Seeing Bones Speaking:
The Female Gaze and the Posthuman Embodiment in Reichs’s Forensic Crime Fiction

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Abstract
The central question that informs the South Central Review special issue on women detectives published in 2001 is, “Whose body makes it possible to identify mystery and detective fiction as feminist?” In response to the above concern, this essay aims to address the issue of the body in terms of the posthuman embodiment. The body is important in women’s crime fiction because it provides a perspective nearer to that of the victim and his/her body, in contrast to the kind of police procedural novel that is focused on the psyche of the killer. Women’s crime fiction has two other features that distinguish it from its police procedural counterpart: the female forensic pathologist’s “affective” view of the dead and her becoming an intended victim herself. These three aspects of women’s crime fiction point to the possibility of posthuman embodiment in the relationship between the heroine’s gaze and the victim’s body. The TV series Bones, which is adapted from Kathy Reichs’s novels, provides the visualization of the heroine’s posthuman embodiment. For us, this posthuman embodiment is based on a “parallax view” (to follow Slavoj Žižek’s usage of the term), an interface, or an empty screen, by which the heroine’s gaze is inscribed into the bones, enabling her to embody them. We will borrow Jacques Lacan’s theory of the gaze and N. Katherine Hayles’s idea of posthuman embodiment to help us understand the interface or interplay between the gendered technological gaze and the body, as well as the twofold process of disembodiment and reembodiment of the body as rendered in Reichs’s novels.

Keywords
forensic crime fiction, the posthuman, embodiment, gaze, parallax view

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The empty orbits of my reference skulls regarded me blankly.

—Kathy Reichs
Déjà Dead

I pictured the other women, their bones, their faces, their gutted bodies. The plunger. The statue. No! screamed a voice in my head. Not me. Please. Not me. How many screams could I manage before he was on me?

—Kathy Reichs
Déjà Dead

The central question that prompts the South Central Review special issue on women detectives, “Whose Body: Recognizing Feminist Mystery and Detective Fiction,” is as follows: “Whose body makes it possible to identify mystery and detective fiction as feminist?”¹ This question may serve as the starting point of our inquiry into the issues of gender and the body in women’s crime fiction, though we do not want to refer to the journal issue particularly. The body raises a gender issue in detective fiction since the female body is under the surveillance of the male (detective’s) gaze. In women’s crime fiction—that is, crime fiction which features a female detective—the body as a gender issue manifests itself through a different means since this time the gaze upon the body is female rather than male, and the female detective’s own body, as well as the victim’s, is involved in the investigative process. This is why the question of “whose body” has to be raised when it comes to women’s crime fiction. In another genre, women’s forensic crime fiction, the issue of the body is further complicated since visual technology, traditionally belonging to the dominant (positivist, male) visual regime,² intervenes between the female gaze and the (victim’s) body when the female forensic pathologist engages herself in precise forensic investigation in behalf of the victim, toward whom she always feels empathy. What is concerned in this genre, therefore, is the tension between the scientific, positivist gaze and the female humanist (affective, emotional) gaze upon the body. The trilateral relationship between the female gaze, technology, and the body enables the female pathologist to embody the victims’ decomposed body, with the help of the technological gaze. N. Katherine Hayles’s distinction between “body” and “embodiment” is useful in helping to understand this kind of

¹ See Palmer 55.
² For the connection between visual technology and operation of social power or forms of control, see Crary.
posthuman embodiment enacted through (visual) technology. Before we explore the female pathologist’s posthuman embodiment, a preliminary understanding of the narrative structures of women’s forensic crime fiction and their bearing on gender issues is necessary.

Forensic crime fiction, which focuses on the scientific aspect of criminal investigations, has become more and more popular, and forensic crime writers, including Patricia Cornwell, Jeffery Deaver, and Kathy Reichs, have produced many best-sellers in the genre. The popularity of forensic crime fiction led to the production of a number of high-rated forensic crime TV series, such as CSI and Bones. Cornwell’s series of novels, featuring a female forensic pathologist, Kay Scarpetta, pioneered the trend of women’s forensic crime fiction. “The entrance of Cornwell into the field signals the significantly growing popularity of the figure of the female pathologist and medical expert,” according to Joy Palmer, “while the genre of the detective novel and its subgenre, the police procedural, have been largely dominated by male authors and protagonists” (Palmer 55). The female forensic pathologist in women’s forensic crime fiction plays a different role from the male detective in traditional detective novels. In women’s forensic crime fiction, the female detective is not directly involved in the pursuit and apprehension of the criminal, but engages herself in speaking for “the suffering of the victim” and listening to “the voice of the dead” (Horsley and Horsley 9).

Reichs follows Cornwell’s lead and has written many novels featuring a female forensic pathologist. Her debut Déjà Dead is in many ways similar to Cornwell’s debut Postmortem. But Reichs writes about the female forensic pathologist more convincingly than Cornwell, perhaps since Cornwell is only an assistant to a forensic pathologist while Reichs is a forensic pathologist herself. Reichs is one of only fifty forensic anthropologists certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and is on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. In 2005, Reichs’s novels began to be adapted into the TV series Bones (Fox TV), which instantly became a hit. The TV series features Temperance Brennan (played by Emily Deschanel) working at the fictional Jeffersonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Reichs reads every script of Bones and is involved in designing the forensic techniques used in it. Though Bones does not copy the story lines of Reichs’s novels, it keeps the same kinds of stories, which center around identifying badly decomposed remains. The main difference between the novels and the TV series lies in the role of science. While the novels depict

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3 We will elaborate on this distinction in the last section of this essay. To put it simply, “body” is an ideal construct while “embodiment” involves the context and the observer (of the body).
science as an instrument, in the TV series science becomes a character.\textsuperscript{4}

In both Reichs’s novels and the TV series \textit{Bones}, the bones themselves play an important role in the narrative. In the pilot episode of \textit{Bones} (premiered on September 13, 2005), the heroine Brennan is carrying a tarred skull with her in her first appearance, as if the skull is one of her belongings. No wonder her colleagues call her “Bones.” The viewers of \textit{Bones} watch the forensic pathologists move around in a bone storage room at the Jeffersonian that is furnished with big glass cabinets where human bones are kept and may very well receive the uncanny impression that the pathologists are somehow inside the bones and the bones are outside the pathologists’ bodies. It is as if in the bone storage room, the bodies of the pathologists are turned inside out. In Reichs’s novels, the victim’s bodies are left with bones or skeletons that carry no personal traits; in fact, they are stripped of everything connected with an identity as such. It is the job of Reichs’s pathologist protagonist Brennan to identify the victims’ bodies with “no manufacturer’s tags or labels, no zippers or buckles, no jewelry, no weapons or bindings, no slashes or entrance holes in clothing” (Reichs, \textit{Déjà Dead} 26) to assist her. As Brennan puts it, “Since the corpse was largely skeletonized, the little soft tissue that remained far too decomposed for standard autopsy, my expertise was requested” (25). Brennan has to deal with the decomposed bodies of the victims that cannot “be identified by normal means” (29). Working with the bare bones, Brennan becomes “a woman of bones,” who is professional and brave. This changes not only our view of the woman, but also our view about the bones as body fragments.

