

# The Dislocated Children of Violence and Memory: Ghostly Apparitions of Injustice in the Legal, Literary, Cultural and Social

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This paper argues that ‘ghosts’ occupy the crevices of our socio-cultural structures and institutions, latently animating the recesses of national consciousness. It is proposed that when the degree of empirical violence exceeds thresholds of the acceptable potential of power, the excess in energy produces spectres. Illustrating the hypothesis through the example of post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia, and drawing comparisons to other prominent instances of transitional justice, it is demonstrated that, notwithstanding attempts to impose nationalised amnesia, ghosts linger in the psyche of the polity and possess its cultural instruments such as the law, literature, language and the arts. Only when pacified, may the ghost finally be put to rest.

## Introduction

Phnom Penh, January 2000:

*With each apprehensive step through the corridors of the former Khmer Rouge S-21 compound, another residue of its former barbarisms becomes apparent: the determinedly creative contraptions of pain and death, the drainage canals, the shoebox cubicles, the wall of skulls, the mosaic of nameless portraits. Yet from the medley of wails that would once have permeated every pore of its stark concrete, all that remained was a hollow and anonymous silence: the victims’ sound nullified in the vacuum of eradication; identities evaporated into the smog of national memory. Beyond the*

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*gates of the site, now known as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, walked those who have restored the city's bustle in the aftermath of the regime. The determined radiance of the new generation that bears the burden of Cambodia's renewal, counterbalanced by flashes of former horrors in the eyes of a dislodged middle-aged generation, those who had either survived or had been coerced to play a part in Pol Pot's murderous regime. Whilst the museum serves as an institutionalised, decaying snapshot of the Khmer Rouge legacy, the ghosts of the Cambodian dead could be most palpably sensed through the faces of the living.<sup>1</sup>*

Suspended amidst manifold paradoxes, the phenomenon of ghosts embodies humanity caught in a limbo of opposing forces. Ephemeral yet omnipotent, spectres call to attention their unique dissonances of past and present;<sup>2</sup> life and death; finality and continuity. Whilst cultures across every era and locality are bound by this phenomenon, the paradigmatic yet heterogeneous presence of spectres can only be expounded through individualised interpretation of their history and form. Whether refracted, sensed or imagined, the ghost represents an anachronistic, imperfect memory of an unsettled past.

Much like Einstein's theory that matter may be entangled over time and space ('spooky action at a distance'),<sup>3</sup> the spectral phenomenon transcends the metaphysical and the material, locality and non-locality. The revenant draws upon sentient life-force in order to form, emerge and re-emerge, 'leaping' across space and time, simultaneously interacting between two or more nodes. Professor Max Bruin likens ghosts to the 'scent of burned toast that remains long after the offending bread is discarded', adding, 'negative emotions, particularly hate, guilt and grief, are the most common causes for ghost formation.'<sup>4</sup> Laden with anxieties from the past,

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<sup>1</sup> Personal account of travels in Phnom Penh in January 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press 2008) xvi.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Einstein, 'Letter from Einstein to Max Born, 3 March 1947' in *The Born-Einstein Letters; Correspondence between Albert Einstein and Max and Hedwig Born from 1916 to 1955* (Macmillan 1971) 157.

<sup>4</sup> Max Bruin, 'Quantum Theory of Ghosts' (*The Mask of Reason*) <<http://maskofreason.wordpress.com/the-book-of-mysteries/theories/quantum-theory-of-ghosts>> accessed 1 April 2013.

spectres inhabit and emerge from fissures in historiographies that conventional narratives cannot articulate,<sup>5</sup> bringing them forward in time. Ghosts encumber modernity, as McEwan and Chakrabarty point out, with an entanglement of times wherein ‘past, present and future are drawn together in profoundly complex relations.’<sup>6</sup>

