from 'mere fabrication' (OWA, p. 34), but instead as a property that emerges from the shoes' secure resting in themselves, their 'belonging' to the earth and their 'protection' in the world of the farmer. In Heidegger's words:

> The equipmental being of equipment was discovered. But how? Not through the description and explanation of a pair of shoes actually present. Not through a report on the process of shoemaking. And not through the observation of the actual use of shoes as it occurs here and there. Rather, the equipmental being of equipment was only discovered by bringing ourselves before the van Gogh painting. It is this that spoke. (OWA, p. 34)

How is it that Van Gogh's painting depicts the shoes' equipmental being, their resting in belonging to earth and in the protection of the farmer's world?

For Heidegger, Van Gogh's depiction of the shoes overcomes aesthetics, its logic of objects presented for the experience of a viewing subject, precisely in the way it sets up the shoes in the foreground of the painting whilst making visible the 'nothing' which supports the shoes and from which they emerge. In their world, the

shoes make this inexhaustible earthly support from which they emerge visible: 'The world grounds itself on the earth and the earth juts through the world' (OWA, p. 54). Through the artist's use of his materials, they are not used up in the production of aesthetic objects that fall into habitual exchange and consumption. Instead, the work makes intelligible the earth from which it emerges, an earth which is the source of all intelligibility in the world (thus cannot be exhausted) and which makes possible 'the creative preserving of truth in the work' (OWA, p. 69):

> This setting forth of the earth is what the work achieves by setting itself back into the earth. The self-seclusion of the earth is, however, no uniform, inflexible staying-in-the-dark, but unfolds, rather, into an inexhaustible richness of simple modes and shapes […] To be sure, the painter, too, makes use of pigment; he uses it, however, in such a way that the colors are not used up but begin, rather, for the first time, to shine. (OWA, p. 46)

This 'nothing' is the formal earth to which, as in the world of the peasant, the shoes belong and from which they emerge into their world. Iain Thomson explains how, when we turn from Heidegger's phenomenological reading to the painting itself, we see that: 'the background of the painting not only inconspicuously supports the foreground image of the shoes but, when we turn our attention to this ordinarily inconspicuous background, we can see that it continues to offer up other inchoate shapes that resist being firmly gestalted themselves'.[215] As Thomson's analysis suggests, this painting, like Hölderlin's poetry, enables Heidegger to set about attuning his reader to seeing things in the world differently. In particular, Thomson's analysis helps with understanding that, for Heidegger, the 'nothing' in the background of the painting is not an empty void, but is rather the immaterial ground from which the shoes emerge in their intelligibility.

---

[215] Iain Thomson, *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 155.

By affording this 'nothing' a certain substantiality and drawing our attention to the inexhaustible background from which the shoes emerge, Van Gogh's painting helps Heidegger demonstrate the truth of the shoes as equipment: the shoes are not in fact objects that exist in stable presence, but rather they exist in the earth which the swirling, suggestive darkness of the painting's background suggests. Heidegger explains as such that this background, which he also describes as earth, is 'nothing' only in the sense that it challenges our ordinary notion of beings as objects which are present-at-hand: 'by nothing is meant the mere not of that which is, if we here think of that which is as an object present in the ordinary way' (OWA, p. 69).

The peasant woman in Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh's work enjoys a proper relation to being because she does not exert technological mastery over the world, something that the earth plays a part in, made clearly visible in the earth's withdrawal in the cold, winter months. The anxiety and joy are significant as emotions because they indicate her precarious dwelling in the eternal struggle between earth and world: her uncertainty is part of this eternal struggle, a signal of the impossibility of mastering this movement between concealment and disclosure. The farmer is, perhaps unknowingly, 'admitted into the silent call of the earth' (OWA, p. 33) by virtue of her dependence upon the 'reliability' of the tools that she uses. The reliability of the tools that mediate between earth and world being, as Andrew Mitchell notes of this passage, is 'all the certainty we can ever have'. [216] It is this uncertainty of the world of objects that Van Gogh's painting reveals to Heidegger in his phenomenological reading.

It is important that the shoes in the painting rest by themselves, or in-themselves, unsupported by human use or by any literally existing ground or earth. Heidegger's displacement of objectification in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' rests

---

[216] Andrew J. Mitchell, *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger*, Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015).

in the releasement of the pair of shoes from their status as mere equipment and in allowing them their 'being-in-themselves', their existence beyond merely appearing as a tool or machine, an expendable resource for human use. In the logic of aesthetics that, for Heidegger, structures the experience of art in the modern age, where the world exists as 'picture', the shoes exist only in relation to the human they are produced *by* and *for*. Denied any existence independent of their human use, the shoes are subject to the emerging human *position* in relation to representation, the *position* that takes humans as the representative of all beings.[217]

The proper relation to being that Heidegger uncovers in his phenomenological reading of Van Gogh's painting can be elucidated by comparison with other artworks. Fredric Jameson's somewhat sketchy summary of Heidegger's reading of Van Gogh's pair of shoes, as a work where 'objectal form is taken as a clue or a symptom for some vaster reality which replaces it as its ultimate truth', and the famous comparison of Van Gogh's work with Andy Warhol's shoes that follows, rest on a technological distinction that is already at work in Heidegger's thought.[218] The technologically rendered shoe presents itself to its viewer as 'some inexplicable natural object […] a random collection of dead objects hanging together […] as shorn of their earlier life world as the pile of shoes left over from Auschwitz or the remainders and tokens of some incomprehensible and tragic fire in a packed dance hall. There is therefore in Warhol no way to complete the hermeneutic gesture and restore to these oddments that whole larger lived context of the dance hall or the ball,

---

[217] As Andrew Mitcell notes, it is not until 1949 that Heidegger will describe technology in terms of *positionality* or '*Gestell*'. Nonetheless, his comment in 'The Age of the World Picuture' that,'for the first time there exists such a thing as the "position" of man [*eine Stellung des Menschen*]' certainly foreshadows this conception of technology as *positionality*. This demonstrates, in turn, the relationship between representation and the positionality of technology that challenges entities forth as standing reserve (*Bestand*). See Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, p. 24.

[218] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 8.

the Culture 9 world of jetset fashion or glamour magazines'.[219] If the repeatability of 'improper' representational production is associable with a world or life beyond picture at all, in this reading, it is life destroyed, rendered unrecognisable by technological reproduction and knowable only as the remnant of traumatic annihilation.

Proper writing and equipmentality in 'The Age of the World Picture'

The paradoxical starting point of Heidegger's analysis of Van Gogh's painting, with a representation, a painting, rather than a description of a piece of equipment in its use, provides a point of comparison and understanding when considering the seemingly paradoxical investment that *Remainder*'s narrator holds in representations as portent of authentic, equipmental being. The paradox of the narrator's idealisation of integral involvement with the world is that he locates this modality of existence not in the everyday actions of his contemporaries, but in the refined movements of Robert de Niro in *Mean Streets*. In contrast to his own, inauthentic second-handedness, De Niro's representation effortlessly and fluently relates to entities in the world in their equipmentality: 'Opening fridge doors, lighting cigarettes. He doesn't have to think about them because he and they are one. Perfect. Real' (p. 23). Angered by the imitation of an advert by the media types of Soho, yet willing to accept the movements of an actor as unmediated and natural, the narrator holds the belief that representations can produce the living being through an exacting control of the entities that they manipulate.

This relationship to authenticity, or circumscribed involvement, implies an understanding of life as mediated by representations to such an extent that self-understanding and involvement in the world mimics, and derives from, aesthetic representations themselves. As discussed above, Heidegger argues that 'to represent

---

[219] Jameson, p. 8.

means here, of oneself to set something before one and to make what has been set in place secure as something set in place' (AWP, p. 82). For the narrator of *Remainder*, Robert De Niro's performance in *Mean Streets* situated him within a representation that secured his authenticity by 'setting in place' his identity within the infinitely repeatable and assured realm of a filmic representation: 'My movements are all fake. Second-hand. […] It's about just being. De Niro was just being; I can never do that now' (p. 23). Heidegger, elsewhere, comparably takes the 'movies' as an example of the way that representations of 'lived experience' inform the self-understanding of the subject in modernity (CPE, p. 109). This construction of a simulated experience of authenticity emerges as the central event of the opening chapters of the novel, as the narrator sets about constructing a space in which to 're-enact' the authentic self that he saw in a vision, in an imagined and idealised representation of his own life.

An evocative moment of déjà vu provides the narrator with a self-representation that inspires the first re-enactment project of the novel. At a friend's party, the uncanny familiarity of a fissure in a bathroom wall produces a 'vision' of a 'remembered building, spreading outwards from the crack' (p. 61), with 'the force of an epiphany, a revelation' (p. 62). The narrator vividly remembers not only the building but the other inhabitants, and the embodied, bodily experience of being in that space. Against his current sense of inauthenticity and detachment, he remembers how his 'gestures had been seamless, perfect […] They'd been *real*; I'd been real — *been* without first understanding how to try to be' (p. 62, italics in original). The narrator's obsession with the reality of this remembered space and time is not diminished by his sense that the building, and his experience of a coherent, authentic subjectivity, is likely itself simply a fabrication emerging from his consciousness: 'It was more complex. Maybe it was various things rolled together: memories, imaginings, films, I don't know. But that bit's not important' (p.76). He now imagines that the realisation of his 'vision' (p. 76), the building of the memory itself,

will offer the opportunity to retrieve, or rather to produce, in reality, for the first time, the imagined state of natural, wholesome presence and being: 'I wanted to reconstruct that space and enter it so that I could feel real again. I wanted to; I had to; I would' (p. 62).

When *Remainder*'s protagonist first remembers the idealised past that his initial performance is based on, he seeks out to rebuild it, to realise this imagined past so that he might move around within it and recover the lost sense of authenticity, of being 'real', that is the condition of his way of being after the accident. He sets out 'to reconstruct that space and enter it so that I could feel real again' (p. 62), in a logic that relies on the reproduction, or representation, of the 'vision' (p. 76) that constitutes the basis of this soon-to-become three-dimensional, 'space' (p. 62).[220] McCarthy's *Remainder*, as is well known, was originally published as an art book, and McCarthy has commented in interview that the novel was the attempt to realise an art project that could never take place in real life.[221]

Privileging representation as something that can paradoxically liberate him from objectification and return him to a pre-objective encounter with equipmentality in the world, the narrator seeks a mode of existence which is more authentic than that which relates to the world as something external to the self, accessible only 'second-hand' through representations. For all that the narrator of *Remainder* aspires to perfect representation, his attempts to construct an idealised past are underpinned by a sense that he is excluded, by virtue of his existence as a traumatised subject in the wake of his accident, from the authenticity that he affords to the assured, effortlessly repeatable representation. In order to make sense of the narrator's relationship to

---

[220] On *Remainder* as a literature of reconstruction in the wake of postmodernism, see Wolfgang Funk, *The Literature of Reconstruction: Authentic Fiction in the New Millennium* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[221] Gill Partington, 'Dummy Chambers and Ur-Houses: How to Find Your Way Around in *Remainder*', in *Tom McCarthy: Critical Essays*, ed. by Dennis Duncan (Canterbury: Gylphi, 2016).

representations, it is then necessary to take account of the traumatic accident, which has stripped him of any possibility of relating with naturalness to entities in the world because he has to relearn all his movements. Cut off from direct contact with his past life, his way of being and the worldliness which this entailed, the accident stands out as a traumatic event that can mostly account for the narrator's current idealisation of a representation of his past self.

Trauma in 'The Age of the World Picture'

Taking account for the place and role of trauma in *Remainder*, it is clear that trauma initially functions to reveal to the narrator the partiality of all attempts to capture, stabilise and bring life to presence through the 'setting in place' of representations. The catastrophic event inscribes a traumatic loss into the narrator's history, which the re-enactments are designed to master by affording the experience of authentic selfhood. The re-enactments also function to return the narrator to the traumatic event, as is quickly revealed once the re-enactments begin. Perfecting his motions during the re-enactments gives the narrator the sense of authenticity he craves, 'the immersion, the contentedness' (p. 151), but the re-enactments are also compulsively addictive because of the traumatic opioids flooding the narrator's brain during these experiences. The narrator feels a pleasurable sense of being exposed during the re-enactments, the mundane vision of a concierge in the building's lobby 'seemed to emanate an almost toxic level of significance […] being this close to her I felt overexposed' (p. 139). This significance is the result of phenomenological experience, the extreme detail of the representations signalling an inexhaustible realm of significance that is paradoxically revealed by the attempt to dominate and control all meaning. All excessive or uncontrolled materiality threatens to escape the re-enactment zone, and hence has to be mastered and brought to objective presence by the narrator, in order to sustain his sense of immersion in the representation. The narrator's attempt to 'capture' a patch of oil left by the motorcyclist re-enactor — 'its

shape, its shade. These were important, and I didn't want to lose them' (p. 142) — is consistent with the narrator's desire to objectify and master unruly materiality through representational capture.

The limits of representation that the narrator explores also put him in contact with trauma, with the inaccessible beyond of experience. Arne De Boever has discussed these aspects of the re-enactments in detail:

> It might very well be that his trauma — the event that reconfigured his existence — operates for him as the real to which he does not have access. Not remembering it, and not being allowed to talk about it publicly, our narrator's existence is ultimately scripted by a foundational event that is inaccessible to him. […] [t]he narrator is trying to get back to that originary moment […] in order to access the real.[222]

Because the accident makes the narrator aware of the inauthenticity of his life, it stands out to him as an encounter with the authentic, inaccessible 'real' itself. Such a reading is consistent with trauma theory (about the secondary image as traumatic return). Whilst trauma makes possible the break out of the representational mode, in this view, it also structures the limits of intelligibility and makes authenticity, or 'the real' in De Boever's terms, knowable only in negative terms, since what is 'broken into' is defined as unintelligible, or is intelligible only in its explanation as trauma. Likewise for Vermeulen, the increasing violence of the narrator's re-enactments is attributable to the narrator's traumatised condition: *Remainder*'s attempt 'to debunk the pieties of trauma fiction […] is progressively complicated as the narrator gets caught up in obsessively detailed re-enactments of seemingly random scenes'.[223] This resurgence of individual psychology against its attempted erasure marks the limit of McCarthy's attempt to 'bury' the novel for Vermeulen: 'McCarthy's own

---

[222] De Boever, p. 132.
[223] Vermeulen, p. 36

programmatic attempt to hasten the death of the novel paradoxically inaugurates the afterlife of an undead and improperly buried form'.[224]

From the perspective of Heidegger's 'Age of the World Picture', the paradoxical practice of negotiating a relation to an inaccessible traumatic event, understood as the 'real', through representational practices signals the existence of disruptive trauma that presents itself as what John Roberts calls 'an epistemological limit that threatens to reveal the partiality of its ontological mode of disclosure, that of *Gestell*, or enframing'.[225] Roberts argues that the 'crisis in representation' posed by trauma threatens to become 'a blind spot' for the sovereign modern subject, who himself has to constitute the objective, analytic ground of his own representations. The kind of modern subject thought by Heidegger necessarily has to incorporate and regulate trauma into the regime of representations that make the world knowable: 'such aporias must be integrated into a metaphysics supporting the subject's own capacities for representing the world, and coming to knowledge'.[226]

Following this line of reasoning, it is possible to see clearly the process by which the narrator is attempting to integrate the authentic beyond of the traumatic event into his re-enactments. Whilst, as discussed above, the narrator does not mourn an authenticity, 'essence' or soul lost through trauma, the inauthenticity that the traumatic event reveals is sufficiently threatening to impel the narrator to pursue (inauthentic) representations that will 'set in place' a stable life. In Roberts' terms, 'trauma threatens, whilst reflecting brightly a meaningful life lived transparently, with relatively certain choices, against background narratives of continuous and coherent biography'. [227] If the re-enactments, with their easily identifiable characters ('the liver

---

[224] Vermeulen, p. 38.

[225] John L Roberts, 'Trauma, Technology and the Ontology of the Modern Subject', *Subjectivity*, 6.3 (2013), 298–319 (p. 300) <https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2013.6>.

[226] Roberts, p. 300-301.

[227] Roberts, 'Trauma, Technology and the Ontology of the Modern Subject', *Subjectivity*, 6.3, pp. 298–319 (p. 315).

lady', 'the motorbike enthusiast', 'the piano teacher') and manageable, manipulable events represent such a life, trauma is a motivating factor in the pursuit of these reconstructive practices. Threatening negation of this realm of 'immersion and contentment', trauma also presents a limit point that the narrator finesses in his attempt to suffuse his reconstructed 'life' with authenticity.

In foregrounding the intimate bond between representation and trauma in modernity discussed by Roberts I intend not to focus on the traumatic opioids that the re-enactments release, or on the re-enactments as mimetic of the narrator's traumatised mind, but instead on the way that trauma drives the intensification of enframing representation in the modern age. In this view, trauma in *Remainder* would also function as a literary analogy for a cultural trauma, the loss of authentic historicality common to all living in the age of the 'world picture'. As a threat that leads technology into an aporetic reflection of its own limits, trauma leads the subject to seek new forms of knowledge that exceed the drive to mastery in objectifying representation. In this way then, traumatic experience is the motivation for representations that would secure a lost sense of identity in the wake of the accident.

The traumatic accident destabilises representation in the novel by revealing the absence of any 'authentic' past, but also paradoxically secures representation as something worth aspiring to, by creating an insistent sense that what was lost in traumatic experience might have been the narrator's authentic subjectivity: the ability to relate to representations without consciousness of the traumatic threat that secures them in place as 'life'. This paradoxical bind leads the narrator to position himself in the realm of the performative. His disavowal of trauma as something that secures representation is not a radical break with representation but is instead a movement into a form of representation that changes relationships with the past, to see it not as a lost soul but as a history of representations themselves supported or grounded by a traumatic absence, a 'nothing' or 'world-ground' that the novel works to reveal.

Intensification of objectification: from representation to positionality

The narrator's strained relationship with representational objectification intensifies as he attempts to exercise increasingly exacting control over the representation of his idealised past, in the house he has purchased and transformed for his re-enactments. However, as mentioned above, the displacement of representational logic that develops across *Remainder* does not occur through its simple rejection, but through an intensification of representational logic that leads the re-enactments to transform the lives of all those involved — the protagonist, his re-enactor staff and his 'executor', Naz. Through exacting control of the specificities of the 'remembered building' and the actions performed therein, and by refusing to contextualise, or explain the meaning of their performances to the hired re-enactors, the narrator maintains a monopolising control over the economy of significance and meaning attached to the building and the re-enactments. Challenged by a hired re-enactor, the 'motorbike enthusiast', over the narrator's desire to preserve the remains of his performance, a 'patch of oil [that] had formed' (p. 141), the protagonist makes it clear that he controls the derivation of meaning from the other's performance, that '[i]t meant whatever I wanted it to mean: I was paying him to do what I said' (p. 142). The re-enactor's desire to 'capture' (p. 141) the remains of their performances, to mediate any new material produced in the process of re-enactment, repeats the process of drawing the environment and its inhabitants into the narrator's economy of meaning. In this way, the staff hired as re-enactors are denied or reduced of any form of subjectivity, meaning or selfhood outside of their 'life' as models of lived experience within the representational economy.

Despite the sovereign control of the narrator over his re-enactments, the 'seamless merging with reality' the narrator pursues demands constant technological innovation. As the re-enactments continue and the staff performing them are expected to be available and ready to perform, their way of being is radically transformed such

that they have no life outside of the life experiences that they are employed to perform. This shift in the life of the re-enactors made clear when the protagonist tells Naz that 'they'll have to get used to being in two modes […] *on* and *off*' (p. 81). The confusion and elision between representation and reality does not depart significantly from, in fact still corresponds with, the logic of machination that I have discussed above. Nonetheless, the continuous availability that is demanded of the re-enactors (such that even when they are in "*off*" mode, they are still immediately available and primed for consumption) transforms the ontological nature of their being and sets them in place as what Heidegger terms 'standing-reserve' (QCT, p. 17).

In one notable instance in the novel, a pianist re-enactor that the narrator has hired uses a tape recording of himself playing in order to evade the narrator's expectation of continuous performance. When the narrator spots the pianist moving around the building whilst his recording plays, he explains that is it 'a recording of me. I made it myself, especially. It's the same thing more or less. Isn't it?' (p. 147). The narrator places him under surveillance, destroying the trace he left of being otherwise made possible by his inactivity. This intensification and extension of the logic of the aesthetic logic of objectifying representation into technological 'enframing' of reality is helpfully evoked by Jean Baudrillard, who argued in the 1990s that the logic of modern aesthetics means artists are 'always close to the perfect crime: saying nothing'.[228] By 'nothing' here Baudrillard is referring to the seamless transformation of the aesthetic into reality, the production of artworks such as the readymade and the soup can painting which, in being more real than the reality they enter, enact the murder of reality by its aestheticised double and the disappearance of the aesthetic, the illusion, through its materialisation. Baudrillard describes this

---

[228] Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, trans. by Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 1996). Google ebook.