The bones in Reichs’s novels or \textit{Bones} have two major significances. The first is that they are frightening things that common people dare not stare at. Lee and Katharine Horsley claim that the grotesqueness of the abject corpse creates “the monstrous, dehumanising effect” in Reichs’s novels (22). As the Horsleys argue, the bones in Reichs’s text help spotlight “the text’s sense of obsessive and intimate contact with the unspeakable real” and are thus “inherently denotative in ways that no living human is” (9). Julia Kristeva’s idea of “the abject,” which many critics follow in treating the issue of the body in women’s crime fiction, may help us understand the “dehumanizing” effect of the bones as “the unspeakable real.” The Kristeva abject can be (briefly) defined as that which a society has to exclude in order to establish its identity. In her book \textit{Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection}, Kristeva claims that the way in which an individual, or a culture or society, excludes the abject mother (the maternal) and the feminine as a means of forming

\textsuperscript{4}Ingrida Povidiša insists that science in the TV series \textit{Bones} aims at the visual, unlike the equivalent figure in \textit{CSI}, which promises knowledge, truth, and certainty.
an identity is the same way in which societies are constructed: “What is abject . . . is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where the meaning collapses” (2). For Kristeva, refuse and corpses are examples of the abject: “refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live” (3). In a corpse, the “most sickening of wastes,” Kristeva argues, “It is no longer I who expel, ‘I’ is expelled” (4). In the same vein, the bones in Reichs’s novels stand for what is expelled or “killed” in society. But, for us, the bones function not only as the gothic abject body that threatens the established identity in society and which society wants to “kill,” but also as the scientific body which signifies the new conception of the body and which the female pathologist tries to identify and embody on different levels. To understand this, we have to turn to the second significance of the bones.

The second major significance of the bones is that they serve as the objects of scientific investigation. Under the scientific gaze, the unfamiliar body interior is exposed and familiarized, such that the bones’ gothic and uncanny character is now moderated. The familiarization of the bones as body interior, in fact, echoes the new discourse of the body in modern society in which the body is turned inside out and digitalized or virtualized. Ingrida Povidiša maintains that the representation or display of bones signifies the turning-inside-out of the body. In a similar vein, the Horsleys argue that the autoptic procedures result in “violations of the privacy of the dead body” and produce an “invitation to voyeurism” (20). This voyeuristic gaze at the bones is interlaced with the new conception of the body. In Reichs’s novels the truth of the body no longer lies in the extensions of the body, as was the case with Sherlock Holmes, but rather lies in the body itself (Povidiša). The fractured elements of the body in forensic crime fiction, according to Palmer, have become familiar pop-icons and have to do with the construction of cultural identity or body politics (55). Following Palmer’s argument, we propose that the investigation of the bones is related to contemporary body discourse, in which the body comes to be molecularized or digitalized.

For us, the bones’ significance as the scientific object is as important as their significance as an abject body. When the abject body becomes a scientific object, its status as a “real,” substantial external body, a “waste” or an “excess” outside the symbolic register, is changed since it is now familiarized by the scientific gaze within the symbolic. Though Kristeva is right in pointing out the ontological significance of the abject as the excess of society, she mistakenly reifies this excess, which is more virtual than substantial, depending on the observer. The Kristevan abject is tainted by essentialist associations and should be contextualized. Here a Lacanian-Žižekian conception of the Real can provide a critique of the Kristevan
abject. For Slavoj Žižek, the Lacanian Real “has to be totally de-substantialized” for “[i]t is not an external thing that resists being caught in the symbolic network, but the fissure within the symbolic network itself.” (Žižek, *How to Read* 72). The Real as “the fissure within the symbolic network” manifests itself as something “behind the veil of appearances” but turns out to be nothing more than a “lure” for the gaze (72). The mutual implication of the abject body and scientific body enables Brennan to escape the essentialist shackles of the body, on the one hand, and, on the other, to provide a critique of the constructionist (relativist) new conception of body—that is, the molecularized or digitalized body—through her affective gaze and her embodiment of the decomposed body.

The two significances of the bones point not only to their paradoxical nature as the object of forensic investigation, but also to the paradoxical nature of the female investigating gaze in Reichs’s crime fiction: under the gaze of Brennan, the bones are both scientific, as the object of forensic investigation, and affective, as the body of a victim enticing the viewer’s empathy; Brennan can feel empathy toward the bones while she is doing the scientific work of forensic investigation. The paradoxical nature of the bones as the object of forensic investigation turns them into a “parallax object” corresponding to a “parallax view” (to follow Žižek’s usage of the terms).5 In Reichs’s novels, it is the female gaze that embodies this parallax view. Before we examine the bones as a parallax object and the corresponding parallax view of Brennan, let us explore the different facets of the female gaze in women’s crime fiction.

**The Female Gaze in Women’s Forensic Crime Fiction**

Women’s forensic crime fiction such as Cornwell’s or Reichs’s might invite discussion about the role of the female gaze because of the three features related to gender issues in narratives within this genre: 1) the genre provides a perspective nearer to that of the victim and his/her body; 2) the female forensic pathologist holds an “affective” view of the victim; 3) the female forensic pathologist becomes a potential victim herself. These narrative features create a tension between the female detective and the overall male structure of the detective novel.6

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5 Žižek extends the idea of “parallax” as the displacement of an object, caused by change in perspective, and considers “parallax” as the mediation between the object and the subject. In the parallax view, the “subject’s gaze is always-already inscribed into the perceived object itself” insofar as an epistemological shift reflects an ontological shift (Žižek, *Parallax View* 17).

