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Hauntology and Cognition: Questions of Knowledge, Pasts and Futures

Abstract. This article presents the major aspects of hauntology, highlighting the impact of spectrality studies on contemporary redefinitions of knowledge and cognition. Referring predominantly to Jacques Derrida's *Spectres de Marx* (1993), we discuss the ways in which the spectral turn has led to a "cognitive crisis" of sorts by radically questioning the existing procedures of knowing and re-configuring the prevalent conceptualization of time and history. Approaching the spectre as a conceptual site of difference and otherness, we comment on the ethical dimensions of spectrality studies and the questions of (in)visibility, representation of as well as responsibility for the Other, the marginalised or the silenced. We also stress the contribution of the psychoanalytic concepts explaining psychological reactions to loss—the metapsychic phantom and the intrapsychic crypt—to the development of trauma and memory studies. In all of these concerns, we are primarily interested in outlining the transformative potential of the figure of the spectre and its influence on methods of study in contemporary scholarship.

Keywords: hauntology; cognition; spectres; memory; trauma; ethics; otherness; textuality.

> The future belongs to ghosts.
> Jacques Derrida (2013)

> One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object,
> this non-present presence, this being-there of an absent or departed one no
> longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks
> one knows by the name of knowledge.
> Jacques Derrida (1994)

The Spectral Turn and the Redefinition of Knowledge

The beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed a number of significant changes in cognitive and symbolic mapping of space and time, accompanied by the emergence of new critical projects questioning the major ways of knowing and exploring the possibilities of knowing differently and knowing otherwise. The general mistrust toward metanarratives identified with postmodernism and the sense that uncertainty was indeed becoming "a permanent condition of life" (Bauman 1994: 36) were exacerbated at the turn of the millennium by anxieties about the future, in particular about the ways in which the past might influence the world to come. The extent of this millennial anxiety, as Andrew Weinstock persuasively argues, was demonstrated by the increasing presence of supernatural creatures in popular culture and by the growing interest in ghosts and hauntings in theory and criticism, eventually leading to the development of "spectrality studies" (Weinstock 2004: 7–8). "The spectral turn"—the term used in 2002 by Roger Luckhurst in the context of a somewhat critical discussion of the spectral and the uncanny and their multiple appropriations in contemporary culture (2013: 75)—describes this shift through which the ghost has been transformed from an index of superstition or a sign for a dead person into a figure that possesses a specific analytical, ethical and political potential and that necessitates the use of different critical procedures redefining both the nature and status of knowledge.

Jacques Derrida's *Spectres de Marx*, published in 1993[1], played a major role in articulating the ethical, critical and political potential of the figure of the ghost and in delineating the methods of investigation subsequently

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[1]   *Spectres de Marx* was translated into English by Peggy Kamuf in 1994; the Polish edition of Derrida's seminal book appeared in 2016 as *Widma Marksa*, translated by Tomasz Załuski.

deployed in spectrality studies[2]. In some of its numerous concerns, Derrida's book is a call to reconsider the status of knowledge and one's relation to the past, and to listen to the voices that perhaps do not really exist or are perceived as too marginal to be taken into consideration. Hauntology demands a new understanding of the object of study that escapes the traditional frames of knowledge. It expands the concept of human cognitive abilities by including what seems to subvert rationality, what possibly does not exist in what we call reality, what cannot be described or classified and what demands from us an admission of our inability to know and understand everything. It also throws into doubt claims of objectivity, certainty, predictability, measurability, and completeness, deconstructing the accepted frames of reference and structures of interpretation, and exploring the workings of human memory, both on individual and collective levels. In fact, as "a disjointed, non-foundational alternative ontology" (Blanco and Peeren 2013a: 14), hauntology questions the very ability to fully understand reality—it leaves gaps, introduces uncertainties, opens up to the indefinite, both confirms and denies presence. Hauntology, Colin Davis states, replaces "the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive" (2005: 373), so that the spectral presence cannot be fully acknowledged, yet it cannot be denied either. Since the spectre makes "established certainties vacillate" (Davis 2005: 376), hauntological approaches cannot but question traditional discourses, occupying spaces in between certainties and categorisations, and in between dichotomous systems.