'perfect crime' as the 'transformation of all acts and events into pure information […] the extermination of reality by its double'.

The aestheticisaiton of the everyday in Warhol's soup can paintings marked the end and failure of art's utopian ideals, for Baudrillard, but also presages a more thoroughgoing virtualisation of reality as culture more broadly is characterised by the facility with which it is becomes an aestheticised object of experience. The presence of a doubled reality is intensified in Warhol's soup can artworks, which can be read in Baudrillard's thought as precursors in a transition towards virtuality, a situation which imagines 'the closing of reality and the extermination of the real by its double'. Happening without a trace, this virtualisation is, for Baudrillard, the perfect crime, a precursor of the virtual for and, in this sense, one stage in a wider story told by Baudrillard: the 'story of a crime — the murder of reality'. My primary interest in the term 'transaesthetics' lies in Baudrillard's conviction that the artist is a figure with the capacity to expose the crime. Warhol is not an artist because he says nothing, leaves no trace — in his perfect works he is a machine. Artistic practice is in fact turning away from this crime, the artist's work 'is the trace of that criminal imperfection. The artist is the one who, with all his might, resists the fundamental drive to not leave traces'. Duchamp's 'Fountain' and Warhol's soup cans, for instance, make present this 'nothing', concealing their status as aesthetic objects such that they merge perfectly with reality, leaving no trace of artistry or imperfection.

Baudrillard's warning of the eternal drive towards transparency, towards the 'saying nothing' that eliminates the difference between aesthetic object and reality, offers an opportunity to reconsider the role of the 'nothing' in Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh's 'Pair of Shoes', and towards the re-enactment projects in *Remainder*. Where 'nothing' for Baudrillard signals the elimination of the trace, the obliteration of any reality outside the economy of representational objectivity, in *Remainder* the 'nothing' of the piano re-enactor's inactivity points towards a

differential escape from objectification. When Heidegger valorised the 'nothing' from which the shoes emerged as a representation, he described it as 'the mere not of beings […] if we represent the being as that which is present in the ordinary way' (OWA, p. 44). Against the drive towards transaesthetic transparency, the piano player's own use of a representative double renders visible the 'not of beings' that the re-enactment sought to deny in its drive towards totalising objectification. Like the swirling background in Van Gogh's picture, the disruptive presence of the piano player, walking through the background of the re-enactment, reveals the representation of him as 'piano player' *as* a representation, unresting it from the attempt to 'set in place' the re-enactment as an authentic lived reality.

It is tempting to articulate the resistance to objectification that the piano player achieves in this passage in terms of 'detournement', the turning of an apparatus of power — in this case representational technologies — against its dominant deployment. This reading is particularly appealing when we consider *Remainder*'s overall project can be thought of as an undoing, detournement or 'burial'' of the realist novel. The piano player's detournement amounts to a moment of inoperative agency, in the vein of Bartleby the Scrivener's pronouncement 'I prefer not to'. Whilst it is ultimately necessary to move beyond such a reading of the re-enactments in *Remainder* as they become not merely biopolitical but violent and traumatic, for reasons I will explain, the inoperative relation to the representational technology of the re-enactment adopted by the piano player points towards the 'proper' relation to representational technology that McCarthy's novel tends towards. Bartleby's refusal to write does not disavow his relation to the technology of writing, rather it affords him the potential both to be or not be a writer. This 'whatever being' is conceived,

too, by Giorgio Agamben as a proper relation to technology, pointing back towards Heidegger's description of 'proper' and 'improper' writing.[229]

The liberation of life in *Remainder* does not occur through relinquishing the improper relation to technology, however, which continues to increase its capture of life in the novel. In order to become real by creating a perfect aestheticisation that will merge with reality without a trace, the narrator has to fix the existences of his re-enactors and deny them their potential for being otherwise. The expendability of the cats that fall from the roof of the house in the re-enactments demonstrates the totalising demand on materiality for becoming representation. The narrator calculates that, 'a loss rate of three every two days, I'd say [I need] quite an amount. A rolling supply. Just keep putting them up there' (p. 146). As the re-enactments continue, the performances lose their attachment to the individuals and become iterations or repetitions of a pattern or sequence which is repeated endlessly, at different speeds, even rewound and looped back, and often slowed down until it stops entirely in suspended animation:

> [A]gain and again and again. Hundreds of times. More. No one counted — I didn't, at any rate. I'd break the sequence down to its constituent parts […] I laid out the constituent parts of the whole sequence and relished each of them, then put them back together and relished the whole — then took them apart again.' (p. 151)

The microscopic expansion and examination of the sequences of events and actions that provide the protagonist his sense of authenticity mark the culmination of a process of objectification that has rendered the human as a raw material, an expendable commodity that has no meaning or value outside of its consumption. These representations now reduce the other to a life experience, bringing the 'life'

---

[229] Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. by Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

that it signifies entirely to view such that its exposure is total, it has nothing significant to hide.

The struggle between earth and world

Affect in the struggle between earth and world

When viewed from the perspective developed in this chapter, the narrator's re-enactments are a (conscious) intensification of the subjection of life to a form of technological, improper writing that seeks to reach the beyond of representation. In one such instance, the narrator tasks the 'liver lady', an elderly character in the reconstructed building where the re-enactments take place, with lifting a bag of rubbish to her doorstep as he moves past her through the re-enactment zone. With each repetition of the movement, the narrator's original intention of "setting in place" life as an objectified representation becomes more successful. The increasing physical suffering of the old lady, who delivers the line 'harder and harder to lift up' (p. 138) lends the aesthetised performance a foundation of accumulated reality, a real suffering that is lends the aesthetic performance a 'transaesthetic', material reality. Edging towards aesthetic perfection, her task becoming as weary and mundane as the lived reality of an old lady that the protagonist envisages reproducing. As the re-enactments continue, however, the intensified repetition and circulation of this materialised representation disrupt the mimesis of the performance, and its recognisable emotional content. 'Break[ing] the sequence into its constituent parts', the narrator 'spent a whole morning going back and back over the moment at which her faced switched from addressing me with the last word of her phrase, the *up*, to cutting off eye contact, turning away and leading first her shoulders then eventually her whole body back into the flat' (p. 151). Through the technological expansion of moments of the re-enactments the narrator liberates the performances from the realm of mimetic representation.

In this way, the re-enactments share a striking similarity with Bill Viola's art projects, in which videos of actors performing emotional states — joy, anger, sorrow and fear — are then slowed down to reveal interstitial moments in the passage of these emotional states that are invisible under natural conditions. As the narrator '[lays] out the constituent parts of the whole sequence', recognisable emotions are rendered imperceptible, and are instead replaced by the (normally invisible) minute, autonomous affective responses that precede emotional responses. Reading the representation of bodily expressions of minute affective processes, normally invisible to the human eye, that inform and underpin identifiable human emotions in the art of Bill Viola, in similar terms, Mark Hansen argues that 'the dissolution of the between-two of *images* and its replacement by a between-two of *emotions* or, better, by affectivity as the very medium of the between'.[230]

Brian Massumi argues that such affective escape is the condition of human culture and history itself:

> If there were no escape, no excess or remainder, no fade-out to infinity, the universe would be without potential, pure entropy, death. Actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect.[231]

Affect, which as I have mentioned has proven a powerful conceptual tool in the critical reception of *Remainder*, particularly in Vermeulen's and Serpell's work on this novel, might well be the inexhaustible source of worldly significance, the 'earth' that sustains and makes possible all worldly significance. Significantly for my argument, though, is the fact that it is through the violent subjection of life to *Remainder*'s improper writing that the objectified representation of authentic emotion is unsettled, no longer 'setting in place' life but instead making available for

---

[230] Mark Hansen, 'The Time of Affect, or Bearing Witness to Life', Critical Inquiry, 30.3 (2004), 584–626 (p. 603) <https://doi.org/0093-1896/04/3003-0004>.
[231] Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', Cultural Critique, 1995, 83 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354446>.

contemplation the inexhaustible background of representative emotions in the circulation and rotation of the standing reserve. In Heidegger's phenomenological evocation of 'The Pair of Shoes', its shifting, swirling background prevent a stable representation of the peasant's world being 'set in place', signalling the uncertainty of her existence and also her 'proper' relation to being. In a paradoxical move in *Remainder*, this same movement towards exposure and vulnerability, enacted in the violent destruction of representations and the intensification of 'improper writing' wrend the world from its 'place', conveying the inexhaustible background of affective energy that will make the narrator's project of 'capture' impossible.

Matter in the struggle between earth and world

After perfecting the actions and sequences in the remembered building, the narrator seeks to reveal what 'lay beneath the surfaces of these — on what was inside, intimate' (p. 197). He begins to re-enact murder scenes; much like his own accident, the traumatic events at the end of the victims' lives puts them in touch with the beyond of representational objectification, a form of authenticity that the narrator seeks to capture and render as pure information. By contrast, as Johnny Boy in the crime film *Mean Streets*, De Niro was infinitely secure, 'set in place' by a representation of a world rendered as a series of manipulable entities, a representation of authentic 'handiness'. The traumatic beyond that these victims encounter marks their liberation, for the narrator, from the authentic repeatability of the foundational authentic representation of 'life' in De Niro's performance. As Zadie Smith notes, McCarthy's narrator 'wants to become the thing beyond the pale, the inconvenient remainder impossible to contain within the social economy of meaning'.[232] The victims of gun violence have lost their proper relationship to being, first through their

---

[232] Smith, 'Two Paths for the Novel'.

subjection to the improper writing of the newspaper reports that render their traumatic deaths impersonal and interchangeable. Unlike the farmer of Van Gogh's painting, made secure in her world only through the reliability of her shoes, which situate her in the 'eternal struggle between world and earth', the modern subject is unable to act in this 'proper' way. In death, the narrator imagines, the victim achieved a sense of immediacy that he himself has pursued in the re-enactments:

> [He] merged with the space around him, sunk and flowed into it until there was no distance between it and him – and merged, too, with his actions, merged to the extent of having no more consciousness of them. He'd stopped being separate, removed, imperfect. Cut out the detour. Then both mind and actions had resolved themselves into pure stasis. (pp. 184–185)

Being's negation in death here symbolises for the narrator the concretisation of a pure form of presence, made possible by the assimilation of human substance with the matter of the external world, presence preserved as 'pure stasis' in matter. The space where the 'black man', human 'symbol of perfection' (p. 184) died becomes, for the narrator, 'sacred ground, blessed ground — and anyone who occupied in the way he occupied it would become blessed too' (p. 185). The narrator will attempt to appropriate that which animated the body of the 'black man', his 'soul', by drawing the material space where the event occurred under his own control:

> I started wondering where this black man's soul disappeared to as it left his body. His thoughts, impressions, memories, whatever: the background noise we all have in our head that stops us from forgetting we're alive. It had to go somewhere: it couldn't just vaporize — it must have gushed, trickled onto some surface, stained it somehow. Everything must leave some kind of mark. (p. 185)

Performance here produces a significance that resides in the materiality of the street, not lost in the flow of time but rather maintained forever in a welling of significance and intensity that is characterised by 'pure stasis'. In a reworking of the narrator's earlier desire to invest a constructed space with a meaning not emanating from its

materiality, the narrator now attempts to extract and 'capture' the significance that, McCarthy's novel suggests, resides in matter itself.

The drive to perform and reveal all aspects of authentic life, to render each imperceptible detail visible and recordable, as aesthetic experience, stops the subject of the re-enactment settling into deathly stasis. Subject to the technological capacity not only for representation but replicability, the life of the 'black man' loses its singular significance as a life when its peaceful resolve into 'pure stasis' is demanded to return to a restless repetition of reproduction and recirculation. This starts first with the newspaper articles where the narrator reads about this man's death, a form of improper writing that motivates the re-enactments. As further victims of gang violence also die, a chain or sequence of destruction that renders each life as available for annihilation as that which preceded it begins to emerge.

The point of recognition of the failure of this attempt to render life a resource that could be made available for ordering and consumption develops when the narrator reflects, 'I felt a huge wave of sadness […] for not having managed, in my re-enactments, to fill the instant of their death with so much space that it retrieved them, kinked them back into life. Impossible, I know, but I still felt responsible, and sad' (p. 223). Paradoxically, to be reduced to a representation of authentic 'life' would merely be to exist within a logic of representational objectification which only recognises that which exists in representation. In this way the drive towards producing the authentic life as standing reserve reveals the very impossibility of reducing a life to a representation.

The challenge posed by the technology of the re-enactment to this supposed object of representation to come forth in its entirety, to make available and exterior its most intimate interiority, is what proves the very impossibility of representation. The process of disintegration and the ongoing, continuous challenging for greater detail and greater deconstruction of the object of representation maintains its separation

from the world (of representations) that the narrator hopes it, and so he, will merge

seamlessly with. The desire to capture the remainder necessitates rendering the

contents of the world as standing reserve, as decontextualised information that can be

taken up at will and in the service of the will. Yet, as Andrew Mitchell argues, the

failure of the desire to merge seamlessly with the world is the condition of the kind of

technological activity that signals towards the thing in the first place:

> For the thing to thing it can be nothing self-contained and identifiable. If it
> were simply the thing it would not gesture the world. It would be contained in
> that world and seamlessly merge with it. The thing needs the technological
> challenge in order *to keep it from being the thing* […] the singularity of the
> thing is dependent upon its very replaceability.[233]

Once again, in the pursuit of 'that which is on the inside, the intimate', the narrator

gains a glimpse of the 'beyond' of representation. The victim achieved the

authenticity that the narrator ascribes to him in the moments before his death, but

instead only in his death itself and in the handling of this death in the re-enactment.

The authenticity afforded by reliability that the narrator attributes to the victim in the

moments before his death is, in fact, an inaccessible beyond that can only be

approached through the destruction that improper writing enacts. This 'improper

writing' stops the subject disappearing into death as the mere negation of being and

instead motivates the restless circulation of the affect, or the inexhaustible ontological

plenitude from which all meaning emerges and recedes.

Following this reading, I am now in a position to conceive of the 'proper'

relation to representation (writing) that McCarthy's novel circles towards. As

discussed above, affect and matter itself both point to a beyond of representations that

is inaccessible in the age of the 'world picture'. As I have attempted to show, this

beyond can be understood as the earth which the modern age has forgotten in its

---

[233] Mitchell, p. 311, emphasis in original.

oblivion of being, a loss of the proper relation to being that began with the entry into improper forms of writing and self-representation. Whilst the narrator first sought to recover a sense of authentic 'handiness' through immersion in authenticating representations, it soon becomes apparent, as Arne De Boever notes, that the re-enactments only become an elaborate means to return to his trauma, to make contact with this beyond that is the inexhaustible ground of the world experienced as 'picture'. The re-enactments do not disavow or escape representation in the pursuit of this 'earth' that they encounter as the abyssal ground of the world. Instead, they proceed through in intensification of technological violence, further demonstrating the impossibility of acting with a 'proper' relation to being-in modernity. The susceptibility to violence and the ongoing annihilation of life in the novel repeats the gesture of affirming the novel as an 'improper' form of writing that, by virtue of its very technicity, cannot create a representation of life that restores its 'proper' relation to being. On the contrary, the pursuit of authentic representation only leads to an ever-increasing capture and technological destruction in an attempt to render life as available information or 'standing reserve'. It is in this escalating attempt of 'improper writing' to render affect, trauma and matter as available for consumption with a representational economy that the 'eternal struggle' between earth and world is revealed. In this view, *Remainder* is a merely an intensification of the novel's essentially 'improper writing', that is to say an intensification of the 'improper burial' of life the novel always performs (since Defoe's *Crusoe*). In an age where the world is lived as 'picture', the destruction of the subject of 'improper writing' brings the forgotten relation of this 'improper life' to a beyond of representation into view. As with Derrida's discussion of the technical burial which returns the subject to 'earth', the novel reveals the relation of improper life, in its world of representations, to the 'earth' (or beyond) of that representation.

Conclusions

Where, in the previous chapter, I took as a starting point a novel — *White Teeth* — where the perspective and autonomy of characters is foreclosed and secondary to their attunement, in this chapter I take as a starting point a character whose breakdown is integral to the technology of representation, through which this character is bound to negotiate the possibilities of autonomy and 'coherence' to which the new ethics appeals.

In *Remainder*, as discussed here, the embrace of the technological re-enactment transforms life through its translation into standing reserve, a transition from machination to standing reserve that is figured by Heidegger in terms of an intensification of circulation of the entities that come to exist as standing reserve. This is evident in Heidegger's discussion of modern technology, when he writes that: '*Gestell / Ge-stell* means the gathering together of the setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve' (QCT, p. 24). As I have shown here, the intensification of the gathering-revealing of technology, the transition from technological machination to standing reserve, incurred as an intensification of a process of gathering-revealing, explodes the stable existence of the entities therein and paradoxically engenders the possibility of a new form of being, albeit one which never materialised outside of the frame of violent destruction. In this example, the modern technological imposition on man is a technological mode of existence in which it has become necessary to gather things, to bring them to presence, not as objects for machination but as endlessly circulating, decontextualised resources available for consumption.

Whilst in this chapter I have cited the enframing tendencies of technology and the role they played in the narrator's attempts to construct an environment for living authentically, and have focused on the standing reserve here as a mode of gathering, it is the case that this mode of gathering is itself a technological variation on a more

fundamental mode of gathering and concentring through which, for Heidegger, things are brought to presence and given meaning by *Dasein*. In the next chapter I demonstrate that this more fundamental notion of gathering, central to dwelling for Heidegger and which appears in his thought much earlier than his writing on modern technology and the standing reserve, can deepen an understanding of the way that narrative functions to reveal and bring entities into their dwelling. As such, whilst this chapter was concerned with writing as a technology, the next chapter takes up the relation between narrative and dwelling from a different viewpoint: that which emerges in Don DeLillo's 2001 novel *The Body Artist*.

Chapter 4:   Dwelling and The Literary Thing: 'Narrative Gathering' in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*

'It felt like home, being here' – Don DeLillo, *The Body Artist*

If dwelling for Heidegger involves a movement of gathering, of drawing together into a play of relations, and if reading and narration are likewise to be thought of as processes of interpretative gathering, can the 'search for dwelling' accommodate dispersion and loss, change, transformation and newness? Similarly, if dwelling as a mode of being is essentially narrative in character, as I have suggested it is, can a narrative of dwelling respond to trauma, loss and dispersion without either becoming a narrative *of* loss, or reducing traumatic loss by domesticating it in the process of shaping a comfortable dwelling? Does this interpretation of human being as a mode, albeit selective, of collating and gathering entities into meaningful associations allow sufficiently for absence or traumatic loss without reducing it to interiority? In this chapter I address these questions through an in-depth reading of Don DeLillo's 2001 novel, *The Body Artist*.[234]

I explore the underestimated importance of place in this novel, which has been read primarily as unfolding in a 'non-place' of mourning and grief, and test the implications of foregrounding the experience of place in the novel against Heidegger's own turn to place in his later philosophy. In doing so, I return to some of the core philosophical concerns in Heidegger's work on dwelling, in particular what commentator Nader El-Bizri has called our 'being-at-home amongst things', and Heidegger's related thinking of dwelling in terms of homecoming.[235] In doing so, I

---

[234] Don DeLillo, *The Body Artist* (London: Picador, 2001). Further references to this source are given after quotations in the text.
[235] Nader El-Bizri, 'Being at Home Among Things: Heidegger's Reflections on Dwelling', *Environment, Space, Place*, 3.1 (2011), 45–69.

argue that DeLillo's novel is an examination of the potential for narrative to shape just such a being-at-home amongst things, and an examination of the ethics of such a return home.