6 In the “golden age” of the detective novel, for example, detection is more rational than emotional and the main plot line focuses on the unemotional presentation of the crime. For
questions about the ideological or feminist impetus of the heroine’s investigative work are unavoidably raised (Palmer 55). For some critics a female protagonist, whatever resistance she shows to a narrative with male conventions, is forced to copy the male logic. This is so, these critics argue, because the female protagonist in the male narrative “is speaking in a voice that is conditioned and contained by the patriarchal structures within which the forensic pathologist must operate” (Horsley and Horsley 13). For other critics, the heroine has to copy the male logic because the whole investigative procedure is based on the restoration of meaning through justice, and the institutions and practices behind this justice are “overwhelmingly conservative, masculine, white, heterosexual” (Mizejewski 10). As many feminists have argued, the detective novel is always already a masculinist genre, and the protagonist, by default, necessarily male (Palmer 56).

The role of the female forensic pathologist in the detective novel is inevitably contradictory. Palmer provides a succinct overview of the contradictory role of the heroine, which we may summarize in the following three points. First, the concept of the “female detective” is inherently oxymoronic and the ideological constraints of the form pose a challenge to those critics who take the representations of the female detective in mainstream fiction as “positive role models” for women (56). Second, the specular instruments of scientific detection help consolidate the feminized and erotic status of the body (55). Third, what the detective follows is a ratiocinative logic informed by a masculinist drive to know, since the history of science is “marked by a drive to penetrate, uncover, and know this nature, rendering it visible under the probing scrutiny of the masculine gaze” (56).

Palmer herself, however, finds the possibility of subversion in the contradiction between the heroine and the male genre. She contends that the gaze of the female forensic pathologist in novels such as Cornwell’s may signal a “potential subversion or shift in those gendered viewing paradigms” (55). Central to Palmer’s argument is the idea that the female pathologist may put the capacity of positive knowledge into question: “the entrance of the female pathologist as a popular figure signals and further compounds fundamental anxieties over the capacity and legitimacy of positivist knowledge fully to discipline and account for identity or desire” (56). The technologies of forensic detection, Palmer argues, while securing the authoritative status of the detective, may “undermine that autonomy by reflecting concerns over the integrity of material evidence converted to digitized code” (69). For Palmer, this “material evidence [the body] converted to digitized code” cannot be identified by “a normalizing and disciplinary gaze” and thus arouse

features of the detective novel in the “golden age,” see Knight.
“anxieties over the body as both the sign of the self and the site of disciplinary
control” (69). This leads her to conclude that “both technology and gender function
as places where these contradictions can be negotiated and played out” (69).

The Horsleys make a similar claim that technology may be a site of
contradiction in women’s forensic crime fiction since in it there are narrative
tensions “between a feminist perspective and the hard masculine edge of old
fashioned policing” (14). They take Cornwell’s novels as an example to illustrate
how the heroine’s manner of investigation undermines the regime of the male gaze.
They note that in the critical discussion of the role of Scarpetta, what is repeatedly
emphasized is the difference between the “male activity of gathering information”
and the “more feminine recognition of the limitations of objective, unemotional
knowledge” (24). In Cornwell’s first few novels, the Horsleys explain, Scarpetta
may look like a hardened veteran during the investigative process, but Cornwell’s
later fiction distinguishes Scarpetta’s way of investigation from her male
colleagues’ impartial observation of homicide. Scarpetta is disturbed by the victim’s
death, while her male colleagues are unmoved by it: whereas she immerses herself
in the “horrifying reality of the victim’s death,” her male colleagues need only to
look at “clean case files and glossy photos and cold crime scenes” (qtd. in Horsley
and Horsley 7). Immersing herself in “the horrible reality of the victim’s death,” the
Horsleys comment, enables the female forensic pathologist to “speak so forcefully
for the suffering of the victim” that she can “giv[e] voice to what would otherwise
remain simply ‘unspeakable,’” and “listen to the voices of the dead” (7-9).

Another important reason why the female forensic pathologist feels empathy
toward the dead is that she often becomes a potential victim herself. This is true of
many of women’s crime fiction. In Reichs’s novels, the heroine is stalked, attacked,
and even abducted by the suspect, with the result that she experiences an apparently
constant paranoia: “No! screamed a voice in my head. Not me. Please. Not me. How
many screams could I manage before he [the killer] was on me?” (Reichs,
Déjà Dead 238)—to quote again from the very beginning of this essay. It is
standard within the genre that the female pathologist may become the “next victim”
and be threatened by death and dismemberment (Horsley and Horsley 14).
According to the Horsleys, this possibility of becoming the intended victim
dissolves the heroine’s self in two ways: 1) “her independence as a
narrator/interpreter of events is repeatedly called into question” (14); 2) she loses
her ability to read bodies because of her destabilized identity (25).

The Horsleys argue that the female pathologist’s empathy with the victim and
her contact with the messy corpse enacts her “gothic doubling” with the victim and
leads to her “self-division” and “dissolution of identity” (9). For them, the “gothicizing of the narrative,” accompanied by the “violation of our bodily interiors,” may erode both the conventional investigative structure and the protagonist’s own sense of identity and agency (30-31). In their eyes, it is difficult for the female pathologist to reinscribe the abject bodies into the symbolic order as the narratives slide towards “nightmarish images of violating the deeply rooted prohibition against looking into our own bodies” (24). Here we can see that the Horsleys basically follow Kristeva’s idea of the abject in proposing that the abject body can disrupt the dominant symbolic order and the concomitant gender establishment, serving as a locus for female subjectivity. This is also the position of Linda Mizejewski, who argues that the disturbing discovery of a corpse or the abject body, the Kristevan “body-without-meaning,” in crime fiction “defines the place of subjectivity” (10).

The Gendered Technological Gaze and the Virtual Body in Reichs’s Novels

While critics like the Horsleys and Mizejewski are right in spotlighting the gothic abject body in the forensic crime fiction, they are wrong in downplaying the role of science in this kind of fiction, which may help moderate the atmosphere of the gothic. Although the female pathologist’s gaze is different from the male gaze in many respects, her gaze is in essence a technological gaze, though not necessarily a positivist one. Science in Reichs’s novels is central and exists at the surface of the narrative; in the television series, science even becomes a character itself. As Povidiša puts it, “the series is its [science’s] show, the character science displays itself in its different forms, it surprises, disappoints, scares, shocks.” In Reichs’s novels, the gothic flavor is juxtaposed with the scientific flavor insofar as the female pathologist has to “clean” and even “boil” to expose the bones for investigation: “I may see something on the bones when they’re cleaned” (Reichs, Déjà Dead 22).