Such hauntings are beyond human command, though spirits may also be conjured ceremoniously, simultaneously exorcising an adverse presence.<sup>7</sup> For Derrida, the notion of a *hauntology* refers explicitly to the iterations across the disjuncture of time, as famously expressed in *Hamlet*, and partially vented in ‘performative fashion’, through the media, namely ‘news, the press, telecommunications’.<sup>8</sup> Communications through historiographies in various formats are undoubtedly the most tangible vehicle by which ghosts can travel. Their most pervading power, however, lies in their unique capacity to connect the dead with the living. Residual presences of the deceased thus emerge into the present, guiding it with far greater influence than is commonly recognised. In order to ‘learn to live finally’, Derrida asserts, one must learn to live with spirits by accepting the complex entanglements of life and death.<sup>9</sup>

## The Spectral Imaginary

Complexity, for Avery Gordon, is at the heart of life’s spectral underpinnings.<sup>10</sup> In her maxims on *complex personhood* she underscores the contradictions and misconceptions present in people’s subjective narrations and categorisations of themselves. ‘At the very least,’ she punctuates, ‘people’s lives are simultaneously

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<sup>5</sup> See Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton University Press 2001) chapter 7.

<sup>6</sup> Cheryl McEwan, ‘A Very Modern Ghost: Post-colonialism and the Politics of Enchantment’ (2008) 26(1) *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, 41; citing Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press 2008) 243.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (Peggy Kamuf tr, Routledge 2006) 59.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid* 63.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid* xvii.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon (n 2) 3.

straightforward and full of enormously subtle meaning.<sup>11</sup> Much like the Lacanian phenomenon of the *imaginary*, the *complex personhood* projects a sense of identity and self-image, yet hides latent truths that are at odds with interests of the ego.<sup>12</sup> Borne in the individual, yet swelling seamlessly into the collective unconscious, these spectral entities may be absorbed into the material of social, cultural, legal and literary institutions, animating the inner workings of their mechanics. Echoing Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* (a set of intrinsic values that presuppose behaviour and perception),<sup>13</sup> Gordon believes that our social milieu, pre-ordained by our predecessors, is beyond our influence, forming the unshakeable bedrock of our existence. These ethereal underpinnings—especially those of past injustices—infuse with contemporaneous zeitgeists, sending further iterations across generations. As Wendy Brown contends, there is no experiential or substantive version of history that can explain the residual after-effects of slavery, colonialism and genocide.<sup>14</sup> This unwritten history, in turn, interacts with the omnipresent yet intangible common denominator of the *logos*, the overarching system of values embedded in the psyche of the people. The *logos* is an object that power continually strives to control, yet notwithstanding attempts to temper the national consciousness, power frequently finds itself mitigated by the pervading essence of the public mindset.<sup>15</sup>

## Institutionalised Spectres

*The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting<sup>16</sup> ... We want to be masters of the future only for the power to change the past.<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid* 5.

<sup>12</sup> Alan Sheridan, 'Translator's Note' in Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Jacques-Alain Miller ed, Karnac 2004) 279.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (Routledge 1992) 74.

<sup>14</sup> Brown (n 5) 141.

<sup>15</sup> Such attempts manifest in various forms: from crude slogans recited by Khmer Rouge cadres, to Tayyip Erdoğan's recent Twitter and Youtube bans, and more sublime measures such as the UK Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014, aka the Gagging Bill.

<sup>16</sup> Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (Faber and Faber 1996) 4.

—Milan Kundera

After the Vietnamese entered Phnom Penh in 1979, displacing the Khmer Rouge, the new government urgently sought physical evidence to show the outside world that the regime change was one of liberation. This was immediately realised upon the discovery of the S-21 compound, a former school where 17,000 KR defectors were said to have died and many more tortured. The site was immediately established as a national genocide memorial, thereby serving as an archive of the previous regime's misdeeds, furthering the validation of the new sovereignty and condemning the past.

Derrida points out that much like the etymology of the word *archive*, institutionalised archives denote the establishment of command and its commencement.<sup>18</sup> By attempting to embed amnesia of former ills and nationalise memory, archival practices dismantle history and attempt to restructure it from its fragmented debris. Archives can manifest via numerous formats: constitutional manifestos, legislation, international treaties, memorial sites (or the destruction of), constitutional documents, and trials. They can take the form of retributive justice, as was seen at Nuremberg, or truth and reconciliation commissions, as employed in South Africa, as well as hybrids of both models. Beneath the shell of justice and healing, archival processes and artefacts attempt to coagulate spectral nebulae into material form, yet they frequently suffer the paradox of raising as many ghosts as they attempt to exorcise. An empirical reality of state power is that it is far more adept in creating spectres than it is in dispelling them.