In recalling the importance of homecoming, and of place, in DeLillo's novel, I repeat Heidegger's gesture of foregrounding thought, or at least in this case the thought at work in DeLillo's novel, as itself a movement of returning to place, as a homecoming.[236] In conjoining, as Heidegger does, 'ideas of remembrance with that of the return home' I risk levelling on myself and this novel the charge commonly brought against Heidegger, noted by Jeff Malpas, of thought that 'contains an essential nostalgia within' it.[237] With this said, a thinking of remembrance and homecoming is exactly what I find at the heart of DeLillo's novel. These issues revolve instead around the ethics of remembrance and homecoming in the face of traumatic absence and are tied into a reflection on the capacity of the novel and its narrative conventions to accommodate human existence when it is characterised by rupture, dispersion and loss. As such, if the thought of DeLillo's novel shares with Heidegger's this nostalgia, it must be of the radical kind that Malpas points towards in Heidegger's defence, a form of nostalgia that must be thought of 'through the connotations suggested by its Greek etymology as precisely a longing for the return home — a return that cannot be achieved — a form of homesickness, and so as discomfiting rather than comfortable, as bringing with it a sense of the essential questionability of our own being in the world'.[238] The search for dwelling as a

---

[236] See Robert Mugerauer, *Heidegger and Homecoming: The Leitmotif in the Later Writings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

[237] A charge that, for Malpas, 'is correct in its attribution of the nostalgic, but too often mistaken in its construal of what this means'. Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place: Explorations in the Topology of Being* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012), pp. 19–20.

[238] Malpas, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place*, p. 161. With this radical notion of nostalgia, it must also be noted that Heidegger's thinking of remembrance and homecoming manifested itself in his Nazism, in particular in 'his misguided political commitment' to the 'homecoming' and 'homeland' of the German people. See Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 102.

questioning of our own being-in-the-world necessarily unfolds through thought that remembers, recollects and reflects upon the nature of that being and its unfolding in a particular place.

This chapter builds on a conviction that *The Body Artist* is singular in DeLillo's oeuvre — in the proximity it creates between the practices of negotiating and living in an environment, creating artworks, reading and writing/narrating. I am interested in the specific way this novel brings DeLillo's longstanding interests in our language-bound existence, our individual creative practices and our attachment to place together, in the process of negotiating possibilities for recovery, redemption and resurrection. By foregrounding a certain discursive process of interpretive and focalising gathering inherent in narrative, reading, remembrance and navigation of the environment, I think of these acts together, and so in turn reflect on how they function together to shape human dwelling. At the centre of each of these processes are *things* that mediate the process of gathering. Considering narrative as something that gathers entities into meaningful relation, I foreground DeLillo's sustained evaluation, and extension, of narrative's capacity to function as a means for exploring and shaping worldly belonging, as well as the novel's implicit deliberation on human investments in narrative as a means of shaping meaningful inhabitation. I also explore the possibility of thinking of dwelling as a process of narratively shaping meaningful relations in environments and physical contexts where subjects live, and the implications of adopting this view of human flourishing in times of crisis.

This chapter is made up of six sections, the first of which situates my argument about *The Body Artist* in the context both of developments in DeLillo's oeuvre from the 1990s onwards, and of examples from recent criticism which address environmental concerns in DeLillo's work. The remaining sections involve a detailed reading of the novel itself. As such this chapter is loosely structured around the movement of the novel itself, with the thematic concerns explored within this overall

movement. In particular, the second section of the chapter focuses solely on the novel's opening scene, in order to introduce the novel's framing of dwelling and subjectivity as constituted in and through narrative processes. Here I foreground the importance of *things* in shaping dwelling, and consider the possibility of thinking narrative processes as unfolding in relation to *thinging*. In the third section I examine the emergence of Mr Tuttle and relate this central event of the novel, once again, to processes of gathering and *thinging*, this time thought not in relation to narrative interpretation or mediation, but to technological media. Remembrance, and particularly the remembrance of place, are at work from the beginning of this chapter, but come into focus in the fourth section, through a consideration of the issue of Rey's 'aliveness' in the figure of Mr Tuttle. In the fifth section I discuss in detail the relation between art and dwelling in the novel, contrasting the potentials for recovery entailed by Lauren's performance piece *Body Time* with the unproductive, 'festive' creativity which unfolds in her remembrance of Rey at the remote seaside home. In the final section of the chapter I address Lauren's recovery, and her achievement of an ethical relation to Rey (the lost other). My reading of Lauren's recovery foregrounds the relationship between Lauren's remembrance of place, her return home, the recovery of dwelling and the recovery of narrative.

The Body Artist and environmental consciousness in DeLillo's late fiction

The opening chapter of *The Body Artist* introduces a vision of the idealised dwelling, or worldly belonging, of a recently married couple, Lauren and Rey, at their remote home near an unnamed coastal town in North America. This opening scene precedes Rey's unexpected departure and suicide later that day. The traumatic rupture from worldly belonging that Rey's death brings into the life of his surviving partner, body artist Lauren Hartke, orients the rest of the novel. What follows is a creative exploration of the limits and intersections of narrative, architecture, the body and

performance art, as Lauren mourns Rey's death and seeks new possibilities for worldly belonging and selfhood in his absence. In this sense, *The Body Artist* builds on earlier works' exploration of writing and professional artistry as modes of self-reclamation. With DeLillo's *Valparaiso* (1999), the novel shares an exploration of celebrity and public life in contemporary American society.[239] In this play, struggling businessman Michael Majeski seeks to seize the Janus-faced opportunity of transforming his identity after accidentally becoming a minor celebrity and media spectacle. *The Body Artist* also shares *Mao II*'s (1991) interest in the private and public dimensions of professional artistry.[240] In that novel, author Bill Gray's resistance to finishing and publishing his novel, and his reclusion from the society that his writing documents, create a paranoid projection of mass consumption as destructive of the individual creative subject. *The Body Artist* develops these interests in the way that creative acts shape private and public selves: through artist Lauren Hartke's production of a performance artwork, created in isolation following her husband's suicide and titled *Body Time*, which emerges from Lauren's period of mourning and questions the possibility of reclaiming identity through professional artistry and its public consumption.

Unlike Bill Gray in *Mao II*, one of DeLillo's failed artists who, in Elise Martucci's words, has 'removed themselves from the world they are trying to represent through art',[241] Lauren's location at the remote seaside house shapes her creative practices, which, in turn, form a new sense of belonging as the novel unfolds. In DeLillo's work, a search for embeddedness in place persists in play with the persistence of non-places in his works, of which the supermarket in *White Noise* is perhaps the best example. *The Body Artist*'s interest in the relation between place and

---

[239] Don DeLillo, *Valparaiso* (New York: Scribner, 1999).
[240] Don DeLillo, *Mao II* (New York: Viking, 1991).
[241] Elise A. Martucci, *The Environmental Unconscious in the Fiction of Don DeLillo* (Routledge, 2007), p. 58.

artistry, in particular, builds on ideas explored in *Underworld*, in particular what

Martucci, who offers rare critical recognition of the significance of place in DeLillo's

oeuvre, has described as that novel's investment in 'the altered landscape as an

essential background for [characters'] creations, and […] the importance of particular

places in an effort to adapt to and survive the damaging effects of our consumer

culture'.[242]

The 'environmental unconscious' of *Underworld*, revolving for Martucci

around consumerism and human environmental impact, presents differently in *The*

Body Artist. The importance of place and creativity remains, however, as Martucci's

title suggests, submerged, not least in the critical reception of the novel, but also in

the exploration of place in terms of loss and absence. Whilst *Underworld* engaged

with creative responses to the destructive impact of human consumption, waste and

pollution on lived environments, DeLillo's most recent works — *Point Omega* (2010)

and *Zero K* (2016) — engage more explicitly with human existence in the

Anthropocene.[243] In *Point Omega*, as Pieter Vermeulen has argued, confrontation

with death in the vastness of a desert landscape resituates human experience in

relation to the vast scale of geological time in which human history is implicated.[244]

In a similar way to *The Body Artist*, artworks attune DeLillo's reader to such

exceptional temporalities in that novel. In the opening scene of *Point Omega*, an art

gallery displays Douglas Gordon's art installation *24 Hour Psycho*, in which

Hitchcock's film is reproduced across a full day, slowed down almost until the point

of stasis. Instead of familiar events, this alien temporal register reveals to its viewer

the interstices in recognisable emotions previously expressed by Hitchcock's

characters, effecting what Mark Hansen has called the 'technical expansion of self-

---

[242] Martucci, p. 6.

[243] Don DeLillo, *Point Omega* (London: Picador, 2010); Don DeLillo, *Zero K* (London: Picador, 2016).

[244] Pieter Vermeulen, 'Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*, the Anthropocene, and the Scales of Literature', *Studia Neophilologica*, 87.sup1 (2015), 68–81 <https://doi.org/10.1086/421163>.

affection' made possible by new media.[245] This expansion of the temporal register of

human behaviour prepares DeLillo's reader to think of humanity in relation to the

vast, and often imperceptible, scales of geological time which Vermeulen locates in

the vast deserts of this novel. *Body Time* has a comparable role of attuning Lauren, as

I will demonstrate, to possibilities for being which are explored and realised through

her navigations of the lived environment.

If the expansion of affect and temporality in *Point Omega* begins to take the

measure of the human in relation to the vast scales of geological time, remapping the

possibilities of human existence in the process, *Zero K* extends these concerns into a

deliberation on the posthuman existence of Artis Martineau, who is frozen at the

moment of her death. Contemplating the sight of 'the dead, or maybe dead [...] the

cryogenic dead, upright in their capsules', Artis' stepson Jeffrey reflects that 'this was

art in itself, nowhere else but here'.[246] If the narration of Artis' preserved

consciousness recalls Samuel Beckett's late work, for instance *Company*, with its

evocation of existence sustained only, yet inexhaustibly, in language, it also looks

back to Lauren's extinguishing of selfhood in *The Body Artist*. The name Artis and

her physical transformation before her preservation likewise recalls Lauren's own

body artistry. If Artis' preservation is another version of Lauren's body art, the event

of her preservation in a remote and architecturally impressive desert compound

littered with human sculptures, which Jeffrey calls 'mannequins', also recalls the

'land art' of *Underworld*.[247] Artis' preservation in one of the 'body pods […] super-

insulated plastic tubes' paradoxically exposes her to the vast physical and temporal

---

[245] Mark Hansen, 'The Time of Affect, or Bearing Witness to Life', *Critical Inquiry*, 30.3
(2004), 584–626 (p. 591) <https://doi.org/0093-1896/04/3003-0004>.
[246] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 74.
[247] Don DeLillo, *Underworld* (London: Picador, 1997), p. 126; *Zero K*, p. 146.

scales of the planet itself, entangling the possibilities of her life with the unknown future of a world facing destruction through human activity.[248]

If these works can be said to constitute DeLillo's contribution to thinking human life in the Anthropocene, it is the case that these themes exist at the margins of *The Body Artist*'s exploration of the way death and mourning instantiate a radically altered experience of time. It is the case, too, that *The Body Artist* steps back from, or had not yet arrived at, these more explicitly ecological and political concerns, in its detailed exploration of how phenomenological experience of the lived environment supports human creativity. The novel brings together earlier interests in the redemptive capacities of art with a new engagement in thinking narrative and the novel form as entangled with the lived environment. More so than any other work in DeLillo's oeuvre, *The Body Artist* considers the novel itself as a lived environment, an equally architectural and textual space for artistry, self-transformation and recovery. DeLillo's exploration of postmodern simulacrum, consumerism and human detachment from the lived environment in modernity has, as Martucci recognises, always been accompanied by a broadly environmental 'concern with our consciousness of the material world'.[249] As yet underexplored (though addressed in this chapter), however, is the role that *The Body Artist* plays in shaping the transition from this 'environmental unconscious' to the explicitly anthropocentric concerns of his most recent novels.[250]

If place and the lived environment have been underrepresented in criticism of *The Body Artist*, the importance of narrative in Lauren's recovery has received critical attention, primarily in terms of Lauren's departure from a non-time of grief and

---

[248] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 140. In this novel the process of 'gathering' I will discuss in this chapter reaches a limit point, where existence beyond death has to incorporate the collation, and preservation of, all aspects of life into a single, indivisible — yet potentially vast and endless — moment of consciousness.

[249] Martucci, p. 11.

[250] Martucci, p. 163.

mourning into a newly emergent relation to narrative time at the novel's conclusion, which is an interpretation I broadly agree with. In particular, the release from grief and sense of recovery that Lauren experiences at the close of the novel has been read as a product of the novel's narrative closure. As Rachel Smith observes, at its close, *The Body Artist* 'succumbs to the narrative temporal requirements of the novel form' which itself affords a degree of comfortability and stability to Lauren's worldly existence through a return to a more recognisable temporalisation.[251] At the same time, I find that a purposeful discussion of the relationship between narrative, the lived environment and human flourishing in this novel has been somewhat foreclosed by this critical focus on *The Body Artist*'s rendering of the loss, and return of narrative in temporal terms, specifically in terms of the stilled, uncertain, non-narrative temporality which Lauren experiences after Rey's suicide. Smith's analysis of the creative and political possibilities of the non-time of mourning — for instance the focus on the way that *The Body Artist* 'delinks time from its mediating spatial structures and exposes its indeterminacy and discontinuity' (p. 104) — is indicative of the wider critical suppression of place and the lived environment.[252] DeLillo's own comment in 2003 that '*The Body Artist* is about time, language and grief', quoted in Cleopatra Kontoulis and Eliza Kitis' article, itself titled under these three headings, is indicative of the frame in which the novel has been received.[253] This holds particularly true amongst some of the commentators who observed close affinities between DeLillo's novel and Heidegger's thought, for instance Cornel Bonca's and Kalvado's. Whilst Smith's statement that time is 'delinked' from its 'mediating spatial structures' acknowledges the structuring role of the lived environment in shaping temporal experience, the separation of time and experience from these

---

[251] Rachel Smith, 'Grief Time: The Crisis of Narrative in Don DeLillo's The Body Artist', *Polygraph: An International Journal of Culture and Politics*, 18 (2006), 99–110 (p. 102).

[252] Rachel Smith, p. 104.

[253] Cleopatra Kontoulis and Eliza Kitis, 'Don DeLillo's The Body Artist: Time, Language and Grief', *Janus Head*, 12.1 (2011), 222–42 (p. 222).

'mediating structures' has often led critics to focus on Lauren's experience of a 'non-place' that emerges in the time of mourning.

Writing of this departure from place through a discussion of 'landscape', Tyler Kessel develops an understanding of the time and space of mourning as a form of Outside. Kessel rightly notes it is necessary to think 'of the house as a concept, which involves an economy between inside and outside'.[254] Yet for Kessel, the threshold of the household is superficial, and precedes the crossing of another threshold as the novel enters into the space and time of mourning no longer governed by the crossing of a threshold in literal space but by a departure from physical space into an Outside, a 'landscape of estrangement' beyond time and space.[255] Kessel conceives of the 'landscape' of the novel, 'the Outside', as having little relation to the landscape or environment itself, as the unconditional hospitality that Lauren offers to Mr Tuttle creates an absolute Outside that is a total departure from the lived environment into the non-space of the event. In this way, Lauren's welcoming of Mr Tuttle into her home unravels the distinction between guest and host, and the distinction between the interiority of the house and the exteriority that Mr Tuttle represents, fulfilling the ethical role of Derridean hospitality without condition: 'Lauren's welcoming of [Mr Tuttle], of his interruption, signifies a welcoming of the Outside that constitutes an absolute hospitality'.[256] This ethical analysis risks underestimating the remembering of, and return to, place and home in the constitution of this encounter between Lauren and the otherness Mr Tuttle embodies.

This Outside, a departure from space, is mirrored in the critical discussion by Hikaru Fujii's conception of the Outside in the novel in temporal terms, as Mr Tuttle,

---

[254] Tyler Kessel, 'A Question of Hospitality in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 49.2 (2008), 185–204 (p. 201 n. 9) <https://doi.org/10.3200/CRIT.49.2.185-204>.

[255] Tyler Kessel, *Reading Landscape in American Literature: The Outside in the Fiction of Don DeLillo* (New York: Cambria Press, 2011), p. 24.

[256] Kessel, *Reading Landscape in American Literature: The Outside in the Fiction of Don DeLillo*, p. 189.

rightly arguing that 'the linear movement of narrative time […] guarantees that those moments [of death and grief] will pass out of the present. Tuttle defies this promise of time'.[257] In this way, Mr Tuttle constitutes, as should be clear by this point, the experience of a temporal Outside; in Fujii's Deleuzian register, '[t]ime becomes a subject because it is the folding of the Outside'.[258] Both these discussions reflect the concerns in Peter Boxall's description of the 'non-place' and 'non-time' of mourning.[259]

Given the increasing critical awareness of the role of the environment in DeLillo's fiction, discussed above in relation to Martucci, and the recent evocation of human entanglement in the vast scales of planetary time in his writing, for instance in Vermeulen's essay, it is surprising that the criticism of *The Body Artist* cited above has tended to overlook the importance of the lived environment in Lauren's negotiation of mourning and eventual recovery in this novel.[260] In addressing recovery not in relation to Lauren's return to public life but in terms of a search for worldly belonging, I seek to reorientate discussion of the novel to address Lauren's creativity as an issue relating to dwelling, or perhaps as the recovery of dwelling itself. I now turn to the opening chapter, which presents Lauren and Rey's 'final morning' together, and a poignant moment of dwelling before Rey's death.

'This final morning that they were here'

The primary narrative of the novel unfolds at 'a large house on an empty coast' (p. 36) where Lauren and Rey live, until Rey's suicide, and where Lauren returns to mourn and recover from her husband's death. The novel's opening scene

---

[257] Hikaru Fujii, *Outside, America: The Temporal Turn in Contemporary American Fiction* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 88.

[258] Fujii, p. 88.

[259] Boxall, p. 226.

[260] Martucci recognises the importance of place in *The Body Artist*, but maintains a focus on 'consumerism and our consciousness the material world', explored for Martucci most comprehensively and explicitly by DeLillo in *Underworld*. *The Environmental Unconscious in Don DeLillo*, p. 163 n. 3.

follows Lauren and Rey taking breakfast in the kitchen of the seaside house directly before Rey's departure and eventual suicide later that day. The scene renders the flow of dwelling through narrative, both by building the household through its narrative structure and by shaping the event of dwelling that unfolds there. The opening chapter also works retrospectively to memorialise and preserve the memory of this mode of belonging, both invoking and mourning the departure of the Woolfian confidence in the capacity of art to 'make of the moment something permanent'.[261] Boxall comments of this morning scene:

> The prose reaches for a crispness, a fineness and a brilliance in the depiction of this unshadowed scene, a forensic separation of the components of the morning, that allows for the time of this day to be chiselled out, to stand stoneclad in all its presence and clarity. It is difficult to think of a stretch of prose, since Woolf's depiction of the fleeting moment, that has stilled time this effectively or this cleanly.[262]

This opening scene reflects this formal inheritance of modernism through its exploration of identity and worldly belonging in narrative, rendering the flow of dwelling through narrative. In this way, as I will show, the narration of this scene contemplates the capacity for the novel form, and its narrative conventions, to support worldly belonging.

Dwelling and being-at-home in narrative

Befittingly of a breakfast scene, there is little dialogue in the opening chapter. As a result, the narration introduces Lauren and Rey primarily through their performance of certain habits and preferences. The narrative builds through repeated descriptions of Lauren and Rey's actions ('Rey sat with the newspaper, stirring his coffee') and through the acknowledgement by Lauren's narrating consciousness of these actions as markers of identity: 'It was his coffee and his cup. They shared the

---

[261] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: Grafton, 1977), p. 151, qtd. in Boxall, p. 246 n. 7.
[262] Boxall, p. 218.

newspaper but it was actually, unspokenly, hers' (p. 8). Throughout, Lauren and Rey also perform gestures which demonstrate their unspoken knowledge of each other's preferences and routines: making 'his' toast, 'Lauren flipped it down again because it took two flips to get the bread to go brown' (p. 8). In response, Rey turns on the radio and finds the weather for Lauren, 'absently nodd[ing] his acknowledgement because it was his toast and his butter and then he turned on the radio and got the weather' (p. 8).[263]

By circumscribing all narrative movement within this domestic scene, the opening chapter creates in its reader a strong sense of immersion in the particular narrative environment. DeLillo arguably builds an analogous relationship between the novel form and the household itself, an effect further developed by the intensity of Lauren's own experience of belonging and identity in this time and place: 'You know more surely who you are on a strong bright day after a storm when the smallest falling leaf is stabbed with self-awareness' (p. 7). When Lauren describes how birds perched around the house might view it, she reflects the sense of immersion in a bounded narrative environment which I am pointing to here:

> What impossible worlds they see. Think. What a shedding of every knowable surface and process. She wanted to believe the bird was seeing her, a woman with a teacup in her hand, and never mind the folding back of day and night, the apparition of a space set off from time. (p. 22)

At the same time, this exacting narration monumentalises not so much the household itself as a space, but the moment of Lauren and Rey's dwelling in which this place comes into being. Put differently, the household itself as an enveloping architectural structure emerges here only as the space of the event of Lauren and Rey's dwelling.