The Cognitive Crisis and the Scholar of the Future

Hauntology conceptualizes the spectre as a crisis of knowledge, as a defiance of "semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy" (Derrida 1994: 6). An encounter with the spectral results in and perhaps from the condition and acceptance of the state of unknowing. Hauntology is concerned with the readiness to accept and acknowledge uncertainty, inbetweenness, absence, paradox, since a confrontation with the spectre always demands the reformulation of one's expectations and frames

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[2]   While Derrida's work is the major source of hauntology, the psychoanalytic explorations of phantoms by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok provide its second source; for a detailed discussion of the differences between these two approaches, see Davis's "*État Présent*: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms" (2005).

of reference: "One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present presence, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge" (Derrida 1994: 6).

Ultimately, the spectre is "a deconstructive figure" (Davis 2005: 376) and hauntology can be understood as a continuation of the deconstructive project, questioning reason, systems, structures and meanings. What Jonathan Culler writes of deconstruction aptly describes hauntology: "deconstruction shatters their [structuralists'] 'faith in reason' by revealing the uncanny irrationality of texts and their ability to confute or subvert every system or position they are thought to manifest" (1998: 220). Yet, from the traditionally rational perspective, being preoccupied with ghosts is an academically suspect activity. Nicholas Royle classifies Derrida's "spectral" deconstruction as "ascholarly," subverting traditional scholarship, but also going beyond the scholarly/unscholarly dichotomy. The "new notion of scholarship" that Derrida's *Specters of Marx* proposes, as Royle writes, looks into "other spaces of intellectual thinking, spaces that can be called affirmatively spectral or phantomistic," concerned not so much with the presence of ghosts or phantoms but with "phantom effects" (Royle 2003: 278). Investigating these unscholarly spaces, as Davis argues, challenges the traditional ways of thinking: "Derrida calls on us to endeavour to speak and listen to the spectre, despite the reluctance inherited from our intellectual traditions and because of the challenge it may pose to them" (Davis 2005: 377). After all, in order to claim the academic relevance of the concept, one needs to redefine the existing rules, the object and method of study or deconstruct them, by probing into inconsistencies, challenges, ambiguities that appear when we try to apply them to a discussion of the spectral effect. Derrida's call to address the spectre is simultaneously a call to open up to "an essential unknowing which underlies and may undermine what we think we know" (Davis 2005: 377). This opening up seems to be a long and gradual process, envisaged by Derrida as a future possibility, as a project of a new intellectual, which—following the spectral logic—is bound to haunt our cognition, imagination and future academic scenarios without ever becoming a fact. Described in the final paragraph of *Specters of Marx*, "the 'scholar' of the future, the 'intellectual' of tomorrow,"

> should learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with
> the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak
> or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the
> other, in the other in oneself: they are always there, specters, even

> if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not
> yet. (Derrida 1994: 176)

Indeed, hauntology has already proved a fruitful ground on which both artists and scholars have developed their explorations of what goes beyond the scope of verifiable reality, scientific certainty, definite and definable experience, what counteracts postmodern amnesia or disturbs the flow of perpetual presents by the return of repressed and traumatic memories and the past. Most of all, spectres are figures of otherness and subversion, introducing other dimensions—or dimensions of otherness—that disturb analytical customs and perceptions. Accordingly, contemporary scholars use hauntology to investigate, among other issues, the mechanisms of history and the potential for social change, the operations of memory and trauma, the workings of scientific processes, technologies, and media, and the normative procedures that bear upon gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class (Blanco and Peeren 2013a: 2). Ghosts are a capacious conceptual category by which a whole range of meanings and implications are expressed. They can be used to analyze processes of (textual and social) exclusion of marginalized others or to deconstruct hegemonic procedures behind the construction of norms, identities and literary canons[3]. What the various ghosts share is the urgency of the voice of the spectre and the questions of responsibility and responsiveness since, as Derrida states beginning his *Specters of Marx*, "[t]here is then some spirit. Spirits. And one must reckon with them. One cannot not have to, one must not not be able to reckon with them…" (1994: xx).

