10-12-2023

Archaeology and Hauntology: An Ongoing, Stalled Conversation

Colby Dickinson
Loyola University Chicago, cdickinson1@luc.edu

Recommended Citation

Article

Archaeology and Hauntology: An Ongoing, Stalled Conversation

Colby Dickinson

Theology Department, Loyola University Chicago, 1032 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660, USA; cdickinson1@luc.edu

Abstract: It is certainly possible that we might learn to better acknowledge the spirits of our ancestors who came before us, as well as to recognize them in such ways that we also learn to embrace the 'woven density' of our own lives, our histories and our communities. By doing so, we might begin to discover that the spirits we had thought were removed from our modern, secularized world never fully left us, just as the irrationality of our humanity cannot be fully tamed via a reductive, rational and scientific outlook on life. There are, as Bruno Latour had frequently argued, many modes of human existence that interact in complex networks of relations. To fall back on any one particular mode as if it could dominate over others would only grant us a mistaken impression of our own humanity, even though this is what has been practiced for centuries in order to legitimate a particular, sovereign configuration of power. It is to the credit of archaeologists and hauntologists alike that we are more able than ever to take account of the complexity of ourselves in ways that we had previously ignored or repressed.

Keywords: archaeology; hauntology; complexity; sovereignty

1. Introduction

As Todd May has rightly suggested, the refusal of one's vulnerability signals a refusal to grieve the losses that an individual inevitably sustains at so many points throughout their life (May 2017). To deny our vulnerability is to construct a series of futile attempts to buttress ourselves against the very possibility of personal destruction. Seeking to be invulnerable, as May terms it, is to attempt to be sovereign over oneself in such a way as to never compromise or grieve and never recognize the failings that are bound to appear on the horizon of our existence. To construct an invulnerable self is to perform one's subjectivity *as* a sovereign act, then becoming a sovereign self that denies its relationships with others, with the precarity and, yet, necessity of love and with one's own embodied existence (see the arguments put forth in (Elshtain 2008)). To accept our vulnerability, however, means to accept the brokenness that accompanies our failures, whether real or perceived.

Our vulnerability is acted out on a number of levels that characterize the complexity and richness of our humanity. For example, we can actively see it at work in the necessary failures of our memory. We must forget things in order to move forward in life—in order to fabricate those narratives that sustain our sense of self—though our lives, immersed in the documents that seem to verify our existence to ourselves and to others, cry out to be preserved and maintained (see Ferraris 2013). We must forget even the violence and tragedy that befall us at times, though the retention of such memories in certain historical contexts is, nonetheless, a necessity for justice to be enacted (Rieff 2017). I think here of the ways in which we, as humans, strive to cultivate a 'happy memory', as Paul Ricoeur once phrased it, a memory that cannot possibly recall everything, but which is open to recalling whatever cries out to be remembered (Ricouer 2004). The painful fragments of our lives ask us to listen to them, and our maturity and wholeness depend in large part upon our

willingness to do so, even if, at a later time, we are able to let go of painful memories in order to allow a truer healing take place.

Facing our vulnerability as a species frequently means listening to the extreme moments of witness testimony concerning the many and ongoing failures that humanity has encountered and that we must learn from as they register themselves within our collective past. To do so means challenging the sovereign selves that we construct for ourselves and facing the realities that abound in our world when we let those sovereign selves loose, free to roam unrestrained in the world. Whether we read the meditative history of inhumanity encountered in Primo Levi's writings or the account of destruction that haunts W.G. Sebald's descriptions of German warfare, or whether we think of our continued exploitation of the planet that we try to dominate or the cries of so many marginalized and displaced persons whose very lives testify to the unjust dealings of so many sovereign powers, we are confronted with our vulnerability in ways that move far beyond the domain of the individual, though they call forth every possible configuration of the individual at the same time (see (Levi 2015) and (Sebald 2003)).

Confronting and challenging the sovereign self and the narrative that it constructs for itself in order to make itself sovereign at all, no matter the form that either takes, has occasioned a variety of tactics, ranging from those who would label them as sources of a 'unbound' will to power at the root of modern forms of nihilism, relativism and totalitarianism, much as more conservative voices often lament, to those who identify with the so-called left and try to discern how various 'postmodern' critiques of the self are an attempt to legitimize their own position, with the author as sovereign (see Elshtain 2008; Milbank 2013; Dews 1987). (The 'postmodern' deconstructions of the self are mainly represented in this essay by the archaeological and deconstructivist perspectives discussed. For a fuller account of the context, however, see (Lyotard 1984). For more details on the author as sovereign, see (Derrida 2011)).