---

[263] The reader only learns some pages later that the radio and the weather are markers of Lauren's identity, when Rey turns the radio back off, 'such astonishing shit' (p. 14), before Lauren repeats Rey's initial action of turning it on and searching for the weather (p. 23).

To demonstrate further what I mean by this I turn to some examples of the way that Lauren and Rey's dwelling depends on their shared attunement to the lived environment around them. Elsewhere, Lauren's repeated assertions of individual identity, '[t]hey shared the newspaper but it was actually, unspokenly, hers' (p. 8); 'they both used the computer but it was spiritually hers' (p. 12) have a similar effect, of representing subjects whose identities are inseparably bound up in one another. Above all, it is Lauren's narration which gathers together Rey, Lauren and the things in their environment into a scene of harmonious belonging-together. The repetition of things and technologies associated with each person, and of personal pronouns themselves, accumulate in this scene, simultaneously distinguishing between Lauren and Rey whilst also depicting identity as relational, differential and performative — a product of the 'sedimented acts' of speech,[264] citation and corporeal performances which Judith Butler argues shape individual subjectivity.[265]

The gathering effect of Lauren's narration is exemplified in the heteroglossic nature of Lauren's narrative interpretation and mediation of the scene. One moment unfolds like this: 'Rey was always saying, or said once, and she carried a voice in her head that was hers and it was a dialogue or a monologue […] a voice that flowed from a story in the paper' (p. 16). The inclusion of a conjunction here ('Rey was always saying, or said once, *and* she carried a voice in her head') renders it uncertain as to whether it is Rey who told Lauren that she 'carrie[s] a voice in her head', or that it is Lauren's reflection we are hearing, or perhaps an interjection from an undramatised narrator. Whilst the statement cannot be grammatically attributed to Rey, his voice still enters Lauren's *as* that voice in her head, even if the reader does

---

[264] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (1988), 519-531 (p. 523).

[265] For Butler, 'there is no performer prior to the performed, the performance is performative [and] the performance constitutes the appearance of a "subject"'. Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination' in D. Fuss ed., *Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 13-31 (p. 21).

not have access to it. In this way the narrating consciousness, 'hers', contains alterity within it, and is shaped not only by Lauren's thoughts but by Rey and by things in the environment they inhabit, too.

Remembrance

When read with knowledge of Rey's death, the opening chapter carries subtle intimations of violence which might previously have seemed innocuous: when Lauren comments that Rey has cut himself shaving, Rey replies 'I want God to see my face' (p. 14); when Lauren mentions a strange noise in the house (that later turns out to be Mr Tuttle) Rey answers, 'Good. I'm glad […] You need the company' (p. 19). Likewise, Lauren's reflections on how the birds perched around the house might view it further as an 'apparition', discussed above, further reflect a growing view of this moment as something fleeting, ghostly and alien, as if accessible only from beyond a divide that is impossible to bridge. The dwelling that unfolds in the opening scene threatens, in this view, to become a mode of belonging after Rey's death, accessible only through an act of memory, as if from Outside. Knowledge of Rey's death raises the possibility that this scene might be narrated retrospectively, by a consciousness looking back on this scene to recover the narrative memory of some final moments of dwelling before Rey's death. As Peter Boxall comments of this chapter, it is 'a scene which is, in some ways, already a memory of a scene, already laden with the weight of being the Last Day'.[266]

Viewed this way, Lauren's narration of the final morning with Rey works not only to make sense of events leading to Rey's death, but to recover the texture and details of the 'sedimented acts' of daily life, of everyday habits and performances which weaved together to build their worldly belonging in this place. The memory of Rey's identifying behaviours are as important for Lauren's self-identity as her own,

---

[266] Boxall, p. 217.

particularly after his death, the meaningful sense of who 'she' was (or is) relying on the interplay of 'his' and 'her' particular way of being. Matthew Escobar rightly notes 'Lauren's fixation on mentally identifying to whom each object in the kitchen belongs [...] distinctions that Lauren needs in order to feel that she exists as a separate consciousness'.[267] In the aftermath of Rey's death this economy of subjectivity, both relational and differential, is threatened with collapse. At the same time, as Lauren continues to live in the seaside home, her knowledge of Rey's accumulated gestures, ritualised habits, and ways of interacting with objects tends towards sustaining Rey's subjectivity, and her own, when she is alone in the household after his death. From this perspective, the narration of the final morning can be understood, primarily, as an act of narratively gathering details from Lauren's and Rey's past in the present moment after Rey's death. I understand this as a process to fulfil Lauren's need to distinguish between herself and Rey in order to establish a sense of autonomy after his death, whilst the narrative's repeated distinctions between Lauren and Rey's preferences also attest to the possibility that Lauren is shaping fragments from her past into a coherent narrative of selfhood in this scene. Taken collectively, these details make it is possible to read this narrative of the final morning as part of Lauren's mourning and remembrance of Rey, a form of remembrance akin to a narrative memorialisation of their dwelling.

Reading and gathering

To back up the proposition that Lauren's narration of the final morning might be a retrospective narrative gathering, a 'reading' of her own memories, it is necessary to consider the act of reading itself as it unfolds at the narrative level in this scene. As Lauren reads the newspaper she encounters living others there, navigating 'endless lines of identical print with people living somewhere in the words' (p. 19).

---

[267] Matthew Escobar, *The Persistence of the Human: Consciousness, Meta-Body and Survival in Contemporary Film and Literature* (Boston: Brill, 2016), p. 91.

Lauren finds herself transported, 'halfway around the world' (p. 19), as 'she more or less saw herself talking to a doctor in the bush somewhere, with people hungry in the dust' (pp. 23–24). Her sense of being located both in her kitchen and the place she is reading about, and of entry into the 'the strange contained reality of paper and ink' (p. 19), also mirrors the reader's own crossing of the threshold into the interior space of the text and house where they encounter Rey and Lauren, foregrounding the novel's status as a world brought into existence in the event of reading. The narrative further evokes the experience of reading by creating a dialogue between Lauren's narrating consciousness and the narrative she is reading in the paper, so that reading becomes the event of an encounter between Lauren and the others who are described in the newspaper. In this way that act of reading, and so the newspaper itself as a thing in the environment, shapes the narration of Lauren's final morning with Rey. The displacement which occurs as Lauren reads, '[s]he read and drifted. She was here and there' (p. 23), further suggests the displacement of individuality discussed above. As Kontoulis and Kitis note of this scene, 'Lauren's presumed subjectivity has already collapsed into the environment'.[268]

It is equally possible to see this displacement of individual subjectivity as a move towards further entanglement with things in the lived environment. The process of reading discussed here draws Lauren outside of herself into a strangely bounded location: as Lauren reflects, 'when you look at a page and distinguish one line from another it begins to gather you into it' (p. 19). Yet Tyler Kessel's suggestion that this scene narrates Lauren's first experience of a Deleuzian Outside underestimates the extent to which being Outside yourself is inherent in human existence. Instead, I read this scene as a different, yet related instance of what I am calling 'narrative gathering' in this chapter: here, Lauren's reading acts as an interpretative process of gathering that is mediated, in turn, by the thing in the environment (the newspaper) that shapes

---

[268] Kontoulis and Kitis, p. 229.

her dwelling and identity. Rather than a departure into a non-space *outside* the lived environment, the gathering together of Lauren, Rey, the people in the newspaper, the newspaper itself, and all the other things in the environment is the event of dwelling itself, shaped in particular here by narrative media and the act of reading which constitute the mediating-interpreting texture of this unfolding moment of dwelling.

The unexpected appearance of Rey's obituary, which closes the opening chapter of the novel also evokes, for the reader, Lauren's own shock at hearing the news of Rey's sudden death, as well as the arrival of the newspaper version of Rey's life in the outside world into the interior space of the home. I follow Rudiger Heinze's descriptions of these shifts in form as 'insertions', as I find the term productively suggestive of Lauren's own tendency 'to place herself, to insert herself into certain stories in the newspaper' (p. 14), which I have already discussed above.[269] In this obituary, the reader likewise confronts, with Lauren, the problem of incorporating the version of Rey conveyed in the 'strange contained reality' (p. 19) of his obituary with her own knowledge of the man. Heinze persuasively argues, however, that the disruptive 'insertion' of different forms (the biographical obituary into the intimate narrative) holds an ethical function for the novel's reader:

> The montage allows and even forces the readers to distance themselves, to reassess the impression about Rey attained in the first chapter, thus relativizing everything read so far […] In the end, the reader has to wager a guess which narrative to trust, and the result will most likely be a blend of the two narratives […] The posing of objectivity [in the obituary form] only reveals the impossibility of objectivity, and room is left for the reader to fill the gap of how Rey's death affects Lauren […] the insertion creates the paradoxical effect of achieving intersubjective empathy through distancing.[270]

---

[269] Rüdiger Heinze, *Ethics of Literary Forms in Contemporary American Literature* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005), p. 67.
[270] Heinze, p. 70.

On one hand, the 'insertion' of this newspaper article into the narrative builds a sense of readerly immersion in the household environment, positioning DeLillo's reader almost as if she were Lauren, reading the newspaper at the kitchen table in the seaside house. On the other, the potential for empathic contact that Heinze locates in the shift between forms perhaps downplays the force of rupture, and the disruption of a mode of belonging, enacted by the arrival of this news.[271]

In this way DeLillo questions the narrative of dwelling that opened the novel, presenting the reader with two narrative representations of Rey's existence, neither of which continue to offer the sense of worldly belonging that Lauren had experienced prior to Rey's death. The implied arrival of the obituary on Lauren's kitchen table likewise ruptures her connection to the narrative of dwelling which had disclosed that table as a meaningful thing in the environment, and so in turn threatens her connection to the table itself, and to the household environment as a world of belonging. The novel asks its reader to imagine that Lauren is encountering Rey through the process of reading, drifting and inserting herself into the life that the obituary accounts, allowing herself to be gathered into this reality and allowing it to come to presence in the context of the household space that harbours her memories of being with Rey. In the way the novel foregrounds the similarity, and the play between, Lauren's narrative exploration of a lived environment (the seaside home before Rey's death) and the phenomenological exploration of a narrative environment (his obituary). The arrival of the obituary in the household marks the end of Lauren's harmonious belonging to this place, and the beginning of a new search for dwelling; a search which, paradoxically, is already underway in the narrative representation of life before Rey's death.

---

[271] This is particularly the case in Heinze's reflection that the term 'insertions' 'does not […] do justice to the montage of different kinds of texts, since it suggests a fissure, an alien-ness of texture, a "not belonging to," an undue interruption'. Heinze, p. 68.

Drawing on this discussion, I would like to highlight further the importance accorded, in the opening chapter of *The Body Artist*, to reading as an activity that shapes human dwelling. The experience of reading is, as discussed above, one of movement into a 'strange closed reality' (p. 19), but a reality which converges with shapes, and is shaped by, Lauren's experience of situatedness in the seaside home. Reading, here, is the event of being situated in an environment which is itself the open space of an encounter with alterity, the space of an event of crossing the spatial and temporal gap between the physical environment of the household in which Lauren is reading, and the textual environment where the other resides. This movement is conveyed through Lauren's sense that '[s]he read and drifted. She was here and there' (p. 23). In this experience of movement between the space occupied consciously by Lauren and that of the text, the reader allows the 'reality' of the newspaper story to enter, so that it 'seeps through the house for a week' (p. 19). This opening scene asks the reader to reflect on reading as an act of hospitality inseparable from dwelling, an event of gathering into a space and projection outside of the self, of reaching out to welcome otherness into the space of dwelling.

The connection between reading and an entry into the lived environment here makes it possible to conceive of the text as a special thing that shapes dwelling by gathering together human and non-human entities in a world mediated by this thing. Lauren Hartke's dwelling is shaped by reading, an experience which entailed hospitality, allowing otherness to enter the household and a gathering together of different people in their shared inhabitation of a worldly environment. Lauren's dwelling is dependent on these others and the environing world of the text which shapes her own narrative interpretation of the world around her. I have taken some time over the novel's presentation of the reading process, here, as these considerations are central to my interpretation of the way that Lauren's remembrance of Rey unfolds through the narrative navigation of the lived space of the household

after his death. Likewise, the understanding of reading as a narrative process of encountering entities in an environment underpins my discussion, below, of the key event and philosophical issue of the novel: the appearance, presence and disappearance of Mr Tuttle.

Mr Tuttle, alterity and things in the environment

Choosing to remain alone at the seaside home after Rey's death, Lauren's inhabitation there unfolds in what Peter Boxall described as 'the time of mourning, in a kind of evacuated time which has lost its narrative quality, which can neither inherit the legacy of the past, nor move towards the possibility of a new and undiscovered future'.[272] The experience of grief and loss disrupts the interpretative process of narrative gathering and mediation which previously shaped Lauren's sense of identity and worldly belonging. This disruption of narrative interpretation of worldly experience is both spatial — disrupting Lauren's sense of the lived environment as meaningful — and temporal. Put differently, as the narrative entanglement of self, other and environment depicted in the opening chapter falters, so too does Lauren's orientation in passing time. In Kontoulis' and Kitis' terms, 'the breakdown of individuated subjectivity [in the novel] is commensurate with the dissolution of the concept of time as we know it'.[273] At the same time the fundamentally narrative process of drawing meaningful connections between elements of the environment, and reflecting on meaningful relations between self and other in that environment, continues to underpin Lauren's search for dwelling after Rey's death; albeit in a form that has lost its narrative character. With these considerations in mind, I also read the scenes that follow Rey's death as exploring the relationship between the 'thin simultaneity' of technological immediacy and the experience of temporal suspension discussed above.[274] In doing so I foreground the creative possibilities of rupture for

---

[272] Boxall, p. 217.
[273] Kontoulis and Kitis, p. 227.
[274] Boxall, p. 222.

reshaping worldly belonging, whilst proposing that worldly belonging itself is inextricably tied to narrative forms of knowledge in this novel.

After Rey's death, Lauren seeks to explore her memory of Rey and their dwelling together through the navigation of the household environment into which the memories of this past life are dispersed. In the face of this dispersion, Lauren continues to pursue the process of gathering which was fundamental to the form of worldly belonging figured in the novel's opening chapter. Yet, in the wake of Rey's death this process of gathering is no longer one comparable with the reading, narrating and meaningful inhabiting of the lived environment. The capacity for capturing a moment of dwelling through narrative memorialisation gives way to an interest in tape recordings and webcam footage, which present themselves to Lauren as media which respond to the stilled temporality of death and offer creative possibilities for shaping worldly inhabitation. The transition in interest towards non-narrative, technological media here opens a play between narrative and non-narrative modes of disclosure, referentiality and worldly self-orientation central to the exploration of dwelling in the novel, in particular the interplay between written signification in the opening chapter and new media technologies in the middle section of the novel. As such, the possibility that Lauren sought to retrieve the memory of her past through retrospective narration of the morning scene is displaced here by a sense that narrative has lost its capacity to interpretatively gather and mediate relations between self, other and world. As I will discuss here, the stilled time of death and the modern technologies that preserve traces of life make possible a totalising gathering, one which eliminates temporal movement and distance and monumentalises this stilled temporality in the form of Mr Tuttle.

Encountering life in technological media

Lauren's continued desire to inhabit the house with Rey after his death, what Peter Boxall has called her need to find him 'alive in the stalled time of a refusal to

relinquish a loved one', is evident in fleeting encounters with Rey shortly after his death.[275] Lauren 'felt him in the rooms on the second floor' (p. 32), in a part of the house where he used to work on his scripts. Rey's previous presence and activity here allows Lauren to locate him, not in the memory of the belonging that existed between Rey and Things in the environment, as before his death, but instead as a 'thing' himself, dispersed and unravelled into the environment:

> He used to prowl these rooms talking into a tiny tape recorder, smoke in his face, reciting ideas about some weary script to a writer somewhere whose name he could never recall […] Now he was the smoke, Rey was, the thing in the air, vaporous, drifting into every space sooner or later, unshaped, but with a face that was somehow part of the presence, specific to the prowling man. (p. 33)

Here, Rey's ghostly presence hangs in the air and is associated with the house itself, the 'apparition' which Lauren navigated in the opening chapter (p. 22). If Lauren and Rey had previously belonged with Things in the environment through their interaction and use of them, Rey's presence now resides more than ever in these Things, the traces of his existence dispersed through the contents of the household.

Whilst the sparse, modernist narrative style introduced in the opening chapter of the novel is sustained after Rey's death, the lack of temporal progression that Lauren experiences, of 'nothing going on' (p. 38), drives a loss of interest in language-based, narrative forms. In this non-narrative time, Lauren shapes newfound attachments to non-narrative media technologies which correspond with her experience of this uneventful, atemporal and evacuated present. Her pursuit of a departure from narrative knowledge is fulfilled by these media technologies and their alternative modes of referentiality, which upset the sense of storytelling inherent in

---

[275] Boxall, p. 216.

the opening chapter of the novel through their resistance to event, progression and closure.

By 'reading' the environment for traces of Rey's presence – the smell of smoke, the memory of his dwelling in that room, how he prowled, smoked and spoke into a recording device – Lauren allows Rey's otherness, like that of the figures in the newspaper, to emerge from a distant reality into the space she now occupies, to spread like smoke into the house and to fill every space there, suffusing it with his presence, 'unshaped' but discernible, 'with a face' (p. 33) that might even be visible to Lauren. This fleeting encounter with Rey is achieved through a moment of narrative interpretation reminiscent of the narrative dwelling that unfolded before Rey's death, connecting the 'apparition' of the house and Rey's spectral presence through their shared narrativity and suggesting the possibility of a meaningful form of narrative remembrance.

After sensing Rey's spectral presence in this part of the house, Lauren finds Mr Tuttle one floor higher, in a smaller bedroom connected to an empty room. When Lauren first speaks to Mr Tuttle, she recognises the speech he produces as coming from these specific recordings. At their second meeting the tape recorder, as yet unmentioned as an object in itself, 'lay blinking in the middle of the table' (p. 54).[276] All of this suggests that Mr Tuttle is a figure constituted through and in technological media, an expression of the capacity of this technological thing, formerly 'his', to create a bridge between Rey and Lauren: in David Cowart's terms, Mr Tuttle 'turns out to be a human tape recorder'.[277] These recordings of Rey's conversations with his scriptwriter allow Lauren a more direct encounter with Rey's performed, professional

---

[276] The primacy of this medium in particular, over and above the webcam feed and the answering machine, media whose qualities also possess, or are possessed by, Mr Tuttle, is suggestive of the ongoing negotiation of human dwelling in narrative in the novel. Unlike a webcam, for instance, a tape recording shares strongly in the linear character of writing, particularly its looping line-like strip of magnetic tape.

[277] David Cowart, *Don DeLillo: The Physics of Language* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), p. 203.

selfhood — a part of his life she had little access to. Most importantly, the recordings afford more immediacy of contact and sense of presence than Lauren's memories of Rey. Lauren's creative mourning of Rey explores the possibilities of overcoming the loss inherent in language, and indeed all communication, in order to return the lost other to living presence. This begins, as discussed above, with the newspaper and particularly with Rey's obituary, which for Lauren allowed a 'sending' of otherness into the household space. Technological media such as the webcam of Kotka extend this interest for Lauren by eliminating, for her almost entirely, the dispersion and loss involved in 'crossing' or 'sending' information across space and time, from one reality to another. This sense of presence is strongest 'in the dead times' when the road is empty, when there are no cars entering or leaving Kotka but instead simply the road itself, a medium for both crossing, for arrival and departure, in 'a place stripped of everything but a road that approaches and recedes, both realities occurring at once' (p. 39). It is through a process of memorial gathering and recollection of the lost other that Lauren attempts to overcome death and bring the technical traces of Rey to life in their remote seaside home.