During the investigative procedure, under the technological gaze, the bones are digitalized, making them as spectral as the abject body, but in a different sense. What entices the scopic drive of the female forensic pathologist is the double status of the dead body as the abject body and at the same time as the digitalized body. In Reichs’s novels, the female forensic pathologist Brennan’s empathy toward the victims results from the abject body at the crime scene and the digitalized body at the autopsy table. At the crime scene, Brennan is shocked by the terrible
decomposition of the body or the evidence of the brutal death of the victim, whereas in the autopsy room she is driven by the desire to find the cause of the victim’s death. At the crime scene, Brennan’s scopic drive has to do with her naked eye, whereas in the autopsy room, her scopic drive has to do with the technological gaze. On both levels of Brennan’s scopic drive, the body of the victim inscribes Brennan’s affective gaze. This makes Brennan’s gaze different from her male colleagues’: on the one hand, Brennan’s gaze is more affective and humanistic than her male colleagues’, and on the other, her gaze is more technological (molecular) than theirs (their molar gaze). Now let us explore in more detail the parallax view of Brennan’s gendered technological gaze.

We will look at the technological aspect of Brennan’s gaze first. The gaze of the female forensic pathologist, in most cases, has to be mediated by visual technology, which is neglected by those critics who focus on the gothic abject body in women’s crime fiction. Palmer argues that crime fiction like Cornwell’s should be put in the cultural context “in which the continuous development of visualization techniques contributes to a sense that we have come to ‘know’ our bodies and those of others in progressively more complicated and contingent ways” (55). The body under investigation is (re)presented through the visualization techniques and manifests itself in a different way from the body under the naked eye in traditional crime fiction, which we will discuss shortly. The female forensic pathologist’s gaze upon the body is what we may call the “gendered (feminized) technological gaze,” which is affective and scientific at the same time. This can help us understand why Palmer claims that science can be the site of “potential subversion or shift in those gendered viewing paradigms,” that gender and technology, often linked in the genre of women’s forensic crime fiction, “work both to secure and challenge the sovereignty of the positivist gaze” (55). The gendered technological gaze makes the relationship between the technological gaze and the body more complicated than it has ever been.

Under a technological gaze, the bones as body fragments become scientific objects and can be further broken down during the investigating process, whether through DNA sampling, bone-cut analysis, or other scientific methods. This breaking-down of the body fragments amounts to a “fragmentation of fragmentation,” a twofold process through which the body is disfigured and then reconfigured. The “fragmentation of fragmentation” of the bones is in essence an act of violence (the investigator’s) against violence (the killer’s). The way the pathologist violates the body of the victim when she investigates the body is close to what the killer himself does when he kills the victim: “pathologist and killer both
dissect the body and impose a narrative on it,” as the Horsleys argue (18). Brennan’s attitude toward the bones is a contradictory one. On the one hand, the bones belong to a person with life and dignity; on the other hand, the bones are merely lifeless objects to be analyzed and dissected. Brennan is self-conscious about this contradiction:

Violent death allows no privacy. It plunders one’s dignity as surely as it has taken one’s life. The body is handled, scrutinized, and photographed, with a new series of digits allocated at each step. The victim becomes part of the evidence, an exhibit, on display for police, pathologists, forensic specialists, lawyers, and, eventually, jurors. Number it. Photograph it. Take samples. Tag the toe. While I am an active participant, I can never accept the impersonality of the system. It is like looting on the most personal level. At least I would give this victim a name. Death in anonymity would not be added to the list of violations he or she would suffer. (Reichs, Déjà Dead 27)

The body of the victim has lost its dignity and is “impersonalized” or dehumanized during the investigating process of photographing, sampling, and tagging. This is the violence the forensic investigation imposes on the body of the victim. Yet Brennan wants to go beyond “the impersonality of the system” by giving the victim “a name,” which shows her humanistic or affective concern. The humanity Brennan shows, paradoxically, is one that is based on dehumanization (fragmentation or digitalization).

The body under Brennan’s technological gaze is thus very different from the body as rendered in traditional crime fiction. While the body in traditional crime fiction is relatively easy to identify, through clothing, personal belongings, or other personal identifiers, the body in Reichs’s novels is bereft of all except the skeleton or individual bones, which are hard to identify and personalize. As Brennan describes: “I would have no manufacturer’s tags or labels, no zippers or buckles, no jewelry, no weapons or bindings, no slashes or entrance holes in clothing to corroborate my findings. The body had been dumped, naked and mutilated, stripped of everything that linked it to a life” (Reichs, Déjà Dead 26). The corpse in Reichs’s fiction tends to be mere bones that carry no personal belongings and thus are stripped of everything that may be linked to an identity. Or we can say that the identity of the victim lies in the “interior” of the body rather than the clothing or accessories of the body or its extensions. The fragmentation and interiorization of
the body in Reichs’s novels indicate that the body no longer belongs to the human, but has become a mere scientific object: “the lifeless body is in effect little more than organic material to be investigated, dissected, cooked and scanned,” as Povidiša comments.

The bones in Reichs’s novels signify a new conception of the body. We propose that the bones as body fragments can be informed by contemporary body discourse or biopolitics, in which the body is studied at the molecular level. Following Nikolas Rose’s distinction between the molar body and the molecular body (a distinction he inherits from Deleuze), we can say that the body in traditional crime fiction is a “molar” one, while the body in Reichs’s novels is a molecular one under a “molecular gaze.” The molar body refers to the body as “a systematic whole—that was the focus of clinical medicine,” whereas the molecular body refers to the body at the molecular level, in terms of, say, activities of particular intracellular elements (Rose 11-12). Visualization techniques, for Rose, are crucial in enhancing the “thought at the molecular level” (14). Such visualization techniques operate through “digital simulation” and can “reconstruct an apparent mimetic realism at the molecular level” through digital information (14). These visualization techniques entail more than the equipment seeing the biological at the molecular level. For Rose, technology is “an assemblage of social and human relations within which equipment and techniques are only one element” (16). Rose’s idea of technology can be compared to Hayles’s idea of embodiment, which we will discuss later.

In Déjà Dead, the female pathologist Brennan embodies “the molecular gaze” and is the only one in the whole forensic team that can identify the otherwise unidentifiable bones: “since the corpse was largely skeletonized, the little soft tissue that remained far too decomposed for standard autopsy, my expertise was requested,” as Brennan claims (25). The status of the bones is blurry and is at the border between the visible and the invisible. It is “visible” in the sense that it belongs to a human; it is “invisible” because it has become molecular and not visible to the naked eye. Brennan’s job is to visualize the invisible.