Spectral Re-Conceptualizations of Time

Why the ghosts are important and why they must be reckoned with can be intuited, among others, from the function they play with respect to time, whose linearity they disturb so as to counter impulses of historical amnesia and to map out the possibilities of different futures by uncovering the hidden spaces of silenced others. The complexity of the relation between ghosts and chronological time is aptly captured by Weinstock when he describes

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[3]   See, for example, Edyta Lorek-Jezińska's *Hauntology and Intertextuality in Contemporary British Drama by Women Playwrights* (2013), which offers an examination of excluded texts and identities, and Katarzyna Więckowska's *Spectres of Men: Masculinity, Crisis and British Literature* (2014), which provides an overview of a number of hegemonic strategies of silencing others.

the ghost as "a symptom of repressed knowledge" that "calls into question the possibilities of a future based on avoidance of the past" (2004: 6). The ghost forces us to confront and deal with the burden of the past and its unacknowledged spectres. In effect, summoning ghosts makes the present itself appear as not something solid, one-dimensional, or self-sufficient, but as something that is split and unstable, based on the suppression of other presents and voices, and, ultimately, spectral.

The ghost not only distorts the self-sameness of the present but it also forcefully announces the need for transformation and change, for "something-to-be-done" which would not merely be "a return to the past but a reckoning with its repression in the present, a reckoning with that which we have lost, but never had" (Gordon 2004: 183). Thus, haunting explicitly points to the need to face the past and to accept its multifarious inheritance, and this is another major function of the ghost, since "[o]ne never inherits without coming to terms with some specter, and therefore with more than one specter" (Derrida 1994: 21). The spectral seems to represent the conceptual and cognitive space between the past and the future. It disorganizes the chronological order, reframes time reference, dislocates the past from its pastness, and introduces a radical discontinuity into the present, making it not contemporaneous with itself.

Spectres disturb chronology and the order of precedence it establishes. This disturbance is not a singular occurrence, but a general mechanism—a principle perhaps—of the passing of time: a ghost, Derrida says, "never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back" (1994: 99). Additionally, while the comings and goings of spectres are not assigned specific dates, they also cannot be scheduled or controlled, especially because one can never count on the appearance of one ghost only as whenever and wherever there is one spectre, there are already many[4]. Accordingly, haunting transforms the linear time of the calendar into a time of waiting and uncertainty, of not knowing who and when may arrive.

Making Sense of Difference / Otherness

Ghosts should be reckoned with also because they conceptualize and foster the processes of understanding exclusion and conceiving of and reclaiming otherness. Unexpected and unregulated, haunting stages an

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[4]   Derrida writes about ghosts that "[t]here is but one of them and already there are too many" (1994: 138).

encounter with alterity, with the ghost turning up as a site of difference, of the marginal, of what Avery F. Gordon describes as something "we normally exclude or banish, or more commonly, . . . what we never even notice" (2004: 24). The experience of being haunted entails a fundamentally ethical dimension, where the appearance of the ghost imposes on the haunted the duty to account for themselves, as well as for the ghost, and delivers the call for responsibility and for hospitality which Derrida describes as "hospitality without reserve" (1994: 65). Ultimately, the spectre poses the question of justice; in fact, it becomes the figure of justice and its very possibility:

> No justice—let us say no law and once again we are not speaking here of laws—seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some *responsibility*, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any other forms of totalitarianism. (Derrida 1994: xix)

The appearance of the ghost opens up the choice between either welcoming or rejecting the spectre—"[a]s soon as there is some specter," writes Derrida, "hospitality and exclusion go together" (1994: 141)—or between either uncertainty, heterogeneity, and multiplicity or any forms of totalitarianism, with the latter signifying a rejection of ghosts, "a reaction of panic-ridden fear before the ghost in general" (Derrida 1994: 105). It is in this ethical potential of haunting, in the agreement to live with spectres, that there lies the possibility of "a *politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations" (Derrida 1994: xix) and, one might add, of knowledge, of learning how to live, which, as Derrida argues, is not something one could learn from oneself or from life, but "[o]nly from the other and by death" (1994: xviii). Accordingly, spectrality has been used to conceptualize numerous forms of alterity and difference, marginalization and avoidance, victimization and subversion. Spectres have been used to present postcolonial identities, aboriginal and ethnic groups[5], gender and sexual identities (e.g. the apparitional lesbian[6]), race[7] or dis-ability.