In the non-narrative time of Lauren's mourning these media traces do not weave, as Rey's and Lauren's conversations had done in the opening chapter, into narrative reflections which form a 'dialogue or monologue' between them (p. 16). Instead they take on substantial corporeal form in the arrival of Mr Tuttle, who emerges as an embodiment of the loss of narrative movement through time, of the desubjectified state of mourning and the simultaneity of technological immediacy. Mr Tuttle is the form of worldly existence that emerges in an 'eternal, and hence atemporal, nowness' that arises from the loss of narrative's capacity for meaningful mediation in the novel.[278] After his appearance, Mr Tuttle first reproduces for Lauren fragments of speech recorded by Rey in the weeks and months before his suicide,

---

[278] Kontoulis and Kitis, p. 227.

messages that would be sent to a scriptwriter for one of his films. The first time Mr Tuttle produces Rey's and Lauren's voices, he reproduces a conversation between them captured on this recording device:

> He gestured as he spoke, moving his hand to the words, and she began to realize she'd said these things to Rey, here in the house, or things similar. They were routine remarks about a call she'd had from friends who wanted to visit. She remembered, she recalled dimly that she'd been standing at the foot of the stairs and that he'd been on the second floor, Rey had, walking up and down the hall, doing scriptwork. (p. 51)

With time, Mr Tuttle produces vocalisations of other memories Lauren has of Rey that were not recorded on tape.[279] Yet importantly, it is these technologically mediated traces of Rey (and Mr Tuttle's ability to reproduce them) which provide a signature of Rey's authentic existence in this man.

As such, Mr Tuttle embodies the creative possibilities of immediacy and presence encapsulated in technological media, and in Lauren's 'refusal to relinquish a loved one' into the realm of remembrance and spectrality.[280] He is a figure, as discussed above in regard to Rachel Smith's criticism, of a creative possibility shaped through grief and divorce from narrative time, which was unavailable to Lauren before the rupture of her narratively mediated dwelling. In Mr Tuttle's existence, the worldly belonging that was shaped through Lauren and Rey's inhabiting of and interaction with the environment gives way to another process of gathering, where Lauren gathers traces of Rey's presence – in technological media, in the space of the house itself – and allows the radical alterity of death to take its place in the household space. Whilst Mr Tuttle exists, for Lauren, as a living being that she discovers in the

---

[279] '[H]e was talking about cigarette brands, Players and Gitanes, I'd walk a mile for a Camel, and then she heard Rey's, the bell-clap report of Rey's laughter, clear and spaced, and this did not come from a tape recorder' (BA, p. 61).

[280] Boxall, p. 216. It is notable that Lauren's remembrance of Rey's presence focuses on his professional activities in the household only *after* the 'insertion' of the obituary which described Rey's life as a film director into the narrative, suggesting that particular narrative has 'seeped' into the household space and informed Lauren's remembrance of Rey.

house, it is more accurate to locate his existence in the space of the gathering together of Lauren's body, the media traces of Rey's voice, and the household where her encounter with Mr Tuttle unfolds. Put differently, the rupture of narrative interpretation and mediation brings with it a collapse of the distance between Things, environment and body in the novel, and Mr Tuttle is a figure of this collapse.

Following my discussion of Mr Tuttle's appearance, it seems more apposite to locate Mr Tuttle existence not in a non-place outside of the lived environment, but in the household space itself, or more accurately in the gathering together of Lauren's body, the media traces of Rey's voice, and the household where her encounter with Mr Tuttle unfolds. Whilst Mr Tuttle exists for Lauren as a living being that she discovers in the house, it is more accurate to locate their encounter in the collapse of the distance between things, environment and body, a collapsing which occurs through the rupture of narrative interpretation and mediation.

Mr Tuttle as a Thing: the substantiality of the event

In order to understand the relationship between the issue of remembrance to the lived experience of dwelling, it is important to consider that the working of gathering in *Dasein*'s encounter with the world is evident, in Heidegger's writings, not only in discourse, thought and memory, but also in the projects that shape and give meaning to the lived environment, creating relations between people and Things in those environments. *Denken* thought is already formulated by Heidegger in terms of gathering. In 'Building Dwelling Thinking', building and dwelling are likewise conceived of in terms of gathering, enabling a clearer thinking of the relation between these practices.

In what sense is Mr Tuttle a thing? In 'Building Dwelling Thinking', the thing which gathers the fourfold into dwelling is nothing like a fixed point or object that secures a system of relations. Rather, its 'thinging' is temporary, constituted by its sustaining a relationship between the entities it gathers together. Heidegger argues,

for example, that a bridge makes possible relations between different elements of the environment and between the people who populate this environment precisely through this process of gathering:

> The bridge swings over the stream "with ease and power." It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge expressly causes them to lie across from each other. […] With the banks, the bridge brings the stream to the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighbourhood. The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream. […] The bridge initiates the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may go to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side. (BDT, p. 150, emphasis added)

Whilst individuals might dwell on the bridge itself, tarrying, reflecting and interacting there, the bridge would not exist without the relations it creates between previously separate people and environments. The bridge does not exist independently of the event of drawing people and landscapes dwelling together into the same 'neighbourhood' (BDT, p. 150). Also significant for my conception of Mr Tuttle as a Thing is the observation in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' that dwelling unfolds through encounters with death and otherness: the bridge's existence as an event of gathering, in that example, shapes an encounter with alterity and mortality central to dwelling. Via the bridge people 'go to other banks', encountering other locations and ways of life, and, 'in the end, as mortals, to the other side' (BDT, p. 150). In what sense is the bridge involved in encountering death, crossing over to 'the other side'? In order to understand what Heidegger has in mind here, it is necessary first to attend to the distinction Heidegger draws between 'men' — who, 'lingering and hastening', make their way 'to and fro' — and 'mortals' in this passage. To become a mortal, for Heidegger, is to attend to death as the ultimate possibility of our lives. The encounter with alterity that the bridge initiates, the possibilities for crossing that it permits

enable reflection on the radical alterity of death, bringing this impossible possibility within the realm of human meaning and reflection.

As R. L. Mølbak writes in relation to this passage, the bridge has 'the substantiality of an event […] defined in and through the particular elements of a gathering':

> [T]he bridge can only become the bridge that it is by constituting an event that draws the banks, the stream and the possibilities of a subject into it as part of its own gathering or world. It attains its individuality not from itself but from the locale which it draws together. Its thinghood resides in the distribution of the subjective and objective elements through which it shows itself and becomes this particular event of a bridge […] To say of the bridge that it has the substantiality of an event is thus to say that it has the nature of a specific belonging between subjects and objects that endures or stays for a while.[281]

The involvement of the bridge in emergence of a locale, and the possibilities of subjects who are gathered there, makes the bridge itself an event of dwelling rather than an independent architectural structure or environment in itself. Mr Tuttle can be seen in just such terms: an entity whose substantiality depends upon the creation, and sustainment, of Lauren and Rey's 'lingering' (BDT, p. 150) and 'staying' (BDT, p. 145) with each other after Rey's death. Mr Tuttle creates a belonging between Lauren and Rey in the latter's absence, but is himself the thing in the environment which mediates this belonging between them.

It is my view, then, that the problem of 'living memory' in *The Body Artist* revolves around a mode of gathering that unfolds, differentially, through narrative interpretation and through the immediacy of technological media. Mr Tuttle is likewise a technologically produced thing in the environment which gathers together

---

[281] R. L. Mølbak, 'From a Phenomenology of the Subject to a Phenomenology of the Event: Reconstructing the Ontological Basis for a Phenomenological Psychology', *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 43 (2012), 185–215 (p. 205).

Lauren and Rey; by speaking the words that Rey spoke and recorded on his tape recorder, Mr Tuttle fills, and enables Lauren to cross, the metaphysical gap between her and Rey. To be more precise still, he is the happening of a space in which Lauren is able to encounter Rey. The end of this event is the end of a gathering that brought Lauren and Rey into proximity after Rey's death, and so the end of the space that Mr Tuttle made possible, and the disappearance of Mr Tuttle himself. Like the bridge between two locales, Mr Tuttle exists only insofar as he is the happening of the space in which Lauren crosses the channel between her and Rey. The space that Mr Tuttle constitutes is the space of an event of relation between Lauren and Rey. Mr Tuttle suffuses the house with Rey's presence, and attains substantiality in doing so. In other words, Mr Tuttle constitutes, and exists in the happening of, the space of Lauren's creative remembrance and attempts to dwell.

Remembrance and the problem of loss

For Lauren, it is both important, and alarming that 'this was not some communication with the dead. It was Rey alive in the course of a talk he'd had with her, in this room, not long after they'd come here' (p. 61). The immediacy of Lauren's encounter with Rey is, in this sense, not reducible to a notion of life beyond death: '[h]e was talking to her, not to a screenwriter in Rome or Los Angeles […] it did not seem like an act of memory. It was Rey's voice all right, it was her husband's tonal soul, but she didn't think the man was remembering. It is happening now' (p. 61, p. 87). Memory here is paradoxically encountered as unfolding in the living present, as a form of contact with the living past which challenges understandings of memory and the retrieval of the past as a process of deferral, spectrality and loss associated with the technicity which made this living memory possible. The central difficulty in this encounter with Rey is that, in spite of the desire for Rey's return, his presence is reducible to the performative gathering of technical traces and remembrance of their dwelling in the house together, which is itself challenging to the

notion of individuated subjectivity that Lauren is seeking to recover after the rupture of Rey's death. When Mr Tuttle begins to give voice to other conversations between Rey and Lauren, Lauren (and DeLillo's reader) is forced to grapple with the possibility that subjectivity can be boiled down to these performative reiterations, which initially only give rise to the diminished existence of Mr Tuttle but soon affect the resurrection of Rey himself. Whilst Mr Tuttle embodies the creative possibilities of grief and mourning, it is not yet clear how the creation and existence of this figure will shape Lauren's recovery, or if it will do so at all. As long as Mr Tuttle exists, it seems that Lauren will not be able to recover from Rey's death or find a way to incorporate Rey, to keep him close but to establish the necessary distance in order for her own life to continue.

A tape recorder with physical reels of tape is a notably archaic technology in contemporary times and seems to demand reflection on the emergence as much as the experience of new media. The sense that Mr Tuttle's mimicry of Rey's tape recordings confirms, for Lauren, the authenticity of the interlocutor, is reminiscent of Friedrich Kittler's discussion of the use of magnetic tapes to confirm the identity of telegram operators in WWII, in his seminal work from 1986, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*.[282] As Kittler notes, the German Army High Command established the authenticity of messages received by checking the 'signature' of their messages against recordings left at home.[283] To provide a record of this signature for comparing the messages, they 'had the "handwriting" of every single agent recorded at the Wohldorf radio station close to Hamburg before they went abroad on their secret missions'.[284] In this way, unique inflections in the messages confirmed the presence of the operator's hand behind the incoming messages and allowed communication to

---

[282] Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
[283] Kittler, p. 107.
[284] Kittler, p. 107.

continue. Lauren is similarly willing to accept these technological confirmations of Rey's unique technological 'signature' or 'handwriting'. In spite of knowledge of Rey's death, Lauren accepts that she is encountering him there, that he is paradoxically 'alive' in Mr Tuttle. In this way it is the immediacy of technological media and not Lauren's memory that shapes Mr Tuttle and allows Lauren, in turn, to bring her memory of Rey into living presence.

The ethical and philosophical stakes of this desire for 'living memory' can be explored further by turning to a text where Jacques Derrida discusses memory and remembrance in Heidegger. In *Memories for Paul de Man*, Derrida emphasises the dispersion and loss at the heart of all remembrance and questions an oppositional tendency in Heidegger towards an 'all-gathering recollection' that would obliterate loss.[285] In *The Body Artist* Lauren's creative mourning of Rey explores the possibilities of overcoming the loss inherent in language, and indeed all communication, in order to return the lost other to living presence.

At issue here too, of course, is the character of Heidegger's philosophical project which shapes my interpretation of the novel. Beginning with *Being and Time*, Heidegger sought to address our forgetfulness of being and inaugurated a philosophical project which Nicholas de Warren describes, fittingly, as a 'singular struggle against forgetting'.[286] Heidegger's thinking of Being rests, in this sense, on the possibility of an 'all-gathering recollection' of Being through the history of language, of Being's sending through the historical traditions of philosophy.[287]

---

[285] Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* Qtd in Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, trans. by Cecile Lindsay and others (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 92. See also pp. 140-141 in Derrida's text.

[286] Nicolas de Warren, 'Memory in Continental Philosophy: Metaphor, Concept, Thinking', in *Memory: A History*, ed. by Dmitri Nikulin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 228–74 (p. 255).

[287] See also Mark Dooley and Liam Kavanagh, *The Philosophy of Derrida* (New York: Routledge, 2014). For these commentators, Heidegger is 'ultimately [a thinker] of gathering and adjustment' (p. 94).

Heidegger argues in *What is Called Thinking* that the German term for thought, *Gedanc*:

> [D]oes not mean the current meaning still left over in our present usage of the word "thought." A thought usually means an idea, a view or opinion, a notion. The root or originary word says: the gathered, all-gathering recollection. (WCT, p. 92)

Unsettling the opposition between thought and memory, Heidegger's argument performs, for Derrida, a problematic movement towards unity, gathering and originarity, reducing the 'difference' and 'disjunction' at the heart of all communication.[288]

In Chapter 1 I suggested that reading, when considered or practised in the vein and spirit of Heidegger's thought, could be understood as a process of interpretative gathering. In addressing this point I turned to Heidegger's discussion of the early Greek experience of language. For Heidegger, as discussed there, the early Greeks inhabited language not as rational animals in possession of the ability to order reality through speech, but as a manifestation of a human capacity for discourse, which itself responds to emergence the emergence of entities in the world into presence, and their gathering together into meaningful relations and contexts of experience. I cited there Heidegger's point that:

> The word *logos* names that which gathers all present beings into presencing and lets them lie before us in it […] The laying that gathers assembles in itself all destiny by bringing things and letting them lie before us, keeping each absent and present being in its place and on its way; and by its assembling it secures everything in the totality. Thus each being can be secured and sent into its own. (EGT, p. 68).

---

[288] Derrida, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, p. 141. Derrida refers here to disjunction as a 'de Manian motif'.

Particularly important in the context of this discussion is Heidegger's intimation that each being comes to presence not through human volition but instead is 'sent into its own', coming into being according its 'destiny'. Being itself is never revealed as *a* being, of course, but instead is thought, as this passage suggests, as occurring progressively, through time, in a simultaneous process of revealing and concealing which constitutes the *there* of lived experience. For Heidegger, the particular stage of the 'destiny' of being, in the time of the Greeks, finds expression in the fragment from Heraclitus around which his discussion revolves.

Heidegger's reading of the fragment from Heraclitus is one instance of the expression of being as it unfolds historically in different epochs. In *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)* Heidegger further explicated these considerations, as well as detailing how, in his view, this unfolding of being often remains unthought, only coming to expression in the works of certain writers at certain historical junctures (of which Heraclitus is an important example). This time, discussing the unfolding of being not in terms of language explicitly, but, as in the Heraclitus fragment, in terms of progressive historical conceptions of truth, Heidegger writes of 'the essence of truth':

> Most intrinsically proper to this essence is the fact that it is historical. The history of truth, the history of the shining forth, transforming, and grounding of its essence, contains only rare and widespread moments. For long periods of time, this essence seems congealed (cf. the lengthy history of truth as correctness: adaequatio), because what is sought and pursued is only the true that is determined by this essence. Truth never "is"; instead, it essentially occurs. For truth is the truth of beyng, and beyng "only" essentially occurs. Thus what essentially occurs is everything that belongs to truth, including time-space and consequently "time" and "space". (CPE, pp. 270–271)

In this passage Heidegger argues that the essence of truth is historical, is the truth of being itself as it unfolds progressively through different epochs. This argument is consistent in many ways with the discussion of *logos* as quoted above, in particular

the idea that 'truth', like the discoursing-gathering which underpins human language, is 'primarily clearing-concealment' tied to the progressive 'destiny' of being in different epochs and so to what Heidegger calls 'the self-concealing of beyng in the clearing of the "there"' (CPE, p. 271).

To demonstrate the importance of this discussion to *The Body Artist* it is necessary to recall that the Heraclitus fragments offer, for Heidegger, evidence of the early Greek understanding of truth in its essence, in terms similar both to the 'clearing-unconcealment' which Heidegger discusses in *Contributions* and 'truth in the sense of discoveredness (unconcealment)' in *Being and Time* (BT, p. 210). As Heidegger writes, 'in one of the fragments of Heraclitus – the oldest fragments of philosophical doctrine in which the λόγος [*logos*] is *explicitly* handled – the phenomenon of truth in the sense of discoveredness (unconcealment), as we have set it forth, shows through' (BT, p. 210). Heraclitus' fragments retain the trace of the pre-philosophical, pre-metaphysical era which they unknowingly inaugurate, evident in the way that Heidegger can speak of the continuity in the Greek's 'pre-philosophical and their philosophical ways of interpreting […] the essence of man' (BT, p. 157).

That the pre-philosophical 'essence' of truth (or indeed language) remains intact through all the distortions of the metaphysical tradition, that it has a 'history', if only one of 'rare and widespread moments', is a central issue in working with an understanding of human discoursing-gathering —including language, reading and phenomenal interpretation. Derrida in particular, as Jussi Backman notes, 'becomes increasingly sensitive to certain traditional commitments of the Heideggerian notion of the epochal history of metaphysics […] suspicious of the very notion of "history" as such, insofar as it implies, in the literal sense of the Greek ἱστορία, a teleologically structured narrative in which all elements ultimately come together'.[289]

---

[289] Backman, p. 77.

To relate this discussion to *The Body Artist*, I turn to a story, perhaps a joke,
Derrida offers about his relationship with Heidegger in *The Post Card*. There, Derrida
relates receiving a call from 'Heidegger' in 1979, three years after the thinker's death:

> The American operator asks me if I accept a "collect call" from Martin (she
> says Martine or Martini) Heidegger. I heard, as one often does in these
> situations […] voices that I thought I recognized on the other end of the
> intercontinental line, listening to me and watching my reaction. What will he
> do with the ghost or Geist of Martin? I cannot summarize here all the
> chemistry of the calculation that very quickly made me refuse ("It's a joke, I
> do not accept") after having had the name of Martini Heidegger repeated
> several times, hoping that the author of the farce would finally name himself.
> […] All of this must not lead you to believe that no telephonic
> communication links me to Heidegger's ghost, as to more than one other.
> Quite the contrary, the network of my hookups, you have the proof of it here,
> is on the burdensome side, and more than one switchboard is necessary in
> order to digest the overload. It is simply […] that my private relation with
> Martin does not go through the same exchange.[290]

Derrida does not miss the opportunity to raise the distinction between the 'network'
of connections between his work and Heidegger's and the kind of immediate,
unmediated encounter suggested by the telephone exchange. Instead, after attesting to
the veracity of the tale ('I know that I will be suspected of making it all up, since it is
too good to be true. But what can I do? It is true, rigorously, from start to finish')
Derrida returns the question of the correspondence between him and Heidegger to the
letters which make up *The Post Card* itself: 'It is true, and moreover demonstrable, if
one wishes to take the trouble of inquiring: there are witnesses and a postal archive of
the thing. I call upon these witnesses (these waystations between Heidegger and
myself) to make themselves known'.[291] In this way, and not least through the slippage
from Martin to Martine or Martini in his story, Derrida returns his reader to the

---

[290] Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. by Alan Bass
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 21.
[291] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 21.

'postal principle', and so to Heidegger's thought itself. As Derrida writes later in this work, describing the originary contamination of all 'essence' through the very event of sending itself, 'the postal principle does not happen to *differance, and even less to "Being,"* it destines them to itself from the very "first" *envoi* [dispatch]'.[292]

In *Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology*, Derrida considers revising his account of logocentrism to accommodate Heidegger's practice of interpreting *logos* in terms of gathering, writing that, 'at bottom logocentrism is perhaps not so much the gesture that consists in placing the *logos* at the centre as the interpretation of *logos* as *Versammlung*, that is, as the gathering that precisely concenters what it configures'.[293] At the same time, Derrida also acknowledged the importance of this act of gathering for meaningful understanding and thought, commenting elsewhere of Heidegger's tendency to gathering that 'I will not turn my uneasiness into a critique, because I do not believe that this gesture of gathering is avoidable. It is always productive, and philosophically necessary'.[294]

Art and dwelling

So far I have pointed towards the creative possibilities emerging from the rupture of Rey's death only in terms of the emergence of Mr Tuttle. Considering Lauren's remembrance and the emergence of Mr Tuttle as an artistic process means adopting a broad view of artistry and questioning the position of the 'artwork' as the privileged element in the relationship between art and Lauren's recovery, considered here in terms of her pursuit of worldly dwelling or belonging. This section considers more closely the question of artistry and dwelling as represented in DeLillo's novel, looking at how Heidegger's thought makes it possible to retain the sense of Mr Tuttle

---

[292] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 191.

[293] Jacques Derrida, 'Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology (Geschlecht IV)', ed. by John Sallis, trans. by John P. Leavey Jr (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 187.