As all of these attempts to be sovereign are implicated in a long history of Western metaphysical claims to absolute (divine) power, there are often theological stakes at play in the various formulations of the self-posited in order to legitimate themselves in relation to something else over which the self dominates—animals, our planet, other races or women, one's own body, and so forth. By asserting the human being as sovereign over the other animals on this planet—men as dominant over women or the 'white race' as dominant over all others—sections of humanity 'play God' in order to assert their own claims to superiority.

It makes a good deal of logical sense, therefore, that so many philosophers focused on the end of Western metaphysics have also been suspicious of the Western subject formed as an image within God's shadow.

2. Archaeological Methods

Ever since Nietzsche began to investigate the sovereign claims of Western morality, with its deterministic framing of an ambiguous good in contrast to an ambiguous evil, through a genealogical exploration of the history and development of such concepts, digging through the evolution of theologically inflected concepts in a genealogical–archaeological manner has become a privileged method of philosophical inquiry (Nietzsche 1989). Such archaeological methods, as Michel Foucault was to later call them, dislodged the dominant, normative claims of a particular present and the subjects who live in it in favor of new possibilities for cultural, social, political and religious representations, among others. Archaeology, in its essence, looks for an origin that was never actually, historically present, but which dwells—as Derrida would himself formulate matters in a deconstructive context—as a sort of spectral presence that does not really exist but haunts the present moment nonetheless, dictating the terms by which we configure our realities and relationships. Archaeology searches for alternative meanings and histories of concepts so that it might dislodge any attempt to root oneself in an originary meaning that seems—but only seems—to withstand the test of time.

Though Jacques Derrida was skeptical, and highly critical, of those utilizing archaeological methods, as I will look at below, his writing, as I have argued elsewhere, was surprisingly resonant at times with the methodological aims embraced by both Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, two archaeologists whom Derrida would accuse by name of falling into the madness of 'archive fever'.

Foucault, for his part, criticized any alleged origins for fixed subjects because the selves that we know ourselves to be are far more mutable than we often want to recognize. For him, archaeology was not a science, but a willingness to locate the disruptions, dissociations and failures to connect that lay between various discourses (Foucault 2002). In his words, 'It is no longer a question of judging the past in the name of a truth that only we can possess in the present, but of risking the destruction of the subject who seeks knowledge in the endless deployment of the will to knowledge' (Foucault 1984). Archaeology, like deconstruction, I would add, was about decentering or destabilizing the subject so that another representation might be able to appear, though what that representation would come to be was impossible to determine and certainly not a fixed, sovereign self.

Archaeology, for Agamben, whose work is a direct outgrowth of Foucault's in many ways, is an operation *on* the subject as much as on any alleged origin point *for* the subject seeking to establish itself as sovereign in some sense (Agamben 2009). The 'origin', in fact, is not to be understood as a 'given locatable in a chronology', much as Derrida had also understood it (Agamben 2009, p. 110). Archaeological regression, as Agamben phrases the process, is an attempt to go back to a spot within ourselves prior to the split between the conscious and the unconscious in order to experience 'the sudden, dazzling disclosure of the moment of arising, the revelation of the present as something that we were not able to live or think' (Agamben 2009, p. 99). These tactics do not mean that we escape positing any sovereign claims through such gestures: we still require a minimum of sovereign power in order to form ourselves as subjects at all. Rather, they indicate that our sense of self and our subjectivity is dependent upon our ability to call forth a present based on our access to such a space. Our 'access to the present' is only made possible through an archaeological regression that begins to explore, and rethink, our relations to ourselves (Agamben 2009, p. 103).

The 'anonymous' sovereignty that is made possible through such tactics, as Agamben describes this contrasting figure in his writings—one that is able to construct a sense of self, and so be sovereign over itself, while also refusing to utilize such a construct in order to dominate over another, any other—is distinct from those sovereign claims that underlie the long history of political theology (I describe and analyze Agamben's development of an anonymous form of sovereignty in (Dickinson 2022, p. 81)). This anonymous form of sovereignty is, thus, not closed off from its relationships with others. Rather than being legitimated by a sense of sacrality that sovereignty often asserts, there is another sense of self possible, one that issues forth from the structural parallel between archaeological regression as that which makes the present possible and the task of profanation that regresses to a space prior to the split between the sacred and the secular in order to make things truly usable (Agamben 2007).