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[5]   For example, Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (2000).

[6]   See, for example, Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (1993).

[7]   See Melanie L. Anderson, *Spectrality in the Novels of Toni Morrison* (2013).

The ethical and political potential of haunting is inevitably connected with its social dimension, and more precisely with the task of taking up responsibility for the would-be and past victims of various procedures of exclusion. The spectre, Derrida claims, is social, and haunting is an indispensible element of society: "For the specter is social... Otherwise neither *socius*, nor conflict, nor desire, nor love, nor peace would be tenable" (1994: 151). Moreover, while haunting is historical and not dated, it nevertheless "belongs to the structure of every hegemony" (Derrida 1994: 37), which regulates the frequency of hauntings and dictates the forms of welcoming or rejecting the spectre. Specific constellations of power accord visibility to specific spectres only, making haunting a constitutive element of social life, as well as of its study. As the sociologist Avery Gordon claims in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (1997)[8],

> Ghostly matters are part of social life. If we want to study social life well, and in addition we want to contribute, in however small a measure, to changing it, we must learn how to identify hauntings and reckon with ghosts, must learn how to make contact with what is without a doubt often painful, difficult, and unsettling. (2004: 23)

Spectrality and the Topography of Memory and Trauma

The difficulty and painfulness of spectral encounters primarily derives from the function spectres play in representing traumatic experiences and melancholia. Spectrality's special relation to the past discussed above is partly conditioned by the role it plays in the processes of mourning. Fredric Jameson argues that the appearance of the ghost figure in narratives necessitates "a thoroughgoing reinvention" of our understanding of the past "in a situation in which only mourning, and its peculiar failures and dissatisfactions—or perhaps one had better say, in which only melancholia as such—opens a vulnerable space and entry-point through which ghosts might make their appearance" (Jameson 2008: 43). In this reading of the ghost figure, other narratives acquire the attributes of melancholic texts and indirectly address the questions of memory and loss, bearing upon how we make sense of the past.

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[8]   Blanco and Peeren describe Gordon's book as "one of the most widely read texts of the spectral turn" (2013b: 93).

The psychological reactions to loss and the changes that affect the structures of one's psyche can be accounted for with the use of the concepts of the phantom and the intrapsychic tomb/crypt developed by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. The concept of the crypt is employed to explain what happens in a mourner's psyche when the "normal" trajectories of mourning fail, when the object of loss cannot be relinquished. What follows is the construction of the intrapsychic crypt or "a secret tomb inside the subject"—the one that forms its own complete psychic topography out of memories, affects and "the actual or supposed traumas that made introjection [the gradual process of decreasing "objectal dependency"] impracticable" (Abraham and Torok 1994: 130, Torok 1994: 114). This different substitute phantom object is a constant reminder of the other object that has been lost and the circumstances of its sudden disappearance (Torok 1994: 114).

The phantom stands for the "interpersonal and transgenerational consequences of silence" (Rand 1994: 168); according to Abraham, "what haunts us are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others," since the phantom is not directly related to the subject who experiences haunting (1994: 171, 175). Consequently, the phantom operates as a "metapsychological" category (Abraham 1994: 171), which fosters our understanding and conceptualization of the transgenerational persistence of secrets, gaps and omissions, the transgenerational trauma and responsibility, as well as the sense of guilt caused by both keeping and revealing the past secrets. These complex processes are meant to account for the inconsistencies of individual and collective memories and their various suppressions (cf. Rand 1994: 169). They also pertain to the concept of cultural trauma, which is defined by Jeffrey C. Alexander as occurring in the shared consciousness of a collectivity, who feel that they have been subjected to a traumatic event causing a radical change of their future identity and memories, even though psychoanalytic theories are disputably classified by Alexander as lay, non-academic studies of trauma (2004: 1, 5). In these collective contexts, spectrality, melancholia and trauma bear upon the processes by which groups, communities or nations construct their versions of the past and the future and engage in cultural practices of commemoration or forgetting.