The molar/molecular or visible/invisible distinction corresponds to the male/female labor division in Reichs’s novels. Whereas Brennan’s male colleagues are responsible for the homicide detection and focus on the molar level, she is in charge of the forensic investigation at the molecular level. Since the molecular/invisible part of the bones is not recognizable to the naked eye, Brennan’s male colleagues often cast doubtful eyes on her investigation. It turns out,

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7 See Rose 9-14.
however, that Brennan is right in the long run, and her male colleagues have to give her the credit she deserves. In *Déjà Dead*, for example, Brennan, often mocked and hindered by her male colleagues, finally receives an acknowledgement letter from one of her male co-workers after her investigation job vindicates her earlier claims. The letter says: “You are right. No one should die in anonymity. Thanks to you, these women did not . . .” (411).

The bones are “invisible” to Brennan’s male colleagues on another level, the humanistic or affective one: whereas Brennan can associate the bones with the violent death of the victim, and thus develop empathy toward the victim, her male colleagues do not “see” the suffering of the victim since they regard his/her body as a purely scientific object. Unlike her male colleagues, Brennan’s technological gaze upon the molecularized or digitalized bones is not purely scientific, but concomitant with her affective attitude toward them. The more the bones are digitalized or molecularized, the more Brennan is mentally or bodily involved with them. The digitalized or molecularized bodies of the victims serve as an interface between the scientific objects and the affective gaze. Brennan’s male colleagues, on the other hand, “mask the horror” of violence on the victim. As Brennan describes: “I wondered if he felt anything for the dead woman or if it was all an exercise for him. Find the bad guy. Outwit the perp. I’d heard the banter, the comments, the jokes made over a victim’s battered body. For some it was a way to deal with the obscenity of violence, a protective barrier against the daily reality of human slaughter. Morgue humor. Mask the horror in male bravado” (43). Here Brennan is commenting on her male colleagues’ aloofness toward the body of the victim, their doing investigation for investigation’s sake, and their masking the horror of violence with “male bravado.” Whereas Brennan has a more humanistic concern for the victim, her male colleagues’ attitude toward the victim is positivist. Though her job is forensic investigation and providing “accurate technical support,” she cannot “escape the feeling” that she needs to do something for the victim, which keeps gnawing at her, “like a hamster with a carrot” (88). This “feeling” or “something” is vague, but it does express Brennan’s humanistic or affective concern for the victim.

The “feeling” or “something” Brennan feels toward the victim corresponds to the blind spot in the scientific image of the bones, a blind spot which her male colleagues fail to see. To see the blind spot, to visualize the invisible, or even to identify with it, constitutes Brennan’s act of embodiment. To detect the blind spot in the detective’s scopic field has always been a feature of detective fiction, especially in the “private eye” subgenre. Now the time for the comparison between the female forensic pathologist in women’s crime fiction and the hero in the “private eye”
tradition of detective fiction is in order. The difference between Brennan and her male colleagues in “seeing” the body can be compared to the difference between the hero and the police organization in the “private eye” tradition, in which the hero has a “solitary eye,” “a non-organization man’s eye,” an eye that “is licensed to look” and “trusts no other” (Porter 95). Most importantly, the “private eye” is an eye that is motivated by “pleasure associated with Freud’s scopic drive” (95). It is thus not far-fetched to interpret the blind spot in the scientific image of the bones in terms of psychoanalytical theory of scopic drive. More specifically, we can borrow Lacan’s concept of “anamorphosis” or “the split between the eye and the gaze” to explain the blind spot in the scientific image of the bones.

To put it simply, the Lacanian scopic drive or gaze points toward an anamorphosis as the blind spot in a picture viewed in a certain way (from a normal perspective). For Jacques Lacan, the gaze corresponds to the “blind spot” in the subject’s perception of visible reality, “disturbing its transparent visibility” (Žižek, Looking Awry 79). Lacan illustrates his concept of anamorphosis through Holbein’s painting “The Ambassadors” (Four Fundamental 88-89). In the painting, there is a strange, blurry object in the foreground in front of the two ambassadors. When we look at the picture in a direct frontal way, the blurry object looks like a meaningless stain, but when we change our position and look at the picture from the side, the meaningless stain turns into the shape of a skull. Lacan here describes the correlation between the viewer and the picture; the gaze is reflected within the picture, such that the picture returns the viewer’s gaze.

We can also explain Lacanian anamorphosis through his idea of “the split between the eye and the gaze” (Lacan, Four Fundamental 67-78). Lacan illustrates this kind of split by writing, “I see only from one point, but in my existence, I am looked at from all sides” (72). The split between the eye and the gaze corresponds to “seeing” and “seeing oneself seen.” The split between the eye and the gaze causes scopic drive: “The eye and the gaze—this is for us the split in which the drive is manifested at the level of the scopic field” (73). Scopic drive thus involves the dynamic interaction between the picture and the gaze, between “seeing” and “seeing oneself seen.” More exactly, in scopic drive, the drive’s circuit manifests itself in three levels: to see, to see oneself, to be seen (Evans 47). When “the drive completes its circuit,” the subject can transcend the autoerotic or pleasure principle and “a new subject” will appear (47-48).

Brennan can transform herself into “a new subject” by embodying the bones of the victim. The blind spot in the scientific image of the bones, which Brennan sees but her male colleagues fail to see, has to do with Brennan’s “reflexive”
relationship with the bones. In them, what Brennan sees is not only the decomposed body or the digital information of a molecularized body, but also herself reflected in/through the image of the bones. And her reflexive relationship with the bones enables Brennan to reconfigure her own body or identity. Thus in Brennan’s reflexive relationship with the bones a twofold process of disfiguration/disembodiment (molecularization) and reconfiguration/reembodiment (i.e., Brennan’s embodiment of the bones) is entailed. It is the status of the bones as the parallax object, denoting the abject body and scientific object at the same time, that makes this twofold process possible. And it is this twofold process of deconstructing and reconstructing the body that enables Brennan to engage in a dialogue with the molecular view of the body and endow this new conception of body with a feminist twist. Brennan’s reflexive relationship with the bones creates her reflexive relationship with the new view of the body.

But in what way can we say that Brennan sees herself reflected (“sees herself seen”) in the image of the bones? In women’s forensic crime fiction, indeed, the female forensic pathologist herself can be seen to be “metaphorically put on the autopsy table” since she doubles as “retributive agent and eroticised victim of male violence” (Horsley and Horsley 26). We can interpret Brennan’s being “put on the autopsy table” in terms of three narrative features in Reichs’s novels.

