THE SPECTRALITIES READER

GHOSTS AND HAUNTING IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL THEORY

EDITED BY
MARÍA DEL PILAR BLANCO
AND ESTHER PEEREN

BLOOMSBURY

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Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities

María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren

> *a specter does not only cause séance tables to turn, but sets heads spinning.*[1]

Ghosts, spirits, and specters have played vital roles in oral and written narratives throughout history and across cultures, appearing as anything from figments of the imagination, divine messengers, benign or exacting ancestors, and pesky otherworldly creatures populating particular loci to disturbing figures returned from the dead bent on exacting revenge, revealing hidden crimes, continuing a love affair or simply searching for a way to pass on. Their representational and socio-cultural functions, meanings, and effects have been at least as manifold as their shapes— or non-shapes, as the case may be—and extend far beyond the rituals, traditions, ghost stories, folktales, and urban legends they populate.

It is part of this beyond that *The Spectralities Reader* seeks to address by focusing on how, at the end of the twentieth century, a specific metamorphosis occurred of ghosts and haunting from possible actual entities, plot devices, and clichés of common parlance ("he is a ghost of himself," "we are haunted by the past") into influential conceptual metaphors permeating global (popular) culture and academia alike. A conceptual metaphor, Mieke Bal suggests, differs from an ordinary one in evoking, through a dynamic comparative interaction, not just another thing, word or idea and its associations, but a discourse, a system of producing knowledge.[2] Besides fulfilling an aesthetic or semantic function, then, a conceptual metaphor "performs theoretical work."[3] The ghost's emerging status as an analytical tool that *does* theory—and thereby, as Derrida notes in the above epigraph, "sets heads spinning"—was signaled and delineated by the sudden preference

expressed in 1990s cultural criticism for the somewhat archaic terms "specter" and "spectrality" over the more mundane "ghost" and "ghostliness."[4] "Specter" and "spectrality" not only have a more serious, scholarly ring to them, but specifically evoke an etymological link to visibility and vision, to that which is both *looked at* (as fascinating spectacle) and *looking* (in the sense of examining), suggesting their suitability for exploring and illuminating phenomena other than the putative return of the dead. In their new spectral guise, certain features of ghosts and haunting—such as their liminal position between visibility and invisibility, life and death, materiality and immateriality, and their association with powerful affects like fear and obsession—quickly came to be employed across the humanities and social sciences to theorize a variety of social, ethical, and political questions. These questions include, among others, the temporal and spatial sedimentation of history and tradition, and its impact on possibilities for social change; the intricacies of memory and trauma, personal and collective; the workings and effects of scientific processes, technologies, and media; and the exclusionary, effacing dimensions of social norms pertaining to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class.

The publication of Jacques Derrida's *Spectres de Marx* in 1993 (and its English translation, *Specters of Marx*, in 1994) is commonly considered the catalyst for what some have called the "spectral turn," marking the appearance of a new area of investigation of which the past two decades represent an apogee and of which this *Reader* collects a number of influential texts, chosen to display the extent of spectrality's critical scope in contemporary cultural theory. Before charting this still-developing area in more detail and specifying the distinctive trajectories of spectrality explored in the six parts that constitute this *Reader*, it is first necessary to look back further than the 1990s in order to ask what changed at this time with regard to the critical perception of ghosts and haunting, and how this change was precipitated.

The ghost as actuality, metaphor, and concept

As noted, the figure of the ghost has haunted human culture and imagination for a long time, perhaps even forever, although more insistently in certain societies and periods than in others. One of its heydays in the western world came in the late nineteenth century, when the literary fashion for ghost stories (developed in Romanticism and the genres of the Gothic and the fantastic) intersected with the effort to unlock other worlds and dimensions—material, psychic, and supernatural—that characterized both spiritualism, in its entanglement with new religious movements, the

emergent discipline of psychology, and the professionalization of science in general, and the invention of penetrating yet intangible new media such as telegraphy, photography, and cinema.[5] In this era, the ghost already operated as a powerful metaphor for encounters with disturbing forms of otherness (including that contained inside the self, the home, and the homeland), the obfuscations inherent to capitalist commodity production (as outlined by Marx and Engels), and the ungraspable operations of newly discovered particles and microbes, as well as technological processes such as X-rays. This figurative use, however, remained grounded, to an extent, in the ghost's possible reality as an empirically verifiable supernatural phenomenon, making it less a tool for obtaining insight into something else than itself an object of knowledge and scientific experimentation (as, for example, in spirit photography and the exploits of the Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882). In a way, the widespread obsession with proving or disproving the reality of spiritualist feats and related phenomena such as telepathy and *clairvoyance* prevented the ghost's figurative potential from fully emancipating itself.

Although the inclination to take the ghost literally largely abated over the course of the twentieth century, turning believing in actual ghosts (as the dead returned to life or able to communicate with the living) into something of a fringe eccentricity, its lingering association with such notions seems to have rendered the ghostly somewhat toxic for scholars seeking to be taken seriously. A case in point is Freud's famous 1919 elaboration of the *unheimlich* or uncanny, which meticulously seeks to avoid this concept's contamination with anything potentially supernatural. While admitting that "spirits and ghosts" would have been a suitable and logical starting point—"We might indeed have begun our investigation with this example, perhaps the most striking of all, of something uncanny"—Freud notes how he decided against this in order to avoid intermixing the uncanny with "what is purely gruesome."[6] Ostensibly, then, ghosts and spirits are deferred because of their lack of ambiguity and singular frightfulness, a rather strange position to take given the variety of shapes and affective reactions these figures could be seen to take on and elicit in the literature, other arts, and society of the time (as, for example, the welcomed, often comforting ghosts of spiritualism). From the remainder of Freud's text, we might surmise that what he finds truly "gruesome" is the fact that too many people remain susceptible to the backward attitude of considering ghosts a possible actuality. While this lingering susceptibility is not considered surprising, it is marked as something that ought, in time, to pass:

> In our great cities, placards announce lectures that undertake to tell us how to get into touch with the souls of the departed; and it cannot be denied that not a few of the most able and penetrating minds among our

men of science have come to the conclusion, especially towards the close of their own lives, that a contact of this kind is not impossible. Since almost all of us still think as savages do on this topic, it is no matter for surprise that the primitive fear of the dead is still so strong within us and always ready to come to the surface on any provocation.[7]

Here, the universal inability to grasp the idea of one's own mortality is—in what could be seen as a redoubled disavowal—displaced onto an equally repressed "primitive fear *of the dead*" that locates the demise outside the self in the other and explains why ghosts can only ever be threatening. Paradoxically, where repression is usually presented by Freud as withholding something important that ought to be accessed and worked through, the rejection of the belief "that the dead can become visible as spirits" is considered a commendable sign of having outgrown savage animism and primary narcissism. In this case, the content of the repressed is identified as a risible falsehood, the definitive dismissal of which is only being prevented, for the moment, by biology—which "has not yet been able to decide whether death is the inevitable fate of every living being or whether it is only a regular but yet perhaps avoidable event in life"—and by religion and government, which benefit from keeping intact the expectation of an afterlife.[8] Once rationality prevails and animistic beliefs are overcome by all, the uncanny associated with the resurfacing of animistic beliefs—clearly considered inferior to that proceeding from "repressed infantile complexes, from the castration complex, womb-phantasies, etc." and involving "an actual repression of some content of thought and a return of this repressed content, not a cessation of *belief in the reality* of such a content"—will happily be surrendered.[9]

Freud illustrates the uncanny feeling that arises "when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality" with a story about a young married couple staying in a house with a table, the carvings on which come alive at night as "ghostly crocodiles." This particular instance of the uncanny is associated with an "infantile element" consisting of "the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with material reality," while the story itself, which Freud apparently found in *Strand Magazine*, is called "naïve enough," yet capable of producing a "quite remarkable" sense of the uncanny.[10] Here, the susceptibility to the uncanny is explicitly related to *not* believing in the actuality of the ghostly events, for if they were acknowledged as real, there would be no repression (no element of really knowing better than to believe in ghosts) and consequently no uncanny effect. Only someone who has at least partially superseded what are seen as primitive or childish notions, then, has access to the uncanny, making it, as Brian McCuskey notes, "a mark of superior education" serving, in particular, to distinguish superstitious servants from their sophisticated masters: "it … goes without saying—and Freud does

not—that a superstitious person, whose mind readily accommodates occult phenomena, will not experience the frisson of the uncanny, feeling instead only fatalism or fear."[11] In the end, for Freud's theory to be accepted as rational and properly scientific, it has to dissociate itself thoroughly not only from literal ghosts (by grudgingly allowing a lingering belief in them, already tempered by rationality and destined to disappear), but equally from the ghost as metaphor—hence Freud's regret that the German "an *unheimlich* house" cannot be translated otherwise, in English, than as "a haunted house."[12] Lest the serious aesthetic study of the uncanny raise the crude specter of actual ghosts and the associated animistic worldview, it cannot in any way be linked with them.

From a different vantage point, but in a similar vein, Theodor Adorno rejects the ghostly in his "Theses against Occultism," where occultism is declared "a symptom of a regression in consciousness" leading to an illicit mixing of the conditional and the unconditional.[13] For Freud, too, the uncanny has to be exorcised—cleansed of ghosts—precisely because, to maintain its status as a normal, even privileged experience, it cannot, at least not exclusively, be associated with the (non-repressed) primitive "animistic conception of the universe."[14] For Adorno, it is indeed such a "reborn animalism" that, in a sweep of "panic," undoes the gains of enlightenment and establishes, in the wake of the death of God, a "second mythology."[15] In pre-capitalist society, he states, occultism may have had a valid function in explaining the unfathomable elements of nature by assigning them an anthropomorphic subjectivity; now, however, it has become merely another way to conceal the alienation produced by the subject's reification in capitalist production:

> The occultist draws the ultimate conclusion from the fetish-character of commodities: menacingly objectified labour assails him on all sides from demonically grimacing objects. What has been forgotten in a world congealed into products, the fact that it has been produced by men, is split off and misremembered as a being-in-itself added to that of the objects and equivalent to them. Because objects have frozen in the cold light of reason, lost their illusory animation, the social quality that now animates them is given an independent existence both natural and supernatural, a thing among things.[16]

Rather than remembering, in good Marxist fashion, that the laborer is the one who produces the object and its (added) value, the occultist takes the object for an autonomous agent, enhancing its status as a fetish while seeking to deny it. Historical processes and the fact that it is people who oppress people are obfuscated, Adorno suggests, by fortune-tellers, psychic researchers, and "astrological hocus-pocus," all working to transfer agency and responsibility to an external, ungraspable, non-material force.[17]

Adorno's rather hyperbolic rant against occult practices that were, by the time of writing in the 1940s, already rather marginal, but which are nevertheless likened to Fascism and seen to wield a totalitarian power, leaves little room for understanding the reasons why people invest themselves in these beliefs. He goes as far as to dismiss the fear of death he, like Freud, recognizes might underlie "the woeful idiocy they practice" as itself "crass."[18] The elided material diagnosis of the collective catastrophe society is heading towards is seen to invalidate any personal longing for hope or comfort as a childish indulgence, generating more than a whiff of the same elitism pervading Freud's discussion of the uncanny. If mediums convey "nothing more significant than the dead grandmother's greetings and the prophecy of an imminent journey," this can have no possible value for Adorno.[19] It merely marks those who take them seriously as "dunces," who, instead of challenging the way capitalism deprives their existence of worth, revel in its "everyday dreariness."[20]