Writing Ghosts, Practising Hauntology

The existence of a peculiar link between textuality and haunting has been argued by a number of critics, in particular by Julian Wolfreys, who proposes to see textuality itself as spectral, as that "which is phantomatic or phantasmatic in nature while, paradoxically, having an undeniably real or material effect, if not presence" (2002: 73). In effect, as Wolfreys argues, "to tell a story is always to invoke ghosts, to open a space through which something other returns" (Wolfreys 2002: 3). Wolfreys' statement aptly summarizes the goals of the articles collected in this volume, which apply the concepts of haunting and spectres to examine a variety of texts and phenomena, from computer games through TV series to novels, drama, photography, and philosophy. Their broad focus and the various discursive tools they employ demonstrate both the ubiquitous "presence" of spectres in contemporary culture and the widespread applicability of the concepts and methods developed by hauntology and spectrality studies. Additionally, while the articles focus on the examination of texts, thereby implicitly binding ghosts with textuality, they also reach beyond individual books, games or shows to suggest the importance of ghosts to various social and cultural processes and practices, as well as to the ways in which knowledge is produced.

Haunting Texts / Haunted Texts

The phantasmatic nature of texts and the "phantom effects" they produce are examined in the opening article by Michał Kisiel, who offers a reading of spectrality as a feature of critical texts—and perhaps eventually of all texts—by tracing the spectral quality *of* and *in* Jacques Derrida's writing. The article focuses on the notions of theatricality, iterability, staging and re-staging of various encrypted events and foundational gestures, such as Freud's and Lacan's key texts of psychoanalysis. Kisiel proposes to read Derrida's ghosted texts, in particular his "Envois," through the trope of apostrophe as signifying a singular address and a detour—what can be eavesdropped or turned away—as well as an absence—what may always replace a letter, a text or an identity. Tracing the link joining *apo-strophe* with *apo-calypse* sketched by Derrida, Kisiel's careful reading of the philosopher's works ends with the proposal to re-configure "apocalypse from the ultimate spectacle at the end of time into a mode of either postal or spectral intrusion of the other."

If Kisiel's text points to the general mechanisms of the production, not only textual, of otherness and spectres, the following articles examine the various ways in which ghosts may appear as well as their disparate natures. Nelly Strehlau and Katarzyna Marak focus on spectrality in connection to television programmes and computer games, thus addressing the paramount spaces in which contemporary ghosts and spectrality are found[9]. Accordingly, Strehlau argues that there is a "ghost of feminism" that haunts female characters in postfeminist American television series of the late 1990s, 2000s and early 2010s, and that can be also identified in contemporary television criticism. In her analysis of the gendering of men's and women's encounters with haunting, Strehlau inquires into the questions of who haunts and who is haunted, and analyses the effects the spectres have on the women in the shows. The discussion of literal and figurative instances of haunting and of the functions they perform centre on questions of heritage and empowerment so as to argue that postfeminism itself is a haunted space.

Katarzyna Marak's article turns to the haunting medium of computer games to analyse the relationship between spectres and traumatic past in *Layers Of Fear* (2016), a story-oriented walking simulator. The specificity of computer games, as Marak argues, lies in their ability to immerse the player in the game and to make them not only watch, but also experience the narrated event. Accordingly, the article shows how *Layers Of Fear*, which depicts the experience of being haunted by the past, allows the player to "literally walk through the past, among material representations of memories and emotions" of the game protagonist. In effect, the gameplay enacts the experience of haunting and forces the player to confront the ghost of another person's repressed memories and to bear witness to other people's suffering, thereby gesturing toward the ethical potential of haunting.

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[9]   It might be useful to recall here Derrida's statement that "[c]ontrary to what we might believe, the experience of ghosts is not tied to a bygone historical period . . ., but on the contrary, is accentuated, accelerated by modern technologies like film, television, the telephone. These technologies inhabit, as it were, a phantom structure" (in Wolfreys 2002: 1). Indeed, one may claim that, following Buse's and Stott's commentary on Steven Connor, "if we want to find today's ghosts, we should look to the workings of telecommunications, the activities of the media, the omniscient absence-presence, in which our 'contemporary' spectrality is to be found" (1999: 17).