### (Un)Identified Spectral Objects

The Tuol Sleng example illustrates that an institutionalised public archive that attempts to address spectres of former violence may only serve to perpetuate its violence by replaying it in continuity.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid* 30-31.

<sup>18</sup> Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, 'Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression' (Summer 2005) 25(2) *Diacritics* 9.

<sup>19</sup> Lisa M Moore, '(Re) Covering the Past, Remembering the Trauma: The Politics of Commemoration at Sites of Atrocity' (Spring 2009) 20 *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 47, 53.

Its preservation of human remains (a practice also shared at Auschwitz and the Murambi Museum in Rwanda)<sup>20</sup> may provide a record of atrocity but it limits the capacity for closure when emphasis is placed on acts of violence, rather than remembering victims. The protraction of atrocity is not limited to violence inflicted to the person of victims, but also violence to identity. Tuol Sleng's decision to maintain the anonymity of victims has proven controversial amongst the Cambodian people with most photographs remaining unnamed, and missing family members still unaccounted for. Maria Elander contends that '(un)recognition holds a power to alter attachments and thereby shake communities', adding that the 'unrecognised have a strange way of remaining animated.'<sup>21</sup> This dilemma is reflected in Geoff Ryman's short story *Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter*, wherein the dead haunt the leader's westernised daughter by churning out images of their faces via printers and photocopiers. They only cease to haunt after she communicates with them, agreeing to write the names of every victim under their printed faces.<sup>22</sup>

As Lisa Moore suggests, memorials are synonymous with politics and are only able to pacify hauntings to those they address.<sup>23</sup> Whilst trauma may be paradigmatic, objectification of the past has been of little empirical benefit in healing the subjective traumas of individuals.<sup>24</sup> The principal platform upon which individual trauma may be granted a regulated voice is through legal process, yet it is impossible to deal with numerous individual traumas without some degree of collective clustering.<sup>25</sup> The question looms over the law as to what juridical approaches, if any, are best equipped to address such latent and confined anxieties, especially when a legal system cannot be deemed independent of political objective.

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid* 51.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Elander, 'The Victim's Address: Expressivism and the Victim at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia' (2013) 7(1) *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 95, 103.

<sup>22</sup> Geoff Ryman, *Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter* (Fictionwise 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Moore (n 19) 51-53.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>25</sup> Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press 2002) 6.

## Exorcisms

*There are two ways of re-establishing concord; one is in the letter, and the other one is in the spirit and in the letter ... The concord re-established in the spirit and in the letter is alone right and lawful.*<sup>26</sup>

— Buddhist mantra

If the activities of a previous regime—which in the positivist sense may have been legal within its borders at the time—are to be tested in a superseding or outside jurisdiction, then a higher, unwritten canon of law must be invoked to achieve justice.

The ethereal doctrines of *erga omnes* obligations and *jus cogens* may well provide a consciousness by which inter-jurisdictional retroactive trials may be performed, binding state morality to ‘supra-jurisdictional’ norms.<sup>27</sup> However, as the Nuremberg and Eichmann trials demonstrated, their retributive approach often does more to rouse ghosts than to encourage their ‘transcendence’ away from the affected living. This model goes some way to provide redress for victims, but in doing so the attainment of justice is often to the detriment to social goodwill.<sup>28</sup> The hub of attention in Nuremberg remained with the perpetrator and, by the nature of adversarial cross-examination, victims were not able to adequately convey their stories in a manner that allowed them to fully express their concerns.<sup>29</sup> The Nuremberg model can be likened to a spectral battlefield, with traumas remaining untreated and the ghosts of former violence invoked for bureaucratised extermination. The only spectres truly addressed are those of power: by asserting the rule of

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Carus, ‘The Gospel of the Buddha’ in Jack Kornfield (ed), *Teachings of the Buddha* (Shambala Publications 1996) 100.

