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Assignment #2 (?)

No Absolutes in the Work Place

A person can become quite comfortable in his place of work after some time. The repetitious actions become familiar and easier. This person may enjoy the repetitiveness, but it may make him question why he is working there. Postmodernists would agree that this person would question his work because there is no absolute way of working. This is what happens with the character Blue in Paul Auster's "Ghost." The ambiguity of Blue's job causes him to question why he does what he does. Keeping in mind the postmodernist denial of absolute truth, for Blue, this means there is not even a definite way to do his job he previously enjoyed.

The stagnant nature of Blue's recent case is different than his previous cases, showing that work cannot be constant, and changes as well. As Blue sits in his rented apartment, watching Black day after day, he notices the drastic change his work has taken, and he wonders about those changes. Blue is used to work that is "full of strange twists and amusing coincidences" (133). But the case White gives him does not consist of the disguises and chases Blue is used to. For a postmodernist, this change of work is inevitable. There is no absolute truth in a job. Blue can't expect to do the same thing day after day. Each case is completely separate from the previous, and has different "twists and coincidences," or even none at all, as is shown with his newest job.

However, Blue's case is still constant, and the time left for his reflection causes more questioning and doubt, just as a postmodernist would expect. As he watches Black, Blue begins to think inwardly, to the "unknown quantity, unexplored and therefore dark, even to himself" (136). He even questions what Black is really doing. He makes up stories about Black for entertainment, then when he goes to write his report, he realizes that he "grows aware of his predicament" (139). He realizes how his work is not like his work before, "Clues, legwork, investigative routine—none of this is going to matter anymore" and his resulting questions help him see that he "can only surmise what the case is not" (139).

Blue's uncomfortable feelings about his case cause Blue to see himself reflected in Black, and it makes it hard for him to be objective. He doesn't want to write boring facts on a page. He wants to make his job interesting, but in turn, he is actually learning about himself, and not Black. This booming self awareness is a result of the questioning. He never had time for inward reflection, and now he sees how his work is more subjective than he ever thought possible.

Blue's previous life as a private detective was dealt more in objectivity and absolutes. He could guarantee on excitement and adventure. But this case shows him that nothing is completely objective, and the thrills he depended upon before are not absolutes. This shows the postmodernist's rejection of absolute truth within the field of work.