Spectral Fictions: Language and Image

The figure of the ghost is frequently approached by scholars as a symptom of repressed memories that points to the need, the necessity even, to confront the past in order to be able to create a future. This is the perspective that informs the article by Karolina Kolenda, who examines the experience of trauma and the spectral presence of memories of the past in the work of Sinfried Georg Sebald, where the ghost of the Holocaust functions as an invitation to personal and collective remembrance. Analysing the relation between text and image in the German writer's prose, Kolenda argues that trauma and melancholic loss influence perceptions and perspectives by fostering "a compulsive mode of looking at the world, which affects the way its images are perceived." Contrary to the prevailing view that photography has a direct relation to the represented object, the author claims that the use of photographs in Sebald's fiction questions the very possibility of representation, exposes the cognitive limitation of human mind through reinforcing potential disappearance, and fosters forgetting rather than remembering. As a result, the textual experience of spectrality mirrors the work of memory, though it also insists on the necessity to confront what seems to have been forgotten.

While the spectral quality of Sebald's prose works to question the veracity of photographic realism and to complicate the relation between image and text, in Don DeLillo's later fiction it is language itself that appears spectral. Jarosław Hetman's article offers a reading of the representation of language in DeLillo's prose and traces its transformation from a tangible, disturbing and arbitrary presence in *The Names* (1982) to something immaterial, ineffable and ghostly in *The Body Artist* (2001). In the latter novel, as Hetman argues, language occupies "a paradoxical, liminal space between material existence and inexistence" that is blatantly spectral and that creates the possibility of communicating and connecting to others, though only on condition of letting oneself be possessed by the language one uses and is used by.

The examination of the connection between language, texts, images and spectres is a theme that recurs in most of the articles collected in this volume and that is frequently used in order to question and rewrite some well-established critical terms and taxonomies. This is the case in Anna Warso's analysis of Chuck Palahniuk's *Haunted: A Novel of Stories* (2005) as a haunting book about various cultural hauntings. Situating the novel in the Gothic tradition and stressing its metafictional/ postmodern provenance, Warso interprets Palahniuk's *Haunted* as an

example of a culture's various means of purifying the abject and as an act of ghosting which exposes the elements vehemently excluded from individual and national self-definition, thereby forcing the readers to confront their personal and collective ghosts.

Ghosts of the Past

In Derrida's formulation, the spectre is simultaneously from the past and the future, returning like a repressed memory which must be recognized and acknowledged in order to enable a move forward. This paradoxical nature of the spectre as "always both *revenant* (invoking what was) and *arrivant* (announcing what will come)" (Blanco and Peeren 2013a: 13) is emphasized in Agnieszka Podruczna's analysis of cityspace haunted by colonial past in Vandana Singh's short story "Delhi" (2004). Podruczna's reading of Singh's story historicizes the appearance of spectres and points to "the insidious nature of the colonial legacy" which invades the present and brings back the immobilizing trauma, but which also facilitates confrontation with the past and thus fosters resistance. In effect, according to the author, "Delhi" binds haunting with witnessing and with the possibility to create liminal spaces for postcolonial counter-discursive practices of writing and speaking, of reclaiming space as well as history.

In contrast to Podruczna's reading of colonial legacy in "Delhi," which stresses the subversive, transgressive potential of haunting, Olivier Harenda emphasizes the status of the spectre as a symptom of unprocessed trauma. Harenda's article approaches the Partition of India as a cultural trauma that has not been yet worked through. The continuing, haunting impact of the Partition on contemporary Indian society is discussed on the example of Shyam Benegal's *Mammo* (1994), a film which illustrates another stage in working through the trauma of the past and which represents facing the trauma as both a collective and individual activity.