While the occult is condemned for mixing the conditional and unconditional, Adorno praises the traditional religions for stressing the "inseparability of the spiritual and the physical": soul and body should not be thought apart from each other, as the supposed freedom of the soul (or mind) serves merely to conceal the unfreedom of the laboring body.[21] Only by thinking the spiritual as part of the physical, subsumed under it, does it become amenable to materialist critique. As in Freud, then, it is not just the supposed existence of actual ghosts that Adorno derides, but also the figurative use of spirit, from which the dangerous belief in the autonomous material reality of the ghost and the soul alike is seen to originate: "The doctrine of the existence of the Spirit, the ultimate exaltation of bourgeois consciousness, … bore teleologically within it the belief in spirits, its ultimate degradation."[22] The only possible conclusion, drawn in Adorno's final sentence, is that there must not be *any* ghost or spirit, actual *or* metaphorical: "No spirit exists."[23]

How can the change from this reluctance to appeal to the figure of the ghost to Derrida's—and others'—wholehearted embrace of it at the end of the twentieth century be explained? What is striking in this respect is that Derrida's rehabilitation of the ghostly takes inspiration from precisely the two systems of thought represented by Freud and Adorno: psychoanalysis and Marxism. The latter, as is well known, provides the main impetus for *Specters of Marx*, which endeavors to conjure not only the multiple legacies of Marx's thought in the present—its haunting survival beyond the fall of the Berlin Wall and Francis Fukuyama's proclamation of the "end of history"—but also Marx's own alleged obsession with getting rid of ghosts. Following this line of thought, Adorno's dismissal of the occult as *occultus*, as concealing the secret that is the real condition of the material world, can be seen to restage Marx's ghostbusting stance, which, according to Derrida, is similarly aimed at making visible what is actually present:

> Marx is very firm: when one has destroyed a phantomatic body, the real body remains. When the *ghostly* body (*die gespenstige Leibhaftigkeit*) of the emperor disappears, it is not the body that disappears, merely its phenomenality, its phantomality (*Gespensterhaftigkeit*). The emperor is then more real than ever and one can measure better than ever his actual power (*wirkliche Macht*).[24]

While Derrida's re-reading of Marx's work—especially his assertion that deconstruction "has remained faithful to a certain spirit of Marxism, to at least one of its spirits" and enables its "radicalization"[25]—can (and has been) critiqued,[26] his suggestion that rather than being expelled, the ghost should remain, be lived *with*, as a conceptual metaphor signaling the ultimate disjointedness of ontology, history, inheritance, materiality, and ideology, has been widely taken up. As related to "the deconstructive thinking of the trace, of iterability, of prosthetic synthesis, of supplementarity, and so forth," the ghost ceases to be seen as obscurantist and becomes, instead, a figure of clarification with a specifically ethical and political potential.[27]

The second, psychoanalytical locus of inspiration for Derrida's summoning of the spectral is found in the two forewords he wrote in the 1970s to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy* and Abraham's "The Shell and the Kernel," respectively entitled "Fors" and "Me-Psychoanalysis."[28] What attracts him in the work of these Hungarian-born psychoanalysts is their untying of sense from that which is present or presentable: besides the visible shell, the kernel, as that which is "inaccessible" and marked "with absolute non-presence," also becomes a carrier of meaning.[29] Moreover, the meanings contained in the kernel-like psychic formations of the crypt (an incorporated traumatic secret or loss of the self) and the phantom (an incorporated traumatic secret or loss of the other) are heterogeneous and consequently not amenable to systematic, instantaneous decoding; instead, they require multiple, laborious, and creative processes of translation or "analytico-poetic transcription."[30] It is easy to see how these ideas chime with Derrida's elaboration of, for instance, *différance*, even though, as Colin Davis explains in the article reprinted in this *Reader*, within Abraham and Torok's clinical orientation the process of deferred meaning is supposed to come to an eventual standstill in the curative moment. While no explicit mention of spectrality is made by Derrida in either foreword, the stated appreciation of the radically non-present(ational) figure of "the heterocryptic ghost that *returns* from the unconscious *of* the other, according to what might be called the law of *another generation*"[31] strongly foreshadows *Specters of Marx*'s discussion of the specter as a figuration of presence-absence, the negotiation of which compels a "*politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations."[32]

Abraham himself, in "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology," does not hesitate to employ ghosts metaphorically,

confident as he is of their ultimate unreality: "It is a fact that the 'phantom,' whatever its form, is nothing but an invention of the living."[33] Although the need to state this explicitly and his choice to place the term "phantom" – the synonym for ghost most intimately associated with the illusionary – between quotation marks may indicate an element of caution, the psychic formation it describes is unabashedly said to haunt. In fact, embodied ghosts are seen to derive from a more fundamental psychic figuration: "The phantoms of folklore merely objectify a metaphor active within the unconscious: the burial of an unspeakable fact *within the loved one*."[34] This resembles Adorno's insistence that *Geist* (spirit) becomes ghost, only here it leads to the positive conclusion that looking at objectified ghosts and their antics can elucidate the workings of the mind: "Here we are in the midst of clinical psychoanalysis and still shrouded in obscurity, an obscurity, however, that the nocturnal being of phantoms (if only in the metapsychological sense) can, paradoxically, be called upon to clarify."[35] What ensues is a consideration of intergenerational trauma as a haunting force, where the notion of haunting, as site of comparison, clarifies both the temporal and spatial aspects of the affliction, while its resolution is described as the phantom being "successfully exorcised."[36]

Yet another early engagement on Derrida's part with the ghost is found in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* from 1987. In contrast to Adorno's indictment of the metaphorical use of Spirit as generating its embodied counterparts—he calls occultism "the *enfant terrible* of the mystical moment in Hegel"[37]—Derrida insists that the two cannot be fully separated (which, incidentally, does not amount to their equation). Heidegger's vacillating between refusing spirit as anti-ontological and appealing to it as a non-religious form of spirituality that founds the world, without being able to keep the different meanings of *Geist* from infecting each other, is described through recourse to the vocabulary of the ghost and haunting:

> *Geist* is always haunted by its *Geist*: a spirit, or in other words, in French [and English] as in German, a phantom, always surprises by returning to be the other's ventriloquist. Metaphysics always returns, I mean in the sense of a *revenant* [ghost], and *Geist* is the most fatal figure of this *revenance* [returning, haunting]. Of the double who can never be separated from the single.[38]

The spirit, in its lexical link to the ghost, exhibits a "spectral duplicity," a self-haunting that "allows neither analysis nor dissolution into the simplicity of a perception."[39] Not only can the metaphorical and the literal sense of *Geist* not be kept apart, the metaphysical ghost and its penchant for haunting now becomes the basis for the concept of this inseparability, for the single that is always already double, the "*origin-heterogeneous*" [*hétérogène à l'origine*]."[40] The latter will, in *Specters of Marx*, where the

ghost completes its transition from potential actuality to ordinary metaphor to conceptual metaphor, re-emerge as the "*more than one/no more one* [*le plus d'un*]" of hauntology.[41]

For Derrida, as Fredric Jameson notes, "spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist."[42] In its capacity as a figuration that *does* theory, it critiques precisely what both Adorno, in his quest for the material, and Freud, in his desire to unambiguously define the ambiguity of the uncanny, seek to preserve: "the 'unmixed': what is somehow pure and self-sufficient or autonomous, what is able to be disengaged from the general mess of mixed, hybrid phenomena all around it and named with the satisfaction of a single conceptual proper name."[43] Thus, even though he uses the literal ghost of Hamlet's father as a paradigmatic example and inveighs traditional scholars for not believing in ghosts, when Derrida proposes the possibility of "another 'scholar'" open to spectrality, this is not someone who trusts in the return of the dead; rather, it is someone "capable, beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility."[44] To believe or not believe in ghosts no longer involves a determination about the empirical (im)possibility of the supernatural, but indicates contrasting validated attitudes—a welcoming seen as ethical and enabling, and a rejection considered unethical and dispossessing—towards the uncertainty, heterogeneity, multiplicity, and indeterminacy that characterize language and Being because of their inevitable entanglement with alterity and difference. Derrida, then, far from being a ghostbuster like Freud, Adorno, and Abraham and Torok, uses the figure of the ghost to pursue (without ever fully apprehending) that which haunts *like a ghost* and, by way of this haunting, demands justice, or at least a response.

This quest cannot be called a science, or even a method, as the ghost or specter is seen to signify precisely that which escapes full cognition or comprehension: "One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge."[45] Hence our pluralization of "spectralities" in the title of this *Reader* and our hesitancy in presenting the spectral investigations gathered here as a new field or discipline (both of which imply delineation and control). The ghost, even when turned into a conceptual metaphor, remains a figure of unruliness pointing to the tangibly ambiguous. While it has insight to offer, especially into those matters that are commonly considered not to matter and into the ambiguous itself, its own status as discourse or epistemology is never stable, as the ghost also questions the formation of knowledge itself and specifically invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception and, consequently, from both the archive as the depository of the sanctioned, acknowledged past and politics as the (re)imagined present and future.

Although *Specters of Marx* is often seen to stand at the origin of the so-called "spectral turn" (a turn of phrase whose aptness and risks are at stake in the first part of this *Reader*), it would go against the spirit of the specter—and Derrida's elaboration of it—to assign a unitary genesis to what was in fact a diffuse, extended cultural moment. We have already seen that Derrida's ideas can be traced back to at least the 1970s and are predicated on the work of others.[46] In addition, his elaboration of spectrality coincided with further conceptual investigations of ghosts and haunting that opened up different avenues of inquiry. One example is Terry Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian* (1993), which, by exploring the pervasive cultural disavowal of lesbianism through acts of "ghosting" (rendering lesbian sexuality invisible by associating it with the ephemeral) and thus emphasizing the ghost's association with dispossession, disappearance, and social erasure, provides an important counterweight to Derrida's emphasis on the specter as a powerful haunting force.[47] Another early conceptual exploration of the ghostly is found in Anthony Vidler's *The Architectural Uncanny* (1992), from which a section is included here. By way of an architectural consideration of notions of house and home, Vidler brings the uncanny (presented as a metaphor or trope that exceeds its Freudian elaboration) together with the ghost to suggest that "the uncanny might regain a political connotation as the very condition of contemporary haunting."[48] The specific architectural projects analyzed, which explore the possibility of making absence present through materializations of invisibility, translucency, and transparency, concretize what Derrida would call the "non-sensuous sensuous."[49] Moreover, Vidler's attention for the spatial dimension of haunting—its association with displacement and the out-of-place—marks a different path from *Specters of Marx*'s focus on the ghost's temporality, its tendency to put time out of joint.

The renewed conceptual interest in ghosts and haunting that characterized the 1990s has also been linked to a broader (and somewhat earlier) turn to history and memory, concentrating in particular on dealing with personal and collective trauma. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, for instance, connects "spectral discourse" with "the recent preoccupation with 'trauma' in which the presence of a symptom demonstrates the subject's failure to internalize a past event, in which something from the past emerges to disrupt the present."[50] The next section explores how certain elaborations of spectrality do indeed dovetail with the concerns of trauma studies, while at the same time insisting that, as a cross-disciplinary concept used to tackle a wide variety of phenomena, it goes beyond them.