The archaeologist profanes what was once taken to be sacred, or inviolable, in this sense, no matter whether we are talking about holy sites or seemingly incontestable senses of the self. Archaeological methods put us in touch with the fragility of our present conceptualizations and identities, those that undergird our societies and the selves they generate and become part of our religious–symbolic economies. In this area, I argue, Foucault and Agamben agree with Derrida in espousing positions that do not seek to restore a particular metaphysical, sovereign claim, though Derrida would take both to task for allegedly doing just that, as we will see in a moment. From where I stand, however, there is more of an ongoing conversation between their methods than even they had ever realized.

Archaeological methods are often profoundly illuminated in the context of the history of religious structures, which have very specific ties to their own origins and are often

sacralized to some degree. Every political theology, as well as the sovereign claims legitimated therein, necessarily starts by defining its relationship to particular origins and ruins, accessed through specific archaeological means or those literal, physical digs in the dirt that seek to uncover a past that can appear to legitimate a present political configuration of (sovereign) power. This context is the case for justifying the sovereign claims of religious scriptures no less than national–ethnic mythologies. Seeking to monumentalize the sacred origins of a particular community will always be subject, however, to another form of archaeology, a philosophical–political archaeological inversion—or profanation, as Agamben calls it—that seeks to lessen the dominant, sacralized hold that a particular myth has upon its subjects (Agamben's approach to profanation, to my mind, bears a resemblance to Étienne Balibar's quest for 'secularizing secularity' (see Balibar 2018)). This issue was what was consistently on the minds of Nietzsche, Foucault and Agamben, among others.

After such an archaeological investigation 'unearths' alternative readings of history as new possibilities for the liberation of alternative subjectivities, and so does not simply lift physical objects from under the soil in order to attempt to legitimate a hegemonic claim on the present (and as Derrida mistakenly understood philosophical archaeology to be), what we are left with is something like a sense of freedom in the ruins of history—a position that some philosophers can only negatively refer to as a 'disenclosure', perhaps, or a 'negative dialectic' that embraces the nihilistic currents within history so that new formulations might be possible (see Nancy 2008, as well as Adorno 1973). As Walter Benjamin had once intimated, locating the right time in history, or a Kairos, was not just about finding a particular, historical location or point of origin: it was about finding the right constellation or configuration of ideas from among the ruins of history (Benjamin 2003; Benjamin's conceptualization of history is explicitly linked to Agamben's genealogical project through his reading of Kairos in (Agamben 2005)). From this perspective, he aligns not only with Agamben's archaeological agenda but also with those thinkers, such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who seek to make new assemblages from the ruins among which we live (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

For Nietzsche, such methods signaled the death of a particular, Western metaphysical God, but not the gods themselves, as vague or ambiguous as such a formulation might sound. There are, he maintained, and as Heidegger followed, *other* possibilities for sacrality present in our world (see, among others, the essays collected in (Bloechl 2003)). Though some may argue that Nietzsche, and Heidegger along with him, trusted more in a (sovereign) will to power than to its renunciation (in and through one's vulnerability), Nietzsche's suggestion that other possibilities for sacrality might be present elsewhere may ultimately grant us another way to perceive the possibilities of religious beings in the world.

As Agamben himself has argued, modern forms of reification have brought us objectified representations of selves that reduce our humanity, such as one sees in pornography, for example. But such acts of reification have also suspended those previous theological signatures that governed our conceptions of self, dictating the duties of reproduction and sexual morality alike, thereby offering us a new sense of freedom we have yet to fully comprehend (Agamben 1993). Though his archaeological–genealogical methods are intended to displace and allow new configurations, and so as not to make one particular claim upon us, there will, nonetheless, always be metaphysical–theological claims made upon us that we must also always strive to profane at the same time. We are caught in an inescapable tension that archaeological methods make more transparent to us, even if we will never be able to eradicate such a tension altogether (this tension is represented and discussed quite well in Giorgio Agamben's lecture at the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris on the future of the Church—see (Agamben 2012)).

3. Hauntology as Critique and Collaborator

The critique of archaeological methods that Derrida undertook on multiple occasions was a direct outgrowth of his own deconstructive practice that sought to keep a healthy

distance from any historical claims to (sovereign) power. Though religion might be rightly critiqued as attempting to sacralize its mythological origins, there was yet another side to religion that he tried to recover and uplift in order to provide a corrective tension to any given representational claim.