The first narrative feature that enables Brennan to be seen in/through the bones is that Brennan has an affective attitude toward the bones, as we have emphasized. In Déjà Dead, Brennan expresses her affective attitude toward the bones by describing how she feels fearful and “disturbed” and how her guts feel “like ice” when she is faced with the decomposed body, resulting in a composite of feelings within her, which is “vague, ill-formed” and “apart from the normal reaction to depravity” (29). The decomposed body seems to have something to say to her, and implores her to do more precise forensic investigations: “I want more precision” (29), as Brennan reminds herself, in response to the “voice” of the bones. In Death du Jour, Brennan expresses her “ache” about the victim (the bones of the victim), which is more than a feeling of pity: “I ache each time one [the decomposed body of a baby] arrives in the morgue. The stark truth of fallen humanity stares at me. And pity provides small comfort” (82). Here Brennan is describing her “ache” which stems from the decomposed body of a murdered child. The bodies of the children are “always difficult” for Brennan because they are “the most vulnerable, the most trusting, and the most innocent” (82), and they remind her of her daughter Katy. Whenever there are cases involving children, Brennan would “fight an urge to tether Katy to [herself] to keep [Katy] in sight” (82). Here
we can say that Brennan’s reflexive relationship with the child’s body is mediated through her worry about her own daughter.

The second narrative feature that enables Brennan to be seen in/through the bones is that she is bodily involved with the bones when she is at work. In the autopsy room, Brennan is surrounded by the smell of death: “The fans and disinfectants never quite win over the smell of ripened death. The antiseptic gleam of the stainless steel never really eradicates the images of human carnage” (Reichs, *Déjà Dead* 14). At the crime scenes, too, when she is trying to inspect the body remains, all of her senses are involved. Here is an example of Brennan’s bodily involvement with the remains of the victims at a crime scene:

Rewrapping the plastic around my hand, I pulled harder, and felt the bag move. I could tell that its contents had substance. Insects whined in my face. Sweat trickled down my back. My heart drummed like the bass in a heavy metal band. One more tug and the bag came free. I dragged it forward far enough to allow a view inside. . . . Whatever it held was heavy, and I had little doubt what that would be. And I was right. As I disentangled the ends of the plastic, the smell of putrefaction was overwhelming. I unwound the edges and looked inside. (12)

Brennan is at a crime scene where the remains of the victim are put in a plastic bag and buried underground. Brennan has to pull and tug the plastic bag out. During the pulling and tugging process, Brennan’s visual, acoustic, olfactory, and tactile senses are all involved. In this way, the victim’s body remains are embodied by her through her senses.

The third and most important narrative feature that enables Brennan to “see herself seen” is that Brennan herself becomes the target of the murderer. When Brennan sees the bones of a victim, they return her gaze, such that what she sees is actually herself seen from the perspective of the object, that is, the bones. In this way, Brennan puts herself into the picture she is seeing. In a section of *Déjà Dead* in which Brennan is reading journals reporting the latest homicide case and the investigation of it, she can see her name on the pages: “Dr. Temperance Brennan, an American forensic anthropologist and expert in skeletal trauma, is examining the bones of the victim for indications of knife marks . . .” (86). Sometimes she even sees her own picture placed side by side with the photos of the crime scene: “I was dismayed to see the third photo: a shot of me at a disinterment” (86). Here
Brennan’s own shot is a metonym of the victim’s when they are juxtaposed together. Of course, Brennan’s connection with the victim is more than metonymic. She herself does actually become the target of the killer later in the novel. On one occasion, she gets home to find her own picture with a large X scrawled upon it, which seems to indicate a threat to her life: “My image had been circled and recircled in pen, and the front of my chest was marked with a large X” (120). Sometimes Brennan is even attacked and abducted by the killer. This is why, in 206 Bones, Brennan associates herself with the autopsy photo of the victim:

Clearly, I’d been abducted. To be the victim in some sick game? To be removed as a threat? The thought triggered my first clear memory. An autopsy photo. A corpse, charred and twisted, jaws agape in a final agonal scream. Then a kaleidoscope sequence, image chasing image. Two morgues. Two autopsy rooms. Name plaques marking two labs. Temperance Brennan, Forensic Anthropologist. Temperance Brennan, Anthropologue Judiciaire. (3)

When Brennan is abducted, she can imagine what will happen to her next since the killer will do the same to her as he did to the victim. This is why she associates herself with the autopsy photo of a “charred and twisted” corpse she sees in the autopsy room. The name plaque of the victim this time carries her own name: “Temperance Brennan.”

When Brennan sees herself seen in/through the bones, she embodies the bones and the bones turn into the interface (screen) between subject and object, between mind and body, and between human and posthuman. When the bones turn into the interface, they are virtualized. This can be explained on two levels. On the first level, the bones are virtualized because they are under a technological gaze and are digitalized. On the second level, the bones are virtualized because they appear differently depending on whether it is Brennan’s or her male colleagues’ gazes. Both levels of virtualization of the bones have to do with Brennan’s “gendered technological gaze.”

Whose Body?
The Posthuman Embodiment in Bones

The trilateral relationship between the female gaze, technology, and the body is the basis on which Brennan enacts the posthuman embodiment. Here
posthumanity and embodiment reinforce each other. We should approach posthumanism through a critique of humanism, with its premises of reason, autonomy of the self, and mind/body dichotomy, etc. For example, Hayles’s study of the posthuman discourses shows how such posthuman models as cybernetics subvert the autonomous self of liberal humanism by “connecting the organic body to its prosthetic extensions” (2). However, such posthuman models tend to turn everything into information or digital patterns, making them lose their materiality or body. As stated by Hayles in her negative reaction to this tendency, in the information flow or the feedback loop between humans and computer, “information loses its body” (2). The posthuman embodiment we propose here is instead a reembodiment, a twofold process in which the body is disfigured first and then reconfigured/re-embodied, as seen in Brennan’s embodiment of the bones through her affective gaze upon them or her scopic drive.