Spectrality and trauma studies

Already in his *Cultural Semantics* from 1998, Martin Jay was speaking out about the "uncanny nineties," a particular *Zeitgeist* that described the "current obsession with the troubled interface between history and memory" and the concern with "the way the past makes cultural demands on us we have difficulty fulfilling."[51] In this academic milieu of saturated ghostliness, Jay perceived a problem in the collapsing of "the metaphoric and the real, the symbolic and the literal," claiming that it was "now the height of canniness to market the uncanny."[52] The disdain for any lingering belief in actual returnees from the dead or other supernatural entities that led Freud and Adorno to shy away from even metaphorical uses had apparently reversed into an uncritical and undifferentiated acceptance of any and all figurative ghosts. This pervasive haunting of the academy, according to Jay, had echoes in the "recent debates over alleged repressed memory" that were occupying scholars in the field of psychology.[53] As Abraham and Torok's notion of the phantom (as unconsciously inherited loss or secret) already indicated, the conceptual metaphor of spectrality is deeply embedded within the discourse of loss, mourning, and recovery that delineated the multidisciplinary project of trauma studies as it emerged in the 1980s. To be traumatized, as Cathy Caruth has explained, is to be "possessed by an image or event" located in the past.[54] To be "possessed"—gripped indefinitely by an anachronistic event—also describes the condition of being haunted, as it has been commonly construed. In other words, when we think of ghost stories (traditional ones, at least), it is the haunting of the present by the past that emerges as the most insistent narrative. The mode of expression that many scholars use to describe the spectral, then, is similar to, if not fully consonant with, the terms used to describe the affective qualities of trauma. Take, for instance, Ulrich Baer's chapter from *Spectral Evidence* reprinted here, in which he discusses Mikael Levin's and Dirk Reinartz's strikingly analogous photographs of contemporary landscapes growing in the areas where Nazi concentration camps use to stand. These are places that "[have] not been fully mastered and contained," characterized by their "enigmatic structure," and which confront us with the limits of historicization.[55] Baer addresses these photographs as traumatic and ghostly, given that, as spectators, we have arrived late at the scene of a "retained past" that nevertheless reminds us of its absence in our present.[56]

As Roger Luckhurst has outlined in *The Trauma Question*, the history of this disorder can be traced back to its physical origins in the 1600s, to the rise of psychology in the Victorian period, and, later, its reemergence at the end of the 1970s with the coinage of the term "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD)—a diagnosis used for Vietnam veterans suffering from hallucinations, shell shock, and other forms of post-combat stress.[57]

Critics within trauma studies have expanded on this paradigm to address catastrophic personal and collective experiences, and the acts of witnessing and testimony related to them. Ranging from colonial violence and the genocides that transpired, for example, during the Holocaust and in Rwanda during the early 1990s, to the events of 9/11, these experiences are seen as eliding and literally rupturing comprehension; they are past acts which we would like to access again in order to attempt changing them, and which the traumatized often relive compulsively, but that remain locked in their inaccessibility and relentless repetition.

Scholars like Caruth have come to understand post-traumatic duress as not simply a "symptom of the unconscious," but "a symptom of history" as well.[58] Here we can see how the condition of the traumatized individual is catapulted into the larger, multi-subjective experience of a global culture in which the avant-garde dream of the revolutionary new is being replaced with, following Dominick LaCapra, the "memory-work" of studies of the past conducted in earnest during the final decades of the last century and the beginning of the twenty-first.[59] Thus, Caruth describes traumatized individuals as historical subjects, in the sense that, much like Abraham and Torok's phantom-laden patients, they "carry an impossible history within them or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess."[60] Trauma, as Caruth describes it, is forever engaged in the quest for an answer, an evanescent truth. Such is the case with ghosts that arrive from the past, seeking to establish an ethical dialogue with the present. Ghosts, in this case, are part of a symptomatology of trauma, as they become both the objects of and metaphors for a wounded historical experience.

Within the growing fields of memory and trauma studies, different and divergent arguments have emerged, especially with respect to the palliative possibilities of memory-work (which tends to envision a conjuration of the past's truth, primarily through giving a voice to its victims, which is subsequently laid to rest as traumatic repetition is foreclosed and the memory integrated into a narrative account[61]). As Richard Crownshaw has recently pointed out, the reliance of certain branches of trauma studies on "individual psychological and psychoanalytic definitions of experience" may drive the field into an "overpersonalisation" and, subsequently, "dehistoricis[ation]" of collective experience.[62] One of trauma studies' most outspoken critics has been Andreas Huyssen. In "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," he speaks of a "globalization paradox" of traumatic events like the Holocaust, whereby this event has become an absolute "cipher for the twentieth century as a whole."[63] What Huyssen describes here is a singular model of trauma (and its potential resolution) that is subsequently applied to other situations that, while perhaps similar in some ways, are nevertheless historically, culturally, and politically removed from the experiences of the Jews under Nazism. This "totalization" risks

erasing the Holocaust's specificity, as well as locking other experiences of catastrophe and loss within a distant, now universalized and universalizing, model. Instead, Huyssen argues for a conception of remembrance in which memory and trauma are not treated as synonymous:

> It has been all too tempting to some to think of trauma as the hidden core of all memory. After all, both memory and trauma are predicated on the absence of that which is negotiated in memory or in the traumatic symptom. Both are marked by instability, transitoriness, and structures of repetition. But to collapse memory into trauma ... would unduly confine our understanding of memory, marking it too exclusively in terms of pain, suffering, and loss.[64]

The danger in marking all remembering with the affective registers of melancholia is that we may come to understand memory as working solely on the basis of repetition and negativity, rather than on its progressive (future) productivity. Here, we may remember Freud's equally singular association of the ghost with the gruesome and begin to be reminded of the innovation inherent in Derrida's conceptualization of the specter—which is always both *revenant* (invoking what was) and *arrivant* (announcing what will come)—as operating on a number of temporal planes, most crucially the future and its possible interactions with the present and the past. Derrida's specter not only "signals the unbidden imposition of parts of the past on the present, and the way in which the future is always already populated with certain possibilities derived from the past," but also, through its association with the messianic, or, less enigmatically, with Gayatri Spivak's ghost dance as future anterior, the potential for different re-articulations of these possibilities.[65] Unlike traumatic repetition, after all, the ghost is a figure of surprise that does not necessarily reappear in exactly the same manner or guise. Moreover, it provokes the one it haunts to a response or reaction, leading Avery F. Gordon to note that "haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done."[66]

Analyzing the problems of contemporary historiography, LaCapra seeks a way out of trauma discourse's melancholic conundrum by separating loss from absence. In its persistent reference to the missing object, loss can transform into nostalgia or, worse, a "utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community" when it is conflated with a conception of absence.[67] Put simply, absence that is interiorized as loss entails a process of incessant mourning and melancholia, as well as an overlaying of the planes of the then with those of the now. Absence describes something related, but quite different, to loss: we can understand it as transhistorical (structural) trauma, according to LaCapra, while loss must retain its historical specificity. As he explains:

> Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or revenant. Moreover, losses are specific and involve particular events, such as the death of loved ones on a personal level or, on a broader scale, the losses brought about by apartheid or by the Holocaust in its effects on Jews and other victims of the Nazi genocide, including both the lives and cultures of affected groups. I think it is misleading to situate loss on a transhistorical level, something that happens when it is conflated with absence and conceived as constitutive of existence.[68]

In an argument that resonates with Huyssen's critique of the trauma paradigm, LaCapra argues for an understanding of trauma as grounded in the specific event, and the experiences that surround it.

LaCapra's prescription to work through the dialectics of absence and loss, and thus to produce "a condition of possibility of historicity,"[69] in many ways echoes Derrida's injunction to learn to "live otherwise, and better" by learning "to live *with* ghosts," and the latter's insistence that a history conceived as spectral would necessitate a reflection of how the past is both absent and present within the now moment, but also how the past can open up the possibilities for the future.[70] However, at the same time, Derrida could be said to be guilty of a similar dehistoricizing conflation to that between loss and absence. Hauntology, as a disjointed, non-foundational alternative ontology, rivals LaCapra's notion of absence in its tendency towards universality and transhistoricism, as becomes clear when Derrida states that "it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept. Of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time."[71] Undoubtedly, such a generalized notion of haunting has its uses, as does the idea of structural trauma. A distinction, however, must be maintained between the ghost as "only one in a series of deconstructive tropes," a meta-concept that comes to possess virtually everything, and its more specific conceptualizations, where ghosts and haunting are taken up as historically and culturally particular, and where they may even be re-supernaturalized.[72]

For Derrida, hauntology reshapes history by disrupting its conventional structure of chronology: "haunting is historical, to be sure, but it is not *dated*, it is never docilely given a date in the chain of presents, day after day, according to the instituted order of a calendar."[73] This may serve to counter the historical overdetermination (the search for truth in a fixed point of origin) that characterizes certain incarnations of trauma studies, but it also causes the specters he conjures to remain strangely unmoored from historical contexts, as all ghosts, by being reduced to their most general characteristics, become essentially the same (as do all exorcists). Ghosts, then, are not only apt embodiments and figurations of trauma, but trauma theory also provides valuable lessons as it responds to and takes on board critiques equally applicable to certain elaborations of spectrality. As

the texts collected in this *Reader* show, a large part of the effort in the wake of *Specters of Marx* has been to specify the ghost's conceptual potential in relation to history and memory by pointing out, for example, that historical events or memories, even when ostensibly similar in kind, may give rise to vastly different hauntings, and that even the same event may not return in identical ways across time. All history and memory may indeed be spectral in some sense, but understanding the effects of particular instances requires careful contextualization and conceptual delimitation.

Having sketched the contact zone between trauma studies and theories of spectrality, it is important to avoid the impression that the ghost as conceptual metaphor is limited to elucidating issues of memory and history (whether traumatic or not); while these are important—perhaps even dominant—areas of investigation, spectrality has proven useful in addressing many other issues, to the point of seeming ubiquitous. While the extent of its scholarly reach will be outlined at the end of this introduction, the penultimate section explores the familiar danger of a newly popular academic concept turning into a bandwagon.

Stretching the ghost

The multidisciplinary applicability of trauma scholarship, and spectrality studies more broadly, means that terms developed within one field of study are employed in others. This transferability, while opening up interdisciplinary opportunities, may also result in rather cyclical, if not overstretched, interpretations of the uses, meanings, and possibilities of haunting. Recently, Roger Luckhurst has noted that "the ghost as figure of trauma has become almost a cliché, reinforced as it was throughout the 1990s by an elaborate critical discourse of spectres and 'spectrality.'"[74] Already in his critique of "the spectral turn" from 2002 (excerpted in this volume), he describes a body of London-based works of fiction, non-fiction, and criticism that he terms "the London Gothic" (marking another important intersection for spectral studies) in the following terms:

> Unable to discriminate between instances and largely uninterested in historicity (beyond its ghostly disruption), the discourse of spectralized modernity risks investing in the compulsive repetitions of a structure of melancholic entrapment. In this mode, to suggest an inevitably historicized mourning-work that might actually seek to lay a ghost to rest would be the height of bad manners. And because the spectral infiltrates the hermeneutic act itself, critical work can only replicate tropes from textual sources, punning spiritedly around the central terms of the Gothic to produce a curious form of meta-Gothic that elides object and instrument.[75]

If narrative language and the language of trauma are intimate bedfellows, given that both can play and experiment on the idea of overcoming the aporias left behind by the past, then it should be no wonder that the tropes of literary texts should find a home in the body of criticism that accompanies it. What Luckhurst describes in the passage above, however, does go to the heart of the evolution of the field of spectrality studies. This area of scholarly focus is often considered as a response, and antidote, to our alleged age of amnesia, and its emphasis on the duty to remember and acknowledge the past (to keep ghosts alive) can indeed seem overly judgmental of processes of closure and forgetting. Yet at the same time, living *with* ghosts does not have to entail "melancholic entrapment," since the spectral return, as noted earlier, is capable of exceeding pure replication. Conversant with nostalgia studies, yet another current within contemporary cultural theory,[76] studies of ghosts and haunting can do more than obsessively recall a fixed past; in an active, dynamic engagement, they may reveal the insufficiency of the present moment, as well as the disconsolations and erasures of the past, and a tentative hopefulness for future resolutions.