Derrida pointed out, for example, how religion captures something of the essence of the emancipatory hauntology that Marxism once sought to embody (Derrida 1994). Religion, especially in the Judaic–Christian strand that he directly analyzes in his *Specters of Marx*, emphasizes a messianic logic embedded within every history or historical form that undid each and every representation in a bid for more justice to appear upon the face of this earth. To be fair, this is precisely the place where Foucault and Agamben converge with Derrida, especially insofar as the latter explicitly called attention to those Benjaminian 'weak messianic forces' that undo our most normative representations (Agamben 2005, pp. 140–45).

To be clear, no particular representation could ever fully disclose a presence long sought after, though we will still yearn for a presence we cannot enjoy. The history of the West is in many ways one thoroughly complicit with a 'metaphysics of presence', wherein we construct representations that we take to be presentations of the 'thing itself', which is always beyond our comprehension. We are always on a quest for a presence, or a point of origin, that we will never actually obtain sight of as we sift among the existent 'copies of copies' for the most authentic or most just representation of reality (see the arguments made in (Derrida 1974)). Theology, from this point of view, would seem to be little more than a long history of humanity trying to establish the boundaries of what is and what is not an acceptable (re)presentation of those lived realities that we ultimately do not know how to express.

Archive fever—as the name for Derrida's diagnosis of the archaeologist's madness in believing their methods might reveal a previously concealed presence within history—takes over, he argued, when we believe that we can locate, once and for all, a presence beyond all of the copies, an 'original' presence that is nothing more, and nothing less, than a metaphysical claim to sovereign power. We are haunted by the fact that no representation that we will construct or find is authentic or original, yet we are unable to locate such a presence because it cannot be represented in any form or made intelligible in any language. Freud, who was the central aim of this critique that was later extended directly by name to both Foucault and Agamben, was haunted by his own ghosts, as Derrida notes, the same as we are all haunted by ours, all of us given over to a bit of 'archive fever' in trying to dislodge their hold upon us if we could only but name them and exorcise them once and for all (see (Derrida 1996) and the commentary on the debate between Foucault and Derrida in (Gasché 2007)).

The one suffering from archive fever believes that somehow, by sifting through the documents and narratives that constitute an 'official' record of the subject of history, they might be able to locate, once and for all, its point of origin. Thus, if they might, they would be able to possess the subject in some sense, to be master of it, to be sovereign over it, even if that subject is one's own self. As Jean Bethke Elshtain has illustrated in another context, the search for origins has historically been routinely bound up with fascist movements and their desperate searches for power amidst the ruins of history, such as with Mussolini's various excavations undertaken in the ancient city of Rome in the early Twentieth Century (Elshtain 2008, p. 198).

Derrida was determined to unearth voices lost to time but not actually identify such spirits as if they could be propped up like some embodiment of monumental history, as Nietzsche had once critiqued it (see Nietzsche 1997). Derrida was rightly concerned about, and critical of, those archaeologists whom he believed suffered from 'archive fever', such as Freud, Foucault and Agamben, who, he argued, sought to dig through the dirt of history in the hopes of uncovering an overlooked object or presence of some sort that they might then utilize in order to construct a sovereign narrative of their own (I discuss the debate between Derrida and Agamben in terms of their methodologies and references to each other

in-depth in (Dickinson 2013)). Derrida was at pains in his lectures on sovereignty to critique Agamben for attempting to be sovereign 'as an author' by rushing into his archaeological endeavors in order to be the first to 'uncover' historical concepts and connections that others had never seen (Derrida 2011, pp. 316–17). Such totemistic fetishes, if we can call them that, *might* end up becoming a source of legitimation for concrete, ideological causes, something that Derrida was inclined to read within each author's writings, such as when he read Foucault's history of madness as an attempt to let madness speak for itself, as if it could ever do such a thing (Derrida 1978). Archaeology, he claimed, searches the ruins for other configurations, possibilities and potentialities, though it is also possibly a way to cement a specific sovereign claim, to legitimate a present identity through recourse to an alleged, mythological past. This possibility, for instance, was what had once motivated Edward Said's critique of Israel's use of archaeological methods to legitimate contemporary political claims made upon already occupied lands (Said 2003).