<sup>27</sup> Larry May, *Crimes Against Humanity: A Normative Account* (Cambridge University Press 2005) 24.

<sup>28</sup> Lak Chansok and Khoun Theara, ‘In Pursuit of Transitional Justice in Cambodia: From Theoretical to Pragmatic Applications’ (February 2012) 47 Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace Working Paper No 47, 6-7.

<sup>29</sup> Brianne N McGonigle, ‘Two for the Price of one: Attempts by the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia to Combine Retributive and Restorative Justice Principles’ (March 2009) 22(1) *Leiden Journal of International Law* 127, 129.

law, the court reaffirms what Walter Benjamin defines as the law's 'monopoly of violence.'<sup>30</sup>

As Felman notes, the law's language is ill equipped to deal with the textural complexity of what is to be heard in court.<sup>31</sup> The restorative model of justice, as seen in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (hereafter 'TRC'), attempts to address the chasms of animosity that the retributive process cannot reach. As Derrida asserts, in order to speak of ghosts in the name of justice, one must speak with them.<sup>32</sup>

By officiating and consolidating a sum of extra-judicial narratives, the TRC aimed to heal wounds by bringing the populace closer to the truth, thus allowing it to be set free from the slurry of a distorted past.<sup>33</sup> Antjie Krog accentuates that these narratives restrain people's 'separate dynasties of denial.'<sup>34</sup> After a process of fact-finding, admission and apology, amnesty dissolves culpability for those who committed acts with political motive and strives for perpetrators to be reintegrated into society, for the greater good of social goodwill.<sup>35</sup> Whilst the process has contributed to a rapid process of healing from apartheid, some wounds remain untreated. The case of *The Citizen v McBride* (2011) illustrated that amnesty for former ANC members left the matter of criminal justice unresolved for victims, thus sparking renewed divisions.<sup>36</sup>

The process of transitional justice hence is fraught with multiple tensions: social reconciliation versus legal retribution; memory versus amnesia; retroactivity versus prospect; the ghosts of violence versus ghosts of the dead. At the Extraordinary Chambers in the

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<sup>30</sup> Felman (n 25) 1; Patricia Tuitt, 'Individual Violence and the Law' (2006) 39 *Studies in Law, Politics and Society* 5, citing Walter Benjamin, 'Critique of Violence' (1921) in Marcus Bullock and Michael W Jennings (eds), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1 1913-1926* (Harvard University Press 2004) 235-252.

<sup>31</sup> Felman (n 25) 4.

<sup>32</sup> Derrida, *Specters* (n 7) xviii.

<sup>33</sup> Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull* (Random House 2003) 89.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Lak Chansok and Khoun Theara (n 28) 6.

<sup>36</sup> *The Citizen 1978 (Pty) Ltd and Others v McBride* (CCT 23/10) [2011] ZACC 11; 2011 (4) SA 191 (CC); 2011 (8) BCLR 816 (CC).

Courts of Cambodia (hereafter ‘ECCC’) a hybrid of both models was adopted in order to address the need to balance these tensions.<sup>37</sup> With the assistance of the UN, the court merged Cambodian criminal law with international standards of due process and the conscience of peremptory *jus cogens* principles.<sup>38</sup> The court, in seeking both truth and justice, allowed victims to be heard in full, whilst striving for due process for the perpetrators.<sup>39</sup> The ‘two for the price of one’ model not only merged retribution and reconciliation in legal procedure but in reparations: the ECCC was at liberty to order the publication of judgments in the media; for the perpetrator to finance educational or non-profit programmes supporting victims; or the construction of monuments.<sup>40</sup> The degree of victim participation was unprecedented in any international court,<sup>41</sup> but despite the exhaustive approach to rectify the past, the two key cases collapsed following the ill health and deaths of leaders, government intervention in the judicial process, and fears of civil war due to the sheer number of people who had been a part of the regime.<sup>42</sup>