Still, despite the presence of a discourse that, generalizing the haunted experience, may resonate with and speak to other disciplines, histories, and languages, the problem of the ghost's specificity and its localized futurities continues to gnaw at the very idea of the absent present. As we read through the ever-growing pile of works on haunting and observe the continuing manifestation of ghosts in popular culture and the aesthetics and politics of the everyday, we must ask whether the trope of haunting and spectrality has reached its apotheosis, or (more optimistically) whether there are new ways in which we can continue to grow the field without rehearsing the registers we have been relying on for the past decades. The very appearance of this *Reader* signals our belief that scholarly work on spectrality has achieved a critical mass, making anthologization not only possible, but useful. This volume, however, was not undertaken in the mode of the traditional archive; we do not aim to definitively define or delimit a field, but rather to display the diverse fertility of the ghost and haunting as conceptual metaphors over a particular period, in the hope of revealing some influential trajectories and prompting future innovations (through inclusion *and* omission; after all, as Derrida argues in *Archive Fever*, archives are inevitably haunted by what they exclude).[77] Some effort of discrimination is inevitable, though, as we have reached an important (and perhaps slightly *unheimlich*) moment of self-inspection about our fascination with our condition as recovering amnesiacs and investigators of the spectral. Besides asking after the opportunities the spectral offers, this moment equally prompts us to gauge its limitations.

The 2010 *Haunted: Contemporary Photography / Video / Performance* exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York struck us as coming up against the point where a concept threatens to break as it is stretched too thin. Curators Jennifer Blessing and Nat Trotman

channeled Roland Barthes's idea that the medium of photography (which they extend to video and performance), especially in our post-capitalist age, is essentially a haunted one. However, where Barthes carefully elaborates the metaphor and, crucially, distinguishes the moving image as non-spectral,[78] the blurb on the cover of the exhibition catalogue appears to turn any invocation of the past or tradition, and any form of reproduction, into a haunting: "Much contemporary photography and video seems haunted—by the history of art, and by the ghostly apparitions that are reanimated in reproductive mediums, live performance, and the virtual world." At the same time, it confines the meaning of haunting to melancholic nostalgia: "By using dated, passé, or quasi-extinct stylistic devices, subject matter, and technologies, such melancholic art embodies a longing for an otherwise unrecuperable past."[79] The tension between an overly general interpretation—not everything that returns or is repeated is necessarily ghostly or uncanny—and a restricted reading of ghosts as figures of documentation, preservation, and remembrance pervaded the exhibition, which, despite bringing together an impressive collection of works from the 1960s to the 2000s, refused to congeal around its titular concept. Works that seem to invoke haunting only through their medium,

Figure 1 Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled", 1989. © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation. Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York.

their representation of something from the past, or their use of repetition or dated technologies were mixed with works that evoke more concrete, complex senses of ghostliness, such as the Cuban-born American visual artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres's 1989 *"Untitled,"* a chromogenic jigsaw puzzle enveloped in plastic (Figure 1).

This image speaks to the ghost first of all thematically, in *what* it depicts: the rather shapeless backlit shadow figure, further deformed by the creases in the curtain, appears as an unidentifiable ghostly visitor able, as per Derrida's visor effect (the power to see without being seen), to peek through the curtain at us, while we are left to wonder at its motivations. Our propensity to interpret the image as disturbing invokes the relationship between ghosts and the gruesome (on which, as we saw, Freud insists), as well as their tendency to induce paranoia and self-doubt: are we seeing something that is not actually there? While the visitor could indeed be supernatural, the everydayness of the curtain and the fragment of the chair visible in the lower left-hand corner suggests that the socio-political relations of the material world may also produce a sense of haunting. Issues of vulnerability, invasiveness, and hospitality are hinted at, yet any unequivocal signification is foreclosed by the fact that we cannot establish whether the curtain constitutes a protective or exclusionary barrier, and whether the ghostly figure is inside or outside, a threat or the one at risk of exposure. As such, the image foregrounds the in-between or undecidable as something that may unsettle us but nevertheless cannot be banished from our lives. This idea is reinforced at the formal level, as the plastic bag interferes with our ability to see the image clearly, while its composition from puzzle pieces confronts us simultaneously with our desire for completeness and identification, and with the fact that these will never be fully achieved—the outlined edges of the pieces forever render the image interrupted, fragmented.

Gonzalez-Torres's artwork, then, counters the dilution and non-differentiation of the notion of haunting that the *Haunted* exhibition at large facilitated, and may also be taken to visualize our conception of this *Reader*, which, like the plastic bag, provides a tentative—by no means impenetrable—casing for a collection of texts that interconnect and are ordered, but could well be shuffled and rearranged. The puzzle pieces, in turn, convey our desire to stress the multiplicity and heterogeneity of recent conceptualizations of spectrality, which originate in different disciplines and approach ghosts and haunting from numerous angles in order to elucidate a variety of cultural objects, histories, and socio-political issues. This multiplicity, as the outline below explicates, includes considerations of ghosts and haunting at a general level (as something that, per Derrida's *hauntology*, is inherent to Being) and more specific ones, but insists, in both cases, on careful conceptual specification. Ghostliness, haunting, and spectrality are not just fashionable terms to be thrown about at random,

but difficult-to-grasp phenomena that require precise delineation as they enter different contexts and scholarly frameworks.

Outline

In order to remain readable, a *Reader* requires some sort of grouping of its collected texts, and this volume is no exception. The groupings chosen—after a process of selection that inevitably entailed some regrettable losses—are not intended to impose a singular structure on the materials, but should be taken as flexible signposts offering one way of broaching an area of thought characterized by multiple intersections and convergences, and not yet fully crystallized (if any scholarly area, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, ever is). Each part—as well as the texts contained in them—will be introduced separately, so here we confine ourselves to indicating the general motivation for and import of the six chosen foci.

The first part, entitled "The Spectral Turn," presents a logical starting point in reflecting on the spread of spectrality as cross-disciplinary instrument of analysis in the humanities and social sciences between the early 1990s and the present, which constitutes the *raison d'être* for this volume. It gathers together texts by Jacques Derrida, Colin Davis, Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, Julian Wolfreys, and Roger Luckhurst that were either instrumental in inaugurating the interest in the ghost or specter as conceptual metaphor and developing this interest across different academic fields, or engage with the risks of its newfound prominence and status as an academic trend.

"Spectropolitics: Ghosts of the Global Contemporary" focuses on those recent explorations of spectrality that emphasize how, if ghosts and haunting are to be employed as conceptual metaphors, two aspects need to be taken into account. First, there is the fact that these phenomena are culturally specific, with non-western traditions yielding considerably different epistemological frameworks and critical possibilities than the western conceptions that initially dominated the spectral turn. Second, it is vital to acknowledge that notions of spectrality may facilitate the understanding and addressing of not only historical injustices and their commemoration in personal and/or collective memory, but also of situations of injustice and disempowerment arising in and from a present characterized by diffuse processes of globalization. The texts by Avery F. Gordon, Achille Mbembe, Arjun Appadurai, and Peter Hitchcock that make up this part propose, each in its own way, a "spectropolitics"—which may be a politics *of* or *for* specters—designed to address how, in different parts of the world, particular subjects become prone to social erasure, marginalization, and precarity. By analyzing how such processes can be thought in terms of spectralization or "ghosting,"

and by imagining counter-conjurations that refuse straightforward notions of rematerialization or exorcism, these critics appeal to spectrality as an alternative to or reconceptualization of the frameworks of postmodernism, postcoloniality, materialism, nationalism, and globalization.

Another dominant concern in recent considerations of spectrality has been the way in which the workings and socio-cultural impact of various media (from the telegraph and the X-ray to cinema, television, radio, and the internet) and their associated senses (most importantly vision and hearing) can be illuminated by exploring how their invention, establishment, and global consolidation was—and to some extent remains—intimately linked with the circulation of practices and discourses of the supernatural. The historical depth and cultural breadth of this particularly fruitful area of spectral investigation is represented, in the third part, "The Ghost in the Machine: Spectral Media," by Tom Gunning, Jeffrey Sconce, Akira Mizuta Lippit, Allen S. Weiss, and David Toop.

Taking up the direction indicated by Terry Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian*, a number of critics have been engaged in exploring the specific ramifications of spectrality for questions of gender, sexuality, and race. Not only can these categories of social differentiation be seen as themselves spectral, in the sense that they are based on retrospectively naturalized, performatively ingrained distinctions that require continuous rematerialization, but they also stratify spectrality, as those excluded from the norm are likely to have greater difficulty in effectively asserting themselves as haunting forces than, for example, the sovereign subject that is Hamlet's father. The attempt to refashion spectrality as a more differentiated concept—and as such more relevant to the specific past, present, and future struggles for recognition, respect, and justice of those identified as non-masculine, non-heterosexual, and/or non-white—is central to the fourth part of this *Reader* on "Spectral Subjectivities: Gender, Sexuality, and Race," which gathers work by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Carla Freccero, Sharon Holland, and Renée L. Bergland.

The spatial dimension of the ghost—which, although central to Gothic studies, threatened to become overshadowed by the focus on temporality within Derrida's work as well as within memory and trauma studies— is addressed in the fifth part, entitled "Possessions: Spectral Spaces," where Anthony Vidler, Ulrich Baer, David Matless, and Giorgio Agamben demonstrate how haunting, as a conceptual metaphor, can elucidate the way architecture, landscape, geography, and tourism mediate particular presences and absences, both material and in the less apprehensible form of dealing with traumatic or oppressive pasts.

The fifth part—in particular the texts by Baer and Agamben—already makes clear that any attempt to rigorously separate the spatial from the temporal dimension of spectrality is futile; ghosts and haunting invariably involve a complication of both realms, as well as of their interaction.

Therefore, the sixth and final part, "Haunted Historiographies," should be seen not as a counterpoint to the fifth, but as its continuation, just as it has strong links with the differentiated histories—and their haunting legacies—of particular subjects as delineated in the fourth one. Where the final part places its own emphasis, however, is in its focus not so much on specific histories as on the notion of historiography—the *making* of history and the way this process becomes entangled, as explicated by Judith Richardson, Jesse Alemán, and Alexander Nemerov, with notions of possession, the gothic and uncanny, and of the fine line that separates presence from absence, evidence from the barely perceptible.

Together, the six parts show the fecundity of the post-1990 use of the ghost as no longer primarily a literal phenomenon requiring empirical verification (although some do remain interested in this possibility, as is clear from the fact that the Society for Psychical Research survives until today[80]), but a conceptual metaphor capable of bringing to light and opening up to analysis hidden, disavowed, and neglected aspects of the social and cultural realm, past and present. As such, spectrality seeks less to take the place of other approaches or concepts than to supplement them with another dimension (a twilight zone, if you will) by offering a new, truly *other* perspective.

Notes

1   Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (1993; New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 127.