The appearance of ghosts complicates the field of vision and modes of perception, and inevitably breeds questions, not only of what or who the ghosts are, but also of who can and should see them. Grzegorz Koneczniak addresses these problems of perception and of the visibility of ghosts in his analysis of two contemporary Irish plays: *Quietly* (2012) by Owen McCafferty and *The Townlands of Brazil* (2006) by Dermot Bolger. Stressing the elusiveness of spectrality, the article inquires into ways of (not) seeing the ghosts both in the plays and in the practices of reading, which may also fall prey to the logic of haunting.

Many of the articles gathered in this volume explore the link between trauma and haunting, presenting ghosts as reminders of some historical injury or an unassimilated past event. The spectre's re-emergence in the present may create pockets of resistance and reclaimed experience, as shown by Podruczna's analysis of "Delhi," or may return the survivors to a past that remains an open wound, as in Harenda's reading of *Mammo*. In both cases, the experience of being haunted is an encounter with something that is not known and that possibly cannot be comprehended, and whose "appearance" produces a breakdown in cognitive functions. Małgorzata Hołda's article focuses on encounters with death—of oneself and of the Other—whose radical otherness turns it into a phenomenon that cannot be conceptualized or classified. The unknowability of death is emphasized in Hołda's summary of Martin Heidegger's presentation of death as "something which possibilizes being," Jacques Derrida's explorations of the *aporia* of mourning, and Emmanuel Levinas's rendering of the Self as responsible for the death of the Other. These philosophical accounts are complemented by a reference to mourning and melancholia as defined by Sigmund Freud and by an analysis of Rudyard Kipling's short story "The Gardener" (1925), whose female protagonist suffers from enduring melancholia, which makes it impossible for her to lay the ghosts of the past to rest.

Authorial Ghosts

Marlena Hetman's analysis of Eugene O'Neill's life and work offers another perspective on the link between trauma and haunting by emphasizing the potential of literature to restrain the ghosts of trauma and the importance of the writer's actual experiences to the reading of the ghosts in O'Neill's plays. The careful analysis of the traumatic events in the writer's life and in his work reinforces the reading of trauma as a haunting force that revisits generations and families, as well as presents the ways in which the ghosts of tragic events can be exorcized. Hetman's suggestion that the reading of the ghosts of a literary work should be anchored in its author's personal struggles is put into practice in the article by Anna Maleszka and Mateusz Maleszka, who examine the links between the supernatural and the material in the works of Howard P. Lovecraft, Montague R. James, Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood. Looking into the haunted places and characters in the writers' fiction, the article aptly demonstrates the influence of the authors' professions and socio-political views on who is haunted and where the haunting takes place, and on the nature of horror in their work, so that in the complex intermingling

of the biographical with the fictional the writers themselves are turned into spectres haunting their own works.

The volume finishes with a review of a 2017 volume of *Litteraria Copernicana* edited by Mirosława Buchholtz, Dorota Guttfeld, and Grzegorz Koneczniak and dedicated to the work *of* as well as *on* Henry James. Titled *Henry James: The Writer's Museum*, the collection of articles evokes the spectre of Henry James and examines the multifarious texts and cultural practices engendered by his writing. By highlighting the constant presence of James in contemporary cultural productions—in museums, books, or scholarly discussions—Beata Williamson's detailed review of *The Writer's Museum* not only outlines James's spectral influence, but also shows the ghost as productive of knowledge and of new ways of knowing that extend beyond the purely literary.

The analyses of the encounters with ghosts in various media, texts and spaces in the articles collected in this volume are best described as exercises in cognitive estrangement and explorations of different means of perception—of such ways of looking and thinking that would be better attuned to the (non)presence of spectres. In many respects, they can be treated as an answer to Derrida's call for a new notion of scholarship and a new kind of scholars that turn to other spaces and spectres in order to re-discover the ghosts and the other within themselves. As all the texts in the volume, including this one, argue, such spectral explorations inevitably transform parameters of cognition and ways of knowing by destabilizing the coordinates of space, time and identity, and by making the known and the knowing equally uncertain. Hauntology is a reclamation of memory and history, a denial of forgetting which changes not only what is studied, but also those who study, since to study haunting is to let ourselves be haunted— by our own ghosts and those of others.

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