

# HAUNTED BOOKS:

## Some Thoughts about Textual Eschatology

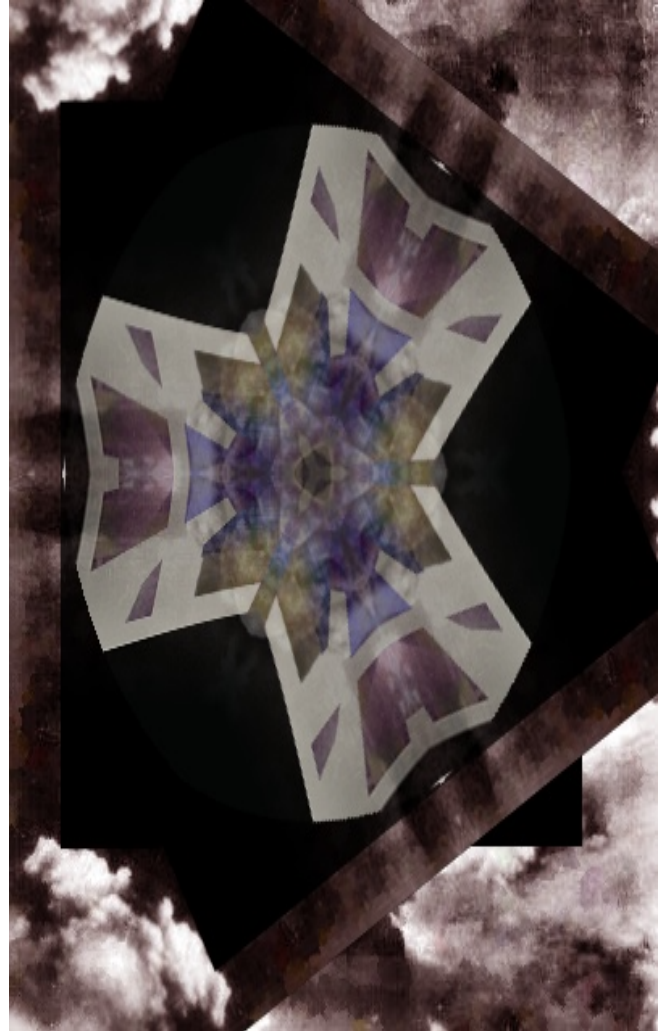
To some degree every book is a ghost  
in which the soul of the author  
seeks a new host

The words on each page  
are designed to engage  
& haunt those passing by  
linguistic graves

Too often the smell of death  
hangs around old parchment  
& as cellulose begins to flake  
& molecular bonds gradually decay  
countless mites  
begin to feast  
with microscopic bites  
& even the best of authors  
as respected authors become  
microbial delicacies.

Perhaps insects understand  
perfectly well how to read:  
wandering freely  
& devouring what they please

They're unafraid  
to scamper across shelves  
& never worry about  
what critics tell,  
or how narratives change unexpectedl...



**Shu:** Tsk! Tsk! I wouldn't be unduly concerned about oblivion. (laughing) It is non-negotiable.

**Ella:** Indeed. Why this morbid fascination?

**Juanita:** Well, Ernest Becker would assert that this pessimism comes from an awareness that the author's "immortality project" is failing.

**Jack:** Yep. All literature is a sort of culturally-endorsed immortality project - a heroic attempt to construct some kind of symbolically meaningful world.

- T Newfields

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