2   Mieke Bal, "Exhibition Practices," *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (2010): 10.

3   Catherine Lord, "Set Adrift in Style: The Scholar as Fiction and Film-Maker in Jacob's Room," in *In(ter)discipline: New Languages for Criticism*, ed. Gillian Beer, Malcolm Bowie, and Beate Perrey (London: LEGENDA, 2007), 92. Teri Reynolds, whose work on cognitive metaphors Bal references, employs concepts from one field (physics) to elucidate another (narrative), stipulating that "these theories are not templates that constrain texts to correspond to the physics. Far from merely illustrating what is already known, they shape and articulate new critical possibilities." The "new critical possibilities" uncovered by spectrality as a cognitive or conceptual metaphor are what *The Spectralities Reader* seeks to present. Teri Reynolds, "Spacetime and Imagetext," *The Germanic Review* 73, no. 2 (2001): 161.

4   The *Oxford English Dictionary* confines the use of "spectre" and "spectrality" for matters related to ghostly apparitions to the (late) nineteenth century, with scientific uses based on its link to "spectrum"—in biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics—extending to the present. A cursory search on *Google Scholar* confirms that spectrality's recent popularity in

the humanities and social sciences has barely dented the dominance of its deployment in the natural sciences.

5   For in-depth discussions of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century culture of ghosts and its legacies, see Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy: 1870–1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Pam Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Marina Warner, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

6   Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *Writings on Art and Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 218.

7   Ibid., 219.

8   Ibid., 218. Significantly, Freud devotes a large part of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (London: W. W. Norton, 1989) to establishing, by reference to biological experiments with single-cell organisms, precisely that death is "the inevitable fate of every living being." The dread this knowledge might evoke is assuaged by the proposition of the death drive, which makes death, as long as it occurs naturally, a (secretly) desirable end that, moreover, does not lead to another world but to a return to pre-birth inertia. In this manner, literal ghosts (those returned from the dead) are rendered not only impossible, but placed beyond human desire and impulse.

9   Freud, "Uncanny," 225, italics in the original. Our reading of Freud differs from that of Renée L. Bergland, who argues that "the long bizarre catalogue of the weird that he presents to his readers in 'The Uncanny' betrays a willingness more to entertain ghosts and horrors than to exorcize them." This ignores the divergent valuations Freud gives to the repressed and the surmounted. See Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 12.

10 Freud, "Uncanny," 221.

11 Brian McCuskey, "Not at Home: Servants, Scholars, and the Uncanny," *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (2006): 429, 428.

12 Freud, "Uncanny," 218.

13 Theodor Adorno, "Theses against Occultism," in *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (1951; London and New York: Verso, 2005), 238.

14 Freud, "Uncanny," 216.

15 Adorno, "Theses," 239.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 241.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 242.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 244. Adorno also notes how, in occultist thought, "only in the metaphor of the body can the concept of pure spirit be grasped at all, and is at the same time cancelled" (242). The spirit (here referring to the soul) should not be figuratively turned *into* a body, but has to stay located *within* the actual body as a bodily aspect, since any metaphorization indicates a departure from the material. Unlike Freud, then, Adorno might be considered hostile to metaphor in general as itself a spectralizing practice akin to the capitalist system that makes everything solid melt into air.

23 Ibid. Avery Gordon argues that in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno work towards establishing a Theory of Ghosts that would enable a "more complex understanding of the generative structures and moving parts of historically embedded social formations in a way that avoids the twin pitfalls of subjectivism and positivism." *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (1997; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 19. However, although Horkheimer and Adorno do indeed agitate against the "disturbed relationship to the dead" that leaves them "forgotten and embalmed"—paralleled by a rejection of personal history "as something irrational, superfluous, utterly obsolete"—their argument in favor of remembering the dead and (personal) history is graphically separated, in a section entitled "Postscript," from the main section, "The Theory of Ghosts." *Dialectics of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 178–9. There, a "unity" with the dead is proposed as "the proper relationship" to them, but this unity is explicitly not one that admits of any literal ghosts, which are seen to sublimate our dread of "death as absolute nothingness" (178). Rather, it entails a recognition—beyond the ghostly—of the "horror of annihilation" that marks both the living and the dead as "victims of the same conditions and of the same disappointed hope" (178). Thus, the metaphorical use of the ghost—which returns in the "Postscript" only once (and with a noticeable shift in terminology) to figure emigrants as "spectral intruders"—remains predicated on the need to reject its literal invocation (179).

24 Derrida, *Specters*, 131.

25 Ibid., 75, 92.

26 See Michael Sprinker, ed., *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx* (London and New York: Verso, 1999) for a number of early critiques of Derrida's interpretation of Marx and Marxism in *Specters of Marx* by, among others, Antonio Negri, Pierre Macherey, Terry Eagleton, and Aijaz Ahmad. The main objections concern Derrida's elision of issues of class and class struggle, the non-concreteness of his concept of the New International, and his elaboration of the messianic. A response by Derrida is included that also takes up Spivak's review of *Specters of Marx* in "Ghostwriting," *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995): 64–84, excerpted here. For a refutation of the idea that Derrida's notion of spectrality falls short of political engagement, see Stella Gaon, "'Politicizing Deconstruction': On Not

Treating *Specters of Marx*," *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, 11, no. 2 (1999): 38–48.

27 Derrida, *Specters*, 75.

28 Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (1976; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Nicolas Abraham, "The Shell and the Kernel: The Scope and Originality of Freudian Psychoanalysis," in *The Shell and the Kernel. Renewals of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1*, trans. Nicholas Rand (1968; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 79–98; Jacques Derrida, "Me-Psychoanalysis: An Introduction to the Translation of 'The Shell and the Kernel' by Nicolas Abraham," trans. Richard Klein, *Diacritics* 9, no. 1 (1979): 3–12; Jacques Derrida, "Foreword: *Fors*: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," trans. Barbara Johnson, in *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xi–xlviii.

29 Derrida, "Me-Psychoanalysis," 10.

30 Derrida, "Foreword: *Fors*," xxxiii.

31 Ibid., xxxi, italics in the original.

32 Derrida, *Specters*, xix, italics in the original.

33 Nicolas Abraham, "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology," trans. Nicholas Rand, *Critical Inquiry* 13, no. 2 (1987): 287.

34 Ibid., 288, italics in the original.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 292.

37 Adorno, "Theses," 244.

38 Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (1987; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 40, italics in the original.

39 Ibid., 62.

40 Ibid., 107, italics in the original.

41 Derrida, *Specters*, xx, italics in the original.

42 Fredric Jameson, "Marx's Purloined Letter," in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinker (London and New York: Verso, 1999), 39.

43 Ibid., 44–5.

44 Derrida, *Specters*, 12.

45 Ibid., 6. In "Spectrographies," collected here, Derrida notes that his statement in Ken McMullen's film *Ghost Dance* that "psychoanalysis plus film equals … a science of ghosts" cannot hold because "there is something which, as soon as one is dealing with ghosts, exceeds, if not scientificity in general, at least what, for a very long time, has modeled scientificity on the real, the objective,

which is not or should not be, precisely, phantomatic." Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, "Spectrographies," in *Echographies of Television*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 118.

46 Besides Abraham and Torok and Heidegger, another important influence is the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, whose *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History* is analyzed in Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (1992; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). This analysis prompts an early formulation of what, in *Specters of Marx*, would become the visor effect, marking the ghostly ability to see without being seen: "The genesis of responsibility that Patočka proposes will not simply describe a history of religion or religiousness. It will be combined with a genealogy of the subject who says 'myself,' the subject's relation to itself as an instance of liberty, singularity, and responsibility, the relation to self as being before the other: the other in its relation to infinite alterity, one who regards without being seen but also whose infinite goodness *gives* in an experience that amounts to a *gift of death* [*donner la mort*]" (3).

47 Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

48 Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), 14.

49 Derrida, *Specters*, 7.

50 Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, ed., *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 5.

51 Martin Jay, *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of our Time* (London: The Athlone Press, 1998), 163–4.

52 Ibid., 163.

53 Ibid., 164.

54 Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 5.

55 Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2002), 63, 69.

56 Ibid., 76.

57 Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008).

58 Caruth, *Trauma*, 5.

59 Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999): 713.

60 Caruth, *Trauma*, 5.

61 See, for example, Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

62 Richard Crownshaw, Jane Kilby, and Antony Rowland, eds., *The Future of Memory* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 10. Interestingly, Abraham and Torok's theory of the phantom has been seen as a way to

historicize Freudian psychoanalysis. In addition to tracing the incorporated secret to specific social norms (such as the disapproval of extra-marital births) rather than invariable psychic structures, Abraham suggests that "shared or complementary phantoms" that escape exorcism can be "established as social practices." Abraham, "Notes," 292.

63 Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 24.

64 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 8.

65 Wendy Brown, "Specters and Angels at the End of History," in *Vocations of Political Theory*, ed. Jason A. Frank and John Tamborino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 36.

66 Avery F. Gordon, "Introduction to the New Edition," in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.

67 LaCapra, "Trauma," 698.

68 Ibid., 700–1.

69 Ibid., 727.

70 Derrida, *Specters*, xviii.

71 Ibid., 161.

72 Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell, "Introduction" in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12. In their introduction, Bown, Burdett, and Thurschwell indict "the metaphorical supernatural" for "unify[ing] and flatten[ing] out the supernatural: [such theories] move too seamlessly over the supernatural into what it signifies" (10, 12). They proceed to ask: "How might we historicise a central aspect of the fascination of the supernatural—the desire to confound history and turn back time, to eschew the material world in favour of an ethereal, magic realm?" (12).

73 Derrida, *Specters*, 4.

74 Luckhurst, *Trauma Question*, 93.

75 Roger Luckhurst, "Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the 'Spectral Turn,'" *Textual Practice* 16, no. 3 (2002): 535. The Gothic is arguably the most common term used to describe geographies (textual or other) in which the past somehow intrudes upon the present. It is therefore not surprising that the Gothic has also seen a revival in scholarship over the past two decades. With some exceptions (e.g. Jesse Alemán's essay in this *Reader*), it predominantly explains an Anglo-American and European understanding of haunting and haunted experience. As we have explained in *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture*, although ghosts are a staple of the Gothic, which can itself be seen as haunted in that it constantly invokes its own generic origins in order to seek its definition, a conflation of the Gothic and the spectral should be avoided. María del Pilar

Blanco and Esther Peeren, eds., *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2010), xvi–xvii.

76 See, for example, Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001) and Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

77 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (1995; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). As with all volumes of this type, the process of selection for *The Spectralities Reader* was guided by our interests and familiarities, as well as by the constraints of the book format and factors of language and cost.

78 Barthes writes: "in the cinema, no doubt, there is always a photographic referent, but this referent shifts, it does not make a claim in favor of its reality, it does not protest its former existence; it does not cling to me: it is not a *specter.*" *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (1980; London: Vintage, 2000), 89.

79 Jennifer Blessing and Nat Trotman, eds., *Haunted: Contemporary Photography / Video / Performance* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2010).

80 See Ralph Noyes, "The Other Side of Plato's Wall," in *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, ed. Peter Buse and Andrew Stott (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 244–62.