[294] Jacques Derrida, "Désistance", p. 212, qtd. in Sean Gaston, *Derrida, Literature and War: Absence and the Chance of Meeting* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 75.

as a creative process of mourning *without* conceiving of artistry as something that only occurs in the teleological process of translating mourning into an artwork which, as I will demonstrate, does not really lead to Lauren's recovery. Instead, I turn to a thinking of remembrance as a creative process in itself, outside of the economy of professional artistry.

Body Time

Through her interactions with Mr Tuttle, with the technologies and lived environment, Lauren gradually returns to her body artistry and produces her performance work, *Body Time*, which she performs publicly and that is relayed to the reader through a newspaper article written by Lauren's friend and writer Mariella Chapman. This piece, as Peter Boxall notes, 'is littered with reshaped elements drawn not only from *The Body Artist*, but from the range of DeLillo's oeuvre'.[295] This piece is the culmination of the process of artistry Lauren has undergone in the novel and is the culmination of Lauren's capacity for self-transformation. Yet this performance does not satisfy Lauren's search for a new mode of worldly belonging, and does not mark the completion or culmination of Lauren's recovery, or the shaping of her worldly dwelling that I am interested in here. It is necessary to consider not only the artistry that unfolds in this preparative process but in fact to consider elements of this artistry as entirely related to mourning, and as existing apart from the teleological creation of the public artwork. This discussion underpins and prepares for my analysis of Lauren's recovery of a narrative mode of dwelling in the final section of this chapter.

The performance of *Body Time* marks Lauren's return to the realm of work and the social, staging an encounter between the non-time of grief and the narrative conventions of both theatre and everyday experience. Lauren wants her audience,

---

[295] Boxall, p. 221.

Body Time's reviewer writes, 'to feel time go by, viscerally, even painfully' (p. 104),

but this desire for a visceral experience of *passing* time is equally applicable to

Hartke herself. Although, on *Body Time*, as Mark Osteen puts it, 'husband and wife

come together behind the veil of art, merging in the figure of a naked man lip-

synching to a tape recorder',[296] the performance does not afford Lauren any

satisfactory release from grief through this encounter with Rey, nor does it provide

the mark a reinvention or re-emergence of her individuated subjectivity.

Penelope Ingram has rightly argued, drawing on Heidegger's work, that

Lauren's resistance of a return to conventional subjectivity or narrative theatrical

performance in *Body Time* opens important ethical possibilities for being. Ingram

argues that Lauren's body work retrieves the capacity of morphological being that she

locates in Heidegger's *Dasein*. By powerfully revealing to her audience that 'alterior

bodily meanings exist here and now', *Body Time* helps the reader realise the full scale

of difference inherent in *Dasein*'s being.[297] This retrieval of Being is made possible,

in Ingram's argument, when the body signifies outside of language and so outside of

the metaphysical tradition. In Ingram's terms, '[t]he body that expresses itself through

changing sexual and racial significations can be seen to realize its full ontological

potential'; 'by imagining matter not tied to representation […] we can foresee an

ontology without ground, from which multiple expressions of difference in Being can

arise'.[298] The key passage in *The Body Artist* that opens onto this reading comes from

Mariella Chapman's review of *Body Time*, where the critic comments that Hartke

'makes femaleness so mysterious and strong that it encompasses both sexes and a

number of nameless states' (p. 109). Through a recovery of *Dasein*'s morphological

sexuality, she argues, the metaphysical understanding of the ground of being can be

---

[296] Mark Osteen, 'Echo Chamber: Undertaking *The Body Artist*', *Studies in the Novel*, 37.1 (2005), 64–81 (p. 76).
[297] Penelope Ingram, *The Signifying Body: Toward an Ethics of Sexual and Racial Difference* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), p. 104.
[298] Ingram, p. 104.

broken. *Dasein*'s transcendence of race, class, sex, etc., its being-without-ground, opens future possibilities for being that exceed existing cultural representations. For Ingram, Lauren Hartke is unable to be 'read', resisting being subsumed into a patriarchal representational economy. Instead, argues Ingram, in *The Body Artist* 'the narrative's disruption of representative categories reveals to the reader her own foreclosed material possibilities and can release her to an ontological becoming through an ethics of reading'.[299]

It is unsurprising that this performance in itself does not complete Lauren's recovery, however. Pavlina Radia's analysis demonstrates, conversely, how the body always comes to presence in a lived context which can compromise its search for dwelling. Radia focuses on the compromised nature of performance artwork as a means for resistance; of particular interest is 'the artist's own complicity in monumentalizing suffering into an act of public consumption'.[300] In Radia's view, the novel interrogates the performance artwork and demonstrates that it is compromised as a form of resistance; performance artistry makes possible the reclamation of subjectivity, in this view, only through resort to a commodifying spectacle which robs the body of its materiality as it becomes a site for the aestheticisation of traumatic suffering. As such, Lauren's body becomes the site for 'enflesh[ing] the reality of her loss' whilst, in *Body Time*, her 'corporeal suffering is staged and thus inevitably reduced to a plethora of aestheticized, albeit ecstatic crossings'.[301] Important for my argument, here, is Radia' body is always viewed in relation to the lived environment in which it takes its place, something that has been overlooked by criticism focusing on the 'outside' in this novel thus far.

---

[299] Ingram, p. xxxv.
[300] Pavlina Radia, 'Doing the Lady Gaga Dance: Postmodern Transaesthetics and the Art of Spectacle in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 44.2 (2014), 194–213 (pp. 209–10) <https://doi.org/10.3138/cras.2014.S02>.
[301] Radia, pp. 209, 195.

Notwithstanding Radia's successful critique of critical investments in the materiality of the body as a site for cultural resistance, her argument — as with other criticism before it — does not look beyond the public performance of *Body Time* to find a place for Lauren's redemption or recovery. For Radia, the body retrieves itself through this commodifying process 'as an art object that immolates itself […] the singed body […] experiences its own glorious flaying, and in this dédoublement, realizes its materiality'.[302] This reading remains fixated on the artwork-cum-revivalist spectacle, the moment when Lauren extinguishes her selfhood 'just to remain present'.[303] As such the argument remains trapped in a quasi-functionalist perspective in which a compromised ritual, the public performance artwork, retains value for its capacity to renew the body and retrieve its materiality in spite of its being compromised.[304]

Festivity and unproductive artistry

Discussion of these works suggests the difficulty of thinking the radical possibilities of Lauren's creative process of mourning apart from the artwork they produce, which itself, as Joseph Dewey notes, is 'a narrow sort of reclamation that is for public consumption […] more for Lauren's audience than for Lauren'.[305] The creative process of self-transformation Lauren undergoes in the house manifests in ways which exceed the translation of mourning into art, and indeed fall outside the economy of both mourning and public consumption. After *Body Time*, for instance, Mr Tuttle becomes a form for resisting reintegration into everyday time, in particular for resisting the narrative incorporation of her loss of Rey into a journalistic tale of

---

[302] Radia, p. 210.
[303] Radia, p. 210.
[304] This argument reflects a development of ideas present in Mark Osteen's landmark monograph on DeLillo, which read DeLillo's novels (prior to *The Body Artist*) as explorations of ritual purgation and renewal through forms that are complicit in the very structures they seek to transcend. *American Magic and Dread: Don DeLillo's Dialogue with Culture*, Penn Studies in Contemporary American Fiction (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).
[305] Joseph Dewey, *Beyond Grief and Nothing: A Reading of Don DeLillo* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), p. 133.

love, tragedy and redemption through art. This is made clear in Lauren's retreat from her public identity when she meets for an interview with art critic and friend Mariella Chapman; during the interview, Chapman attempts to draw information about her life with Rey, 'reminding her of the one time we spent together, the three of us, in Rome, when Rey showed up for dinner with a stray cat on his shoulder. The memory enters her eyes and she sags a bit. I want to blame the recording device sitting on the table. It's an ergonomically smart four-inch-long, one-and-a-half-ounce, message-storing digital voice recorder, and this is the devil that makes me do it.' (p. 108).

Confronting the threat Lauren perceives in Chapman's use of the same media technology, the tape recorder, which shaped her own self-transformation into Mr Tuttle and her encounter with Rey in *Body Time*, Lauren rejects this possibility of a story of redemption narrated by a sympathetic friend and instead adopts Mr Tuttle's voice, frightening Chapman before abandoning the interview and disappearing. In this way Lauren confronts the loss of narrative agency that she has not yet recovered, resisting the appropriation of her experience of grief To bring these aspects of Lauren's artistic production to light I appeal to Heidegger's notion of 'the festive', a period of 'commemorative thinking', 'remembrance', 'holiday' or 'holy mourning' that stands outside a relationship to 'work' or 'the habitual', as discussed primarily in his writing on Hölderlin's poetry. This makes it possible to think about the production of an artwork without interpreting the process of mourning as a teleological return to work itself, since the festival, as figured by Heidegger, is not solely a break from work, an *arbeitpause* (EHP, p. 102), but also the space where a different kind of work can happen. In this way it is possible to understand how Lauren's artistry at the house shapes her recovery apart from the teleology of a return to public and profession life and performance.

Heidegger describes the withdrawal from the routine of work and the everyday into another creative state as the 'festive'. This does not necessarily signal

festivity in terms of celebration — in fact almost the opposite. The holiday that Heidegger describes stands outside this relationship to work, defined as 'setting oneself outside everyday activity, the cessation of work' (EHP, p. 97). The 'cessation of work' ('*das Ruhenlassen der Arbeit*') here is specifically the work of labour, *arbeit*. As Julian Young notes, for Heidegger the modern holiday, by contrast, is 'defined in relation to work' and as such is limited to 'rest and recreation'.[306] Conversely, Heidegger's authentic, Greek holiday makes space for, and does not mean the end of, producing or creating. The opposition of this 'festive' state to the 'rest and recreation' of the modern holiday creates the opportunity for the 'inhabitual' artistry that takes place during Lauren's time at the seaside house.[307]

Festive attunement through the 'holy' is, in this view, what makes Lauren able to attune to and contact Rey. As in Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's poetry, the capacity for artistry to think into the impossible by mourning the 'holy' is not wasted. In mourning the holy and seeking to gather what is sacred from her past into the present, Lauren achieves the festive state that enables her body artistry, culminating in the final scene of the novel that negotiates the prospect of a reunion with Rey. Lauren returns to the seaside house after her performance of *Body Time*, foregrounding the importance of this particular space to her recovery, when she reflects that she returned 'because he'd said what he'd said, that she would be here in the end' (p. 111). The seaside house is associated, in this way, with the possibility of release from the non-time of bereavement and recovery of a linear narrative temporality of meaningful beginnings and ends. At the same time, Lauren's artistic transformation of time and body prepares for and makes possible a different 'end': a physical reunion with Rey in the bedroom where they had slept together and where

---

[306] Young, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, p. 58.

[307] Heidegger does not view the artwork as a breakdown, but there is a significant parallel between breakdown as ethical moment and festive creation which emerges in this breaking-out-of the everyday.

Lauren first found Mr Tuttle. Whilst Rey's 'living memory' had resided, previously, in Lauren's own body and in the corporeal figure of Mr Tuttle, at the close of the novel Lauren now senses Rey's presence in the household space itself. Lauren 'knew how it would happen'; 'she'd return to the house and mount the stairs, past U-HAUL and AUTO PARTS, and walk along the hall on the second floor, in chanted motion, fitting herself to a body in the process of becoming hers' (p. 121). Lauren feels 'she was a fool, in this way and that' (p. 121), for believing that Mr Tuttle was a figure of loss and of Rey, and not simply a vulnerable and aphasic man, but does not doubt Rey's presence 'in her room […] because that's where Rey was intact, in his real body, smoke in his hair and clothes' (p. 121).

This encounter with Rey at the close of the novel is the culmination of a movement towards living memory pursued throughout the novel's gathering of temporal elements, in Mr Tuttle and in *Body Time*, and the reunion takes place at the heart of a temporal 'moment' of dwelling where narrative and place coincide. Entry into the liminal reality of Lauren's meeting with Rey repeats the logic of the artist overcoming time that we witnessed in *Body Time* where, as Lauren explains to Mariella Chapman, her intention was to 'stop time, or stretch it out, or open it up' completely (p. 107). Lauren sees the possibility of bringing this world into existence, allowing the 'two real bodies in a room' to materialise a new reality in which Rey did not die on that final morning. It is Lauren's failure to recover the holy and gather the scared aspect of her past into unity with her present, that gives a glimpse of that unity as a narrative fiction, and that provides Lauren with a conception of artistic transcendence that resides precisely in the capacity to let things show up, in and through their unrecoverability, a mode of disclosure which typifies this festive attunement.

Yet Lauren allows this narrative reunion to slip away in favour of a return to narrative time. She stops before entering the room, 'at room's edge, facing back into

the hall, and felt the emptiness around her'. What she now feels is not 'them', the two bodies in the room, but instead 'she could feel the look on her face […] a frieze of false anticipation'. Lauren's refusal of this fictional reunion with Rey is central to the novel's position on the ethics of artwork and fiction, as this refusal to monumentalise Lauren's suffering, to bring to reality Lauren's imagined meeting through their use of Mr Tuttle, the Other that makes their physical communion possible, signals a refusal of the materialisation of aesthetics that Radia and Ingram – albeit quite differently – propose in their readings.

It is my view that the performance of *Body Time* does not in itself prepare Lauren to relinquish the desire to find Rey 'alive' in their bedroom. As I will discuss below, this recovery depends on the return to a capacity for narration or storytelling so important in shaping the moment of dwelling narrated by Lauren's consciousness in the novel's opening chapter. Paradoxically Lauren's autonomy depends both on the capacity to narrate, and to relate to this narrative as a fiction. The weaving of this fiction through the narrative interpretation of a lived environment and the possibilities for being that exist for the embodied dweller there is the shaping of dwelling itself.

'Being here' and narrative recovery

The final moments of Lauren's recovery involve, without being reducible to, a recovery of the capacity for narrative interpretation and mediation. The disappearance of Mr Tuttle, a figure of mourning and the failure of narrative orientation in space and time, is central to this recovery. Indeed, whilst the criticism I have discussed centres around the corporeal gathering of temporal traces that Lauren achieves in *Body Time*, details from this period of isolation in the remote household suggest that transformations in Lauren's embodied navigation of the environing world first constituted the existence of Mr Tuttle and now underpin Lauren's recovery. Examining Lauren's navigation of the physical environment, here, allows me to speak on the encounter with Mr Tuttle, and look forward to how Lauren relinquishes the

encounter she has with Rey at the close of the novel. Lauren's recovery concurrently occurs through the establishment of a new relationship between narrative and the physical environment, and through the opening of a space for remembrance of Rey and Mr Tuttle such that their incorporeal presence persists in the lived environment to which Lauren opens her body in the closing moments of the novel. Conceiving Lauren's movement from the 'time of grief' to a new, living time in this way proceeds by attending to the importance of the lived environment in shaping Lauren's (narrative) recovery.

Perception of the environment and narrative time

In the non-place and non-time of mourning after Rey's death, Lauren's pays even closer attention to passing narrative time as it emerges in the relationship between her body and the surrounding space. When Lauren drops a paperclip, she narrates the experience as one of emerging into consciousness of what has happened. Lauren realises, 'you've dropped something, you hear it hit the floor, belatedly'; 'it takes a second or two before you know it and even then you know it only as a formless distortion in the teeming space around your body' (p. 89). The formless disruption takes on the shape of a paperclip when it makes a sound, landing against the floor: 'You hear the thing fall and know what it is at the same time, more or less, and it's a paperclip' (p. 89). With the arrival of this knowledge comes the belated realisation of having known all along:

> [y]ou know this from the sound it makes when it hits the floor and from the retrieved memory of the drop itself, the thing falling from your hand or slipping off the edge of the page to which it was clipped. It slipped off the edge of the page. Now that you know you dropped it, you remember how it happened, or half remember, or sort of see it maybe, or something else. The paperclip hits the floor with an end-to-end bounce, faint and weightless, a sound for which there is no imitative word, the sound of a paperclip falling, but when you bend to pick it up, it isn't there. (pp. 89–90)

This scene, as di Prete rightly suggests, is one example of a moment when narrative contemplation enables Lauren to follow 'the complicated journey to knowledge' of Rey's absence.[308] From the perspective of trauma theory, as di Prete notes, 'DeLillo's word ["belatedly"] is crucial here', inviting the reading of this scene as a navigation of 'the distorted temporality that, in trauma, manifests itself as perceptual belatedness'.[309] As di Prete rightly argues, the experience of belatedness shapes Lauren's knowledge of Rey's absence:

> DeLillo deliberately points to the distinctive way in which language can teach about the meaning of loss by carrying the subject to the place of such realization. The subject learns not that the paper clip is falling, or that it has just fallen, but rather that it had fallen in the past, and only its loss, its actual absence, belongs to the present. As a discovery, the fictitiousness of the second sound mirrors the image of Rey's body in Lauren's reverie. As the paper clip is not on the floor, Lauren becomes aware of the absence of Rey's body in her traumatic re-enactment as well as in her life.[310]

This reading explains the scene, as di Prete notes, as an 'analogy' for the recovery from traumatic repetition. An unresolved question remains, however: did the paperclip exist, or was it imagined, a projection of Lauren's 'hyper-aware' consciousness (p. 16)? This issue cannot be resolved, clearly, as both the belated perception of the object and the realisation of its absence depend on Lauren's embodied perception. In order to account for Lauren's embodied navigation of the environment, it is equally important not to privilege the visual perception 'it isn't there' (p. 89) over the bodily knowledge of the object's presence, its 'distortion of the teeming space around your body' (p. 89). Ultimately, the sound Lauren *perceives* is inseparable from her *projection* that it must belong to a paperclip ('you hear the thing

---

[308] Laura Di Prete, 'Don DeLillo's The Body Artist : Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma', *Contemporary Literature*, 46.3 (2005), 483–510 (p. 499) <https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2005.0033>.
[309] Di Prete, pp. 499, 493.
[310] Di Prete, p. 499.

fall and you know what it is at the same time, more or less, and it's a paperclip' [p. 89]), which in turn gives rise to the memory of the object, in the past, as what will have fallen from the table ('Now that you know you dropped it, you remember how it happened, or half remember, or sort of see it maybe, or something else' [p. 89]). As Sylvia Mieszkowski writes of this scene, 'memory and perception collapse into each other, while they are both equally unreliable'.[311] Put differently, despite the realisation that the paperclip 'isn't there' (p. 89), Lauren's bodily knowledge of its presence *as* a distortion of the space around her, remains. The unresolved location of the paperclip leaves open the possibility of coming to terms with the presence of an absent object, achieved through the creation of a new relationship between the body and its surrounding space. In this way, Lauren learns to negotiate the difference between memory and perception through bodily encounter with things in the house.

There are other notable instances after Rey's death when Lauren reflects on the way that phenomenological perception of the environment can give presence to fictional living entities, both of which can inform understanding of Lauren's recovery, and of Mr Tuttle's existence which informs this reading. In one, Lauren sees a man on a paint pot. In the other, she sees an animal in a burlap sack and in yet another, a bird at the window. In each example, Lauren's reflections on the way that phenomenological perception of the environment can give presence to fictional living entities prepares for her encounter with, and relinquishing of, Rey (and Mr Tuttle) in the final pages of the novel.

These examples demonstrate that Lauren and Mr Tuttle achieve their substantiality only in and as part of the secluded environment they navigate, and that

---

[311] Sylvia Mieszkowski, *Resonant Alterities: Sound, Desire and Anxiety in Non-Realist Fiction* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), p. 341. This critic offers a detailed and productive analysis of 'the sound *of* (rather than *in*) the text', and, more broadly an exploration of aural perception in *The Body Artist*, 'what impact the production and perception of sound has on the (re)constitution of the protagonist's gendered identity, desire, and subject status'. Miezskowski, pp. 301–364 (p. 301).