How can Brennan reconfigure the body after it has been disfigured? If we were able to see Brennan’s gaze or her posthuman embodiment, what would it be like? For Lacan, the gaze points toward a virtual dimension in the scopic field. This virtual dimension serves as an interface or the space of mediation, and constitutes what Lacan refers to as “trompe l’œil” or “travesty”—some kind of picture that can trick the eye (Four Fundamental 103). Brennan’s gaze or her posthuman embodiment enacted through the gaze is exactly something like a “trompe l’œil.” However, it is hard to render the visualization of Brennan’s gaze or her posthuman embodiment through words. In the novels, Brennan’s posthumanism can be rendered only figuratively rather than visually. Povidiša proposes that in a crime fiction like Reichs’s, the embodiment of the dead can be described by the rhetorical figure of Prosopopoeia, “a feigned presentation of characters and things through the attribution of qualities such as speaking and listening, thereby giving a face to the absent and dead.” In Reichs’s novels, when Brennan is embodying the bones, the bones become the “dead living” and Brennan becomes the “living dead.” In either the “dead living” or “living dead”, we can see an amalgamation of the bones and the human. In the figure of Prosopopoeia, the binary opposition of human and nonhuman is dissolved, and the distinction between the virtual and reality is erased.

Thanks to such visual and computer technology as 3D simulation, Brennan’s embodiment of the bones in the “trompe l’œil” or through the figure of Prosopopoeia is visualized and rendered in the TV series Bones. The 3D simulation in Bones provides a visualization of the spectral body-image in which the bones and

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8 For the relationship between posthumanism and the critique of humanism, see Badmington 1-10.
the human are juxtaposed. In *Bones*, the forensic pathologists are equipped with the most advanced visual technology, 3D simulation, which enables them to simulate the real person even if they only have the victim’s bones at hand. The 3D simulation can reanimate the skull, make a simulation of the features of the victim, and even roughly represent a whole sequence of events. *Bones* can help us see what Brennan sees in her autopsy room through visual technology. The 3D simulation image actually puts the investigator’s gaze into the picture, such that the gaze humanizes bones, on the one hand, and molecularizes the human, on the other hand. The 3D simulation, with its “touch of the unreal and the far-fetched,” is “a sign of the free artistic interpretation of a reading of evidence” and can be compared to a “divine power with the aid of technology and science,” by which “the dead awake, tell their story and then lie down again in peace” (Povidiša).

In almost every episode of *Bones*, the audience can see lively 3D images created by the 3D simulation device, whereby a real-size human image is projected onto an electronic platform. The forensic pathologist will gather around the virtual image to check how the body was violated and what had happened in the crime scene. Since the virtual image is made of electronic waves, it is transparent, such that we can see the human appearance of the victim and her skeleton inside at the same time. What we see in the 3D image, it turns out, is a phantasmagoria of the dead living, which seems to gaze back at and speak to the investigators.

The device of the 3D simulation is devised and operated by Brennan’s female colleague Angela. But sometimes she is so shocked by the virtual image or the sequence of events she has reconstructed that she cannot stand gazing at it. It seems that the virtual image of the victim is gazing at her and pleading with her, which she finds so unbearable that she has to turn away. In season 1, episode 5 ("A Boy in a Bush"), she almost quits her job because she is frightened by the virtual image she creates: this time the victim is a child and she struggles to observe his face and body while the whole sequence of the crime is being reproduced. Dr. Goodman, a director of the Jeffersonian Anthropology Institute, asks her how she would describe her job. She answers: “I draw death masks,” to which the director replies: “You discern humanity in the rack of the ruin of the human body. You give victims back their faces, their identities, you remind us all of why we’re here. In the first place, because we treasure human life.” For Dr. Goodman, Angela’s simulation of the victim is not merely technical, but also very humanistic or affective. In the simulation, she can “discern humanity in the rack of the ruin of the human body.” The 3D simulation lets the dead speak and enables Angela to discern (in)humanity in science. Here Angela’s humanist concern about the 3D image of the victim is of
the same nature as Brennan’s affective attitude toward the bones of the victim and is also based on the gendered technological gaze.

The 3D simulation ultimately constitutes an interface between body and mind, between human and posthuman, and between subject and object. At this point, the question “Whose body makes it possible to identify mystery and detective fiction as feminist?” we have raised in the beginning of this essay becomes pertinent. In Reichs’s novels, the trilateral relationship between the female gaze, technology, and the bones, which constitutes the interface or the “trompe l’œil,” provides the key to the question. It is through the interface or the “trompe l’œil” that Brennan sees herself in/through the bones and embodies them, thus having her body or identity reconfigured. Those who focus on the abject or gothic body in women’s forensic crime fiction, however, focus only on the disfigurations of the body and neglect the re-figurations of the body through the act of posthuman embodiment. This leads to a “deconstructionist” reading of gender as well as the body. For example, the Horsleys argue that the gothic body and the gothicizing of narratives in Cornwell’s novels lead to the destabilization of female agency and subjectivity (9), “a dissolution of the boundaries” (26), or a “radical permeability of roles” (26). The “deconstructionist” reading of woman in women’s forensic crime fiction is also held by critics who focus on the abnormal gender performances. This leaves the question of the body unanswered. For example, Mizejewski argues that, in Cornwell’s novels, the heroine Kay can gather different transgressive female stereotypes—lesbians, femmes fatales, bad mothers—in an act of “body doubling” and can undermine the boundaries of gender roles (9).

To steer the middle way between reifying the body and forgetting the body appears to be a better approach to the issues of gender and the body in women’s forensic crime fiction. Reading Reichs’s novels in terms of posthuman embodiment may illuminate this middle way. In Brennan’s posthuman embodiment, the paradoxical relationship between the female gaze and the positivist gaze in Reichs’s novels is entwined with the paradoxical relationship between technology and the body. Through Brennan’s gendered technological gaze, the relationship between technology and the body is complicated and involves the twofold process of disembodiment and reembodiment. On the one hand, technology leads to disembodiment when technology digitalizes and molecularizes the body; on the other hand, technology can extend the body and enhance embodiment.9 Whereas

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9For a theory which elucidates the connection between technology and embodiment, please refer to Mark Hansen’s writings, including Embodying Technesis and New Philosophy for New Media, which try to highlight a “technical embodiment.” In Embodying Technesis, Hansen
Brennan’s male colleagues see only the disembodiment of the bones through the technological gaze, Brennan can re-emboby or reconfigure the bones through her gendered technological gaze.