PART ONE

The Spectral Turn

1

The Spectral Turn / Introduction

María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren

What does it mean to think scholarly research, especially regarding ghosts and haunting, in terms of various "turns"? What does this metaphor imply? A turn can be a move towards or away from something (even both at the same time), a tightening or a loosening, a new departure or a revisiting. In academia, naming and claiming a "turn" tends to indicate a foregrounding of an aspect hitherto ignored or under-illuminated: the role of language in the linguistic turn, that of culture in the cultural turn, that of materiality in the material turn, etc. Yet the potentially expansive effect is tempered by an implication of exclusivity: instead of *also* looking at the highlighted aspect, it becomes (or is taken as) a looking *only* at this aspect, necessitating another turn to address newly emerged blind spots. In addition, the rhetoric of the turn suggests a decisive change of direction accompanied by a distancing from the starting point; after all, a "turn in place" is not really a turn at all. Real turns follow on each other and are therefore conceptualized as reactions or ordered in terms of cause and effect; they cannot be thought in concert with each other. Thus, while in *The Affect Theory Reader*, Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg try to move away from the turn as a single decisive moment—"No one 'moment' or key 'theorist' inaugurated 'a' 'turn' 'to' affect; like others, we have been caught and enamored of affect *in turns*, in conjunction with new quotidian realities"[1]—their temporalizing pluralization reinforces rather than overcomes the ultimate singularity of the turn: only one can be taken at a time.

The ghost, as a figure of multiplicity that has turned (from being alive to living-dead) and, as a haunting force, keeps turning up, turning into, and returning in unpredictable and not always easily demarcated ways, could inaugurate an alternative logic of the turn as something not necessarily definitive or revolutionary in the sense of radically new. Instead of demanding a distancing, the twists and turns of haunting manifest as a layering, a palimpsestic thinking together, simultaneously, rather than a thinking against or after (as in the plethora of *counters* and *posts* each scholarly turn tends to precipitate). The spectral turn, then, may be read not only as a turn *to* the spectral, but also as the spectralization *of* the turn—its unmooring from defined points of departure, notions of linear progress, and fixed destinations.

Rather curiously, the spectral turn has not been as prominently or enthusiastically adopted as a site of academic affiliation as other critical reorientations. In fact, in a perhaps strangely fitting anachronism, a full two years before Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock's affirmative use of the term to title his introduction to the edited volume *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* (2004), it featured in Roger Luckhurst's critical article "The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the 'Spectral Turn'" (2002). This article, while apparently the first to name it, already marks the spectral turn—emphatically placed between quotation marks—as having outlived its use. Since then, an ambiguous attitude towards the notion of a spectral turn has persisted: the continued and spreading interest in matters ghostly is either not specifically referred to in these terms, or a certain prevarication is indicated by retaining Luckhurst's quotation marks or preceding it with a "so-called."[2] While such evasions and expressions of skepticism do not invalidate the idea of a surge in scholarly attention for ghosts and haunting, they do indicate a degree of self-reflexivity with respect to the established, non-spectralized logic of the turn. Accordingly, this first part of *The Spectralities Reader* shows the existence, survival, scope, uses, and effects of what appears as "the spectral turn" to be up for debate.

The opening gambit, ardently proclaiming spectrality's wide-ranging conceptual potential, almost unavoidably involves Jacques Derrida. "Spectrographies" is part of a transcribed "improvised interview" with Derrida conducted by Bernard Stiegler. Filmed in 1993 by Jean-Christophe Rosé for the INA (Institut National de l'Audiovisuel), it was published in *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*.[3] Only slightly trailing the French publication of *Specters of Marx*, which, as we noted in our general introduction, is generally considered the main catalyst for the late-twentieth-century surge in explorations of ghosts and haunting, "Spectrographies" condenses the most vital aspects of the theorization of spectrality and hauntology delineated in the longer, less accessible work. It also installs a useful distance between Derrida's thinking of spectrality

and his much-contested reading of Marx (without, however, completely excluding it).

The interview starts from a discussion of Derrida's statement "The future belongs to ghosts," made in Ken McMullen's 1983 experimental film *Ghost Dance*, which invokes an intricate discourse of ghosts and haunting predicated on technological advancement (by way of references to cargo cults), the living on of the past in the present, and psychic dissolution.[4] It proceeds to conjure a complex configuration of spectral meditations pertaining to death and mourning, technology and technics, (in)visibility, inheritance, justice and respect, messianicity, history, and Heidegger. Holding this ostensibly far-flung constellation together is the notion of the specter as that which, in its paradoxical invisible visibility—"it is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood"—proposes "a deconstructive logic" that, by insisting on "heteronomy," undoes established binaries and challenges foundational, presentist, and teleological modes of thinking.[5] The specter is always already before us, confronting us with what precedes and exceeds our sense of autonomy, seeing us without being seen, and demanding a certain responsibility and answerability, making Derrida's theory, besides an alternative ontology, also an ethics: "There is no respect and, therefore, no justice possible without this relation of fidelity or of promise, as it were, to what is no longer living or living yet, to what is not simply present."[6] What is at stake, ultimately, is the specter as a figure of absolute alterity (existing both outside and within us) that should, as emphasized in *Specters of Marx*, not be assimilated or negated (exorcized), but lived *with*, in an open, welcoming relationality.

Derrida's penchant for thinking (through) ghosts—which inhabited his work from long before *Specters of Marx* up to his death in 2004[7]— has received much comment, from the mostly critical responses focusing on Derrida's interaction with Marx gathered in Sprinker's *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx* (1995) and the special issue of *Parallax* on the New International (2001) to works that specifically seek to take up and elaborate on his engagement with the specter, including Nicholas Royle's "Phantom Review" (1997), Jodey Castricano's *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* (2003), and David Appelbaum's *Jacques Derrida's Ghost: A Conjuration* (2009).[8] Since this part of the *Reader* is dedicated to exploring the spectral turn as a heterogeneous formation—as itself, in a way, spectralized: "*more than one/no more one* [*le* plus d'un]"[9]—we have chosen to follow Derrida's text with Colin Davis's "État Présent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms." In this lucid essay, of which an extended version is included in *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (2007), Davis bifurcates the spectral turn by arguing that the current fascination with ghosts and haunting is traceable to two models.[10] Rather than being conflated, these models—the deconstructive,

Derridean thinking of the ghost and its prior psychoanalytical elaboration by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok—should be carefully distinguished on the basis of contrasting attitudes towards the secret it embodies. For Derrida, this secret should remain at least partially inscrutable to ensure respect for otherness and to be of value for discovering what it means to learn to live; Abraham and Torok, on the other hand, conceive of their phantom as a lying intruder to be exposed and expelled through psychotherapy. In pointing to this contrast, Davis does not seek to identify either model as superior, but suggests that, when transposed to literary studies, each has value in facilitating a particular type of textual analysis.

Whereas neither Derrida nor Davis speaks in so many words of a spectral turn, this part would be incomplete without an excerpt from Weinstock's aforementioned introduction, which takes the term for its title and charts its progression through popular culture (from the 1980s resurgence in cinema ghosts to the apparitions crowding 1990s fiction, television, and theater) and, subsequently, academia. Noting the ghost's affinity—as a figure of undecidability as well as one that persistently demands attention—with poststructuralism and revisionist tendencies in history, Weinstock effectuates a necessary historical and cultural specification of spectrality by inquiring after the reason for the renewed prevalence of ghosts and haunting in late-twentieth-century American culture. Narrowing the focus to "America's Spectral Turn" suggests other possible ghostly turns elsewhere, provoked by different preoccupations than a "postmodern suspicion of meta-narratives accentuated by millennial anxiety" and a unique national history of ethnic diversity and cultural amnesia.[11] It also challenges the generalizing tendency of Derrida's account, which leaves unacknowledged its reliance on a western, Judeo-Christian conception of haunting.[12]

Following Weinstock's specification of the spectral turn—replicable for other nations or areas, as well as periods, media, genres, etc.—is Julian Wolfreys's "Preface: On Textual Haunting," from *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (2002). Wolfreys, who conceives of literature in general as a haunting structure, has been accused of moving in the direction of broadening spectrality's reach to the point where everything becomes ghostly. It is worth pointing out, though, that while the preface indeed posits that all literature and storytelling is marked by the power of the text, its author/speaker, and characters to be reanimated again and again in a way that blurs or suspends "categories such as the real or the imaginary," subsequent chapters carefully trace the ways in which individual Victorian writers (Dickens, Tennyson, Eliot, and Hardy) mobilize specific forms of haunting—in the divergent modes of the gothic, the uncanny, and the spectral.[13] Wolfreys's book, therefore, shows how spectrality may operate, simultaneously, at different levels, without the making of a general point precluding more precise uses.

Closing the first part is an excerpt from Roger Luckhurst's critical contemplation of the limits of the spectral turn—the very turn this article, ironically, seems to have been the first to proclaim. In response to Martin Jay's question of why the uncanny has begun to function as a "master trope," Luckhurst critiques "the generalized economy of haunting" he feels inhabits the work of Derrida and Wolfreys, while arguing for a renewed focus on the "generative loci" that prompt specific Gothic apparitions, in this case in tales set in contemporary London.[14] Certain accounts of spectrality may indeed be faulted for ignoring historical, cultural, and geographical specificities—the way ghosts and haunting do not function the same, or elicit the same affective responses, in all contexts—as well as eliding significant differences between concepts like the uncanny, the Gothic, and the spectral. Yet at the same time the construction of a "meta-Gothic discourse" or the contemplation of the "ghostly disruption" of historicity itself are not without merit, as they enable us to think about the structuring role of forms of repetition and return in our contemporary postcolonial, globalizing, and increasingly re- and pre-mediated world.[15]

As subsequent parts of this *Reader* will show, far from finding its limit in Luckhurst's text, the spectral turn persists, not as a unified whole, but in (at least) two interdependent guises. The expansive adoption of the specter as able to (re)configure fundamental aspects of our culture and existence—always perilously close to overstretching the concept and ignoring local variations in the way ghosts and haunting are apprehended and employed—may have been what prompted the spectral turn and ensured its cross-disciplinary reach, yet its perpetuation and continued fecundity has largely depended on attempts to more precisely orient and differentiate spectrality.

Notes

1 Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 19, italics in the original.

2 See, for example, Julian Holloway and James Kneale, "Locating Haunting: A Ghost-Hunter's Guide," *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2008): 297–312; Emilie Cameron, "Indigenous Spectrality and the Politics of Postcolonial Ghost Stories," *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2008): 383–93; Christine Ferguson, "Recent Studies in Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism," *Literature Compass* 9, no. 6 (2012): 431–40.

3 Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, "Spectrographies," in *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek (1996; Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 31.

4   For an extended discussion of Derrida's appearance in this film, see Laurence Simmons, "Jacques Derrida's Ghostface," *Angelaki* 16, no. 1 (2011): 129–41.

5   Derrida and Stiegler, "Spectrographies," 115, 117, 122.

6   Ibid., 123–4.

7   See our general introduction for a discussion of the works leading up to *Specters of Marx*. Following that text, the specter reappears most insistently in Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (1995; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998) and Jacques Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally: The Last Interview*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Hoboken: Melville House Publishing, 2007).

8   Michael Sprinker ed., *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's* Specters of Marx (London and New York: Verso, 1999); *The New International*, spec. issue of *Parallax* 7, no. 3 (2001): 1–137; Nicholas Royle, "Phantom Review," *Textual Practice* 11, no. 2 (1997): 386–98; Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Derrida's Ghost Writing* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); David Appelbaum, *Jacques Derrida's Ghosts: A Conjuration* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009).

9   Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (1993; London and New York: Routledge, 1994), xx.

10   Colin Davis, *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

11   Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 5.

12   For a discussion of Derrida's Eurocentrism, seen as particularly jarring in view of his ties to Algeria, see Christopher Wise, "Saying 'Yes' to Africa: Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*," *Research in African Literatures* 33, no. 4 (2002): 124–42.