Mr Tuttle is like these fictional entities in that he exists only in Lauren's projection and interpretation of the environment. The question of Mr Tuttle's fictionality was an issue for Lauren as she was not able to navigate the environment narratively and was not able to reflect on her projections and the things and people, which instead remained held in the temporally stilled moment of their perceptual appearance and apprehension. Now, with the return of passing time, she realises that things are not what they 'seem':

> She looked and it was a bird, its flight line perfectly vertical, its streaked brown body horizontal, wings calmly stroking, a sparrow, not wind-hovering but generating lift and then instantly gone.
>
> She saw it mostly in retrospect because she didn't know what she was seeing at first and had to re-create the ghostly moment, write it like a line in a piece of fiction, and maybe it wasn't a sparrow at all but a smaller bird, gray and not brown and not spotted and not streaked but not as small as a hummingbird, and how would she ever know for sure unless it happened again, and even then, she thought, and even then again.
>
> It isn't true because it can't be true. Rey is not alive in this man's consciousness or in his palpable verb tense, his walking talking continuum.
> (p. 91)

Here Lauren's realisation of the fiction of her perceptions depends on her retrieval of human narrative processes, both of recreating the moment ('writing it like a line of fiction'), and more importantly, perhaps, of recognising its fictionality and the fleeting moment of an encounter that unfolded but cannot be recalled, restored or preserved. This process of navigating and renewing her own capacities for projection and interpretation in both narrative and non-narrative terms underpin both Lauren's transformation into Mr Tuttle and her eventual recovery, shaping her final relinquishing of Rey's 'real' existence in Mr Tuttle in favour of the lingering presence of his dwelling, the narrative of which she can only weave 'like a line in a piece of fiction' (p. 91).

(Narrative) recovery at the seaside home

In the final scene of the novel, Lauren relinquishes the possibility of this physical encounter, acknowledging that the 'room was empty all along' before throwing open the window 'to feel the flow of time in her body, to tell her who she was'. Stepping into that past reality — 'she will already have been there' — is now a temporal issue, one of positioning her body in that time by closing any gap between this reality and that, 'a question of fitting herself into the moment' (p. 122). On the margins of reality, a figure is there, 'the pulse of every secret intimation you've ever felt around the edges of your life' (p. 122), and Lauren and Rey 'are two real bodies in a room' (p. 122). Lauren 'feels them', and in this reality they have just had their breakfast on the final morning, only Rey did not leave afterwards, Lauren destroyed his keys and it was 'the simplest thing in the world' (p. 123). This scene of communion, 'with hands that touch and rub and mouths that open slowly' is negotiated temporally: 'it is a question of fitting herself to the moment', of straddling the temporal gap between the day of Rey's death and the time of this scene. Months after Rey's death, this gap has been reduced, through this gathering of memories, brought to life in Mr Tuttle and Lauren's body, to smallest of temporal spaces, the 'slivered heart of the half second' that opens the physical meeting between Lauren and Rey. As in the opening of the novel, the narration of the 'final morning', Lauren is gathered into a temporal moment, 'slid[ing] into another reality' (p. 114) constituted through Lauren allowing an imagined, ideal past into presence.

No longer able to hold Mr Tuttle and Rey with her, Lauren 'rocked down to the floor, backed against the doorpost. She went twistingly down, slowly, almost thoughtfully, and opened her mouth, *oh*, in a moan that remained unsounded'. This moan carries with it both the agony of mourning and a silently voiced realisation which marks Lauren's belated understanding that 'she'd known it was empty all along but was only catching up' (p. 124). As in earlier scenes when Lauren is reading

the newspaper, observing birds through the window, or watching water run from a tap, the fleeting experience of presence, of 'seeing as is for the first time' is primarily captured retrospectively, glancingly, through Lauren's narration that captures the fiction of unity and transcendence to 're-create the ghostly moment, write it like a line in a piece of fiction' (p. 91). By creating and sustaining an open space for Rey's return and allowing her irretrievable past into the house, Lauren produces a narrative of their encounter that preserves Rey in the world around her. Yet, as with Lauren's communication with people she encounters in the newspaper before Rey's death, this moment of transcendence and communion with Rey that Lauren edges into is also a displacement from the present. This moment of 'wonder', gives way to shame as Lauren realises, retrospectively, that the room is empty: 'it was pathetic to look' in the room, where 'the bed was empty. She'd known it was empty all along but was only catching up' (p. 124). Lauren's exposure arrived finally through an admission of the impossibility of bringing memories of the dead to life, even as those dead memories are becoming living memories in the event of Lauren's imagined encounter with Rey. Lauren is then exposed to 'the flow of time in her body, to tell her who she was'. The other reality that is carried in the temporal opening constituted by Lauren's artistry, the 'slivered heart of the half second' where the body caresses and opens space, allows an opening to otherness that resides in the internal divisions of the self. Lauren's realisation of her ongoing relationship with the Other provides the security for the release from grief that she experiences in this scene, for instance when she reflects that 'her mother died when she was nine. It wasn't her fault. It had nothing to do with her'. Even as Lauren relinquishes the possibility of a physical communion with Rey, the experience of transcendence persists, bringing with it the knowledge of Lauren's intersubjectivity, held open in Lauren's retrieval of a world where the otherness that has gathered in her artistry can persist and flourish.

Conclusions

In DeLillo's 9/11 novel, *Falling Man* (2003), as both Richard Gray and Pieter Vermeulen have argued, the domestic stands as a container for the trauma of the 9/11 attacks, driving their psychological effects into confinement and so precluding reflection on their transformational impact. In Vermeulen's terms, the 'ashes [of 9/11] are gathered into the domestic domain […] domestic trauma is a foreclosure of the *global* dimensions of the affective and political changes that the events of 9/11 have unleashed'.[312] I have sought to demonstrate in this chapter that this movement of *gathering*, the return 'home' and to the domestic, does not have the same effect of foreclosing the ruptures incurred by traumatic loss.[313] It is clear that *The Body Artist* resists characterisation as a domestic trauma narrative primarily due to the radical disruption of domesticity in the novel. Yet, this radicalisation does not render the 'homely' environment dispensable. Instead, home, the remembrance of and dwelling in that place, shapes a radical and intimate exploration, and transformation of, subjectivity in the secluded encounter between Lauren and the mysterious Mr Tuttle.

The dynamics of Lauren's recovery in *The Body Artist* involve the emergence of an awareness that the return to dwelling unfolds not simply through capturing and distilling moments in the unfolding of being, but through taking over the possibilities that these moments open for the self and incorporating them into an orientation towards the future. The opening scene depicting the 'final morning' represents, as Peter Boxall points out, a series of 'moments of being', and distils these above all as markers of subjective individuation; *Body Time*, for its part, is the culmination of Lauren's ability to incorporate and perform such moments of (subjective) being — first expressed in Mr Tuttle — and so, as Ingram has observed, to give expression to

---

[312] Pieter Vermeulen, 'Don DeLillo's Point Omega, the Anthropocene, and the Scales of Literature', *Studia Neophilologica*, 87:1, 68–81 (68).
[313] Any connection I draw here between global terror and an individual suicide is illustrative, rather than comparative.

different possibilities for existence.[314] However, as I have argued, it is only through

incorporating these moments into narrative that Lauren is able recover her orientation

in passing time. Peter Boxall's observation that, for Lauren Hartke, '[d]welling in the

moment involves, always, an estrangement from the moment' (Boxall, p. 218)

captures this movement most usefully, in particular for the way it suggests that

capturing the moment itself precludes the unfolding of dwelling. Ultimately, it is

through recapturing the power of narration, figured here as the ability to allow these

moments to pass into narrative, 'like a line of fiction' (p. 91), that Lauren achieves

autonomy over her being at the close of the novel. Paradoxically, through recovering

this capacity for narration, Lauren is able to relinquish the 'fiction' of Rey's living

presence. As I have shown, it is remembrance, of and in place, and a return home in

this novel that primarily makes possible this recuperation of narrative interpretation:

through a process of interpretative gathering that unfolds in this place, Lauren is able

to relinquish the atemporal moment of Mr Tuttle's *thinging* and allow his presence,

and Rey's, to be gathered into the environment and into a movement of dwelling

amongst things.

---

[314] On the relationship between being and performance in Heidegger see Stuart Grant,
'Heidegger's Augenblick as the Moment of the Performance', in *Performance and
Temporalisation: Time Happens*, ed. by Stuart Grant, Jodie McNeilly, and Maeva Veerapen
(London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 213–29.

Conclusion

Any reader turning from *Being and Time*'s fundamental anthropology of *Dasein* to Heidegger's late work 'Building Dwelling Thinking' will be struck by the transformation in the form of life they encounter there. In *Being and Time*, the 'authentic' self is, above all, 'resolute' — a figure which takes on its socially embedded possibilities for being with ownership and resolve. For instance, in that text Heidegger writes that: 'It is from the authentic being a self of resoluteness that authentic being-with-one-another first arises, not from ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the they and in what one wants to undertake' (BT, p. 285). In this work awareness of 'not-being-at-home', as the authentic condition of *Dasein*, and the fundamental attunement of anxiety that precedes it, is infinitely preferable to the 'tranquilized self-assurance' of 'everyday publicness' (BT, p. 182). *Dasein*, here, is a figure which above all attains to its essential nature when it *gathers itself* together, confronting its fundamental mortality and protecting against the ever-present threat of dispersion into everyday, inauthentic concerns.

In the essays on dwelling in the collection *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Heidegger imagines a human figure, by contrast, that attains to its mortality not through a resolute confrontation with the abyssal ground of its being, but through its binding into the simple oneness of the fourfold. In this 'mirror-play' of earth, sky, divinities and mortals, each element attains to its essential nature. Rather than *gathering itself*, the human figure is gathered together by its relation to the 'locations' and 'things' through which this gathering unfolds (BDT, p. 155). In dwelling, their place in the fourfold reflects an essential openness and entanglement into the environing world. For Heidegger, this signals a proximity to Being, 'in keeping with which mortals exist' (BDT, p. 158), but in more everyday terms, it is possible to

understand this 'round dance' (BDT, p. 180) of dwelling as the movement between these elements that unfolds both in life and in death.

As such, the movement towards a conception of human being as dwelling in Heidegger's thought centres, as Julian Young notes, around a radical change: 'ontological insecurity, understood as the heart of human being, has been transformed into ontological security'.[315] And, in this way, what Young has called Heidegger's 'gradual, but radical, reappraisal of the character of "the nothing"' in his later writings gives shape to a radical change in the character of the human figure.[316]

Importantly, it is artworks like Van Gogh's painting of shoes, and Friedrich Hölderlin's and Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry, that enabled Heidegger to articulate this conception of ontological security through their aesthetic revealing of dwelling as a mode of being. As with Heidegger's discussion of the peasant shoes in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', the abyssal 'nothing' that forms the background of everyday existence comes to take on a positive quality in these artworks that enables Heidegger to rethink our relationship to death. In 'What Are Poets For?', for instance, Heidegger turns to Rilke's poetic description of the dark and lighted sides of moon as an aesthetic expression of the 'globe of being' (WPF, p. 121). Through this aesthetic formulation, Heidegger is able to express his conception of death not as an abyssal nothing but as an unthought dimension of our being: '[d]eath and the realm of the dead belong to the whole of beings as its other side' (WPF, p. 122).

In sum, in these writings Heidegger demonstrates how artworks attend to, and reveal for contemplation, dimensions of our existence that we tend to turn away from both in everyday life and in our everyday experience of artworks. Put simply,

---

[315] Julian Young, 'What Is Dwelling? The Homelessness of Modernity and the Worlding of the World', in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus, Volume 1*, ed. by Mark A. Wrathall and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 187–204 (p. 190).

[316] Young, 'What Is Dwelling? The Homelessness of Modernity and the Worlding of the World', p. 190.

Heidegger's later works on art and poetry also facilitate his reinterpretation of the fundamental anthropology of *Being and Time*. In a certain, although not too literal sense, a similar movement through aesthetic exploration of anthropological premises can be seen to organise my interpretation of the novels discussed in this thesis. In other words, each chapter has taken as it starting point an aspect of human worldliness that emerges in Heidegger's thought — our attunements or relation to technology, and our fundamental entanglement with narrative — and addressed its exploration in the aesthetic and formal experimentation of contemporary fiction writers. Whilst these dimensions of worldliness are central to Heidegger's writings on the search, and possibility, of dwelling, I have argued that in each case these concerns are mobilised in the novels themselves.

As indivisibly anthropological and aesthetic concerns, human attunements, entanglements with technologies and with narratives offer a starting point for each writer to reflexively explore the relation between the human life they seek to narrate and the novel form. As such whilst my readings were inspired, in part, by this turn to poetry and artworks in Heidegger's thought, I have argued that the aesthetic and formal assessments of anthropological premises discussed in this thesis are internal to each of the writers' works addressed here. Where Heidegger saw in art, technology and poetic attunement a 'saving power [that] lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence' (QCT, p. 32), the novels that I have discussed here offer a condensed negotiation between anthropological interpolations of the human that open their narratives and the capacities of their form to respond and accommodate the life that inhabits it. Dwelling offered something of a conceptual nexus for addressing these novelistic explorations in the thesis, but also gives name to the possibilities for inhabiting the novel form explored in each novel.

Significantly, as discussed in each chapter and above, each novel (or pair of novels, as in the case of Chapter 2) discussed in the thesis introduces its particular

aesthetic concerns through the instantiation of new or altered modes of human life at the beginnings of their novels. *White Teeth*, for instance, opens with a suicide crisis announcing not only the emergence of a new mode of life that will inhabit the novel form, but also the characterisation of this mode of life in terms of attunement and its ecstatic temporality. In *Remainder*, a mode of Being more fundamental than the feeling of detachment the narrator suffers after his accident is held up as an elusive goal. In *The Body Artist*, the narratively mediated form of worldly belonging that opens the novel is irrevocably ruptured to create a new search for dwelling that tests the limits of our attachment to narrative forms. In each novel, these traumatic beginnings open possibilities for new modes of existence by rupturing both psychological interiority, as in *White Teeth* and *Remainder*, or creating subjects with a new relationship to language, most explicit in *The Body Artist* but also at work in the Smith's and McCarthy's novels discussed here.

In the technological modernity that Heidegger was concerned with, in particular, the disruptive threat of trauma presents itself, as John Roberts notes, 'an epistemological limit that threatens to reveal the partiality of its ontological mode of disclosure, that of *Gestell*, or enframing […] 'trauma potentially liberates the subject from the restraints of representational thought'.[317] As such it is quite possible to suggest that the premise of the search for dwelling in each novel is not an interest in novel form and the dwelling of human life in the novel, but what Roberts calls the 'traumatic ontology of the modern subject', something that is certainly implicit in each of the novels discussed here.

Whilst this view supports my reading of *Remainder* in particular, I have resisted reading any of these beginnings through the lens of trauma theory; in part because, as Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* suggests, all subjects in modernity begin their

---

[317] Roberts, p. 300.

search for dwelling on the ground of the traumatic legacies of the twentieth century. Furthermore, whilst trauma makes possible the break out of familiar representational modes, in each novel, it remains, necessarily only a starting point: by definition, trauma is unintelligible, or is intelligible only in its explanation as trauma. Rather, the threat that trauma poses to psychological interiority, our relationship to language and to technologies of writing we are indivisibly attached to, provides a background which 'supports the revealing or unconcealment of modern reflexivity, agency and biographical selfhood' in each writer addressed here.[318] In this sense, trauma supports, but is secondary to, the search for dwelling in these novels. Reading each of the novels addressed here in relation to the question of dwelling, furthermore, allowed me to attend to the specific dimensions of reflexivity, agency and selfhood as they present in each writers' works.

As such, in each chapter, the 'search for dwelling' served not to reveal the traumatic underpinnings of the modern subject, but instead to reveal certain aesthetic dimensions that underpin the existence of human life in the novel form. In this sense, it is the aesthetic and formal background to 'life' in the novel that I have sought to attend to, and argued that these contemporary writers are likewise concerned with bringing into view.

It is also perhaps possible to assess the relative achievements of the thesis as a whole. Firstly, I hope to have demonstrated that approaching fiction with a 'dwelling perspective' can not only lead to original readings of works by significant contemporary authors, but can expand critical viewpoints on contemporary writing in which attachments to particular locations, architectures, things, houses, towns, neighbourhoods or postcodes are in productive tension with the experience of 'not being at home in the world, including the world of language'.[319] In this particular

---

[318] Roberts, p. 315.
[319] Spurr, p. x.

moment in contemporary fiction which I have been concerned with elucidating here, the characters' attachments to lived environments and architectures is allowed to speak for their attachment to the novel form – its moods, its narrative spatiotemporality, and its existence as a technology of writing. To be more precise still, the act of dwelling in these environments achieves what Timothy Bewes argues is distinctively contemporary about contemporary fiction: 'it is primarily ontological; it defines the very world that opens itself up for presentation and can no longer be reduced to a mere consequence of the act of representation'.[320]

I conclude by noting that the thesis makes a modest, but potentially significant, contribution to the developing interest in Heidegger's writings on dwelling in the fields on novel criticism and theory. Heidegger's privileging of ontology over ethics perhaps explains his absence from the list of influences that Dorothy Hale cites in her discussion of new ethical theory of the novel: Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Alain Badiou. Yet, Heidegger's presence in the background of these philosophers' work has never been in doubt, and his work has in turn influenced the work of 'new ethicists' like Judith Butler in diffuse and diverse ways. That critical approaches like this thesis, which address Heidegger and the novel, and dwelling and the novel in particular, are only now beginning to emerge, is perhaps to be expected: the rich and highly original interpretations of the aesthetic dimensions of the poetry and artworks in Heidegger's writings will be increasingly productive for novel theory and criticism as it relocates the ethical in texts' diverse ontological dimensions.

Each chapter of the thesis also sought to make Heidegger's writings on dwelling 'speak' to the field of contemporary literary criticism. In Chapter 1, I suggested that Heidegger's writings on *Stimmung* serve to reveal the ethical

---

[320] Timothy Bewes, 'Introduction: Temporalizing the Present', *NOVEL A Forum on Fiction*, 45.2 (2012), 159–64 (p. 160) <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-1573913>.

dimensions of attunement in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, a novel that might be overlooked by more traditional ethical criticism. As I have suggested, attunements dispose characters towards the world in ways that serve to reveal that world for readers. For some ethically-minded critics, the value of attention to characterological attunement might lie in a more nuanced understanding of the encounter with alterity that unfolds in the process of reading.

As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, a growing body of criticism now seeks to approach the question of ethics and politics in the novel through the affective, aesthetic and formal dimensions of texts, in a turn away from the traditional ethical focus on the encounter with a social other in the novel. In Chapter 3, I sought to position my work on dwelling in relation to this criticism, and so to demonstrate how Heidegger's thought can contribute to theoretically-oriented discussions of the contemporary novel. In that chapter, again, I suggested that novelists are rethinking the function of their characters as figures who, in their search for dwelling, reveal the ontological dimensions of their worlds. Dwelling in turn offers a thematic for thinking through the complex ontological binds that these formal and aesthetic dimensions place characters in.

Ben Masters, one of the neo-formalist proponents of this new critical generation (a side of which was represented in particular in this thesis by Namwali Serpell's work on narrative 'modes') describes his approach as attending to 'how ethics is felt and realized through a text's stylistic performativity'. As critics increasingly turn to the ethics of style and form, they may benefit from the attempt, in this thesis, to think in more depth about the way in which character is itself generative of the novel's aesthetic and stylistic dimensions.