Exorcising ghosts through legal process is therefore an ambitious endeavour, but as the Buddhist mantra emphasises, the black letter of the law is fruitless in the absence of support in spirit. It is perhaps only through individuated cultural practices that the spirit of a society may be influenced. Lak and Khoun propose that Buddhism would be a more effective medium to achieve Cambodian reconciliation, by establishing public forums through which victims and perpetrators may mediate with the participation of monks.<sup>43</sup> This ethos was echoed by South African TRC’s adoption of *ubuntu* values. As Rousseau contended, the rule of law depends heavily upon the consent of the governed,<sup>44</sup> and it is unlikely this consent

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<sup>37</sup> Lak Chansok and Khoun Theara (n 28) 6.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Petit and Anees Ahmed, ‘A Review of the Jurisprudence of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal’ (2010) 8(2) Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights 165, 166 and 184.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid* 168, 173, 180-181.

<sup>40</sup> McGonigle (n 29) 141.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid* 142.

<sup>42</sup> Lak and Khoun (n 28) 15.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid* 19.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Penguin 2004).

can be achieved without some incorporation of the prevailing *logos* of the time. Yet beneath these interactions, however authentic, lurks what Derrida identifies as a ‘globalisation of forgiveness’. Post-war processes of reconciliation, echoing the refrain ‘never again’, have adopted an Abrahamic rhetoric of forgiveness and ‘a process of Christianisation which has no more need for the Christian church.’<sup>45</sup>

## Phantoms of Language

*The only way to get change is not through the courts or ... the politicians, but through a change of human consciousness and through a change of heart. Only through the arts—music, poetry, dance, painting, writing—can we really reach each other.*<sup>46</sup>

— Leslie Marmon Silko

As Ryman’s short story exemplifies, fiction has a strange capacity to express truths that the courts and media cannot: truths beyond the reach of the law, truths beyond conventional narrative, truths embedded in the imaginary. Following the publication of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez asserted that his account of the true events pieced together ‘the broken mirror of memory’<sup>47</sup> more accurately than any of the case reports and press and local accounts put together.<sup>48</sup> As with the TRC, the sum of the narratives revealed a spectral dimension to the crime: that an omnipotent mindset within the entire community was in fact responsible for the killing. Interchanging fact with imagination, and interjecting the real with the unreal, Marquez emphasises an unearthly element at the heart of a material tragedy. The predominantly Latin American genre of magical realism, of which Marquez is a key proponent, employs the ghost, not as an element of

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<sup>45</sup> Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (Routledge 2005) 30-31.

<sup>46</sup> Leslie Marmon Silko, ‘Keynote address’ (ASU 16th Annual Writers Conference, San Angelo, TX, 24 February 2012), cited in Rick Smith, *Arizona Writer Captures Her World in Words* (2012) <<http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2012/feb/25/rick-smith-arizona-writer-captures-her-world-in>> accessed 3 February 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (Penguin 2008) 6.

<sup>48</sup> Maria Aristodemou, *Law and Literature: Journeys from Her to Eternity* (Oxford University Press 2000).

fantasy, but as a figurative icon of unscratched social and cultural itches; intermediary bodies that would otherwise lie dormant in a vacuum of inattention.<sup>49</sup> The ubiquity of ghost stories is, perhaps inadvertently, one of humanity's most omnipresent spectres, enjoying greatest popularity at times of socio-cultural upheaval, reflecting the need to call upon the missing 'spectres that are otherwise obscured in dominant discourses of modernity'.<sup>50</sup>

More contemporaneously, Leos Carax's contribution to the *Tokyo!* short film trilogy, 'Merde',<sup>51</sup> teases out post-9/11 anxieties by way of a murderous, repugnant sprite that inhabits the sewers, terrorises the population, and speaks in a mysterious dissonant tongue during his court trial. Ultimately, the character proves to be more of an orientalist threat than a tangible entity, reflecting the spectral realities and fictions of terror and its portrayals in the media.