13   Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), xiii.

14   Roger Luckhurst, "The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the 'Spectral Turn,'" *Textual Practice* 16, no. 3 (2002): 527, 534, 528.

15   Luckhurst, "Contemporary London Gothic," 536, 535. On re- and pre-mediation, see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Boston: The MIT Press, 2000) and Richard Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality after 9/11* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

2

Spectrographies

Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler

BERNARD STIEGLER *I would like nonetheless to come back to the question of death, with or without direct or explicit reference to* Being and Time – *let's at least say that it would be necessary in certain respects to go there – insofar as, in Barthes, the analysis of photographic intentionality is inscribed in the question of narcissism and of mourning. Narcissism would be radically affected by the photographic experience in its strictly technical dimension. We have talked a lot about Barthes, whom I would like to cite so that I may then cite you, not from a book, but from a film in which you played yourself –* Ghostdance[1] *– and in which you say a number of things about film and ghosts. There is a thematic of the ghost and of the specter which is at the very heart of your book on Marx, but which has been insistent in your work for a very long time, which incessantly comes back there. Barthes writes, in* Camera Lucida: *"I call 'photographic referent,' not the optionally real thing to which an image or sign refers, but the necessarily real thing that was placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph. Painting, on the other hand, can feign reality without having seen it." He adds, a bit further on: "[I]n photography, I can never deny that the thing was there. Past and reality are superimposed. . . . The photo is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body which was there proceed radiations that come to touch me, I who am here. The duration of the transmission doesn't matter. The photo of the departed being comes to touch me like the delayed rays of a star. A kind of umbilical cord ties the body of the photographic thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is really a carnal medium here, a skin that I share with the one who was photographed. . . . The bygone thing has really touched, with its immediate radiations (its luminances), the surface that is in turn touched by my gaze."[2]*

Commenting on these lines, you have written that "the modern possibility of the photograph joins, in a single system, death and the referent."³ Already in this commentary, you spoke of the "phantomatic effect," which Barthes himself had put forth.⁴ In the film, in which you play yourself, you say to Pascale Ogier, your partner: "To be haunted by a ghost is to remember what one has never lived in the present, to remember what, in essence, has never had the form of presence. Film is a 'phantomachia.' Let the ghosts come back. Film plus psychoanalysis equals a science of ghosts. Modern technology, contrary to appearances, although it is scientific, increases tenfold the power of ghosts. The future belongs to ghosts." Might you elaborate on this statement: "The future belongs to ghosts"?

Jacques Derrida When Barthes grants such importance to touch in the photographic experience, it is insofar as the very thing one is deprived of, as much in spectrality as in the gaze which looks at images or watches film and television, is indeed tactile sensitivity. The desire to touch, the tactile effect or affect, is violently summoned by its very frustration, summoned to come back [*appelé à revenir*], like a ghost [*un revenant*], in the places haunted by its absence. In the series of more or less equivalent words that accurately designate haunting, *specter*, as distinct from ghost [*revenant*], speaks of the spectacle. The specter is first and foremost something visible. It is of the visible, but of the invisible visible, it is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood. It resists the intuition to which it presents itself, it is not tangible. *Phantom* preserves the same reference to *phainesthai*, to appearing for vision, to the brightness of day, to phenomenality. And what happens with spectrality, with phantomality – and not necessarily with coming-back [*revenance*] – is that something becomes almost visible which is visible only insofar as it is not visible in flesh and blood. It is a night visibility. As soon as there is a technology of the image, visibility brings night. It incarnates in a night body, it radiates a night light. At this moment, in this room, night is falling over us. Even if it weren't falling, we are already in night, as soon as we are captured by optical instruments which don't even need the light of day. We are already specters of a "televised." In the nocturnal space in which this image of us, this picture we are in the process of having "taken," is described, it is already night. Furthermore, because we know that, once it has been taken, captured, this image will be reproducible in our absence, because we know this *already*, we are already haunted by this future, which brings our death. Our disappearance is already here. We are already transfixed by a disappearance [*une disparition*] which promises and conceals in advance another magic "apparition," a ghostly "re-apparition" which is in truth properly *miraculous*, something to see, as admirable as it is incredible [*incroyable*], believable [*croyable*] only by the grace of an act of faith. Faith which is summoned by technics itself, by our relation of essential incompetence to technical operation. (For even

if we know how something works, our knowledge is incommensurable with the immediate perception that attunes us to technical efficacy, to the fact that "it works": we see that "it works," but even if we *know* this, we don't *see* how "it works"; seeing and knowing are incommensurable here.) And this is what makes our experience so strange. We are spectralized by the shot, captured or possessed by spectrality in advance.

What has, dare I say, constantly haunted me in this logic of the specter is that it regularly exceeds all the oppositions between visible and invisible, sensible and insensible. A specter is both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance. The spectral logic is de facto a deconstructive logic. It is in the element of haunting that deconstruction finds the place most hospitable to it, at the heart of the living present, in the quickest heartbeat of the philosophical. Like the work of mourning, in a sense, which produces spectrality, and like *all* work produces spectrality.

To come back to the *Ghostdance* experience, I regret the expression that came to me while improvising (the scene you cited was improvised) from start to finish. I remember it from this one sentence because it was a rather singular experience with Ken McMullen, the English filmmaker: we had studied that morning, in the bar of the Select, for an hour, a scene which lasted a minute, and which we repeated, repeated, repeated to the point of exhaustion. Then, that afternoon, in my office, conversely, we improvised from beginning to end a completely different scene, it was very long, which Ken McMullen kept almost in its entirety and in which the exchange you mentioned was shot. Thus I improvised this sentence, "Psychoanalysis plus film equals . . . a science of ghosts." Of course, upon reflection, beyond the improvisation, I'm not sure I'd keep the word "science"; for at the same time, there is something which, as soon as one is dealing with ghosts, exceeds, if not scientificity in general, at least what, for a very long time, has modeled scientificity on the real, the objective, which is not or should not be, precisely, phantomatic. It is in the name of the scientificity of science that one conjures ghosts or condemns obscurantism, spiritualism, in short, everything that has to do with haunting and with specters. There would be much to say about this.

With regard to emanations and the very beautiful text by Barthes which you cited, rather than problematize what he says, I would like to tell you what happened with this film, *Ghostdance*. Having invented this scene with Pascale Ogier, who was sitting across from me, in my office, and who had taught me, in the intervals between shots, what in cinematic terms is called the *eye-line* [in English in the original], that is to say, the fact of looking eye to eye (we spent long minutes, if not hours, at the request of the filmmaker, looking into one another's eyes, which is an experience of strange and unreal intensity: you can imagine what this experience of the eye-line can be when it is prolonged and passionately repeated between two actors,

even if it is only fictional and "professional"), and after she had taught me that, then, after I had said roughly what you repeated, I had to ask her: "And what about you, do you believe in ghosts?" This is the only thing the filmmaker dictated to me. At the end of my improvisation, I was to say to her: "And what about you, do you believe in ghosts?" And, repeating it over and over, at least thirty times, at the request of the filmmaker, she says this little sentence: "Yes, now I do, yes." And so, already during shooting, she repeated this sentence at least thirty times. Already this was a little strange, a little spectral, out of sync, outside itself; this was happening several times in one. But imagine the experience I had when, two or three years later, after Pascale Ogier had died, I watched the film again in the United States, at the request of students who wanted to discuss it with me. Suddenly I saw Pascale's face, which I knew was a dead woman's face, come onto the screen. She answered my question: "Do you believe in ghosts?" Practically looking me in the eye, she said to me again, on the big screen: "Yes, now I do, yes." Which now? Years later in Texas. I had the unnerving sense of the return of her specter, the specter of her specter coming back to say to me – to me here, now: "Now . . . now . . . now, that is to say, in this dark room on another continent, in another world, here, now, yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts."

But at the same time, I know that the first time Pascale said this, already, when she repeated this in my office, already, this spectrality was at work. It was already there, she was already saying this, and she knew, just as we know, that even if she hadn't died in the interval, one day, it would be a dead woman who said, "I am dead," or "I am dead, I know what I'm talking about from where I am, and I'm watching you," and this gaze remained dissymmetrical, exchanged beyond all possible exchange, eye-line without eye-line, the eye-line of a gaze that fixes and looks for the other, its other, its counterpart [*vis-à-vis*], the other gaze met, in an infinite night.

You will remember what Gradiva said: "For a long time now, I have been used to being dead."

This is what I meant to say a moment ago when I spoke of inheritance. In inheritance, there is always this experience which I dubbed, in the book on Marx, the "visor effect": the ghost looks at or watches us, the ghost concerns us.[5] The specter is not simply someone we see coming back, it is someone by whom we feel ourselves watched, observed, surveyed, as if by the law: we are "before the law," without any possible symmetry, without reciprocity, insofar as the other is watching only us, concerns only us, we who are observing it (in the same way that one observes and respects the law) without even being able to meet its gaze. Hence the dissymmetry and, consequently, the heteronomic figure of the law. The wholly other – and the dead person is the wholly other – watches me, concerns me, and concerns or watches me while addressing to me, without however answering me, a prayer or an injunction, an infinite demand, which becomes the law for

me: it concerns me, it regards me, it addresses itself only to me at the same time that it exceeds me infinitely and universally, without my being able to exchange a glance with him or with her.

"The visor effect" in *Hamlet*, or what in any case I have called this, is that, up or down, the king's helmet, Hamlet's father's helmet, reminds us that his gaze can see without being seen. There is a moment where Hamlet is very anxious to know whether the witnesses who saw his father, Marcellus and Horatio, saw his eyes. Was his visor up? The answer is: "Yes, he wore his visor up," but it doesn't matter, he could have worn it down: the fact that there is a visor symbolizes the situation in which I can't see who is looking at me, I can't meet the gaze of the other, whereas I am in his sight. The specter is not simply this visible invisible that I can see, it is someone who watches or concerns me without any possible reciprocity, and who therefore makes the law when I am blind, blind by situation. The specter enjoys the right of absolute inspection. He is the right of inspection itself.

And this is why I am an inheritor: the other comes *before* me,[6] I who am before him, I who am because of him, owing to him [*l'autre est* avant *moi devant moi qui suis devant lui*], owing him obedience [*lui devant obéissance*], incapable of exchanging with him (not even a glance). The father comes before me, I who am "owing" or indebted [*avant moi qui suis "devant" ou redevable*]. The one who watches or concerns me is or comes before me. The predecessor has come before me [*est arrivé là avant moi devant moi*], I who am before him, I who am because of him, owing to him [*qui suis devant lui*], owing him everything [*lui devant tout*]. This is the law of the genealogy of the law, the irreducible difference of generation. From the moment that I cannot exchange or meet a glance, I am dealing with the other, who comes before me; an absolute autonomy is already no longer possible. And I cannot settle my debt, I can neither give back nor exchange because of this absence of the other, which I can't look in the eye. Even if I do it or think I do it, viewer and visible can only succeed one another, alternate, not be confused in the other's eye. I can't see the eye of the other as viewing and visible at the same time.

This is why I am in heteronomy. This does not mean that I am not free; on the contrary, it is a *condition of freedom*, so to speak: my freedom springs from the condition of this responsibility which is born of heteronomy in the eyes of the other, in the other's sight. This gaze is spectrality itself.

One has a tendency to treat what we've been talking about here under the names of image, teletechnology, television screen, archive, as if all these things were on display: a collection of objects, things we see, spectacles in front of us, devices we might use, much as we might use a "teleprompter" we had ourselves prewritten or prescribed. But wherever there are these specters, we are being watched, we sense or think we are being watched.