The final chapter of this thesis, on *The Body Artist*, demonstrated the strongest example of an instance of dwelling in the novel and brought together key theoretical strands of the thesis – attunement, technology and narrative. In particular

this chapter sought to theorise and foreground the spatial qualities of narrative dwelling. By demonstrating that the central encounter with alterity in the novel unfolds in and through dwelling in a particular place, this chapter gestured, albeit indirectly, to the potential for developing an ontologically sensitive ethics of dwelling in the novel.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio, *The Coming Community*, trans. by Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

Altes, Liesbeth Korthals, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014)

Armstrong, Nancy, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Astrada, Scott, 'Home and Dwelling: Re-Examining Race and Identity Through Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and Paul Beatty's *The Sellout*', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25 (2017), 105–20 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jffp.2017.816>

Attridge, Derek, *The Singularity of Literature*, New edn (New York: Routledge, 2017)

Augé, Marc, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, ed. & trans. by John Howe (London: Verso, 1995)

Backman, Jussi, 'Logocentrism and the Gathering Λόγος: Heidegger, Derrida, and the Contextual Centers of Meaning', *Research in Phenomenology*, 42 (2012), 67–91 <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916412X628757>

Baudrillard, Jean, *The Perfect Crime*, trans. by Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 1996)

Benesch, Klaus, 'Space, Place, Narrative: Critical Regionalism and the Idea of Home in a Global Age', *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik*, 64 (2016), 93–108 <https://doi.org/10.1515/zaa-2016-0008>

Benjamin, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Kevin McLaughlin and Howard Eiland (London: Belknap Press, 1999)

Berlant, Lauren, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011)

Berning, Nora, 'Narrative Ethics and Alterity in Adichie's Novel Americanah', *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 17 (2015) <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2733>

Bewes, Timothy, 'Introduction: Temporalizing the Present', *NOVEL A Forum on Fiction*, 45 (2012), 159–64 <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-1573913>

Bieger, Laura, 'No Place Like Home; or, Dwelling in Narrative', *New Literary History*, 46 (2015), 17–39 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2015.0004>

Birkenstein, Jeff, Anna Froula & Karen Randell eds., *Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the 'War on Terror'* (London: Continuum, 2010)

Bonca, Cornel, 'Being, Time, and Death in DeLillo's "The Body Artist"', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 37 (2002), 58–68 <https://doi.org/10.2307/4142090>

Boxall, Peter, 'A Bridge to Nowhere: Fictions of the Future in the Twenty-First Century Novel' (presented at the ZEUS Graduate Workshop, University of Cologne, 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0Ul0zcf-Jk>

———, *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006)

Brooks, Cleanth, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2006)

Brooks, Peter, *Realist Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

Buchanan, Jason, 'Ruined Futures: Gentrification as Famine in Post-Celtic Tiger Irish Literature', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63 (2017), 50–72 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0004>

Butler, Judith, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2010)

———, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination' in D. Fuss ed., *Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (London: Routledge, 1991), 13-31

———, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (1988), 519-531

———, 'Values of Difficulty', in *Just Being Difficult? Academic Writing in the Public Arena*, ed. by Jonathan D. Culler and Kevin Lamb (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 199–216

Campbell, Timothy, *Improper Life: Technology and Biopolitics from Heidegger to Agamben* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011)

Cheah, Pheng, *What Is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016)

Clark, Timothy, *Martin Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 2002)

Cleopatra Kontoulis, and Eliza Kitis, 'Don DeLillo's The Body Artist: Time, Language and Grief', *Janus Head*, 12 (2011), 222–42

Cowart, David, *Don DeLillo: The Physics of Language* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002)

Critchley, Simon, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014)

Culler, Jonathan D., *Deconstruction: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2003)

Currie, Mark, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Davies, Ben, 'The Complexities of Dwelling in Ali Smith's *There but for The*', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 58 (2017), 509–20 <https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.2017.1318820>

Dawson, Paul, 'The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction', *Narrative*, 17 (2009), 143–61

De Boever, Arne, '"Biopolitics in Deconstruction" and "Derrida's Theory of the Novel"' <<http://derridaseminars.org/workshops>> [accessed 4 January 2017]

———, *Narrative Care: Biopolitics and the Novel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Deane, Bradley, *Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market.* (London: Routledge, 2014)

DeLillo, Don, *Mao II* (New York: Viking, 1991)

———, *Point Omega* (London: Picador, 2010)

———, *The Body Artist* (London: Picador, 2001)

———, *Underworld* (London: Picador, 1997)

———, *Valparaiso* (New York: Scribner, 1999)

———, *Zero K* (London: Picador, 2016)

Derrida, Jacques, 'Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology (Geschlecht IV)', ed. by John Sallis, trans. by John P. Leavey Jr (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993)

———, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, trans. by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava, and Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989)

———, *The Beast & the Sovereign: Volume Two*, ed. by Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017)

———, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Dewey, Joseph, *Beyond Grief and Nothing: A Reading of Don DeLillo* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006)

Di Prete, Laura, 'Don DeLillo's The Body Artist : Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma', *Contemporary Literature*, 46 (2005), 483–510 <https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2005.0033>

Diprose, Rosalyn, 'Corporeal Interdependence: From Vulnerability to Dwelling in Ethical Community', *SubStance*, 42 (2013), 185–204 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2013.0035>

Dooley, Mark, and Liam Kavanagh, *The Philosophy of Derrida* (New York: Routledge, 2014)

Döring, Tobias, & others, *REAL - Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature 31 (2015)* (BoD – Books on Demand, 2015)

Dragas, Areti, *The Return of the Storyteller in Contemporary Fiction*, Literary Studies (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)

Drury, Joseph, *Novel Machines: Technology and Narrative Form in Enlightenment Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

Duncan, Dennis, ed., 'Restricted Action: McCarthy's Modernist Legacy?', in *Tom McCarthy: Critical Essays* (Canterbury: Gylphi, 2016)

Dungey, Nicholas, 'The Ethics and Politics of Dwelling', *Polity*, 39 (2007), 234–58

Eaglestone, Robert, *Ethical Criticism: Reading after Levinas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997)

———, 'One and the Same? Ethics, Aesthetics, and Truth', *Poetics Today*, 25 (2004), 595–608 <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-25-4-595>

El-Bizri, Nader, 'Being at Home Among Things: Heidegger's Reflections on Dwelling', *Environment, Space, Place*, 3 (2011), 45–69

Elpidorou, Andreas, and Lauren Freeman, 'Affectivity in Heidegger I: Moods and Emotions in *Being and Time*: Affectivity in Heidegger I', *Philosophy Compass*, 10 (2015), 661–71 <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12236>

Escobar, Matthew, *The Persistence of the Human: Consciousness, Meta-Body and Survival in Contemporary Film and Literature* (Boston: Brill, 2016)

Eskin, Michael, 'Introduction: The Double "Turn" to Ethics and Literature?', *Poetics Today*, 25 (2004), 557–72 <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-25-4-557>

Farred, Grant, 'Letting-Be: Dwelling, Peace and Violence in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Petals of Blood', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25 (2017), 10–26 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jffp.2017.811>

Farred, Grant, and Alfred J. Lopez, 'Introduction: The Persistence of Dwelling', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25 (2017), 1–9 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jffp.2017.810>

Felski, Rita, *'Art and Attunement'* <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/art-and-attunement-professor-rita-felski-university-virginia-and-southern-denmark> [accessed 27 June 2018]

Fisher, Tony, 'Heidegger and the Narrativity Debate', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 43 (2010), 241–65 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-010-9141-x>

Flatley, Jonathan, 'How A Revolutionary Counter-Mood Is Made', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 503–25 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0028>

Forss, Anne-Mari, 'The Aesthetics Of Dwelling', *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology*, 1 (2014), 169–90 <https://doi.org/10.2752/205393214X14083775794952>

Fujii, Hikaru, *Outside, America: The Temporal Turn in Contemporary American Fiction* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Funk, Wolfgang, *The Literature of Reconstruction: Authentic Fiction in the New Millennium* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)

Fuss, Diana, *Human, All Too Human* (Routledge, 2013)

Gaston, Sean, *Derrida, Literature and War: Absence and the Chance of Meeting* (London: Continuum, 2009)

———, *The Concept of World from Kant to Derrida* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2013)

Gibson, Andrew, *Postmodernity, Ethics, and the Novel* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Gibson, James J., *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Psychology Press, 2015)

Glendinning, Simon, 'Settled-There: Heidegger on the Work of Art as the Cultivation of Place', *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology*, 1 (2014), 7–31 <https://doi.org/10.2752/20539339XX14005942184053>

Grant, Stuart, 'Heidegger's Augenblick as the Moment of the Performance', in *Performance and Temporalisation: Time Happens*, ed. by Stuart Grant, Jodie McNeilly, and Maeva Veerapen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 213–29

Guignery, Vanessa, 'Zadie Smith's NW or the art of line-crossing', *E-rea*, 2014 <https://doi.org/10.4000/erea.3892>

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung: On a Hidden Potential of Literature*, trans. by Erik Butler (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012)

Hale, Dorothy J., 'Aesthetics and the New Ethics: Theorizing the Novel in the Twenty-First Century', *PMLA*, 124 (2009), 896–905

———, 'Fiction as Restriction: Self-Binding in New Ethical Theories of the Novel', *Narrative*, 15 (2007), 187–206 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2007.0010>

———, '*On Beauty* as Beautiful?: The Problem of Novelistic Aesthetics by Way of Zadie Smith', *Contemporary Literature*, 53 (2012), 814–44 <https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2012.0033>

Haley, Madigan, 'Marginal Figures and the Ethos of the Global Novel', *Novel*, 48 (2015), 103–21 <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-2860373>

Hansen, Mark, 'The Time of Affect, or Bearing Witness to Life', *Critical Inquiry*, 30 (2004), 584–626 <https://doi.org/0093-1896/04/3003-0004>

Hanssen, Beatrice, ed., *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin Studies Series (New York: Continuum, 2006)

Harries, Karsten, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (MIT Press, 1998)

Harrison, Paul, 'The Space between Us: Opening Remarks on the Concept of Dwelling', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25 (2007), 625–47 <https://doi.org/10.1068/d365t>

———, 'The Space between Us: Opening Remarks on the Concept of Dwelling', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25 (2007), 625–47 <https://doi.org/10.1068/d365t>

Hatab, Lawrence, *Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contributions to Moral Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000)

Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1980), 5–27

Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010)

———, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012)

———, *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, trans. by David Farrell Krell and Frank Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984)

———, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. by Keith Hoeller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000)

———, *Holderlin's Hymn 'Remembrance'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018)

———, *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'The Rhine'*, trans. by William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014)

———, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

———, *Parmenides*, trans. by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992)

———, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971)

———, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Garland, 1977)

———, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. by Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968)

———, *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. by Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2005)

Heinze, Rüdiger, *Ethics of Literary Forms in Contemporary American Literature* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005)

Hemmings, Clare, 'In the Mood for Revolution: Emma Goldman's Passion', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 527–45 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0030>

Herman, David, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan eds., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010)

Hodge, Joanna, *Heidegger and Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1995)

Houser, Tammy Amiel, 'Zadie Smith's *NW*: Unsettling the Promise of Empathy', *Contemporary Literature*, 58 (2017), 116–48 <https://doi.org/10.3368/cl.58.1.116>

Ingold, Tim, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2011)

Ingram, Penelope, *The Signifying Body: Toward an Ethics of Sexual and Racial Difference* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009)

Jakubiak, Katarzyna, 'Simulated Optimism: The International Marketing of *White Teeth*', in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. by Tracey Lorraine Walters (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 201–18

James, David, 'Worlded Localisms: Cosmopolitics Writ Small', in *Postmodern Literature and Race*, ed. by Len Platt and Sara Upstone (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 47–64

Jameson, Fredric, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2008)

Johnson, Barbara, *The Feminist Difference: Literature, Psychoanalysis, Race, and Gender* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000)

Kermode, Frank, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, new edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Kessel, Tyler, 'A Question of Hospitality in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 49 (2008), 185–204 <https://doi.org/10.3200/CRIT.49.2.185-204>

———, *Reading Landscape in American Literature: The Outside in the Fiction of Don DeLillo* (New York: Cambria Press, 2011)

Kittler, Friedrich, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999)

Kontoulis, Cleopatra, and Eliza Kitis, 'Don DeLillo's The Body Artist: Time, Language and Grief', *Janus Head*, 12 (2011), 222–42

Koolhaas, Rem, 'Junkspace', *October*, 100 (2002), 175–90 <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228702320218457>

López, Alfred J., 'Dwelling in a Global Age: An Introduction', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63 (2017), 2–8 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0001>

Magrini, James M., and Elias Schwieler, *Heidegger on Literature, Poetry, and Education after the Turn: At the Limits of Metaphysics*, Routledge International Studies in the Philosophy of Education (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018)

Malabou, Catherine, *The Heidegger Change: On the Fantastic in Philosophy*, trans. by Peter Skafish, SUNY Series in Contemporary French Thought (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011)

Malpas, Jeff, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place: Explorations in the Topology of Being* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012)

———, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006)

Mannon, Ethan, 'Precluded Dwelling: The Dollmaker and Under the Feet of Jesus as Georgics of Displacement', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25 (2017), 86–104 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jffp.2017.815>

Martucci, Elise A., *The Environmental Unconscious in the Fiction of Don DeLillo* (London: Routledge, 2007)

Massumi, Brian, 'The Autonomy of Affect', *Cultural Critique*, 1995, 83 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354446>

Masters, Ben, *Novel Style: Ethics and Excess in English Fiction since the 1960s*, First edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

McCarthy, Tom, *C* (London: Vintage Books, 2011)

———, *Remainder* (Richmond: Alma Books, 2011 [2005])

———, *Satin Island* (New York: Jonathan Cape, 2015)

———, 'Technology and the Novel, from Blake to Ballard', *The Guardian*, 24 July 2010 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jul/24/tom-mccarthy-futurists-novels-technology>>

McNeill, William, *The Time of Life: Heidegger and Ethos* (SUNY Press, 2012)

Meretoja, Hanna, 'Narrative and Human Existence: Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics', *New Literary History*, 45 (2014), 89–109 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2014.0001>

———, *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History, and the Possible*, Explorations in Narrative Psychology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Mieszkowski, Sylvia, *Resonant Alterities: Sound, Desire and Anxiety in Non-Realist Fiction* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014)

Miller, D. A., *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

Mitchell, Andrew J., *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015)

Mølbak, R. L., 'From a Phenomenology of the Subject to a Phenomenology of the Event: Reconstructing the Ontological Basis for a Phenomenological Psychology', *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 43 (2012), 185–215

Mugerauer, Robert, *Heidegger and Homecoming: The Leitmotif in the Later Writings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)

Nel, Philip, 'Don DeLillo's Return to Form: The Modernist Poetics of "The Body Artist"', *Contemporary Literature*, 43 (2002), 736–59 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1209040>

Nieland, Justus, 'Dirty Media: Tom McCarthy and the Afterlife of Modernism', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 58 (2012), 569–99 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2012.0058>

Nussbaum, Martha, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Ong, Walter, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002)

Osteen, Mark, *American Magic and Dread: Don DeLillo's Dialogue with Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000)

———, 'Echo Chamber: Undertaking *The Body Artist*', *Studies in the Novel*, 37 (2005), 64–81

Paproth, Matthew, 'The Flipping Coin: The Modernist and Postmodernist Zadie Smith', in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. by Tracey Lorraine Walters (New York: Peter Lang, 2008)

Partington, Gill, 'Dummy Chambers and Ur-Houses: How to Find Your Way Around in *Remainder*', in *Tom McCarthy: Critical Essays*, ed. by Dennis Duncan (Canterbury: Gylphi, 2016)

Paul, Herman, 'Metahistorical Prefigurations: Towards A Re-Interpretation of Tropology in Hayden White', *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in History and Archaeology*, 1 (2004), 1–19

Pérez-Gómez, Alberto, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016)

Perfect, Michael, *Contemporary Fictions of Multiculturalism: Diversity and the Millennial London Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

Plantinga, Carl, 'Art Moods and Human Moods in Narrative Cinema', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 455–75 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0025>

Radia, Pavlina, 'Doing the Lady Gaga Dance: Postmodern Transaesthetics and the Art of Spectacle in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 44 (2014), 194–213 <https://doi.org/10.3138/cras.2014.S02>

Ramos, Anthony, 'Sketches Toward an Ontology of Non-Dwelling: Mara Salvatrucha 13, Radical Homelessness, and Postglobality', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25 (2017), 61–85 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jffp.2017.814>

Rapaport, Herman, 'Fantasies of Settlement: Heidegger, Tocqueville, Fichte, Faulkner', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63 (2017), 9–28 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0002>

Rhym, John, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Cinematic Mood: Boredom and the Affect of Time in Antonioni's *L'eclisse*', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 477–501 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0027>

Richardson, William J., *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishing, 1963)

Roberts, John L, 'Trauma, Technology and the Ontology of the Modern Subject', *Subjectivity*, 6 (2013), 298–319 <https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2013.6>

Rosfort, René, and Giovanni Stanghellini, 'In the Mood for Thought: Feeling and Thinking in Philosophy', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 395–417 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0031>

Roth, Ben, 'Reading From the Middle: Heidegger and the Narrative Self', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 26 (2018), 746–762 <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12314>

Roupakia, Lydia, 'On Care, Ethics, and Reading Practice: Re-Reading Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*', *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 26 (2015), 150–71 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10436928.2015.1029773>

Roy, Satarupa Sinha, 'Wandering to Dwell: Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Dwelling in Sebald's The Rings of Saturn', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 63 (2017), 29–49 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2017.0003>

Santner, Eric L., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Narrative Vigilance and the Poetic Imagination* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986)

Schapiro, Meyer, 'The Still Life as a Personal Object - A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh', in *The Reach of Mind: Essays in Memory of Kurt Goldstein*, ed. by Marianne L. Simmel (New York: Springer, 1968)

Sell, Jonathan P.A., 'Chance and Gesture in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and *The Autograph Man*: A Model for Multicultural Identity?', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 41 (2006), 27–44 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989406068733>

Serpell, C. Namwali, *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014)

Shaw, Kristian, '"A Passport to Cross the Room": Cosmopolitan Empathy and Transnational Engagement in Zadie Smith's *NW (2012)*', *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings*, 5 (2017) <https://doi.org/10.16995/c21.15>

Shell, Susan Meld, *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009)

Shusterman, Richard, 'Thought in the Strenuous Mood: Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Feeling', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 433–54 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0023>

Simone, Emma, *Virginia Woolf and Being-in-the-World: A Heideggerian Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017)

Smith, Rachel, 'Grief Time: The Crisis of Narrative in Don DeLillo's The Body Artist', *Polygraph: An International Journal of Culture and Politics*, 18 (2006), 99–110

Smith, Zadie, 'Fail Better', *The Guardian*, 13 January 2007

———, *NW* (London: Penguin Books, 2013)

———, 'Some Notes on Attunement: A Voyage around Joni Mitchell', *The New Yorker*, 17 December 2012 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/12/17/some-notes-on-attunement> [accessed 8 January 2018]

———, 'That Crafty Feeling', *Believer Magazine*, 1 June 2008 <https://believermag.com/that-crafty-feeling/> [accessed 11 October 2018]

———, *The Embassy of Cambodia* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2013)

———, 'Two Paths for the Novel', *The New York Review of Books*, 20 November 2008 <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2008/11/20/two-paths-for-the-novel/> [accessed 9 October 2018]

———, *White Teeth* (London: Penguin Books, 2001)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), 243–61

Spurr, David, *Architecture and Modern Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012)

Squires, Clare, *Zadie Smith's White Teeth* (London: Continuum, 2002)

Stenstad, Gail, *Transformations: Thinking after Heidegger* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006)

Svendsen, Lars, 'Moods and the Meaning of Philosophy', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 419–31 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2012.0033>

Thomson, Iain, *Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Throop C. Jason, 'Moral Moods', *Ethos*, 42 (2014), 65–83 <https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12039>

Tutek, Hrvoje, 'Dwelling in the Apocalypse: Capitalist Modernity, Antimodernism, Zombies', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25 (2017), 27–48 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jffp.2017.812>

Vermeulen, Pieter, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

———, 'Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*, the Anthropocene, and the Scales of Literature', *Studia Neophilologica*, 87 (2015), 68–81 <https://doi.org/10.1086/421163>

Warren, Nicolas de, 'Memory in Continental Philosophy: Metaphor, Concept, Thinking', in *Memory: A History*, ed. by Dmitri Nikulin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 228–74

Watt, Ian, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, New edn (London: Penguin, 2015)

Weinberger, Christopher "Triangulating an Ethos: Ethical Criticism, Novel Alterity, and Mori Ogai's "Stereostopic Vision", *positions* 23.2 (2015): 259-285 (261-262)

Wenman, Mark, 'Cosmopolitanism Without Bannisters: Agonism, Humanism and World Disclosure', in *Re-Grounding Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism*, ed. by Tamara Carauș and Elena Paris (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 29–45

White, Hayden, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014)

———, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1980), 5–27

Wood, James, 'Human, All Too Inhuman', *The New Republic*, 24 July 2000 <https://newrepublic.com/article/61361/human-inhuman> [accessed 21 October 2017]

Woolf, Virginia, *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf: Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse and The Waves* (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press, 1992)

Wright, Oliver and Jerome Taylor, 'Cameron: My War On Multiculturalism', *The Independent*, 2011. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-my-war-on-multiculturalism-2205074.html> [accessed 19 October 2017]

Young, Julian, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

———, 'What Is Dwelling? The Homelessness of Modernity and the Worlding of the World', in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L.*

Dreyfus, Volume 1, ed. by Mark A. Wrathall and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 187–204

Zigon, Jarrett, 'An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics: An Ethics of Dwelling', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 20 (2014), 746–64 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.12133>

———, 'Attunement and Fidelity: Two Ontological Conditions for Morally Being-in-the-World', *Ethos*, 42, 16–30 <https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12036>

———, 'Moral Breakdown and the Ethical Demand: A Theoretical Framework for an Anthropology of Moralities', *Anthropological Theory*, 7 (2007), 131–50 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499607077295>

Zubeck, Jacqueline A., *Don DeLillo after the Millennium: Currents and Currencies* (New York: Lexington Books, 2017)