The example that Said gives us of a nation-state grounding its sovereign claims through its historical ties to its past, whether justified as 'authentic' in any way or not, at least opens up the possible ideological uses of archaeological methods to us, and it implicates a variety of theoretical endeavors that exist under the banner of archaeology, or genealogy as some have shifted the label.

The constant subversion of our stability, and, thus, our identity, by the fragility of existence indicated through each ruinous or haunted expanse explains a good deal about the hauntology that defined Derrida's acts of deconstruction as bids for more justice to enter our world. What we have ceased to listen to, but which cries out to be heard, forever haunts us, asking us to issue more justice so that our normative social and political orders might not bury or suffocate them any longer. No singular archaeological claim can be legitimated, once and for all, as the most authentic or most just reading of a present day identity, for this would inevitably imply an impossibility for change. To claim that one has found the point of origin is to, therefore, posit a sovereign, or even totalitarian, gesture at the same time. Though one could argue that neither Foucault nor Agamben directly made such claims, Derrida offers cautionary words.

What Derrida did not articulate in his critique of sovereignty and the ghosts that haunt any sovereign form was how all of our constructs, all of our collective projects, are built from out of the ruins of previous societies, as Maia Kotrosits has argued ('New cities are constructed awkwardly over old ones, the cornerstone of one building becoming the marginalia of another, or vice versa. People inhabit the very places laid waste by themselves or others. They do so preoccupied, often without knowing, by what's underground. Collectives are not "anchored" in the past, in other words. They are rearranging its debris, and arranging themselves in the process' (Kotrosits 2020)). I believe that this is the reason Derrida rarely defended particular canonical claims—such as with particular, Western literary canons of the 'classics'—though he made clear on occasion that he did endorse their existence and not just their deconstruction (see Derrida 1992). Humanity depends upon such depositories and archives, these canonical formulations, even if they are nonetheless always subject to acts of deconstruction through those messianic elements embedded within them that cry out for a better, more just representation to be deployed. Derrida's consistent approach to mainly deconstructing the most canonical of writings in the Western philosophical canon would seem to underscore such a claim.

The hauntology that defines Derridean deconstruction is not, therefore, at complete odds with an archaeological methodology, though he was undoubtedly right to be suspicious of those who would sift through the past in order to legitimate any construction of identity in the present (see the commentary offered in (Kleinberg 2017)). A true archaeology that digs through concepts of the past looking for alternative possibilities needs to be a hauntology acknowledging that no solid representation can ever be permanently fixed at the same time—a point of convergence that both Agamben and Derrida routinely failed to suggest in their various debates with one another. Rather than simply deploy a critique of both archaeology and deconstruction, however, as many are wont to do, perhaps we can

benefit a great deal from a more nuanced view of the limitations and benefits of both of their methods.

4. Conclusions: Archaeology and Hauntology

Humankind's nostalgia for ruins and its fascination with haunted houses and sacred lands converge through the various ways that our identities are constantly subverted by the material existence of these phenomena (see Woodward 2001). Communicating with the spirits that reside in such locations, as with our ancestors, as but one concrete example intended in a non-metaphysical sense, is a significant part of our humanity that we are reminded of when we dwell in such places. We are both symbolically haunted and normatively undone as we dig through the dirt in the places we live, uncovering past connections that gift us with new readings of the present, realigning reality in ways both subtle and profound, even if we will never actually reach a point of origin as we dig deeper into the ground beneath us.

There is no doubt a great truth to Derrida's critique of particular archaeological methods in the observation that so many of us seek a point of origin on which to base our present identities, even if such a point can be destabilized by a plurality of alternative readings, as Foucault, Derrida and Agamben alike all ultimately recognize. Nonetheless, despite the multiplicity of selves possibly uncovered through either archaeological or hauntological methods, we are also more dependent at times upon those singular, sovereign presentations of ourselves, representing what we have to offer socially and politically in terms of our normative identities, than upon those much more complex realities that we actually embody. We are, thus, forever haunted by those possibilities that lurk underneath what we present publicly as ourselves.