The spectre is not only consciously revealed in fiction, but in its subtexts.<sup>52</sup> The social and cultural unconscious provides the overarching *logos* by which anxieties and traumas may be translated into the written word or moving image. The author is therefore an agent for an omnipresent zeitgeist, who often acts out its demands unwittingly. In *Ficciones*, Jorge Luis Borges toys with a hierarchy of roles from his own authorship to fictional authors writing within their own temporal contexts; to the fictional books' contents and characters which, in turn, create a protagonist of the reader based on her own social reality.<sup>53</sup> 'The certainty that everything has been already written,' he writes, 'nullifies or makes phantoms of us all.'<sup>54</sup>

The subjectivity of the literary experience between reader and author creates an interactive duality that, again, evokes Einstein's 'spooky

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<sup>49</sup> Stephen M Hart, 'Magical Realism in the Americas: Politicised Ghosts in One Hundred Years of Solitude, The House of the Spirits, and Beloved' (2003) 9(2) *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 115.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Medley and Lorryne Carroll, 'The Hungry Ghost: IMF Policy, Global Capitalist Transformation, and Laboring Bodies in Southeast Asia' in Eiman Zein Elabdin and S Charusheela (eds) *Postcolonialism Meets Economics* (Routledge 2004) 145-164, cited in McEwan (n 6) 34.

<sup>51</sup> Leos Carax, 'Merde' in *Tokyo!* (Bitters End 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Colin Davis, 'Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms' (2005) 59(3) *French Studies* 373, 374.

<sup>53</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones* (Grove Press 1962) 87.

<sup>54</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Library of Babel' in *Ficciones* (Grove Press 1962) 87.

action at a distance'. This duality may also be seen in film: Derrida notes that film is the 'art of allowing ghosts to come back' by allowing ourselves to be taken over by another's voice, and vice versa.<sup>55</sup>

Beyond the literal and underlying meaning of words resides the transcendent matter of language itself. For Derrida, the ghost permeates the fields of language and thought, and inflates them by expressing the inexpressible.<sup>56</sup> Language is, paradoxically, one of the most salient examples of latent spirits manifesting into the tangible universe. Residues of colonialism, subjugation and slavery are still patently evident today in language, such as in Afrikaans, and within the Muslim Cham population in Cambodia whose populations and culture were obliterated by the Khmer Rouge. The surviving Cham have since lost their language and now speak only Khmer.<sup>57</sup> Derrida's emphasis that 'hauntings belong to the structure of every hegemony'<sup>58</sup> thus rings true for these populations. In Khmer, the first person pronoun *khynom* (I, me, myself) is the same word as 'servant' or 'slave', simultaneously reflecting and entrenching the long history of servitude in Cambodia that continues today.<sup>59</sup> Just as the Latin word for 'left', *sinister* has long lost its original meaning, we carry with us the ghosts of Roman intolerance more than 2000 years later.

## Conclusion

Just as Hamlet bemoans that 'the time is out of joint',<sup>60</sup> spectres call into question the linearity of time and its dependability as a healer. Ghosts occupy an immediate yet intangible dimension of mass: the dark matter of our socio-cultural structures and their institutions. Hauntings are the by-product of a basic formula of power: when the degree of empirical violence exceeds thresholds of the acceptable

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<sup>55</sup> Jacques Derrida in *Ghost Dance*, Ken McMullen, Channel Four Films, (1983).

<sup>56</sup> Davis (n 52), citing Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis* (McGill-Queen's University Press 2003) 30.

<sup>57</sup> Alvin Cheng-Hin Lim, *Cambodia and the Politics of Aesthetics* (Routledge 2012) 84.

<sup>58</sup> Derrida, *Specters* (n 7) 34.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid* 58.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Derrida (n 7) xxi.

potential of power, the excess in energy produces spectres. These iterations are confined not only to specific localities of violence, but entire flashpoints of unrestrained power spectrally recapitulate elsewhere in political epochs and geography. Derrida's assertion, that we must learn to live with ghosts and speak to them, is not simply the haughty abstraction of philosophy, but rather a matter of very tangible urgency.

Due to spectres' multi-dimensional nature, their untapped energy traverses time and the boundaries of reality, affecting our daily lives in latent and sometimes unidentifiable and unpredictable manners. These wayward spirits emerge in the psyche of the polity and possess its cultural instruments such as the law, literature, language and the arts. The ghost may only be put to rest when its demands for attention are wholly pacified. Until that time, the ghost, despite attempts to temper it, remains the unattended and errant child of violence and memory, running amok so as to make its anxieties known.