The issues of gender and the body as rendered in Reichs’s novels thus involve the twofold process of disembodiment and reembodiment. To focus only on the embodiment side (as those critics who follow Kristeva’s idea of the abject body do) or to focus on the disembodiment side (as those who pay attention to abnormal gender performances do) proves to be an insufficient reading of such novels as Reichs’s and disavows the possibility of the emergence of the new form of body in women’s forensic crime fiction. As this essay has sought to argue, this new form of body is based on—but not completely identical with—the new discourse of the body as a molecularized body. It is a molecularized body with a feminist twist. Brennan embodies the molecularized body in different ways and on different levels, as we have mentioned. Brennan’s embodiment of the molecularized body entails the twofold process of disembodiment and reembodiment. In her interaction with the digital body or molecularized body, Brennan enacts a posthuman embodiment.

Hayles’s concept of (posthuman) embodiment, which involves the twofold process of disembodiment and reembodiment and entails an interplay between the ideal body and the particular body, can help understand the posthuman embodiment as rendered in Reichs’s novels or the TV series *Bones*. Hayles elucidates and exemplifies her idea of posthuman embodiment in her book *How We Became Posthuman*. To clarify her idea of posthuman embodiment, Hayles draws a distinction between “body” and “embodiment”: whereas the body is a (Cartesian) abstract idealized form or a discursive universal construct, embodiment refers to the specific, contextual (trans)formations of the given body. For Hayles, posthuman embodiment involves the interplay of the ideal body and the particular or contextual body. She insists that embodiment has to be based on the cultural construct (discourse) of the body: “Experiences of embodiment, far from existing apart from culture, are always already imbricated within it” (197). Embodiment, nevertheless, always deviates from the cultural construct (discourse) of the body. She argues, “Relative to the body, embodiment is other and elsewhere, at once excessive and deficient in its infinite variations, particularities, and abnormalities” (196-97). Thus, there is always an interaction and a tension between the body and embodiment:

*contends that technology can reconfigure our senses by changing our perceptions or sensory experiences. In New Philosophy for New Media, he takes this idea a step further and approaches the interaction between technology (new media) and the body through the idea of “affect” or “affectivity.”*
“Yet because embodiment is individually articulated, there is also at least an incipient tension between it and hegemonic cultural constructs”; “Embodiment is thus inherently destabilizing with respect to the body, for any time this tension can widen into a perceived disparity” (197). In short, embodiment results from the deviation, particularization, or contextualization of the body. In Reichs’s novels, for example, this deviation of the body can be witnessed through the paradox between Brennan’s affective and technological (molecular) views of the bones.

Hayles’s idea of posthuman embodiment is pertinent to our analysis of Reichs’s novels because to decipher the posthuman body and to locate female bodily materiality (subjectivity) within the posthuman body is what both Hayles and Reichs’s heroine Brennan are after. We can even go so far as to compare Brennan and Hayles: Brennan, a female forensic pathologist, sees her “self” in the decomposed body through the forensic process; and Hayles, a posthuman feminist, tries to find some kind of embodiment (materiality) for the (female) subject in the posthuman discourse, in an effort to escape the shackles of the liberal subject as well as the disembodied posthuman discourse. Both Hayles and Brennan have the question “Whose body?” in mind and try to answer it. In the case of Hayles, “enactment” and “feeling” of the observer are implicated with the body he/she observes and constitutes an important part of embodiment;10 for Brennan, to have an affective gaze by “seeing herself seen” through the bones, in which she is bodily and personally involved, constitutes the key to deciphering the body. For both, the body is always already posthuman and yet can never be separated from the observer’s humanistic or affective concerns such as his/her embodiment or his/her

10 For Hayles, “enactment” involves the mutual implication between the observer and his/her environment, so the observer has to be considered as part of the environment in the same way that the Lacanian gaze has to be integrated into the picture. Hayles derives her idea of enactment from Varela’s concept of enaction, which involves movement (action) of the perceiving subject: “Enaction . . . emphasizes that perception is constituted through perceptually guided actions, so that movement within an environment is crucial to an organism’s development” (Hayles 156). Enaction enables the organism to have an “active engagement with its surroundings” in a more “open-ended and transformative” way (156). Most importantly, enaction involves the action of the perceiving subject’s sensory-motor system: in enaction, cognition emerges from “recurrent sensory-motor patterns” (156). Besides “enactment,” another important element implicit in Hayles’s notion of embodiment is “feelings/emotions.” In the end of the section “Narratives of Artificial Life,” Hayles laments that some researchers of Artificial Life are still caught in the dichotomy between mind and body, between information and materiality. And the possible way out of this dichotomy, Hayles implies, is Antonio Damasio’s idea that “feelings constitute a window through which the mind looks into the body” (245). Damasio’s idea of “feelings,” for Hayles, can remedy the theory that human consciousness can be downloaded and totally digitalized. The pertinent question, Hayles insists, is not whether we are posthuman but “what kind of posthuman we will be” (246).
feelings. Hayles’s narratives about the posthuman (dis)embodiment, pregnant with the ideas of embodiment, enactment, the observer’s embodied interaction with the environment, and feelings/emotions, show us a prospective direction for discussing the issues of gender and the body as rendered in Reichs’s novels in particular and women’s forensic fiction in general, in which we can witness the posthuman embodiment. The contribution of Hayles’s theory of posthuman embodiment, nevertheless, lies not in her providing any easy answers, but in her helping clarify the questions that should be asked by those concerned with the issues of gender and the body in the age of the posthuman.

To conclude, Lacan’s theory of the gaze and Hayles’s proposition of posthuman embodiment can help us understand the interface or interplay between the gendered technological gaze and the body, as well as the twofold process of disembodiment and reembodiment of the body as rendered in Reichs’s novels. The bones in Reichs’s novels function as the site where the heroine can interact with the new body regime of the molecularized body and embody it in various ways and at multiple levels. Following Ronald R. Thomas’s argument (as put forward in his Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science) that the inception of the detective novel is situated in a historical context characterized by its preoccupation with the production of new regimes of bodily discipline, we propose that the investigation of the bones has to do with contemporary body discourse, in which the body comes to be digitalized or molecularized. The gendered technological gaze turns the digitalized or molecularized body into a virtual body or an interface which can mediate between subject and object, between mind and body, and between human and posthuman. Palmer maintains that the feminists, who have grown weary of the polarizing and immobilizing debates over essentialism and social-constructionism, may find a much needed third term in the issue of “whose body” in crime fiction (68). The issue of “whose body,” for Palmer, can lead to a “concrete, fleshly sign of the self” and point to what Stuart Hall calls a “residual materiality” (qtd. in Palmer 68). In Reichs’s novels, what the issue of “whose body” implies can be illustrated through the relationship between the heroine’s gaze and her posthuman embodiment, in which some kind of “residual materiality” can be located.

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