It is certainly possible that we might learn to better acknowledge the symbolic spirits of our ancestors and ancient concepts alike that came before us and recognize them in such ways that we also learn to embrace the 'woven density' of our own lives, histories and communities (see the account of 'woven density' given in relation to ancestral spirits in (Lara 2021)). By doing so, we might begin to discover that the so-called messianic spirits that we had thought were removed from our modern, secularized world never fully left us, just as the irrationality of our humanity cannot be fully tamed via a reductive, rational and scientific outlook on life (see Smith 2020, and the account of ancestral religious practices, even superstitions, in modern configurations of the self in (Chakrabarty 2007)). There are, as Bruno Latour has frequently argued, many modes of human existence that interact in complex networks of relations (Latour 2018). To fall back on any one particular mode as if it could permanently dominate others would grant us only a mistaken impression of our own humanity, even though this is what has been practiced for centuries in order to legitimate a particular, sovereign configuration of power. It is to the credit of our archaeologists and deconstructive hauntologists alike that we are more likely than ever to take account of the complexity of ourselves in ways that we had previously ignored or repressed.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Adorno, Theodor W. 1973. *Negative Dialectics*. Translated by E. B. Ashton. London: Continuum.
Agamben, Giorgio. 1993. *The Coming Community*. Translated by Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 47–50.
Agamben, Giorgio. 2005. *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*. Translated by Patricia Dailey. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 140–45.
Agamben, Giorgio. 2007. In Praise of Profanation. In *Profanations*. Translated by Jeff Fort. New York: Zone, p. 77.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2009. Philosophical Archaeology. In *The Signature of All Things*. Translated by Luca D'Isanto, and Kevin Attell. New York: Zone, p. 89.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2012. *The Church and the Kingdom*. Translated by Leland de la Durantaye. New York: Seagull.

Balibar, Étienne. 2018. *Secularism and Cosmopolitanism: Critical Hypotheses on Religion and Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 2003. On the Concept of History. In *Selected Writings*. Edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Translated by Harry Zohn. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, vol. 4, pp. 389–400.

Bloechl, Jeffrey, ed. 2003. *Religious Experience and the End of Metaphysics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2007. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 22–23.

Derrida, Jacques. 1974. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1978. Cogito and the History of Madness. In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 31–63.

Derrida, Jacques. 1992. Canons and Metonymies. In *Logomachia: The Conflict of the Faculties Today*. Edited by Richard Rand. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1994. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. London: Routledge, p. 209.

Derrida, Jacques. 1996. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 84–91.

Derrida, Jacques. 2011. *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, vol. 1.

Dews, Peter. 1987. *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*. London: Verso.

Dickinson, Colby. 2013. *Between the Canon and the Messiah: The Structure of Faith in Contemporary Continental Thought*. London: Bloomsbury.

Dickinson, Colby. 2022. *Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer Series: A Critical Guide and Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. 2008. *Sovereignty: God, State, and Self*. New York: Basic.

Ferraris, Maurizio. 2013. *Documentality: Why It Is Necessary to Leave Traces*. Translated by Richard Davies. New York: Fordham University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1984. Nietzsche, Genealogy, History. In *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard, and Sherry Simon. New York: Pantheon, p. 97.

Foucault, Michel. 2002. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge, p. 195.

Gasché, Rodolphe. 2007. Something Like an Archaeology. In *The Honor of Thinking: Critique, Theory, Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 211–49.

Kleinberg, Ethan. 2017. *Haunting History: For a Deconstructive Approach to the Past*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kotrosits, Maia. 2020. *The Lives of Objects: Material Culture, Experience, and the Real in the History of Early Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 66.

Lara, Ana-Maurine. 2021. *Queer Freedom: Black Sovereignty*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Latour, Bruno. 2018. *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Levi, Primo. 2015. *The Complete Works of Primo Levi*. 3 vols, Edited by Ann Goldstein. New York: Liveright.

Lyotard, Jean-François. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington, and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

May, Toddy. 2017. *A Fragile Life: Accepting Our Vulnerability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Milbank, John. 2013. *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2008. *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*. Translated by Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith. New York: Fordham University Press.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1989. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann, and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1997. On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life. In *Untimely Meditations*. Edited by Daniel Breazeale. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ricouer, Paul. 2004. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey, and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rieff, David. 2017. *In Praise of Forgetting: Historical Memory and Its Ironies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Said, Edward. 2003. *Freud and the Non-European*. London: Verso, p. 47.

Sebald, Winfried Georg. 2003. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. Translated by Anthea Bell. New York: Modern Library.

Smith, Justin E. H. 2020. *Irrationality: A History of the Dark Side of Reason*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Woodward, Christopher. 2001. *In Ruins*. New York: Pantheon.