This dissymmetry complicates everything. The law, the injunction, the order, the performative wins out over the theoretical, the constative, knowledge, calculation, and the programmable.

It is in this way that I would be tempted to understand what Barthes calls "emanation." This flow of light which captures or possesses me, invests me, invades me, or envelops me is not a ray of light, but the source of a possible view: from the point of view of the other. If the "reality effect" is ineluctable, it is not simply because there is something real that is undecomposable, or not synthesizable, some "thing" that was there. It is because there is something other that watches or concerns me. This Thing is the other insofar as it was already there – before me – ahead of me, beating me to it, I who am before it, I who am because of owing to it [*avant moi, devant moi, me devançant, moi qui suis devant lui*]. My law. I have an even greater sense of the "real" when what is photographed is a face or a gaze, although in some ways a mountain can be at least as "real." The "reality effect" stems here from the irreducible alterity of another origin of the world. It is another origin of the world. What I call the gaze here, the gaze of the other, is not simply another machine for the perception of images. It is another world, another source of phenomenality, another degree zero of appearing.

A singularity.

Yes, and it is not simply a *point* of singularity. It is a singularity on the basis of which a world is opened. The other, who is dead, was someone for whom a world, that is to say, a possible infinity or a possible indefinity of experiences was open. It is an opening. Finite-infinite, infinitely finite. Pascale Ogier saw, she will have seen, she did see. There was a world for her. From this other origin, this one that I cannot reappropriate, from this infinitely other place, I am watched. Still, today, this thing looks at me and concerns me and asks me to respond or to be responsible. The word "real," in this context, signifies the irreducible singularity of the other insofar as she opens a world, and insofar as there will have always been a world for her.

To link this statement up with that of spectrality, let's say that our relation to another origin of the world or to another gaze, to the gaze of the other, implies a kind of spectrality. Respect for the alterity of the other dictates respect for the ghost [*le revenant*] and, therefore, for the non-living, for what it's possible is not alive. Not dead, but not living. This is where I try to begin in the book on "Marx's specters," when I ask myself how to "learn how to live" and what "learning how to live" might mean. There is no respect and, therefore, no justice possible without this relation of fidelity or of promise, as it were, to what is no longer living or not living yet, to what is not simply present. There would be no urgent demand for justice, or for responsibility, without this spectral oath. And there would

be no oath, period. Someone pointed out to me that the word "specter" is the perfect anagram of "respect." I since discovered by chance that another word is also the perfect anagram of these two, which is "scepter." These three words, respect, specter, and scepter, form a configuration about which there would be much to say, but which goes without saying, too. Respect would be due the law of the other, who appears without appearing and watches or concerns me as a specter, but why would this unconditional authority, which commands duty without duty, without debt, even beyond the categorical imperative, still be figured by the spectral phallus of the king, by the paternal scepter, by an attribute which we would have to obey just as we would the finger and the eye? The scepter would be to the finger what the phallus is to the penis. Would its fetishistic spectrality be enough to unsettle the identity of the sex organ, the virility of the father? These are questions. In any case, for it is the case, as it happens, here is a very lucky thing: these three words are composed of the same letters. This chance can only arise, don't you think, thanks to alphabetic writing – and in a singular language.

Barthes mentions touch, you recalled this a moment ago. He certainly had a number of reasons for doing so, but it was probably first and foremost in order to insist on the technical character of this effect. He analyzes the way photography functions in its mechanical, chemical, and optical dimensions.

We have the impression, and it would be difficult to avoid this feeling, that a substitution can be made for all the senses except touch. What I see can be replaced. What I touch cannot, or in any case, we have the feeling, illusory or not, that touch guarantees irreplaceability: hence the thing itself in its uniqueness.

Barthes says that in order for the reality effect to take place when I see a photograph, it is actually necessary – if for example I am looking at a portrait of Baudelaire, photographed by Nadar – it is actually necessary for the rays emitted by Baudelaire's face as photographed by Nadar to have touched a photographic plate, for this plate to have been duplicated, and consequently, for luminances to have touched all the duplicates, and that there be a properly "material" chain ensuring that, ultimately, these luminous emanations will end up touching my eye, and so there is, in all this, a . . .

. . . a series of contiguities . . .

. . . of material contiguities, contiguities on the order of matter, which effectively ensures that this thing is looking at me, it is watching me, it concerns me, and it touches me, but I cannot touch Baudelaire's face.

It touches me, but I can't touch it, and there is, with what Barthes calls the spectrum (the photograph itself), this "visor effect" and spectrality in the sense you just described. I want to emphasize matter and technicity. Barthes's sudden and rather striking interest in technicity leads him to say that a camera is a "seeing clock," a magnificent expression. I emphasize this now because you mobilize this thematic in your Specters of Marx *(the subtitle of which we should also remember:* The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*), which you moreover announced in a way, without having planned it, at the time of* Ghostdance, *since you say: "It would be necessary to work through this question starting with Freud and Marx." That was over ten years ago. I am talking about matter here especially because everyone knows that Marx is the theorist of dialectical materialism and because you end up challenging Marx's philosophy as a definite figure of materialism – while at the same time doing justice to a certain materialism – on the basis of this question of the specter. You do this by showing the degree to which this question is at work in Marx, the degree to which it is thematized throughout his entire oeuvre, and to which it unsettles it and frightens him, by showing how he criticizes this mobilization of the specter in Stirner and how, at the same time, he is himself haunted by this question. And this leads you to disturb, on the basis of what you call a "hauntology," the distinction that Marx is able to make between exchange-value and use-value. It also brings us back to the questions we were just discussing with respect to the market. Doesn't the Marxian thought of justice stumble here, in the face of a structural difficulty that would essentially have to do with technics? Again, technics is at the heart of all this, and with it and its spectrality, time – it is not possible to dissociate, in this distinction, technics and time.*

On this point, as on many others, Marx's thought – I don't dare say Marx's philosophy – this thought which divides itself into a philosophy and something other than a philosophy, seems to me tormented by contradictory movements. Which, incidentally, obey a common law. On the one hand, no doubt better than anyone of his time, Marx understood, let's call it, so as to move quickly, the essence of technics or, in any case, the irreducibility of the technical, in science, in language, in politics, and even the irreducibility of the media. He paid constant, obsessive attention to the press, to the modern press, to what was developing between the press and politics at the time. Few thinkers of his time sharpened their analysis of the political stakes of the effects of the press to this degree. On the other hand, as you just reminded us, he paid attention, in a way that was almost compulsive, to the effects of spectrality – I have tried to show this in as precise a way as I could. But at the same time, he shares with all philosophers and perhaps with all scientists . . . dare I call it a belief? in any case, the axiom, at once naive and sensible, according to which there is no such thing, the phantom does not exist. It must not exist, *therefore* we have to get rid of it,

therefore we have to be done with it. Here you have a "therefore" that would already be enough to rattle good sense from the inside. For if there is no such thing, why would we have to chase after the specter, to chase it out or hunt it down? Why would we have to let the dead bury their dead, as Marx says in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, in the biblical tradition? Why would we have to analyze phantomality to the point of making it disappear? Marx reproached Stirner for not doing it properly, and he had, in his critique of Stirner, compelling arguments – we would have to look at it closely – for indicating the conditions on which phantomality could be critiqued, just as fetishism can be critiqued, to the point of making them *effectively disappear* (the question of fetishism, like that of ideology, is at the center of this debate about spectrality). All of this proceeds from a point where Marx reminds us that the ultimate foundation remains *living* experience, *living* production, which must efface every trace of spectrality. In the final analysis, one must refer to a zone where spectrality is nothing. This is why Marx seemed to me to contradict or to limit the movement that ought to have prompted him to take technicity, iterability, everything that makes spectrality irreducible, more seriously. And even the motif of justice – I don't dare say eschatology – a certain "messianicity," which is in my opinion irreducible (I am not talking about messianism), a messianicity irreducible in its revolutionary movement, ought to have made him more respectful of the spectral. (I try elsewhere to show why. I am not able to do it here.) He didn't make this gesture, he *couldn't* make it, he *had to not* make it; I don't know how or in what modalities to present this kind of necessity. But in any case, there is a classical movement in his text to deny all spectrality a scientific, philosophical, political, or technical dignity, or in any case a dignity of thinking or of the question, etc., and this seems to me to constitute an essential limitation of his work, its rootedness in a metaphysics of the effectivity of the living present . . .

As regards the 1848 Revolution, he demonstrates that a return of the dead tormented this revolution, like that of 1789, but he criticizes this revolution insofar as it didn't know how to bury its dead.

One would have to analyze closely this movement and this text of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. In it, Marx consecrates admirable analyses to the return of the specters that made the revolutionary discourse, and even the revolutions, possible. There's a moment where he announces that the coming revolution, the social revolution, the one that failed in 1789 and in 1848, the coming revolution as social revolution, will have to put an end to this separation between form and content, to the inadequation between what he calls the "phrase" and the "content," and so will put an end to this need for dressing up in specters' clothing, in the costume of the past or of phantomatic mythologies, in order to bring the revolution off. What he announces is the end of specters. He announces that the ghost of communism, which, according to the *Manifesto*, was haunting the

European powers, this ghost will have to become, through the revolution, fully present, and so cease to be a ghost, and that this is what the powers of the old Europe, including the papacy, are as it were afraid of. For once the *social* revolution has taken place and this ghost of communism has *presented* itself, and presented itself in person, at this moment, for this very reason, there won't be any ghosts anymore. And so he believes in the disappearance of the phantom, in the disappearance of the dead.

This statement seems very grave to me. In its implications and in its consequences. That is why, even if I have saluted Marx in this book, what I say on this subject may be taken for a fundamental reticence with respect to what he said, and with respect to the politics and even to the idea of justice that this discourse carries within itself. As soon as one calls for the disappearance of ghosts, one deprives oneself of the very thing that constitutes the revolutionary movement itself, that is to say, the appeal to justice, what I call "messianicity" – which is a ghostly business, which must carry beyond the synchrony of living presents … But I am not able to show this here … I must refer you to *Specters of Marx* …

History itself is an effect of spectrality. The return of the Romans in the French Revolution would belong to a mode of spectral transmission which overdetermines all historical events, and this in an irreducible way. Perhaps one should say, furthermore, that this spectrality belongs to what could be called a history in deferred time, a history in the play of writing, which has the structure, it seems to me, with the exception of a few very particular cases (such as signatures on contracts or events of the clearly performative type), of an irreducible distension between the event and its recording. It seems to me that, in an essential way, orthographic writing constitutes a deferred time. Today, we are living a number of events "live," "in real time." To what extent – this is yet another extremely complicated question – is the spectrality at work in this kind of transmission incommensurable with this spectrality in deferred time? In other words, what is the problematic of eventization [événementialisation] that is taking shape around this today?

In principle, every event is experienced or lived, as one says and as one believes, in "real time." What we are living "in real time," and what we find remarkable, is access precisely to what we are not living: we are "there" where we are not, in real time, through images or through technical relation. There happen to us, in real time, events that aren't happening to us, that is to say, that we aren't experiencing immediately around us. We are there, in real time, where bombs are exploding in Kuwait or in Iraq. We record and believe that we are perceiving in an immediate mode events at which we are not present. But the recording of an event, from the moment that there is a technical interposition, is always deferred, that is to say that this "différance" is inscribed in the very heart of supposed synchrony, in the living present. Past events, for example a sequence