

Task #1: Introduction to Ghostliness in Art

1. Carefully watch the video “Ghostliness in Art.”

Available [here](#):

www.dropbox.com/s/svmubkiiiaqdwehj/Ghostliness%20in%20Art.mov?dl=0

→ A transcript of the video’s voice over as well as a collection of passages from works which the video is based on can be found on the document “1.A Video Essay Ghostliness in Art.”

2. Discuss the video (first in pairs, then share your findings with the class).

- ◆ According to the video, how are ghosts related to literature? And what about other types of media, like photographs and voice recordings? Do you think this connection between art and ghosts makes sense? Why (not)?
- ◆ What does the word “disembodied” mean? (Tip: Can you point out different parts of the word and their meaning?) Why is the concept of “disembodiment” important when it comes to the ghostliness of literature? → **Answers:**
 - ◆ dis-embodied: the prefix *dis-* means “the opposite or absence of”¹; *embodied* is the past participle of *to embody* (“to give a body to; to incarnate; to incorporate”)
 - ◆ em-body: the root *body* is affixed with the prefix *em-*, meaning “provide with; within”²
 - ◆ “Disembodied” describes something that is not (or no longer) situated within a body. The separation of voice and body is central to the notion of ghostliness. It is a major characteristic of the ghost and can also be seen in voice recordings and literature.

3. Roger Casement as a ghost? (Discuss in pairs first, then share your findings with the class).

What may be reasons why people think of Roger Casement as a ghost? In other words, what events or aspects of his life make it likely that Casement will be imagined as a ghost, coming back from the dead? → **Possible answers:**

- ◆ While RC was alive, he already “haunted” the British Empire: At first, he worked with and supported the British colonial administration, but then he turned against the strategies used by colonialist forces in Africa (by writing two reports exposing the cruelties committed by King Leopold’s administration in the Congo Free State and by a Peruvian rubber company in the Putumayo³), and against the British empire, specifically (by joining the Irish Nationalist movement and helping to organize a revolt in 1916 – for which he was arrested and hanged).
- ◆ RC dying for the cause of Irish Nationalism renders him a martyr, a legend, or even a saint in the eyes of many. As a result of his heroic death, he becomes “bigger than life” and stays alive in the memory of his supporters.
- ◆ The scandal and uncertainty about RC’s rumored homosexuality affects the way he is remembered. RC, being incarcerated, was not able to (or chose not to) comment on these rumors. Hence, the secret died with him, haunting his memory.

¹ “dis-.” Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. *Merriam-Webster*, 2021, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dis. Accessed 11 November 2021.

² “en-.” Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. *Merriam-Webster*, 2021, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/en-. Accessed 11 November 2021.

³ Burroughs, Robert. “England’s Eyewitness: Casement’s Amazon Journal.” *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo*. Routledge Research in Travel Writing 4. Routledge, 2011. 122–143